

2819761

Registered provider: Estuary Residential Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 3 children with learning difficulties. There were 2 children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2025.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 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	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 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is presented to a good standard. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made. Children's bedrooms and communal areas are personalised. The appointment of a maintenance person means that prompt action is taken when repairs are needed.

Children benefit from well-planned introductions to the home, and the manager considers their individual needs. Since the last inspection, one child has moved out and one has moved in. Staff made good use of social stories to help ease one child's anxiety of moving on. When children are new to the home, staff take time to understand their likes, dislikes and routines. This ensures that children gain confidence in new surroundings and confidently build relationships with staff.

Children's time with their family is well promoted. Staff take a flexible approach when planning family time to ensure that it enhances children's experiences. Children have access to a wide range of fun activities in the local community. These experiences are captured in photograph albums and memory books.

Children's progress in learning is positive. They attend school on a full-time basis. Staff support them to develop life skills, including toileting, hair brushing and personal care. As a result, children's confidence and self-esteem have grown.

The home has a warm and relaxed atmosphere that is filled with laughter and fun. Staff have good knowledge and skills in supporting children with complex needs effectively. Staff encourage children to try new foods, and they are currently working on a support plan to ease one child's fear of water. As a result, children are learning important life skills and making progress in their independence.

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

Staff have a clear understanding of children's vulnerabilities and the potential risks they may be exposed to. Staff understand how to report and respond to any safeguarding concerns.

Recruitment processes for new staff ensure that all necessary background checks are carried out. This means that managers can make informed decisions to ensure that only suitable adults can work in the home.

Restraint is used as a last resort, mostly to prevent children from harming themselves. Staff debriefs are used effectively to review what went well and any changes that could be made to support children. Picture exchange systems and social stories are used to explore children's feelings and explain staff's response to their behaviours.

Children do not go missing from the home due to the high staffing levels. Staff understand whistleblowing procedures and know what actions to take should a concern be raised.

Staff are suitably trained in fire awareness, and children regularly participate in fire drills. These drills are tailored for each child based on their individual evacuation plans that provide details of the support they require in the event of a fire. The child moving into the home has recently undertaken a drill with support from staff.

There are safe storage and robust procedures in place for all medications, including controlled drugs. This ensures that children have the appropriate and correct medication that they need to maintain their emotional wellbeing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager in the home. She is supported by a deputy. Both have been at the home since it was registered. They are aspirational and child focused.

The provider employs highly committed and enthusiastic staff. Staff understand the children's needs very well and recognise the importance of helping them make progress. Staff are skilled in providing nurture and reassurance in a family-style culture. This nurturing care helps children to flourish.

Staff are well supported to develop their professional practice and skills. They have regular, good-quality supervision and attend informative team meetings. There is a clear induction programme in place where new staff complete shadow shifts to learn about the children. There is a suitable annual appraisal system, which allows staff to focus on their development.

The registered manager's internal reviewing and monitoring systems are effective. The manager ensures that she has oversight of all documents and makes sure that staff have read and understood all the child's plans. The manager benefits from the external monitoring provided by the independent person and values all recommendations.

Staff receive training in line with the children's complex needs. Staff have good skills and an awareness of children's alternative methods of communication. These skills help to promote children's choices. However, the manager and staff would benefit from additional opportunities to increase their knowledge of individual's communication needs, and refresher training in learning disabilities and personal care for the newer staff.

Since the last inspection, there has been one serious incident, and leaders and managers have not notified the regulator of this in a timely way. A recommendation has been made to address this shortfall.

The requirements and recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place so that all serious events are notified within 24 hours to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand and can meet each child's needs and have a high level of understanding of their needs. This includes ensuring that all staff undertake training in communication, learning disability and personal care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)

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: 2819761

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Estuary Residential Care Limited

Registered provider address: Glass House, Alderley Park, Congleton Road, Nether Alderley, Macclesfield, Cheshire East SK10 4TG

Responsible individual: Neil Johnstone

Registered manager: Mandy Richards

Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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