

1254258

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties. Children placed at this home can access the organisation's registered school and therapeutic services.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2023.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Three children spoke with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 August 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2024	Full	Outstanding
05/09/2023	Full	Outstanding
28/02/2023	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The members of the staff and management team have a strong focus on relationship building in order to support children's developing needs. This enables children to feel secure during times of change.

Children are making good progress in education. There are high levels of attendance and children engage well. Positive routines support children's educational attainment. Children continue to receive support from the provider's dedicated careers team to access education and work opportunities.

Children's daily health needs are generally well met. Staff have supported one child through planned treatment and ensured full consideration of the impact of the treatment on the child's activities, education and safety. However, managers have not sufficiently considered another child's health diagnosis.

The provider's therapeutic care team provides consistent support to children. Therapists provide clear plans and direction to staff to support children's emotional well-being. The work of the team is embedded within the day-to-day running of the home. This includes support for the team's practice and for the manager's oversight of the home.

Children take part in activities and groups which support their interests and contribute positively to their well-being and confidence. This increases children's socialisation outside of home and school. Children have been able to engage in activities such as overnight camps, which is a significant step.

Professionals and families are positive about staff support of family time. In some cases, staff have supported children to move from the home in a planned way to be reunified with their family. The manager has been responsive to increase one child's family time to provide the child with reassurance and support during a challenging time. This shows how children's wishes and emotional needs are well considered.

Staff support children to develop independence skills at an early age, including cooking and washing. This helps children to feel involved in the running of the home. Staff encourage children to think about their futures and opportunities to gain work experience.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children. They ensure that children have consistent boundaries and routines. This gives children a strong sense of security and predictability.

Risk assessments for children are detailed and easy to understand. There is clear guidance for staff on how to support children to reduce risks with both planned and responsive strategies. Staff undertake meaningful work with children to help them to understand risks and to reflect on the impact of their behaviours. Staff have found creative methods to support children's learning, including developing subject-specific presentations.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When children do go missing, staff take all steps needed to find them and bring them home safely.

The use of physical interventions is low but has increased recently. Staff have a good understanding about the reasons for children's behaviours and work hard to help them to express their feelings in more positive ways. However, one child, who had firm views on how they could feel more supported during interventions, had not been asked about changes which could be made to suit their needs.

Incidents are mostly well recorded. However, there was an isolated incident which involved the use of a physical intervention and led to an allegation being made by a child. There were no records to detail the incident, action and outcome. The manager has since provided clear instruction to staff to highlight expectations and to improve practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers have positive relationships with the children and know them well. Managers are present in the home, which enables them to act as role models to staff and lead by example. Staff benefit from coaching which compliments online and face-to-face training. Staff feel well supported by managers who are flexible and approachable.

The manager works effectively with professionals and the in-house support teams. Children's social workers speak positively about the effective communication from the team and the manager's oversight of incidents.

The manager uses data from incidents to support reflective discussions with staff. This work would benefit from further analysis to evidence understanding of trends and patterns in children's behaviours.

Team meetings and supervisions take place regularly. There is a strong focus on children and the progress they are making. Monitoring of children's progress is not consistent due to a lack of following up identified actions.

Staff benefit from training with the therapeutic team. This supports staff therapeutic practice and understanding how to respond to children. However, the manager accepts that additional training around children's behaviours and diagnosis would support the team to meet children's needs more effectively.

Safe recruitment practice ensures the all new staff are thoroughly vetted and checked before working in the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	30 September 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child;	30 September 2025

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;

the date, time and location of the use of the measure;

a description of the measure and its duration;

details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and

a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—

has spoken to the user about the measure; and

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.

(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that approaches to restraint recognise that children are continuing to develop, both physically and emotionally. Any use of restraint should be suitable for the needs of the individual child and consider the child's views on what strategies might de-escalate or calm the situation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.54)
- The registered person should ensure that there are processes in place to monitor progress with actions identified in staff supervisions and team meetings to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards.'

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1254258

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Registered provider address: Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Mark Jarvill

Registered manager: John O'Boyle

Inspector

Andrea Foreman, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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