

1263199

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to six children who may experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The registered manager holds a Level 5 qualification and was registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2019	Full	Good
11/09/2018	Full	Good
20/03/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children live at the home. Three children have remained at the home for more than three years. Children have a sense of belonging and benefit from a stable placement where they experience permanency in line with their care plan.

Children are happy living in the home. One child wrote about a staff member in a survey, and said, 'My key worker deserves a pay rise; he is always there for me when I need him.' These comments reflect the nature of the relationships that exist between the children and staff in the home.

Children know how to make a complaint, and they feel confident in raising any issues with staff. Children express their views, wishes and feelings during key-work sessions and house meetings. For example, children wanted to change the conservatory into a games room. This was agreed. As a result, they have more in-house activity resources and feel valued and listened to.

Children attend school and make good progress with their educational outcomes and attainment. Where attendance levels fall short, the staff are quick to support the children to return to their usual routines because they liaise with school staff to come to alternative arrangements. This ensures that children don't miss out on their learning opportunities.

Children enjoy a variety of activities. During the inspection, some children chose to play on their gaming consoles, while others played football at the local park. Children's hobbies are actively encouraged. As a result, children's self-esteem and confidence improves.

Children thrive physically, emotionally and socially. Staff work collaboratively with the therapy team to ensure that children access additional support when needed. A social worker said, 'The new therapy team has made a difference in the way [the child] presents.'

Staff go above and beyond to ensure that children keep in touch with their family and friends. A social worker said, 'I couldn't ask for better support with contact with family. On the day, [the child] sometimes decides she is not going. Staff have taken her the following day and waited for her. The level of support is great.'

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

Children are safe and feel safe in the home. Children have positive relationships with one another and the staff team. A child commented in a survey response to Ofsted about how he was protected from harm during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, staff supplied hand gel and face masks to keep them safe.

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and manage and review risk well. A social worker said, 'Staff have managed well. They have a good understanding of [the child's] needs. She is very happy there; she is safe.' As a result, children's risk is reducing and they are more aware of how to stay safe.

Children rarely go missing from care. When children do go missing, staff work effectively in partnership with the police and other professionals to help return children safely. Return home interviews are arranged and undertaken with children. This provides staff with the guidance to support children in reducing their episodes of going missing from care.

Children receive verbal praise from staff for their positive behaviour and achievements. Staff encourage children to follow routines and boundaries and offer incentives to encourage their participation. As a result, children learn how to be socially acceptable and respectful to others.

Staff recognise bullying behaviour and take swift action to intervene and protect children from harm. For example, following an incident of bullying behaviour, staff delivered a bullying workshop. Children wrote and agreed their own bullying contract. This helps children to understand about discriminatory behaviour and what is expected of them.

Staff only use physical restraint when it is necessary to safeguard children and others. Staff successfully use de-escalation techniques that reduce the need to physically intervene. As a result, the use of physical intervention is reducing.

Children know how to stay safe online. Staff educate children about the risks they face and how to use electronic devices safely. As a result, children enjoy the benefits of online gaming, social media and the internet safely.

The registered manager ensures that staff are safely recruited. This means that staff working with the children have been suitably checked to ensure that they do not pose any risks to children.

The home is exceptionally maintained and presented to a high standard. It radiates warmth, nurture and comfort. Children look after their home and are proud of their environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a suitably qualified registered manager. The registered manager is highly ambitious, dedicated and respected by staff children and partner agencies. The manager's consistent leadership inspires staff and children to want to be the best they can be. A member of staff said, 'We have a fantastic management structure, and they are very supportive when staff require some advice and support.'

The manager's monitoring is effective. She uses a wide range of resources to help to identify her strengths and weaknesses. She is quick to implement change and is

confident in her approach. The high-quality monitoring and recording in place enable careful scrutiny of the progress and safety of all children. The registered manager can therefore provide evidence of children's significant progress and positive experiences.

The manager knows she is improving outcomes for children because she is actively involved in the running of the home and carefully tracks the good progress children make. She is accessible to children, parents and professionals at all times. This helps to establish strong relationships that develop mutual trust and respect.

The home has an independent person in place to provide external scrutiny of the home. However, one visit during January 2022 was not completed. This hinders the manager's ability to review feedback and act on any improvements identified.

Children benefit hugely from a stable, experienced staff team that provides consistent care. Staff love working at the home and speak affectionately about the children. Staff feel strongly supported by their colleagues and the managers. The registered manager provides staff with regular reflective supervision and team meetings where they can express ideas and concerns and share best practice.

Staff collaborate excellently with school staff, social workers, health professionals and family members. As a result, children are provided with the best opportunities and support. Social workers are extremely positive about the management of the service, the care that young people receive and the quality of communication between themselves and the staff.

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, 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 registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44 (1))	1 April 2022

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have 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: 1263199

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Registered provider address: Witherslack Group, Lupton Tower, Lupton,
Carnforth LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Marcella Bird

Registered manager: Lisa Shoosmith

Inspector

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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