

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Unique reference number	1229229
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Esland North Limited
Registered provider address	1 Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual	Lyndsey Sim
Registered manager	Sarah Billam
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A (First inspection)
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1229229

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The progress that the young person living in this home makes is exceptional.
- High-quality care, provided by a consistent, committed and enthusiastic staff team, has made a significant difference to the young person's life. She has enjoyed new experiences and developed socially and emotionally. Her self-esteem and confidence have significantly improved.
- The young person speaks extremely positively about her experiences of living in the home. She has developed trusting and positive relationships with staff who provide her with high levels of emotional warmth and who have high aspirations for her to achieve to the very best of her abilities.
- The young person feels highly respected and valued. She plays a full role in the running of the home. She is involved in the preparation of her placement plan and, with support, she writes her own risk management plans and contracts. As a result, she is motivated to work towards the goals that she has set.
- Comprehensive risk and behaviour management plans, implemented effectively by staff, provide the present young person with a high level of safety. The actions of staff, access to specialist support and excellent partnership working have resulted in a significant reduction in challenging and damaging behaviours.
- The management team is strong and enthusiastic. The staff feel valued and share their managers' commitment to improving young people's lives. They have a good grasp of the strengths of the home and have plans to make further improvements to an outstanding service.
- One recommendation is made as a result of this inspection. This is in relation to staff having access to return home interviews after incidents of going missing. However, this has not had an impact on the high-quality care and high levels of safety that the young person living in this home is receiving.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure that the home takes account of the information provided in return home interviews after periods of a child being missing or absent without permission when assessing risk and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to two children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
This is the home's first inspection since it was registered on 1st April 2016. A young person was admitted very shortly after this registration. As a result of comprehensive pre-planning assessments it was established that, in order to meet her specific and complex needs, no other admissions should be made. This has remained the case. The admission was extremely well planned, with the young person having an opportunity to meet the manager and some staff prior to placement. The young person said, 'When I came I had already met some staff, I had the young people's guide and so I knew what to expect. I was made to feel really welcome.' As a result of careful planning and a warm welcome, the young person settled quickly and she has continued to thrive. From her starting point, the current young person has made outstanding progress and has had very positive experiences. Her social worker commented, 'She is a completely different person to the one that arrived. She is happier, she is more settled than ever, she is making good progress at school, she has made friends and she is so much safer.' The young person herself reflected, 'I have lost count of the number of placements I have had, but out of all of them this is definitely the best place I have lived as the staff are great.' The young person has developed extremely positive relationships with a very committed and consistent staff team who know her well. She has learnt how to trust staff as a result of the emotionally warm and predictable care that they provide. A lead from her virtual school commented, 'Due to the dedication and care provided, the young person has learnt to trust and this has enabled her to progress across the board.' Because staff are aspirational and encourage the young person to engage in new activities and experiences, and pursue her dreams and talents, her confidence and self-esteem have grown significantly. She has joined a number of youth groups, she participates in a variety of activities in the local community, she has been on holiday abroad with staff and she is rehearsing to perform at an achievement award ceremony. She said, 'I have been to Spain and it was brilliant. Staff are helping me to feel good about myself. They respect me for who I am and really encourage me to do things and to feel proud of who I am. I feel more confident and happier as a result of living here.' The young person is starting to believe she has a happy future ahead of her. From her starting point, the young person has made significant educational progress. She has gone from participating in some online learning within the home to attending a full-time educational programme with a local education provider. She has started to develop aspirations for the future and staff are helping her to	

explore possible future careers. A lead from the virtual school commented, 'This home is giving the young person the best chance of succeeding educationally and having a secure adult life.'

Staff support the young person very well to become healthier, both physically and emotionally. Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted. The young person has access to an in-house therapy service although she currently chooses not to engage directly with her therapist. A social worker said, 'Staff take on board advice and guidance from the therapist. They get the support they need to meet her emotional and therapeutic needs well.'

The young person is fully respected and valued. Her views are central to the running of the home. She is also fully involved in her care planning. With support, she writes her own risk management plans and contracts and decides what consequences, positive or negative, are appropriate for her. As a result, the young person is motivated to work towards the goals that she has set. She has a sense of control over her life and this helps to raise her confidence and self-esteem.

