

SC475697

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It offers care for up to 7 children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 7 children were living at the home. During the inspection, the inspectors spoke with all the children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2025.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 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: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2024	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2023	Full	Good
22/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children express how staff assist them in building confidence. One child described how the people who support them are more like 'mum and dad' than staff. Another child said they feel they have made progress. They said they previously did not want to go to school, but they are now determined to complete their GCSEs and go to college. This aspiration will help them make a positive contribution when they enter adulthood.

One child's social worker said that they cannot believe the progress their child has made in the past 12 months. They said this progress was something they could not envisage before the child moved into the home. They described how the child has 'turned their whole life around'.

The home provides significant evidence of positive changes in the children's behaviour. This is achieved by a highly individualised and therapeutic approach to care. The children can reflect on their actions and develop healthy coping mechanisms because staff consistently reinforce positive behaviour. One child has made exceptional progress from their starting point, and all their initial risks have reduced significantly. This includes criminal exploitation, substance misuse and going missing from home.

All children are making progress in education. This is significant for one child, who was not attending school in the previous two years. This child is now in regular daily education and is progressing from their starting points.

Staff practice is constantly reviewed to ensure that it exceeds the standard of good through unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional care. The staff's dedication goes beyond meeting children's basic care needs, as they use innovative and creative ways to enhance the child's experiences and outcomes. The registered manager ensures that this care is consistently reviewed to ensure that it meets children's emerging or changing needs.

Staff excel at prioritising children's wellbeing. They build trusting and meaningful relationships with the children, which ensures that their emotional, physical and mental health needs are met.

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

The staff use their skills and knowledge to ensure that they understand the complex needs of the children they support. They tirelessly adapt and amend their support to meet each child's holistic needs.

Comprehensive risk assessments are compiled for children. These include contributions from all those involved in children's lives. Risk assessments include potential triggers to

challenging behaviour and strategies that staff can use to manage behaviour. This enables staff to meet children's needs and promote their safety.

Safeguarding incidents are rare. When they occur, staff respond in a timely, confident and considered manner. Safeguarding processes are followed, and relevant individuals are notified of safeguarding concerns. Incidents are significantly reducing as a result.

Children receive strong positive behaviour support from the staff who care for them, most evident in the love and attention given to each child. Staff regularly offer praise for children's achievements or simply for being themselves. This approach helps children build self-awareness and self-esteem, which promotes the development of positive behaviour.

Staff use proactive and creative practices to enable children to work through significant and complex trauma. The registered manager ensures that children are cared for by skilled staff to facilitate their development in all areas of their lives. This is instrumental in helping children understand their past trauma. Staff work effectively with a clinical psychologist. This ensures that the care they provide is underpinned by clear evidence-based therapy and practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers create an environment that enables staff to work confidently and consistently with high levels of autonomy. Staff have high aspirations for their development and the care they provide for children. This drives a culture of professionalism and exceptionally high standards of care.

The staff team benefits from a registered manager and responsible individual who prioritise the care and love of children above everything else. Staff say that they are consistently encouraged to foster a nurturing environment where children are free to be who they want to be.

There are robust monitoring and review systems in place. The registered manager regularly reviews all records. There are systems in place to ensure that all placing local authority care plans and other important records are clearly accessible.

Leaders and managers are aware of the service's strengths and areas for development. The registered manager has created a learning environment where practice is constantly scrutinised to ensure that it meets their high standards. There is clear evidence that paperwork or processes are amended in a proactive manner, which shows that the registered manager anticipates change rather than simply reacts to issues as they arise.

The manager ensures that practice is informed by research. This means that the home evolves in line with emerging theoretical approaches and best practice. This includes developing trauma-informed environments, language and evaluation. This has ensured that children make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Staff have access to a wide range of training, which ensures that they care for the children safely and consistently. Staff training is specific to the needs of the children living at the home. Staff are trained in trauma-informed language and practice. This demonstrates that staff consistently develop their knowledge and skills to support them in their roles. When a child experienced a bereavement, the manager ensured that all staff promptly received training to help them provide the best and most appropriate support.

The management team has developed innovative ways to learn about children's lived experiences. Feedback forms are amended to accommodate the individual needs of each child. When the registered manager identified that written feedback was not suitable, they developed a podcast in which children describe their experiences and journeys since moving into the home. This helps ensure that children leave with positive memories of their time at the home.

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: SC475697

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Martin Ellis

Registered manager: Mark Bruffell

Inspectors

James Meeks, Social Care Inspector
Karen Andrews, Social Care Inspector

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