SC478986

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 large national provider. It provides care for up to 5 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children were living at the home. One child was spoken to by inspectors and 2 children were observed as part of the inspection.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and was present throughout the inspection.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 June 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	**good**
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/07/2025	Full	Good
20/08/2024	Full	Good
09/05/2023	Full	Good
05/04/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

The manager and staff have built positive relationships with children, who have lived in the home for a long time. Staff know children well and want them to achieve. The manager aspires for children and works hard to support them in a therapeutic way. Professionals and family members speak highly of the care offered to children. The home conditions lack warmth and personalisation to children. One child shared very positive feedback about how they are looked after by staff. Children are receiving good care in this home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff know children well and have built trusting relationships with them. Staff support children to build friendships with peers through promoting their similar interests. Staff have good relationships with people connected to children and have supported children to have more family time. Professionals and key people in children's lives give consistently good feedback about the care staff offer children and feel children have made progress. As a result of this, children are supported by a well-connected network. One child described staff as being like family members. One child can find it difficult to accept nurturing care that staff offer. However, staff have tried hard to support the child to engage.

The manager and staff place emphasis on education for children. One child has made good progress in education since they moved into the home and now attends school daily. The manager ensures that this is regularly reviewed to support this increase in line with the child's needs. Staff support children to sit their exams. For one child who has disengaged with education, staff have helped them to undertake exams in the home. This creative practice means children can gain qualifications in ways that meet their individual needs.

Staff understand the importance of children receiving good care related to their health. Staff undertake creative key-work sessions to help children understand the importance of self-care and good hygiene. This has helped some children to improve their self-care. However, for one child, staff have been unable to support them to consistently have good hygiene.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of the issues that impact on children, including specific risks affecting them. Staff have the time to discuss this in frequent team around the child meetings that are therapeutically led. These meetings focus on the individual needs of children, which are aligned with care plans and key-work sessions. The result of this is a thoughtful and child-focused approach from staff.

For one child, life-story work has been completed, which supports them in understanding their identity. Staff offer children opportunities to talk about their wishes and feelings in different ways, including individual trips out of the home with key staff and during house meetings. However, staff do not always record the steps they take to action requests from children following these meetings.

The home is a large building and there are several areas that require attention to improve the homely feel. Children's bedrooms lack personality and do not reflect children's individuality. The home is bare in some areas following incidents, and numerous rooms have items that are no longer useable. Staff have not taken prompt action to address maintenance issues in a child's bathroom, despite the child requesting this.

Staff find it difficult to support one child with maintaining their bedroom cleanliness consistently. The child does not allow external professionals into their room and staff do not undertake regular work with the child to support their understanding of the potential need for this. Staff do not record specific information related to room checks for one child, despite this being part of the care plan for the child.

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

Staff have good relationships with children. There have been no incidents of children going missing from care. Staff understand missing-from-care protocols and there are documents in place to support staff and multi-agency professionals should a child go missing from the home.

When staff must hold children for their safety, it is managed in accordance with plans for the children. Staff speak to children afterwards and offer them support. The manager has good oversight of the use of physical intervention, including facilitating reflective discussions with staff.

Children take regular medication, which staff manage well. Staff keep clear medication records and audits are undertaken regularly. Staff refer to health professionals for the use of non-prescribed medication for children. Staff receive appropriate training and keep up-to-date records. When there have been errors, leaders have taken action to address these and lessons have been learned, which has improved practice.

When children have made allegations, leaders respond promptly and appropriately. This includes referrals to external safeguarding agencies and children's social care. Children's views are sought and measures are put in place to ensure children's immediate safety. The recording of outcomes of allegations is not always clear on children's records.

Children know how to make a complaint. When children raise issues, the manager responds appropriately in line with the policy of the home. Children are informed of the outcome of their complaint. However, follow-up work with other children has not always taken place.

Staff undertake regular fire drills to ensure the safety of children. One child does not wish to take part in fire drills. A support plan is in place that helps staff to know what to do in this event. However, the plan does not include what action staff should take if there was to be a fire and how they would safely support the child to evacuate the home.

The manager and staff support specific needs for a child in a multi-agency way. However, plans do not include the initial decisions made to address risks. When concerns have arisen, staff undertake room searches in line with the children's care plans. Behaviour support plans for children are regularly reviewed by the manager to consider how the needs of children have changed. This practice helps the manager and staff reflect on whether children are making progress. Children have vulnerabilities that staff know how to respond to. However, behaviour support plans are not always clear on expected practice from staff and do not always reflect specific risks for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager cares about the children deeply. Her approach is warm and therapeutically informed. This approach has informed a culture where all staff speak highly of the children in their care. As a result, children feel able to talk to staff about their wishes and feelings and have conversations that are sensitive. A deputy manager has recently been appointed. The manager and deputy work well together, and this has improved leaders' ability to monitor and have good oversight of the home.

The responsible individual is knowledgeable about the children and understands the challenges children face. The responsible individual provides regular support to the registered manager, which has helped the manager to develop her skills.

There have been several changes in the staff team since the last inspection. Staff speak highly of the support they receive from leaders, including the availability of the manager. Staff have their performance appraised at regular intervals, which supports their development.

Staff are offered supervision in line with the statement of purpose. Recently, there have been some gaps in supervision related to staff sickness. The manager has plans to improve this. Managers recognise the benefits of facilitating single-subject supervisions with staff. These supervisions focus not only on staff development needs but also on positive practice. As a result, staff feel well supported by managers.

Staff have regular training, including specific training related to the needs of children. Most staff have gained their required qualification to work in the home. However, one member of staff has not completed their qualification within the regulatory timescales and has made limited progress. Leaders have a plan to address this shortfall.

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

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(iv)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's bedrooms are personalised to them and that the home is in good condition. Staff should record action taken to support children to maintain their bedrooms and their personal items in line with plans for children.	27 August 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. In particular, fire evacuation procedures for children with specific needs should be clear about what staff should do in the event of a fire. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC478986

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: Emma Wright

Registered manager: Sarah Whitemore

Inspectors

Lorna Walker, Social Care Inspector
Dan Griffin, Social Care inspector

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