

2533483

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately operated. It provides care for up to 5 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

Three children living at the home at the time of the inspection, and all children were spoken with.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2023.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2024	Full	Good
08/08/2023	Full	Good
04/01/2023	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The dedication and commitment of staff towards the children have been a contributory factor in all three children making significant progress in all areas of their lives. Consistent staff practice combined with predictable routines, provides children with much needed stability which helps children achieve and have exceptionally positive experiences.

All children have made significant progress in education including improved attendance. Children both past and present have made huge strides academically and have moved on from the home with qualifications. Some children have secured employment, while others have gone on to access higher education.

Staff prioritise building trusting and meaningful relationships with children. Children are open and honest about their wishes and feelings which helps staff to meet children's needs. Relationships between children and staff are such that children often maintain contact with staff, long after they have moved on from the home. One child said, 'The staff are amazing, and always there for me.'

The home is set in a rural area offering peaceful surroundings and is furnished and maintained to a high standard. Children have their own bedrooms which they personalise with their own belongings. Children move around and relax and socialise in several communal areas which includes a games room. The home has a warm and relaxed atmosphere with photos of children throughout. This offers a comfortable family environment for children to enjoy.

Family time is important to children and staff are invested in supporting children to spend time with their loved ones when it is safe to do so. This includes transporting children to their home area and supporting families to enjoy any planned arrangements. Staff recognise the importance of building positive relationships with family and include them in children's lives and planning. This includes carrying out direct work with family members.

Staff are committed to helping children understand and develop their identities. Staff support children with any cultural needs and provide anything they need so children can enjoy and participate in any celebrations and ceremonies. Staff seek out specialist information and advice and provide any products children require. This helps children to understand their heritage and build self-esteem.

Children are well supported by staff to advance their independence and social development. One child arrived at the home experiencing difficulties accessing the community. With the support and encouragement of staff, the child has made

significant progress and is attending classes in the local area. Children who move on from the home are equipped with the skills needed for their next stage in life.

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

Staff go above and beyond to safeguard children. When children go missing from the home, staff are vigilant in their search for children and follow all procedures. When children are located out of the local area, staff travel daily to check in on the child and provide encouragement for them to return home. This helps children to feel cared for and know they are a priority to staff.

There are thorough and in-depth safeguarding procedures in place for children unique to their individual needs. Children's risks are well known and reviewed on a regular basis ensuring the risk assessment record remains live. Equally, care plans are detailed and individualised to children. This ensures staff have the most current and up to date information when caring for children.

When children raise concerns, these are taken seriously by the manager and staff. Investigations are carried out and partner agencies are informed as needed. Staff are child-centred in their approaches and help children understand the process and maintain trusting relationships. This helps children to feel safe, making them more likely to share future worries.

On occasions, children become distressed resulting in children being held by staff. As a result of effective staff intervention and a deep understanding of children's needs, the number of incidents for children has reduced. Furthermore, children have been expertly supported by staff to have a better understanding of and therefore handle their emotions better. This investment by staff helps children to develop resilience to manage difficult situations effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers lead an exceptionally committed culture in the home, and this significantly influences staff practice. This has directed staff to be highly dedicated to the children providing a nurturing and stable environment. Leaders and managers actively participate in the care of children and demonstrate positive role modelling to both staff and children. Children are given clear boundaries, routines and guidance, which benefits them enormously and contributes to the fantastic progress they make.

The manager knows the children remarkably well and has a deep understanding of their needs and experiences. The manager further develops this understanding by embedding research-based practice. This has included exploring the use of holds and the impact on children's relationships with each other and staff. In addition, the manager has completed detailed work in understanding a child's lived experiences by compiling a chronology and timeline. This has helped the manager and staff, to

provide individualised care to the child and tailor support to meet their specific needs.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and managers and this creates trust and transparency. The welfare of the staff is paramount to leaders and managers, and they are supported through regular and meaningful supervision sessions. The manager promotes an open-door policy which helps staff to feel valued and respected. Staff enjoy coming into work and do not consider it 'a job'. They view children as extended family and keep them at the centre of their practice.

Professionals speak highly of staff and managers at the home. One professional said, '[Name of home] has changed the child's life.' Another said, 'It is the best children's home I have ever worked with.' This is also reflected in the views of family members who said the staff are 'excellent' in both caring for children and communicating with them.

The manager is a strong advocate for children and challenges partner agencies when decision making for children falls short of the mark. This includes moves in and out of the home, family time and influencing legal processes that are in the best interests of the child. Furthermore, the manager recognises the limits of the home and when they are no longer able to meet children's needs. They work collaboratively with partner agencies to consider alternative options when arrangements no longer meet a child's needs. This helps children to achieve positive outcomes and avoid being further disadvantaged.

The managers monitoring systems are effective in driving continuous improvement in the home. When incidents occur leaders and managers actively reflect. This enables the manager to identify gaps in staff's knowledge leading to learning and development being identified to further improve future practice.

No requirements or recommendations were raised following this inspection.

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: 2533483

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Natalie Bennett

Registered manager: Jordan Tomlinson

Inspector

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector

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