

2785393

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was in post when the home registered in August 2024.

There were two children living in the home when the inspection took place. Both children were provided with the opportunity to share their views. One child spoke to the inspector during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 2026

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	requires improvement to be 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: 18 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from being cared for by staff who genuinely enjoy their roles. Staff create a warm and nurturing environment where children feel valued, listened to and emotionally secure. Staff provide consistent care and meaningful engagement, which helps children to make progress socially, emotionally and educationally.

The manager's decisive action, and staff skills in de-escalating incidents, have ensured that shortfalls in how children have been helped and protected have not impacted on their overall experiences and progress at this home.

Since the last inspection, three children have moved into the home, and one child has moved out. Children's moves into and out of the home are well planned and include visits to the home. Children are involved in planning and have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. This helps to alleviate potential anxieties. A child who has recently moved into the home was happy and settled.

Children live in a home that is well maintained, warm and welcoming. Staff support children to personalise their bedrooms and decorate the house for special occasions. Staff create memory books for children with photos and messages from staff, which provide a lasting reminder of the children's time at the home. This helps to ensure that children feel a sense of belonging and feel valued in the home.

Staff are skilled at building meaningful relationships with children. Relationships are based on mutual trust and understanding. The strength of relationships has supported children to feel safe to speak openly about their experiences and describe a family feel. Professionals recognise the impact staff have on children and say children make good progress because of the care that they receive.

Staff support children to explore their interests and provide them with a range of activities that enhance their experiences of living at the home. Children have enjoyed a holiday, trips to the beach, horse riding and paddle boarding, and enjoy spending time in the home with staff baking and having movie nights. Activities support children to build resilience and provide them with a sense of enjoyment.

Staff and the manager place a high priority on education. They advocate to ensure that children have what they need. When a child's engagement with their provision reduced, staff ensured that the child's views were heard and that professionals reviewed how well the provision was meeting the child's needs. Both children currently living at the home attend education full time.

The manager and staff hold children's views at the centre of their decision-making. Children are regularly spoken to about their views of the home and staff take action in response to children's requests. This supports children to feel listened to and valued.

Children are supported to spend time with people who are important to them, and children's families are positive about the care their children receive. A child's family member said that their child had 'come on leaps and bounds' since they moved into the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children have been kept safe from serious harm and professionals say that risks are managed well. However, staff have not always followed the protocols in place to keep children safe, and this has contributed to incidents. The manager completes comprehensive evaluations after incidents that identify learning and support development of practice relating to risk. He recognises that there have been shortfalls in practice and is continually working to upskill the team and has a clear plan to address shortfalls.

Staff follow clear guidance when children's whereabouts are unknown. Staff are proactive in searching for children who are missing and incidents of children going missing from care are rare. However, on one occasion, a staff member did not dynamically assess the information a child shared with them and the child subsequently went missing from care. An opportunity was missed to explore the information that could have prevented the incident.

Staff are trained in how to de-escalate incidents and incidents are generally managed well. However, there have been occasions when staff practice has fallen below the expected standard. On one occasion, staff did not follow protocols around locking doors, which enabled a child to gain access to medication. Additionally, staff did not follow on-call guidance to search a child's room. Staff ensured that the child's health was appropriately assessed and the child did not come to harm. The manager completed a comprehensive evaluation of this incident and identified clear learning, which they shared with the wider team.

Staff receive comprehensive training to support children who experience low mood and self-harm, and they use their understanding of children to recognise when risks increase. Children's plans provide staff with clear guidance about how to respond when children are experiencing low mood. Staff regularly speak to children about their mental health and offer access to external support. However, children's plans do not always include creative or detailed strategies to minimise all risks. For example, while risks had been assessed for a child to keep an item they could use to harm themselves, there was no consideration of how the child should be supported to keep the item clean. Staff reduced the immediate risk of infection by helping the child to clean their injuries, but this gap in planning indicates an area of practice that requires improvement. The manager is aware of this shortfall and has a clear plan for how he will address it.

Complaints and allegations are rare and managed well. Children receive a written response when they raise concerns and receive an outcome. Senior leaders support investigations when there is a perceived conflict. On one occasion, staff did not immediately report a concern about practice shared with them by a child. Senior leaders were able to identify this quickly through their evaluation of the incident and took appropriate action to explore it, which included consultation with relevant external professionals.

Staff benefit from the support of a clinician who leads reflective discussions about practice and care. These sessions are individualised to children's needs and help to develop practice, providing staff with guidance on how to respond effectively to emerging risks.

Consequences are used proportionately and the manager has good oversight. Staff always speak to children about consequences and children are encouraged to share their views. The manager evaluates all consequences. However, the manager has not always ensured that the user of the measure is spoken to. The impact of this is low, as the manager evaluates consequences and takes appropriate action. The manager has a clear plan to ensure that they record speaking to staff when consequences are used.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is dedicated to staff, children and the home. He is a passionate advocate for children's views and holds their experiences at the centre of his decision-making. He knows staff, children and the home well and is reflective in his approach. He understands the strengths and areas for development for staff and the home and takes clear action that helps to ensure continuous improvement to the care that children receive.

Staff are unanimous in their praise of the manager and the home. They describe feeling well supported and say that the manager and responsible individual are approachable and know them well. A staff member said they can talk to the manager about 'anything' and that they feel '100%' supported. A staff member said, 'I love it here' and that they 'wouldn't want to work anywhere else'. Children benefit from the support of staff, who are committed and happy in their roles.

Staff turnover is low, which means children benefit from consistent care from adults who know them well. Staff share a clear vision for the home and work well together, creating a strong team culture. They describe professional challenge as a key strength, using it to secure good outcomes for children. Children benefit from the range of skills and interests in the team, which adds to their daily experiences and progress.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive range of training, including training that is individualised to children's needs. The manager has good oversight of training and ensures that staff are up to date. Good training helps to ensure that staff are continually developing in their roles.

Staff receive regular supervision and describe feeling well supported. Supervisions promote reflective discussion and clear actions help to continually improve the care that staff provide.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the home are effective. The manager identifies shortfalls in care and has clear plans to address them.

An independent visitor regularly reviews the quality of care at the home. They produce reports that the manager uses to improve practice. However, the visitor's consultation with children, their families and professionals is inconsistent. The impact is low, as the manager has systems for obtaining feedback. However, opportunities have been missed to gather these views independently. The responsible individual is already aware of this area for improvement and has a plan to address it.

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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are professionally curious when children share information relating to risk. This is particularly when children are spending time in the community and away from the direct support of staff. This also relates to the registered person ensuring that staff follow plans to reduce risks, including locking doors to prevent children having access to items that may cause them harm.	17 March 2026

This also relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are proactive in identifying and using strategies to lower risks relating to self-harm, and that strategies are reflected in children's plans.

This also relates to ensuring that staff understand how to identify allegations and report allegations without delay.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the independent visitor actively seeks the views of professionals and other relevant people involved in children's care to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny so that their use is fair. The manager should ensure that they add to the written record that they have spoken to staff who implemented the measure as part of this scrutiny. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

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: 2785393

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland North Limited

Registered provider address: Suites 1 & 5 Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: Sarah Bourne

Registered manager: Samuel Pugh

Inspector

Laura Norcop, Social Care Inspector

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