

SC024089

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties and those who have mild to moderate learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since November 2023.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 December 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: 30 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2024	Full	Good
26/03/2024	Full	Good
16/08/2022	Full	Good
23/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with staff who know them well. Staff are invested in children's progress. They show pride in children's achievements and communicate this to children. These relationships allow children to build trust, have a sense of belonging and make progress that is relevant to them, such as improved emotional regulation or independence skills.

Staff support and encourage attendance and engagement in education. If children are not attending education, staff ensure that they are provided with constructive, educational activities. Managers and staff work proactively with education colleagues to overcome barriers and advocate strongly for children. Persistent support in this area was instrumental in helping one child return to school successfully after a prolonged period out of education.

Staff invest time in supporting children. They conduct skilful and sensitive one-to-one work with children, focused on the issues they need help with. This input helps children to express wishes and feelings and provides them with guidance about a range of matters, such as managing in school, peer relationships and family time.

Children's moves into and out of the home are well planned and supported. Staff and managers work with children and those who know them to ensure that they are prepared and can ask questions or share worries. As a result, children have positive experiences of moving into or out of the home.

Staff promote children's family relationships in line with their care plans and wishes. They communicate effectively with family members to support arrangements and keep parents informed. One child whose move to the home brought them closer to their family is now able to see them more often, strengthening their identity and connection.

The home is in good repair and furnished in a child-friendly manner. Children and their achievements are celebrated in communal areas if they wish. Staff help children to personalise their bedrooms and involve them in decisions about decoration and organisation of the home. This promotes children's sense of ownership of their environment.

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

There is a strong safeguarding culture. Staff and managers understand children's vulnerabilities and their safeguarding duties well. Each child has detailed, regularly updated protocols that provide guidance for staff. Educative input is provided for children to help boost their awareness of risks, such as those relating to online activity.

Staff provide children with clear guidance and boundaries. They respond with patience and empathy if children are showing behaviours of distress. They focus on de-escalation and helping children to manage difficult feelings safely. Physical interventions are rare and are subject to robust oversight and reflective follow-up with children and staff. The approach of staff has supported a significant reduction in incidents and the use of physical intervention for one child.

Children rarely go missing from home. Each child has a missing-from-care protocol, which is understood by staff. There has been one incident of a child being missing from home since the last inspection. Staff and managers were proactive in collaborating with other professionals to try and locate the child and ensure their safety. Focused work with the child following this incident supported them to reflect on and understand concerns. The child has had no further missing episodes.

The manager maintains rigorous oversight of all incidents of concern in the home and of staff practice. Concerns about staff actions are addressed promptly, with consultation with safeguarding professionals where required. Managers support staff to learn and ensure practice remains safe and beneficial for children.

Managers conduct comprehensive safer recruitment checks before staff come to work in the home. Improvements were made to these processes following the last inspection to ensure they minimise the risks of children coming into contact with unsafe adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Management arrangements are strong and stable. The registered manager has successfully completed their level 5 qualification. The registered manager is enthusiastic and committed to their role, knows the children well and holds high aspirations for them. This provides good role modelling for staff.

Staff say they feel well supported by managers. They receive regular supervision and appraisals in line with company policy and say that managers are available and responsive for ad-hoc support. There are regular team meetings and team-around-the-child meetings with clinical-input. This supports staff to consider children's needs and implement the home's model of care.

Staff are required to complete an appropriate range of mandatory training. Managers provide additional training if needed in line with the needs of children. Managers have effective oversight to ensure staff are up to date with training and are progressing with required qualifications.

There have been some changes to staffing since the last inspection. However, the core staff team has remained. Managers are actively recruiting and have made a child-focused decision not to admit a third child until the home is fully staffed. Use of

agency staff is rare. As a result, children receive consistent care from staff who know them well.

Staff understand the importance of relationships with children's professional networks. They work collaboratively with others involved in children's lives to share information and review progress. Managers challenge partner agencies constructively where they feel responses are not meeting children's needs. Social care professionals provide positive feedback about care, communication and safeguarding. One professional said, 'They are really supportive; challenge is always professional, and [child's name] is at the centre of everything.'

Managers ensure that monthly visits by an independent person take place and respond positively to recommendations made. However, the independent person often visits during school hours, which impacts on their ability to talk to children. Furthermore, the independent person does not usually talk to staff working in the home or obtain the views of children's family members. This reduces the quality of independent scrutiny they provide to the registered manager.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promotes the welfare of the children in the home's care. The registered person should work with the independent person so that they consistently see and speak to children, obtain the views of staff working in the home and, where appropriate, the views of children's relatives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC024089

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

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

Responsible individual: Lucy Knox

Registered manager: Chloe Brittain

Inspectors

Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector
Penny Ademuyiwa, His Majesty's Inspector

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