

1254258

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of privately run children's homes. It is registered for four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Children placed at this home can access the organisation's registered school and therapeutic services.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 5 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are extremely well supported and the care they receive is making a positive difference to their lives. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of each individual child and are very committed to helping them achieve their full potential.

Relationships between children and staff are remarkable. Staff genuinely want children to achieve and work extremely hard to support them to make progress. Because of this, children make steady and consistent progress in many areas of their lives. When measured against starting points on admission to the home, they are thriving.

Children show great insight into their past difficulties and recognise the progress they have made since coming to live at the home. One child said, 'I wasn't in a good place before I came here. I struggled to talk about things. But I can talk to staff here. I really love it, it's amazing. It's much better than anywhere else I've ever lived.'

Birth parents and family members are equally positive about the home. A relative told the inspector, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds, he's much calmer and is growing up. I can't speak highly enough of the staff team and how they have helped him.' Another stated, 'This children's home has provided us with a lifeline. It's exactly what we needed as a family. I am happy to see that my child is more settled and thriving.'

Children who had minimal attendance prior to their admission now access and engage in a full-time education package. Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with teachers. Because of this, children are making excellent progress with their educational attendance and achievement.

Learning is further supplemented in the home. Staff are creative in finding ways for children to enjoy extra learning activities. For example, children are encouraged to express their artistic flair as well as doing bite-sized homework on academic subjects such as maths and English. As a result, children are now more confident in their abilities.

Contact arrangements are clearly outlined in each child's care plan and are fully supported by staff. Staff understand how to manage the complexities of family dynamics and have developed excellent relationships with those who are important to the children. This contributes to making contact a positive experience for all those involved.

Staff practice is influenced and guided by the therapeutic input provided from the organisation's therapy team. Therapists work closely with staff to develop individually tailored strategies of support. Promoting a culture of respect and openness is a clear strength in this home. As a result, the children feel secure, happy and settled.

Children take on given tasks, roles and responsibilities around the home that provide them with useful skills. For example, one child has recently undertaken the task of

chairing house meetings. This is designed to improve her independence and to give her a sense of responsibility.

The home looks and feels like a family home. The children are happy and share a positive relationship with each other. Their day-to-day lives are filled with fulfilling experiences, laughter and warmth.

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

Relationships are a key strength and children have forged strong attachments with the registered manager and the staff team. Exceptionally clear boundaries and routines, coupled with a consistent staff group, enable children to feel settled and gain ownership of their home.

Effective safeguarding practice contributes to children's strong sense of safety and well-being. Risk management elements of care planning are very carefully considered for each child. There is clear identification of the risks, potential triggers for risk-taking behaviours and strategies to minimise or manage those risks.

Reward is a key feature in this home and there are many incentives for children to display positive behaviour and achieve objectives. Staff talk openly with children about how to manage their frustrations and are actively encouraged to be solution focused. As a result, children are developing coping mechanisms and are more able to talk about how they are feeling.

Children have not gone missing since living in this children's home. However, there are clear protocols in place that are well known and understood by the staff should an incident arise.

Training is based on developed research and theories. For example, the manager recently facilitated training on the impact of adverse childhood experiences and mental health. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and more able to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children.

Records highlight that children's behaviour has continued to settle and the frequency and severity of behavioural incidents has reduced significantly. However, physical intervention has occurred when necessary to ensure children's safety and welfare. These incidents are carefully monitored and evaluated by senior staff. Debriefing sessions with children and staff provide opportunities to explore each incident to see whether lessons can be learned and whether the incident could have been handled differently.

Children benefit from a strong, consistent and committed team of staff who are experienced in working with children. All staff are robustly vetted prior to employment within the home and their practice is regularly monitored in line with the culture and ethos of the home.

Children live in a physically safe environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills with the children, to ensure that the premises are safe, and

the children know what to do in case of an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager provides strong, positive leadership. He is committed to delivering high-quality childcare practice, as well as achieving excellent outcomes for children. He can demonstrate the extremely positive impact that living at the home has had on the lives of children.

The registered manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement in the home and is committed to securing continuous improvement. He is well supported by a competent and experienced team of staff who share his aspirational commitment to the children in their care.

All staff receive regular planned and structured supervision. Records highlight a consistent approach to maintaining the already high standards in the home. Staff said they are very happy working in the home and enjoy working with children. The team is highly motivated in its role and everyone exhibits a passion for their work.

Staff have access to a range of training opportunities that enable them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to support children.

The registered manager develops and maintains excellent relationships with professionals and parents. This means that children benefit from the best possible support. He communicates effectively with all agencies to ensure that children continue to make progress and their views are listened to.

The registered manager knows what the home does well. He makes good use of a range of quality-assurance processes to ensure that all aspects of the home's performance and children's progress are routinely monitored. External monitoring is also used effectively. This ensures that the high standards of care practice are maintained.

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: 1254258

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Marcia McLoughlin

Registered manager: Jerrard Charmer

Inspector

Ceri Evans, social care inspector

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