Because of the help and support from staff, the young person is now enjoying significantly improved relationships with her family. Contact with some family members has progressed so that a regular pattern of contact has been established. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The home does everything and more. Staff have supported contact really well. The young person and staff are joining family members for a short break this weekend.' The rebuilding of family relationships has been really important and valuable to the young person. It has helped enhance her sense of identity and has provided her with additional support networks for the future.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The young person says that she feels safe and she has become much safer as a result of living in this home. She said, 'I would grade this home as outstanding as the staff have succeeded in keeping me safe where others could not. I am safe because I am in the middle of nowhere. The staff are always here for me and they help me through bad days. I know I can always rely on them.' The physically and emotionally safe environment, created through positive relationships and consistent care, provide the young person with a very strong sense of safety and security. Comprehensive and regularly updated risk management plans implemented by staff provide the young person with high levels of protection. As the young person has a number of specific vulnerabilities, staff carefully monitor her. However, this does not prohibit her from participating in activities which help with the development of her life and social skills, such as travelling abroad. Rather, robust and regularly reviewed risk management plans enable the young person to enjoy new experiences, and take reasonable risks as part of her growth and development,	

without her safety being compromised.

A multi-agency approach to help and support provide the young person with a high level of protection. A child and adolescent mental health worker who recently visited the home to undertake an assessment following a significant incident was extremely impressed with staff practice. The health worker said, 'The sensitivity of the staff and their understanding of attachment was outstanding. They were really supportive. They had an excellent understanding of how to keep her practically and emotionally safe and how to access support in an emergency.' As a result of coordinated approaches, incidents of risky behaviours such as going missing, threats of harm, aggression and causing damage have significantly reduced.

Incidents of this young person going missing have become rare. On the two occasions when the young person did go missing, staff followed her risk management plan and she was promptly located and welcomed back into the home. The positive relationship that she has with staff and the excellent work that they have undertaken with her in relation to personal safety, including internet risks, have been extremely effective in reducing risk. The young person said, 'Staff guide me and encourage me to make safe choices about not running away and not talking to people I do not know.' Following these incidents, although return home interviews occurred, the outcomes of these were not shared with the staff in the home. Although this has had no impact on this young person's safety on these occasions, not having sight of these means that there is a missed opportunity to learn from them and reduce risk further.

Staff have a very positive and proactive approach to managing behaviour. A robust and up-to-date behaviour and risk management plan highlights the young person's specific vulnerabilities, warning signs and triggers. It provides clear guidance in respect of how to help and support her. The implementation of this plan, alongside positive relationships, high levels of praise and incentive schemes have been very effective in reducing incidents of challenging behaviours. It is a testament to the staff's skills that on no occasions have they had to resort to physical intervention. The young person commented, 'The staff know me so well. They know how to calm me down if I am having a bad day. As a result, I have become calmer. They know when to give me space and they know when not to. They are also really good at giving hugs.'

Recruitment practices are very effective. Robust monitoring and oversight and a clear understanding of safeguarding in relation to recruitment ensure, as far as possible, that only suitable people are recruited to work in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is dedicated and experienced and is on target to complete the required management qualification within the timescales set out in the	

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. She is the manager of this and another of the organisation's homes. Due to some instability in her other home, she has not spent as much time as planned at this home. However, due to the home having a very strong deputy manager, this has not had any impact at all on the quality of care being provided.

The present young person and staff hold the registered manager and the deputy manager in high regard. They are both extremely committed and child-focused and good motivators. A member of staff said, 'We are the smallest team with the biggest hearts. Our manager always reminds us of this and makes us feel really valued for the work we do. She always thanks us for our hard work and sensitively challenges minor practice issues.' Morale in the home and staff retention are very good and a committed and cohesive staff team ensures that the young person consistently receives high standards of care.

Professionals spoken to during the inspection described good levels of communication and partnership working. One professional summed up the views of all by saying, 'The staff understand how working together improves outcomes and I cannot fault levels of communication.' Good partnership working has provided consistency and helped to ensure that the current young person has received the correct help and support to enable her to flourish.

Staff are well trained. All have either completed, or are on target to complete, the required professional qualifications in residential childcare. Staff also have access to a wide range of training opportunities, which help them to develop their understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the young person currently living in the home. Staff also receive training in relation to other emerging issues which could potentially affect any young person living in residential care. This training, alongside regular consultations with the young person's therapist, helps to enhance staff insight and practice.

Staff attend regular team meetings and they receive regular supervision which gives them the opportunity to reflect upon their practice and the needs of the young person that they are caring for. The management team recognises that staff supervision is an area which could be improved further in terms of finding more creative ways of challenging and developing their staff team.

The home's statement of purpose is up to date and provides clear and accurate information to parents and placing authorities about the care, support and services that the home offers.

The manager effectively monitors the progress that the current young person makes. Weekly reports enable placing authorities to see what she is achieving in all aspects of her development. Reports for statutory reviews are also of a high quality and demonstrate the progress that the young person is making. In addition to this, key performance data is collected weekly in respect of all significant incidents and other aspects of the service. This is scrutinised by senior leaders and managers to ensure that the help and support that the young person is receiving is promoting ongoing progress. The monitoring systems within this home and within the wider

organisation enable managers and leaders to demonstrate the impact that living in the home is having on the young person's life.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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