

# 2710409

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It is registered to provide care for up to 8 children with complex needs who may experience a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some children also have a learning disability.

This home is located on the same site as a school, which children living at the home attend. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

At the time of the inspection, 7 children were living in the home, all of whom were present during the inspection. All the children were given the opportunity to speak to an inspector.

A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager is in post.

### Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2026

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be 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:** 21 October 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 21/10/2025      | Full            | Good                 |
| 21/05/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 03/05/2023      | Full            | Good                 |

## Summary of findings

Children are provided with stability. Children who have previously experienced multiple moves are settled in the home and have been for some time.

Children are making good progress from their starting points. They enjoy living in the home and enjoy positive relationships with staff.

Some aspects of safeguarding practice fall short of the standard of good, such as reporting children missing within the time frames set out in their plans, the oversight of restraint and the use of consequences. The impact of this on children is limited, to date.

Managers are ambitious for children and work closely with children's families and other professionals. They have responded proactively to crisis within the home, ensuring staff are supported.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children enjoy living in the home and have positive relationships with staff. Inspectors observed warm, playful and nurturing interactions between staff and children. Children appeared relaxed in the home. These positive relationships help provide children with stability. Children who have previously experienced several moves have been settled and living in the home for an extended amount of time.

The home is large, clean and well furnished. Children's bedrooms are highly personalised, reflecting their individual interests and celebrating their achievements. There are areas of maintenance which detract from the overall homely feel, but there is a plan to address these.

Children's health and educational needs are met well. There are good structures in place to facilitate partnership working and a consistent approach to caring for children. Staff in the home and the school are well supported by the home's therapeutic lead to understand children's needs and how best to meet them. As a result, children who were not previously in education now attend full time.

Children's important relationships are valued and supported. Where appropriate, staff work in close partnership with children's families and support children to spend time with them. Family members are very complimentary about the care children receive and the progress they are making. A family member said, 'I honestly think they are marvellous. From where he was, to where he is, it's incredible.'

As a result of the consistent and informed care they receive, children are making good progress. Staff regularly have important conversations with children designed to help

them become safer and to develop their understanding of themselves and others. Because of this, children are better able to manage difficult feelings, try new things and develop friendships, where previously they struggled. One professional said of the child they work with, 'His confidence, relationships, education, social engagement, and understanding of healthy relationships have all improved.'

Children enjoy a range of activities of their choosing. They go on holidays, see their favourite football teams play, go swimming and attend football camps. These experiences help children to develop new skills and build memories and friendships that enhance their lives.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

The use of physical restraint has been high but is recently reducing. Management oversight has lacked consistency, and on several occasions, managers have not recognised missed opportunities to de-escalate situations. Children do not always have the chance to speak with an adult who was not involved in the incident, which limits their ability to express their views openly. Consequently, important opportunities to learn from incidents and improve children's experiences have been missed.

Because children like living in the home, they rarely go missing. On the 2 occasions when children have gone missing, staff did not inform the police within the time frames set out in children's plans. On one occasion, the poor supervision of children by staff enabled them to go missing from the home. On these occasions, children have not experienced harm as a result of these shortfalls.

One area of restrictive practice, the locking of a bathroom and disabling of an en-suite shower, is not subject to regular review. As a result, it is unclear that the least restrictive practice is being followed.

When consequences have been used, children are not routinely given restorative opportunities that might support their learning and development. Consequently, opportunities to support children's progress may have been missed.

Despite these shortfalls, children feel safe living in the home, and external professionals believe safeguarding incidents are well managed. Staff actively involve children in safety planning, and in creating and reviewing their plans. For one child, this has significantly reduced their risk of self-harm.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders and managers are ambitious for the children in their care and advocate for them as a good parent would. They work in close partnership with children's key professionals to ensure that children are making progress. Feedback from external professionals is very positive, highlighting communication, relationship building and care

as strengths. One professional said of the manager, 'Sam is great, she is doing an amazing job with the children, the home is lovely.'

The home has been through a difficult period, and at times staff have felt overwhelmed. However, leaders and managers have ensured that staff are well supported through reflective supervisions and team meetings. These have given staff opportunities to reflect on the care children receive, and on their own experiences inside and outside of work. Similarly, leaders and managers have ensured that additional resources, such as additional staff, were made available in response to this difficult time. Because of this, most staff feel supported and report positive morale within the team.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive training specific to children's needs. As a result, children are cared for by staff who are knowledgeable and who understand them well.

Recruitment practices are safe and robust. Appropriate checks are carried out to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. As a result, children are cared for by adults who are safe and suitable for their roles.

## 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     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that their oversight of restraint identifies learning, and that children are given the opportunity to speak to someone who has not been involved in restraining them.</p> | 31 July 2026 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.<br/>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v))</p>                                                                                                           | 31 July 2026 |

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| This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that staff follow children's plans when children go missing. |  |
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## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address unwanted behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that all restrictive measures, such as the locking of bathrooms, are subject to systems of regular scrutiny. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

## 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:** 2710409

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Witherslack Group Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Jill Firth

**Registered manager:** Samantha Cadman

## Inspectors

John Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector  
Emma Hutton, Social Care Inspector



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