

SC387684

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in March 2009. The manager has been registered since July 2024 and is appropriately experienced and qualified.

There were three children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 6 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2024	Full	Good
28/09/2023	Full	Good
15/11/2022	Full	Good
08/02/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children live in a welcoming home that is intentionally designed to meet their needs. For example, the clocks in the home have been modified to help one child's understanding of the concept of time. A basketball hoop in the back garden is a recent addition due to another child's passion for the sport. Consultation with children led to a communal area being turned into a cozy and comfortable lounge. As a result, this is a room children use often. Leaders' and managers' commitment to making the home a tailored and adaptive space results in children feeling listened to and valued.

Staff speak positively about children and have a good understanding of each child's likes, dislikes, strengths and challenges. Staff take the time to get to know children well. All children in the home have made significant progress since moving in. One child's relationship with their family has improved. Family members told the inspector that staff 'feel like family' and that the recent change in their family dynamic has been 'miraculous'. Another child who had a limited diet now cooks most meals independently, telling staff that food should be 'nourishing'.

Staff ensure children are engaging in activities that are important to them. One child's creativity is being supported through opportunities to participate in drama, dance and music workshops. When another child expressed an interest in playing basketball, staff's research identified a suitable local team, and the child now plays every weekend. In addition, all the children travelled to Wales with staff this summer for a fun-filled holiday.

The diverse staff team are skilled in promoting children's individual identities. For children who are discovering their gender identity, staff use preferred pronouns and put Pride flags up in the home to show support. This helps children to feel 'comfortable to be who they are meant to be'. Staff also help children embrace their neurodiversity by finding positive role models for them. There is an exceptionally strong emphasis on creating an inclusive atmosphere and giving children a sense of belonging.

Staff promote children's education and learning. As a result, all children, including children who had not previously been in a school setting, are participating in education. Education professionals commented that the staff are 'a very strong team who communicate well and have a real care for the children' and that 'It would be almost impossible, I should think, to find a more devoted team of people.' Managers and staff advocate for children to ensure they are in the most appropriate education setting to best meet their needs.

Staff prioritise children's physical health and emotional well-being. Children's health appointments are up to date and several have gym memberships. An in-house clinical lead completes an initial trauma-informed assessment of children, and all children are engaging in some form of therapeutic support. Staff are competent and confident in using the underpinning therapeutic models in their care of children. The consistent

therapeutic support of staff and other dedicated professionals ensures children make significant and sustainable progress.

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

Children say that they feel safe. The home is calm, stable and provides a secure base for them. Children can identify a trusted person to talk to when they have any worries or concerns. For one child who will only speak to certain staff members, managers adapt the rota to ensure one of these preferred adults is always available. Staff have also created picture cards for this child to use to ensure they always have a way of communicating with staff, especially around safety issues.

Staff and managers understand all the known and potential risks to children. Detailed risk assessments were completed to support staff to take all three children for a summer holiday together. This trip was hugely successful. One child is interested in content creation for social media and enjoys making online videos. Staff work closely with other professionals to monitor that the videos are appropriate and speak with this child often about online safety.

Staff participate in mandatory training covering a wide range of specific safeguarding topics, including county lines, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, child criminal exploitation, online safeguarding and trauma-informed practice. There are monthly reflective group sessions with the clinical lead to discuss each child's progress and potential risks. This supports staff to adjust their way of working to keep children safe.

Serious incidents in the home are rare. When incidents such as children going missing from the care of staff or allegations occur, these are well managed by leaders. They work closely with other professionals and follow all safeguarding procedures. Staff recently participated in training about the Philomena Protocol to ensure they remain up to date with relevant legislation and processes regarding concerns relating to children being missing from their care.

Leaders and managers ensure that safer recruitment policies are robust. Leaders and managers have focused on recruiting an experienced staff team, who are committed to working with children. This means that agency staff are not used and there is a stable staff team that provides consistency of care for children. Children benefit greatly from knowing the staff who care for them well.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager was registered since the last inspection. They bring creative ideas to the home in order to implement a strong therapeutic environment for children. The registered manager is an experienced and committed leader, who strives to make a positive difference to children's lives and will often advocate on children's behalf.

The registered manager has created an ethos in the home that is child centred with a clear focus on meeting the needs of children. As a result, staff take pride in children's achievements and enjoy being positive role models for them.

Staff morale is high. Staff spoke positively about the support they receive from managers and describe a strong culture of team working. One staff member stated that the registered manager 'is very supportive and approachable' and that they 'can't imagine working anywhere else'.

New staff receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing training to strengthen their knowledge and skills. Staff receive regular and effective supervision, which considers and prioritises children's needs, as well as their own personal development. Staff's annual appraisals are strengthened by including the views of children, colleagues and professionals.

Professionals involved in children's lives gave extremely positive feedback about the support children receive. This joined-up approach ensures that children's needs are paramount. Monthly update reports are detailed and shared with social workers. This adds to the excellent communication around children's needs and development.

No requirements or recommendations were raised at this inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: SC387684

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: Liam Healey

Inspectors

Julie Cresswell, social care inspector

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