

# 1254258

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home is registered to provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. Children placed at this home can access the organisation's registered school and therapeutic services.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

### Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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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 effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 15 March 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Good
27/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
27/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
05/12/2017	Full	Good

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children living in the home have built trusting and secure relationships with staff. Staff invest time in children, they listen to them, protect them and promote their welfare. Staff are proud of children's progress and achievements. As a result, children can develop a sense of permanence and belonging. Children are also able to name trusted adults that they can speak to if they have any worries.

When children move into the home, they are sensitively welcomed. Staff spend time with children getting to know them and provide them with explanations about the home. However, it is not always clear if staff have discussed with children the children's guide, how to access advocacy services or how to make a complaint.

All children attend school, they are learning and making excellent progress. The manager and staff are ambitious and have high aspirations for children. Staff support children to attend and do well in their education, and they work closely with schools. As a result, support strategies are implemented when needed, and one child's attendance levels have significantly improved.

Children are provided with therapeutic care and support, and this is fully embedded into staff practice. Staff are guided and supported by a qualified and experienced therapist, and they receive regular training and weekly consultation. As a result, children are being helped to understand their emotions better, and are making considerable progress.

Children's health needs are promoted. They are all registered with local health services and all appointments are up to date. When necessary, specialist help and support services are made available to children, according to their individual needs.

Children are supported to explore and develop their identity. Staff take every step to make sure that children are not subject to discrimination or bullying by their peers. Individuality is promoted and celebrated in the home. Children are supported to understand and recognise each other's differences.

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

Children can identify a trusted adult that they can talk to about any worries or concerns they may have. Children know how to make a complaint and can identify who to complain to if they were to ever have any concerns.

The manager and staff know the children's risks and understand them. Together, they identify and appropriately assess new risks. The manager ensures that risk management plans are individualised and up to date. However, online safety risk management plans do not always contain information regarding parental controls on children's gaming devices.

There have been occasions when children have displayed self-injurious behaviour. Records of these incidents are detailed and evidence what steps staff have taken to support children when in crisis. The manager ensures that effective liaison takes place with relevant professionals to ensure that the most appropriate safety plans and support is implemented. As a result, children are helped to stay safe, and their risks are reducing.

There have been occasions when children have been missing from home. The manager and staff team are proactive in their response and the missing from care protocol is routinely followed. Assessments that are used to manage risks are robust and regularly reviewed and updated. These assessments work together with individualised protocols for when a child is missing from care. When a child has been missing, incident reports are detailed and include the action that staff have taken to locate the child.

Holding a child to keep them safe is used as a last resort. Records are detailed and contain the relevant information. Appropriate debriefs are completed with children, taking into consideration their views, wishes and feelings. Incident records are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the manager, who has excellent oversight. As a result, the manager has been able to implement a reduction plan, this has been effective, and incidents have significantly reduced.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The manager is inspirational, confident, he leads by example and is ambitious for the children. He has high expectations for the staff team and their development. As a result of this, the staff work together to provide a consistent and stable home for children.

The level of oversight from the manager is exceptional. The manager is organised and innovative. He has implemented effective monitoring systems in the home. This has helped him to identify learning outcomes and opportunities to support the staff team's development. This helps to sustain the highest quality care for children.

The manager has developed positive working relationships with professionals, parents and family members. The manager understands the importance of effective partnership working, and how this contributes towards children's positive experiences. One social worker said, 'I cannot speak more highly of them [staff]. They know [name of child] inside out, they are so caring and proactive in their approach.'

The staff training programme is extensive. All staff receive ongoing training that includes mandatory training and relevant online focused training. The manager has also made good use of the team meetings to deliver some bespoke face-to-face training to support practice development. As a result, staff meet the specific needs of the children and are provided with open forums to reflect on their practice.

Staff receive supervision monthly. The supervisions are well planned and structured, and are led by a suitably experienced manager or team leader. The supervisions are reflective and provide a safe environment for staff to reflect on their practice and development.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that strategies used in risk assessments to manage online safety include information about parental controls. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that when conversations take place with children about the children's guide, complaints and advocacy services, these are documented. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 11.7)

### **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:** 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:** Marcella Bird

**Registered manager:** John O'Boyle

## Inspector

Kimmy Feeley, Social Care Inspector

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