

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 March 2025.

There was one child living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 2025

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: 9 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/04/2024	Full	Good
02/05/2023	Full	Good
04/04/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager has made considerable changes which have improved the home environment and garden. Children are now enjoying outdoor games and having fun with staff which is benefiting their sense of wellbeing. There is a positive atmosphere which makes the home a welcoming place for children. The staff help children to develop good routines and learn to cook for themselves. This has a positive impact and helps children to prepare for independence.

Nine children have lived at the home since the last full inspection. Eight of those children have stayed for the whole assessment period and moved on in planned ways with a positive ending. Learning has been identified from the unplanned ending for one child and this is being implemented. For example, it was identified that important information about the child was not shared before they moved in. New systems are being used to gather information which has helped the manager to increase placement stability for children.

Children develop positive relationships with staff. They spend time with the team doing activities and learning new skills. One child is currently learning to play an instrument. This helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Staff show empathy to children and respond sensitively to them. Children benefit from regular direct work sessions and 'house meetings' which are delivered in a child centred and sensitive way. This helps children to share their wishes and feelings.

The staff support children to have time with their families and take part in their care planning. This is important for their emotional wellbeing. The in-house clinician provides clear recommendations about future care arrangements for children which helps professionals with longer term plans. When children move on, they receive good support with their transitions and are well prepared. One child has been able to return to their family following their assessment at the home and they have made good progress.

Children make good progress with their education through the Assessments and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) scheme. Education plans are developed carefully with the child's needs in mind. This helps children to re-engage with education even where they have not been to school for significant periods of time. One child was able to attend their mainstream school which maintained stability in their life at that time.

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

The manager has made the grounds of the home safer for children. This is helping to prevent incidents from escalating and becoming difficult to manage when children are distressed. It is also minimising incidents of children going missing from home. This is now a rare occurrence however, when children have left the home staff respond quickly and work with professionals and families to return children safely.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of the risks posed to and from children. These are managed well through well considered risk management plans. The manager has close oversight of how these are adhered to. He addresses any incidents where staff have not followed plans. Areas for development are addressed through supervision and/or team meetings. This helps to reduce times where children could be at increased risk of harm.

Children have trusted adults to talk to and share their worries with. Children know their time at the home is limited so building trust can be difficult, but they do confide in staff and are able to share their concerns.

Leaders and managers have managed a number of allegations made about staff. These have been investigated, relevant professionals informed, and children provided with outcomes. Where necessary managers implement procedures to ensure that children are kept safe from harm. There has been one occasion where a staff member did not share some concerning information about staff conduct in a timely way. This did not impact on the child in this situation however all staff have the responsibility to report concerns as soon as they are raised by a child.

The staff have become more consistent with managing children's behaviour overall. They set boundaries for them and teach them healthy ways of managing their feelings. Staff have been required to hold children when they have become overwhelmed by their emotions. These interventions have been used appropriately and recorded well. Children are spoken to afterwards however they are not spoken to explicitly about the measures of intervention. This limits opportunities to speak about their feelings during times when they are at their most vulnerable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has made a very positive impact on the home. He has improved standards through hard work and a fresh approach. The manager has shown considerable commitment to the home and children. He is conscientious about seeking children's views and making changes where possible. As such, the standard of care has enhanced under his leadership.

The manager has recruited a mixed team in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. This means that children from diverse backgrounds always have someone they can relate to. There are different levels of experience in the team. The more established staff are guiding newer members. New staff have experience of working with children and have transferable skills they can bring to the role.

Staff say they are well supported and value the manager. He has begun the process of increasing cohesiveness in the team and ensuring that practice is consistent. Staff benefit from guidance provided by the in-house clinician who ensures that the team works from a trauma informed way.

Staff receive supervision and their practice is reviewed regularly. The manager praises staff for good practice and also challenges when practice does not meet children's needs. One staff member undertook a formal review of their practice. The manager did not include a specific concern in this discussion which he had addressed earlier in the year. This dilutes the process of accountability and can be confusing for staff in terms of understanding where their performance needs to be improved.

Professionals provide excellent feedback about the home. They say that children's lives are positively impacted by the care they receive and the relationships they develop. One professional said that the team is 'incredibly supportive'. Another said that staff 'genuinely care about children' and 'help them settle'. This demonstrates a high level of confidence in the care provided and the lasting progress children make in a short period of time.

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, The 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)) This specifically relates to ensuring staff fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and report concerns raised by children at the point the concerns are raised. This also relates to ensuring staff maintain professional boundaries with children at all times.	29 July 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this (regulation 7(2)(b)(iii)). ('Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This includes discussing emerging concerns in formal processes such as probation reviews. ('Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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, Suites 1 & 5, Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: Kim Bell

Registered manager: Daryl Bartholomew

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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