

1263199

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 6 children who may experience social or emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 4 children were living at the home, and 2 children were spoken with.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018. The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 February 2026

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: 15 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2025	Full	Good
20/02/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
01/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The quality of relationships that staff build with children is a priority in this home. Children live in a happy, homely environment that is filled with laughter and humour. Children settle quickly when they move in because staff make a genuine effort to welcome them and help them feel at ease. Children who have lived in the home for a longer period speak confidently about the staff's commitment to them. As a result of these positive and consistent relationships, children invest in the home and respond well to the care that they receive.

Children's emotional and physical health needs are met. Children trust staff and feel able to talk to them about their worries, which enables staff to respond promptly and sensitively. They also benefit from regular therapy sessions with the organisation's clinical team. The organisation's mental health practitioner provides staff with individualised guidance, helping them to understand and meet each child's emotional needs effectively. The combination of strong, trusting relationships and access to specialist advice enhances the support children receive.

Staff prioritise children's education. They help children to have good daily routines so that they maintain good school attendance. Staff support children to maintain family links. Staff work closely with children's families and placing authorities to facilitate regular family visits. This helps children to maintain family ties and a sense of identity.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities and recreational opportunities. These include experiences such as go-karting and visiting the gym, which support children to develop new skills and increase their self-confidence. Children are also offered new and enriching opportunities, including travelling abroad for holidays, enabling them to broaden their horizons and create positive memories. These memories are captured in individual memory books. However, the quality of these books is not consistently good, and some are not well presented. This inconsistency limits their value as a comprehensive record of each child's experiences and progress.

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

Children's risk assessments are regularly updated to reflect current risks and behaviour. They provide staff with clear guidance on the actions to take to keep children safe. This means that staff are consistent in how they help children to become safer.

Staff respond effectively when children are at risk. Immediate responses ensure that children are better protected. Staff have detailed conversations with children to reinforce concerns. Conversations include the dangers of going missing from the home, knife crime and healthy relationships. As a result of this approach, children learn about the harm they might experience and become safer.

Children in the home rarely leave without permission. When they do, staff follow relevant protocols, including going out to search for children. Knowing that staff make concerted efforts to find them tells children how much staff care about them.

Staff know the children well and support them to learn appropriate ways to manage their own emotions. They take advice from the clinical team and put in place strategies to promote appropriate boundaries for children and bring structure to their days. As a result, incidents where children have been physically restrained are rare. When restraint is considered necessary to keep children safe, it is used proportionately and is well documented.

When allegations are made about staff's conduct, leaders and managers address concerns without delay and take action to protect children from harm. Managers use learning from these experiences to strengthen practice and implement changes that further enhance safeguarding arrangements.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high aspirations for the children and is focused on providing good-quality care and support. She is well supported by the deputy manager and a team of committed staff, who work together to improve children's life chances and opportunities. As a result, children are supported by a team that is dedicated to helping them achieve their full potential.

The home is appropriately staffed, and the team has remained stable for a considerable period. Staff feel well supported by the management team and enjoy their roles. They receive regular supervision sessions, and morale within the team has improved in the last few months. Staff feel valued, particularly when the organisation recognises the work they do.

Staff training and development needs are identified and met effectively. There is a strong emphasis on professional progression through ongoing training opportunities. This enables staff to further develop their practice and enhances the quality of care provided to children. Staff also benefit from regular team meetings, which are strengthened by input from the organisation's clinical team. As a result, children are cared for by staff who are competent and who have continuous opportunities to improve their practice.

Managers use a range of monitoring tools to track children's progress and development effectively. They have a good understanding of each child's individual needs. The home also receives regular visits from an independent person, providing an additional layer of external scrutiny and oversight. When areas for improvement are identified, managers use these as opportunities for learning and development, demonstrating a clear commitment to improving practice. This contributes to children achieving positive outcomes.

The managers and staff have effective working relationships with other professionals, including social workers. Professionals report that communication is efficient, and the close partnership working between the home and external agencies helps to ensure that children are better safeguarded.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. In particular, the registered manager should ensure that any memorabilia kept for children is of good quality. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 2PR

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Lisa Shoosmith

Inspector

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

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