

1254258

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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.

The manager was registered in February 2018 and has the level 5 diploma.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 January 2020

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	good
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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 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
05/12/2017	Full	Good

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, 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 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— 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p>	24/02/2020
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b))</p> <p>SCHEDULE 4 Regulation 37 Other records with respect to children's homes Register of children 1. A record in the form of a register showing in respect of each child— (a) the date of the child's admission to the children's home.</p>	24/02/2020

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children at this home make exceptional progress because of the care and support offered to them. Key strengths of the home are stability and consistency throughout the staff team. Children develop very close, positive relationships with staff who care about them. Children thrive because of clear routines, boundaries and expectations. Children's

individual needs are fully understood, and their care is specifically tailored to meet their needs.

Children make significant progress, even those who are recently admitted. One child has been placed for only a few weeks. He is attending school full time, has begun to wear appropriate clothing and has had no incidents of violence or aggression. This progression is remarkable from his starting point. Another child who has lived in the home for some time has made transformative progress. His family described him as 'a different child', stating that the home 'have transformed him' and 'he is unrecognisable'.

Staff are exceptionally good at building and promoting children's relationships with their families. Two children have been successfully returned to the care of their parents. Staff have gone above and beyond to ensure the success of their transitions. Equally, transitions into the home are well planned and managed. This helps to reduce children's anxieties and so they settle quickly.

There is a holistic approach to children's care. Staff work with other agencies, for example education and the clinical support team, to identify the best way to support children. This helps to ensure consistency across all settings.

Innovative ideas are developed and put into practice. For example, children are set targets in line with their needs stemming from their adverse childhood experiences. Staff then devise electronic games and interactive storyboards to help engage them to work towards and achieve their targets. Examples of these reviewed as part of this inspection evidenced exceptional child-centred practice.

Staff are resilient. They do not give up on children. They are prepared to try any number of strategies to help, care and support children until they get it right. They bring energy, enthusiasm and creativity into their work, which makes children feel valued and cared about.

Children are helped to understand the world around them through a weekly newsletter. This is a further example of outstanding practice. The newsletter has news headlines that are relevant to children, for example Greta Thunberg and Ed Sheeran. There is a nominated star of the week, recipes, quizzes, colouring and word searches. Additionally, the newsletter contains up-to-date news from the children's home towns to help them maintain links and remain involved and interested in their home culture.

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

Children are safe. They do not go missing and they are not at risk of child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. They are not involved with gangs, knives or drugs. There are good staffing levels to ensure that children are well supervised and supported. Waking watch staff are used and children's bedroom doors are alarmed to alert staff if any child comes out of their bedroom during the night.

Anxieties for children reduce over time. This is because care is consistent, and routines and boundaries are implemented. Children's behaviours improve over time. Children who show extreme behaviours learn to regulate and manage those behaviours through the positive individualised support given to them.

Positive behaviour support plans are child-friendly and clearly evidence the voice of the child. These plans are highly individualised and are illustrated by characters of the child's choice. Children are encouraged to identify things which help them when they become angry or upset.

Records of physical interventions are cross referenced to an incident analysis report. This report looks at whether the incident could have been avoided, whether there were any antecedents that could have alerted staff and what techniques were most effective. This is an example of outstanding additional follow up work to try to identify any ways that incidents could be de-escalated before a physical intervention becomes necessary.

Children are educated about safety through the Barnardo's 'Real Love Rocks' resource. This helps to develop their understanding of healthy relationships and to prevent child sexual exploitation. These resources are child-centred, age-appropriate educational activities such as jigsaws, storyboards, word searches and games.

Allegations are generally well managed, although there was a lack of clarity for a staff member involved in an allegation. Managers involve the local area designated officer and children's social workers appropriately.

One child's risk assessment omitted a significant risk for him. The referral paperwork reported him to have a risk of aggression and violence in the family home. He had only been in the home for a short time and, although he had not displayed these behaviours, the risk should have been considered within his risk assessment to alert staff to the possibility of these behaviours occurring.

When children display heightened risks, such as self-harm or suicidal ideation, staff work in close partnership with other agencies to implement detailed and effective safety plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by an enthusiastic management team, whose members are committed to delivering high-quality care to children. Managers know the children and the staff team exceptionally well. Managers are keen to continuously develop the service and strive to make continuous improvements.

Managers effectively use research in practice. They do this in a way that is meaningful and tailored to children's needs so that children get individualised, high-quality care. The staff team is enthusiastic about trying new approaches.

Staff feel well supported. Managers are available to staff. They encourage professional development and are open to suggestions and ideas about service improvements. Staff

are recognised when they develop good practice, and this is shared across the organisation. The wider management team within the organisation is also visible and approachable.

There is a detailed and thorough induction process for newly appointed staff. Staff receive regular practice supervision. They benefit from an extensive training package and are encouraged to identify further areas of training, including training specific to the needs of the children placed.

Managers understand the home's strengths and work hard to maintain these. They are aware of areas in which the home could develop and have plans in place to implement positive change.

Multi-agency working is a strength of the home. External agencies consistently report the home to be excellent in respect of their communication and joined-up working.

One omission was identified in the schedule 4 information required under Regulation 37. Although this was rectified at the time of the inspection, a requirement is still made to reflect this oversight.

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 Limited

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

Responsible individual: Marcia McLoughlin

Registered manager: Jerrard Charmer

Inspector

Charlie Bamber: social care inspector

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