

1159763

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and it is registered for the care and accommodation for up to seven children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 January 2018

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: 27 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The leadership and management of the home are excellent. The home is well

resourced and has access to a wide range of services including an on-site learning centre and a team of therapists. The registered manager is extremely able, confident and child centred.

- The children and young people make exceptional progress, and their experiences of living in the home are also excellent. This is largely because the staff create such a positive environment with good structure, routines and clear boundaries. This is combined with a caring and nurturing approach.
- The children and young people receive a very personalised service. Individual work carried out by staff including educational staff and therapy workers is all of the highest quality.
- The staff support the children and young people to both maintain and improve contact and relationships with their families.
- The children and young people achieve above expectations in their education, and their attendance at school is excellent.
- The children and young people are able to pursue a wide range of leisure interests and are encouraged to take part in activities, outings and holidays.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/04/2016	Full	Outstanding
07/12/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home has been open for a little over two and half years. The registered manager and the staff team have developed a culture and an environment where the children and young people thrive. The staff have created structure and routine with clear boundaries and expectations. They also build strong relationships with the children and young people and offer high level of nurture. This means that the children and young people feel safe and secure and cared for. Living in this exceptional environment means that the children and young people make excellent progress, often from very low starting points. The children and young people also benefit from an excellent on-site school and a highly skilled and dedicated team of therapists.

The quality of the individualised work that the children and young people receive is very high. Several of the children and young people have been supported to change their very challenging behaviour and have become calm and positive. School attendance is extremely good and every child or young person is achieving at or beyond their predicted progress. The wide range of therapy available makes a significant difference to the children and young people. Several of them have been helped to understand their communication difficulties and their emotions and feelings. The social worker of one child, whose background was particularly traumatic, said they had seen the child smile for the first time ever. This child is now settled, secure, achieving well at school, making strong relationships and moving towards some family contact. They are making excellent progress in all areas of their life. Another young person has left behind a background of drug taking and serious criminal behaviour and is now well on their way to becoming a qualified tradesperson and a caring, responsible adult. Several children who have learning disabilities have been helped to regulate their emotions and feelings, and have become settled enough to achieve progress at the home and at school. A number of the children and young people have helped others through charity events. One young person in particular raised a large amount of money for a major local charity by their hard work and through making a significant personal donation. These achievements build confidence and self-esteem.

The children and young people are supported to develop and maintain their family relationships. The quality of the family work undertaken is high, and staff often go above and beyond what is expected to make family contact better. Several of the children and young people now have positive family contact that could not have been envisaged before, thanks to these efforts.

There is a very wide range of activities trips and outings available for the children and young people to participate in, and most of them do this with enthusiasm. The children and young people participate in the day-to-day running of the home and have their say in what is happening at the home. All of the children and young people participate in learning new skills to ready themselves for independence.

One member of staff spoken to epitomises the approach of the home with his attention to detail. He described producing a monthly newsletter to be sent to the parents of one child. He also regularly helps this child with their spelling homework to increase the child's confidence at school. A carer spoken to described the change in their young person as 'an absolute miracle' They said, 'We cannot praise them (the staff) enough,' and said the home was the 'right place at the right time'. Another social worker told the inspector that the child they had placed had 'extreme' challenging behaviour at the start of their placement and had now 'hugely improved'.

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

The home is a very safe and secure environment for the children and young people living there. The staff maintain an environment that is well supervised, structured and nurturing. The staff use very few sanctions but pay great attention to individual need and have excellent behaviour support plans, which they put into practice. A central part of the work is the ongoing incentive scheme where children and young people can gain points for positive behaviour and are able to save up for items they wish to buy. All the children and young people are well engaged in this system and, indeed, they originally helped to organise it. Boundaries and expectations are clear and staff work hard with individuals to support them to maintain these.

There have been some missing from home incidents in relation to three of the young people. The staff made significant efforts to prevent these happening. During this time the staff made significant efforts to attempt to reduce these incidents. Two of these young people have moved on and returned to their home areas, as they wanted, and one young person has stopped this behaviour. Missing from home incidents have now reduced dramatically and there has been none for some time.

The staff have also supported a number of the children and young people who have self-harmed. Overall, this has worked well and been positive. However, one young person had to leave to move to a specialist mental health placement as they had developed more serious difficulties.

The registered manager made decisions to move three young people on when he has felt this was needed. All three decisions were made after a prolonged and significant effort was made to protect the young people. The inspector considers that these decisions were therefore made for the appropriate reasons.

The staff do use physical interventions when necessary, and these are appropriate and well managed within clear behaviour support plans. The number of physical interventions has reduced over time and remains low.

It is clear that the children and young people living in this home often arrive with significantly risky behaviours but do quickly become safer. The staff develop good risk assessments and highly effective planning. This helps to manage and minimise the risks, which leads to sustained improvements in the children and young people's lives.

The on-site therapy team uses its considerable skills and knowledge to both advise the staff and to directly help the children and young people make positive changes to their behaviour and stay safer. Several of the young people have engaged in the therapy on offer to manage their anger and emotions, which has allowed them to make these changes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened two and half years ago and he is suitably qualified. He ensures that the home meets the aims and objectives that are written in the statement of purpose.

The registered manager and his deputy manager have a great deal of experience. They have excelled at guiding the staff team from the opening of the home to now, when it is running extremely well. The manager is confident and able. He combines the overall monitoring of the home with spending a good deal of time with the children and young people in an efficient and effective way.

The registered manager has an excellent understanding of the needs of the children and young people. He is ambitious for all the children and young people in his care and is influential in changing their lives. He understands the progress that the children and young people are making and ensures that their needs are met.

The registered manager has overseen the highly successful incentive scheme which encourages positive behaviour. He has the incentives chart in his office and welcomes all the children and young people in to share their progress and their targets with him. This hands-on approach is excellent.

The registered manager is able to lead his staff team and call on the assistance of a wide range of specialist workers to both prioritise and meet these needs. His staff are very complimentary about him. One staff member described him as 'brilliant', and another said that he was 'supportive, encouraging and always available'. He ensures that all the staff have a high standard of training and supervision. One staff member described his induction training as 'fantastic'. The registered manager understands the strengths and weaknesses in his staff team. It is clear from reading the minutes of team meetings and supervision records that attention to detail is really important to him, and this work clearly improves consistency of care practice. A number of the staff commented on how strong the team was and how closely the team members worked together.

The registered manager has good professional relationships with the on-site school and with the therapy team, and the communication between these three parties is excellent. This benefits the children and young people considerably. The registered manager has created a wrap-around service, which works extremely well. He is also very able to challenge other professionals when needed, and will escalate issues if required.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the previous inspection and none has been made at this one.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1159763

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Registered provider address: Witherslack Group, Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth
LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Marcia McLoughlin

Registered manager: Cristopher Beattie

Inspector:

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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