

SC475723

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides therapeutic care for up to nine children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, nine children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 July 2025

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: 12 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2024	Full	Outstanding
13/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/07/2022	Full	Good
12/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

During the inspection, the inspectors spoke with six of the children.

Children benefit from living in a caring and nurturing home. They make excellent progress due to the consistently high standards of care provided by a highly skilled and committed team. Children say that living at the home has changed their lives for the better. One child said, 'I love living here; the staff are really kind and make sure I look after myself.'

Children's complex and challenging needs, including their health needs, are understood and managed well by the managers and staff. Children receive exceptional, individualised care that gives them elevated levels of emotional support and a sense of belonging. The relationships that managers and staff develop with the children enable them to make significant and sustained progress. This alters children's life chances and improves outcomes for them.

Children are making significant progress in their education from their starting points. Managers and staff work closely with education professionals to identify and overcome any barriers to learning. Children who did not attend school before moving into the home now attend full time and take pride in the targets they are achieving. This means children's educational predictions for the future have considerably improved.

Children's moves into the home are carefully planned and positive. Before children move in, the manager consults staff and children already working and living at the home to seek their views. The manager carefully considers how to meet children's individual needs. Managers and staff travel significant distances to visit children before they move into the home, which helps to promote positive relationships.

Children are encouraged to pursue their hobbies and interests, and they attend various activities in the local community, including judo, wrestling and going to the gym. Managers and staff have supported children in going on holiday together and have created journals to capture their memories. Staff are not risk-averse, and risk assessments are carried out to support the children in having time away from the home. This further enhances children's experiences and develops their independence skills.

The managers and staff encourage the children to spend time with people who are important to them. Staff members travel significant distances to support the children in having meaningful time with their families.

The home is decorated to a high standard and has a relaxed atmosphere. Children are helped to decorate their bedrooms to reflect their interests and identities. This supports children in having a sense of belonging.

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

Staff establish clear boundaries, routines and structure to give children a sense of emotional security. With input from the staff team, children make positive and exceptional changes that safeguard them from harm. As a result, children face significantly fewer risks.

Children are extremely settled in the home. Due to the nature of the relationships in the home, staff manage children's feelings effectively, including those that may result in conflict. This means that children learn to identify and manage their feelings in a more appropriate way.

Children do not go missing from home. Physical interventions are used to keep children safe; they are proportionate, with clear reflective support sessions to allow children to talk about how things could be managed better for them in the future. This means children are safer because of the excellent care and support the management team and staff provide to them.

The home offers lots of space inside and out. It is clean, tidy and homely. The home is free of hazards and benefits from strong health and safety procedures to protect children from harm. However, there are some minor decorative works and repairs required, which the manager has acknowledged and acted swiftly to resolve.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager and leadership team are inspirational, confident and ambitious, and they advocate strongly for the children in their care. They lead an enthusiastic, highly motivated, qualified and committed staff team. The children who currently live at the home and those who previously did are extremely fond of them, and this is reciprocated. Both the manager and deputy manager demonstrate excellent leadership in the home and a strong commitment to meeting the children's needs.

The management team and staff are collectively committed to achieving the best outcomes for the children and ensuring that they receive a model of care that meets their individual needs. As a result, the manager has challenged the care planning decisions for a young person who is set to move into semi-independence, meaning they will receive ongoing support once they move. This is exceptional practice and worthy of further dissemination.

Children benefit from being cared for by a stable team of staff, many of whom have worked at the home for several years. Staff feel valued and supported in their roles; they receive regular supervision and training, and they attend team meetings to reflect on their practice. One member of staff said, 'I have worked at [name of home] for approximately three years. I have always felt that the home has provided a safe and caring environment for the children. As well as it being a great place to work, it is professionally managed.'

Staff have access to an extensive training programme and additional training to meet specific areas of need that arise for children. However, staff would benefit from understanding the role of other professionals and agencies in safeguarding children and when they should be contacted.

Children and staff benefit from the strong day-to-day presence of managers and their oversight of the home. The management team has an in-depth understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. They make effective use of internal and external monitoring to ensure that high standards of care practice are maintained.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. Any damages should be quickly repaired. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills around the wider context of safeguarding, which professionals and agencies are involved, and their remit. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 9.12)

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: SC475723

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: Deborah Woollams

Inspectors

Deborah Turner, Social Care Inspector

Michael Charnley, Ofsted Inspector

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