

1245565

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home that is registered to care for three children who may have social and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home offers short-term placements of 12 weeks to children to assess their care needs before they move to longer-term care arrangements.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2023.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 2 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/05/2023	Full	Good
04/04/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
22/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live at the home for a period of 12-week assessment. Seven children have lived at the home since the last inspection. Two children have returned to their families and two children have been placed in other homes within the organisation. Three children have moved to external children's homes. There have been no unplanned endings, which shows that the provider commits to children through what can be a very anxious time for them. Children's transitions are carefully planned. Assessment reports provide helpful information to identify children's needs for future care planning.

The manager has made improvements to the home. The lounge, dining area, and kitchen are particularly comfortable and homely. The garden is a safe place that is secured by new fencing; however, it is still not a child-centred space that children can enjoy. There are plans to develop the garden, but these are yet to be completed.

Children are welcomed when they move in. Staff are skilled in establishing relationships with children quickly. As such, children build strong relationships and confide in the staff team. Children have positive experiences at the home. There is a focus on outdoor activities due to the therapeutic benefits. Children enjoy walking, biking, and gym sessions. Preparing meals is encouraged. This helps children to develop new skills and healthy routines.

The manager and staff prioritise education. The home is now registered with the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). Children have a tutor to teach core subjects. Staff create individual ways for children to learn in other areas. Children's learning is quality assured by the AQA and the home has received positive feedback about their work with children.

Children's health needs are well met. They are registered with universal health services as soon as possible. A child with a particular health need recently moved in, which has been addressed quickly. Shortfalls highlighted from professionals who had previously been involved with the child have been escalated to the relevant agencies.

The manager and staff ensure that children see people who are important to them. This helps children to feel less anxious about being away from their families. The manager has the confidence to advocate on children's behalf when arrangements do not meet their needs.

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

Staff understand the risks posed to and from children well. For example, a child moved in a few days prior to the inspection. The manager and staff have a good grasp of the known risks and emerging vulnerabilities. They quickly put a risk management plan into place to ensure that the child and staff are safe. All staff are aware of the content. They

understand the importance of close supervision at a time when they are getting to know them.

Staff have been required to manage several serious incidents in the last year where children have become overwhelmed by their feelings. Overall, these have been managed well. Staff have used their training to keep children safe, and only use restraint to prevent harm to children and staff. Restraints are used appropriately. However, staff are not recording some incidents where a child's liberty has been restricted, such as when staff have blocked a child's path to prevent them coming to harm. The manager recognises the importance of this following the inspection.

Children have made a small number of allegations about staff. These have been made during incidents where children have been distressed. All allegations are reported to the relevant external agencies and their advice is followed. Practice is transparent in this area. However, children are not routinely informed of the outcomes of their allegations. This is important as children need to know that they will always be kept safe.

Staff respond to incidents of self-injurious behaviour in a sensitive way. Children are supported with their injuries, and staff provide nurture as well as ensuring that children are safe. Where appropriate, children are referred to specialist services to help them to develop healthier coping strategies.

The manager and staff have worked hard to reduce the number of times that children are missing from care. The garden has been made safer and the supervision of children has improved. There have been some missing incidents, which have occurred away from the home. These involved one child. Staff responded quickly to these incidents and, in most cases, the child was found quickly. Where exploitation is suspected, the manager ensures that children have an opportunity to talk with relevant agencies.

Staff are carefully recruited through robust safe recruitment processes. This ensures that children are cared for by suitable adults.

Effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has settled into his role and his confidence has increased. He has worked hard to make improvements that have been informed by his clear priorities and high aspirations. For example, he has established a stable and skilled staff team, who are well trained. There has been little staff turnover since the last full inspection. The team is cohesive and settled. Staff are working well together and are motivated and positive. Team morale has improved due to the leadership of the manager.

The staff understand the model of care provided in the home well. There has been investment in training, which staff are using to good effect. For example, staff are implementing a trauma-informed approach more consistently as practice has become more embedded. Staff receive reflective supervision, which enables them to reflect on their work and remain focused on children's needs.

Staff say that they are happy in the home. They feel supported by one another and the manager. If staff feel impacted by a situation, there are opportunities to take time out to

recharge. This is good for morale and also reduces the risk of poor practice that could impact on children.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the home. Where there are concerns about practice, managers respond in a timely way. The manager has implemented proportionate measures that have helped to raise standards in the home. Incidents of poor practice have reduced since the last inspection.

The manager learns from children's experiences and ensures that staff do the same. He undertakes learning exercises following each placement, which inform how children are cared for going forward. An example is the introduction of an improved pre-admission risk assessment, which gathers detailed information about children's needs and vulnerabilities. This has been positive in terms of assessing which children can be cared for safely at the home.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home and garden areas are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand that restraint also includes restricting a child's liberty of movement. This includes, for example, changes to the physical environment of the home (such as using high door handles) and the removal of physical aids (such as turning off a child's electric wheelchair). Restrictions such as these, and all other restrictions of liberty of movement, should be recorded as restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)
- The registered person should ensure that children feel safe. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected, and be protected from significant harm. This includes sharing with children the outcomes of investigations regarding all allegations made against staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

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: 1245565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Registered provider address: Esland Ltd, Suite 1 & 5, Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: Kim Bell

Registered manager: Simon Jugovic

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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