

SC425418

Registered provider: Esland South Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group of privately owned homes run by an independent provider. It offers care for up to four children with complex needs who require specialist support.

There has been no registered manager since May 2025.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 November 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
30/10/2023	Full	Good
08/11/2022	Full	Good
06/10/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were three children living at the home at the time of this inspection. No children have moved in or out of the home since the last inspection. Three children spoke to the inspector.

Children engage in activities they enjoy and speak positively about these activities. The home has a warm, homely feel, with pictures of children and staff around the home. This has helped children who have experienced significant trauma and abrupt endings to previous placements regain a sense of childhood. One child said, 'I have been to lots of care homes. This does not feel like a care home, it feels like my home.'

Children receive individualised care. They have a say in how their bedrooms are designed and decorated. Children have input in the food menus and at times help staff to prepare meals or cook for themselves.

Positive, warm and nurturing interactions were observed between the children and staff, with lots of laughter and staff being responsive to the individual needs of the children. The children are very comfortable in the company of the staff and have built trusting relationships with them.

The children's guide is child-friendly and gives children a sense of what it is like living at the home. The guide also contains information to help children understand who to speak to if they are worried or if they need support outside of the home.

Staff promote and support children to develop age-appropriate independence skills. Children and parents speak proudly and positively about the progress they have made with their independence skills. Positive relationships with the staff have contributed to the progress that the children have made.

Children are supported to attend education provisions that are tailored to their individual needs. Staff understand the importance of education and encourage children to persevere with their education even when they do not want to attend. One child has very good attendance and goes to college every day.

Staff work hard to ensure that when children see their families, this time is meaningful. This helps children maintain links with those who are important to them. One child was supported to re-establish links with their sibling and parents and increase the amount of time they spent with family.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the children and their vulnerabilities. Staff are sensitive in how they approach and support children to identify and understand these.

Professionals and parents are positive about the safeguarding practice at the home. They said they had no concerns with how their children are cared for and safeguarded. Children say they feel safe living at the home and identified staff they would talk to if they were worried or concerned. Staff have completed the organisation's mandatory safeguarding training and understand how to escalate safeguarding concerns.

The children are protected by the organisation's safe recruitment practices. Staff are assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These procedures promote the safety of the children by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

There have been incidents of children going missing from the home. When children go missing from the home, staff are quick to respond. Partnership work with the police is effective, and staff actively ensure that the children return home as soon as possible.

Physical interventions and allegations against staff are rare. However, when they do occur, they are managed effectively. Children are spoken to following physical interventions. However, on one occasion, staff did not conclude a discussion with a child. This could leave children feeling unheard.

Staff carry out monthly fire drills. However, some staff have not been involved in fire drills despite regularly working at the home. This could have an impact on staff understanding the fire procedures and actions to take in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A new permanent manager was appointed in May 2025. The manager has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager was away from the home from 31 July to 22 September. During this period, there was reduced oversight of the home. Children also felt that the manager was not available to them at this time and raised a concern. This was appropriately investigated. The manager was present during the inspection, supported by the responsible individual and deputy manager.

Staff have not always received one-to-one reflective supervision. Some supervision records are poor. One staff member said, 'Sometimes supervision feels like a tick-box exercise.' Furthermore, when staff receive their annual appraisals, these are not always reflective of their performance. This limits the opportunities to reflect on practice and formally discuss and assess their development.

The independent visitor carries out their monthly visits to the home. However, on most occasions, they do not seek feedback from parents and external professionals. In addition to this, when leaders and managers carry out their review of the quality of care, they do not ascertain the views and feedback from parents and external professionals. This means opportunities are missed to support the development of the home.

Feedback from professionals highlighted shortfalls in communication and consistency among the staff. One professional said, 'There appears to be a divide between staff and

management.' In addition, when asked what they would change about the home, a staff member said 'the uncertainty of who I will be working with on each shift'.

There have been challenges in maintaining a stable staff team. Staff from other homes regularly work at this home. They do not attend team meetings. The frequent changes affect the staff working together as a team. This is having an impact on the children. When asked if they would change anything about the home, one child said, 'I would have a core staff team.' Consistency within the staff team is important to help children feel safe and to have predictable routines.

Leaders and managers have developed good relationships with parents and families. Feedback from parents was positive. One parent said, 'The staff are all lovely. I am over the moon with how things are going.' Another parent said, '[Name of child] has come on leaps and bounds. They would not be where they are today without the support from the home.'

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(e))	29 December 2025
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)) In particular, ensure that they help the independent person to obtain feedback where applicable from relevant stakeholders and that they also obtain stakeholder feedback when carrying out their quality-of-care review.	29 December 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	29 December 2025

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity to 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. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than five days after the incident of restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. In particular, the registered person should ensure that, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC425418

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: Samantha Mitchamson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anver Rose, Social Care Inspector

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