

# 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.

There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

### Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</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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**Date of last inspection:** 28 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/2/2023	Full	Good
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: outstanding**

The children have built strong, trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. The adults are proud of, and are aspirational for, the children. This has enabled children to thrive and learn that their feelings and opinions are important. The child's voice is evident throughout records and in day-to-day living situations in the home. Children's level of engagement in services that support their experiences and progress is exceptional.

The adults and children have developed an exceptionally strong sense of family in the home. The children say they are very happy to live here and feel they belong, but they have a realistic understanding of the fact that their preference would be to live with their own family. With help from the adults, the children are developing a sense of community and understand that this is important, especially when they leave the home. The children respect the adults and they are polite and welcoming to visitors.

The children attend school and are making excellent progress. The school staff and the adults caring for the children, ensure that they communicate well and work in a consistent way to support the children to achieve. One parent was clear that the level of joint working along with the input of the therapists was what made the difference. She described a 'three-pronged approach' that has helped her child be 'a million miles away from where [name of child] started'.

The children are provided with therapeutic care and support that is understood by them and the adults caring for them. The children value the support they receive and can see the benefits they reap from the sessions. The qualified and experienced therapist is highly committed to the children and adults. Between them, they develop innovative ways for children to learn to self-regulate their emotions and tell the adults how they can help them when they feel overwhelmed. Children can identify themselves how far they have come from their starting points and can reflect on the difference living at the home has made to them.

There are weekly consultation sessions with the therapist for children and meetings along with focused training for the adults. The meetings discuss the strategies and the therapeutic input in use, and reflect on what works and what needs to change. The service is also extended to family members to help them understand the needs and presenting behaviours of their children. Family members expressed that they feel well informed and supported by the manager and members of the team.

The children engage in healthy eating and lifestyles. They attend clubs, such as sea cadets and swimming, which help them develop socially and physically. They involve themselves in activities on a regular basis, such as football, visiting country shows and houses, trampolining and the usual cinema and going out for food. The children

live full lives and develop friendships. The children all engage in health services either for routine appointments with dentists and opticians or in specialist services to meet their individual needs. They are supported in this by the adults until they can manage this on their own.

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

The children say they feel safe in the home. They can identify a trusted adult who they can talk to about any worries or concerns. One child said, 'I may not like them all of the time but I trust them.'

Risk management plans contain clear strategies to help the adults mitigate against risks that the children face. The plans are regularly reviewed and updated if required. The records show that all children are making progress in learning to manage risk.

There have been occasions when children have been absent from the home, but the adults have known where they are and who they are with, mainly family. The adults follow all the necessary protocols and procedures to ensure the safe return of children, which does include reporting them as missing to police if necessary. Such incidents are reducing.

There have been incidents where children have needed to be held as a last resort to help them to regulate their emotions. The records of such incidents are clear and the manager's detailed monitoring shows that the amount and the length of time a child is held are all reducing.

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

The manager is a focused and inspirational leader. He is highly effective in his role and is ambitious for the children and his team. He continually develops ways of ensuring that both continue to achieve. He is supported by two deputies.

The manager is visible in the home, and his level of monitoring is exceptional. He uses data with both children and the team to look at why situations happen and develop ways of managing them differently for more positive outcomes.

The manager develops working relationships with other professionals so that he can ensure that children receive the highest quality of care. He challenges appropriately and advocates strongly on behalf of the children when necessary. All professionals spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about the whole team and how it has changed the lives of the children who live in the home.

The training programme is comprehensive and is inclusive of relevant mandatory training as well as specialised, focused training to help the team meet the needs of the children. The manager ensures that staff keep up to date with their knowledge base and uses briefings to discuss topics of interest or relevance. He uses innovative ways to explain complex concepts to the team and constantly re-enforces the

therapeutic ethos of the home. Research underpins his management style and he is constantly looking to improve the lives of the children.

The team receives supervision on a regular basis. The records are detailed and reflective. On occasion, items discussed are not followed through to their conclusion or detailed on the record.

The manager uses the reports of the independent visitor well. He completes good-quality regulation 45 reports that reflect the progress of the children and the team. He is keen to continue learning and developing, and is curious about ways to achieve this.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that supervision records note any actions to follow up. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

### **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:** Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth LA6 2PR

**Responsible individual:** Marcella Bird

**Registered manager:** John O'Boyle

## Inspector

Sue Atkinson-Millmoor, Social Care Inspector

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