

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27 April 2016
Unique reference number	1214270
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Esland Group Ltd
Registered person address	Suite 1–5 Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0RN

Responsible individual	Linzi Simm
Registered manager	Laura Mumford
Inspector	Jo Hornby

Inspection date	27 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The young person lives in a warm, nurturing environment where he receives good care and support. Staff value him and have created a friendly atmosphere, enabling him to make positive relationships with his staff.
- Well-planned and thoughtful admissions assist staff to build trusted and secure relationships with the young person. Consistent care has resulted in stability and security, which is helping him to develop positive relationships with other people and increased self-confidence.
- Staff give the young person's safety high priority. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the young person's risks and vulnerabilities to ensure that the right action is taken to keep him safe from harm.
- Staff provide opportunities for regular one-to-one discussion with the young person, to gain his views on the care he needs and about his life. These formal discussions lack planning, evaluation and the views of the young person.
- The home has strong links with external agencies, such as safeguarding, health and probation. This multi-agency approach has resulted in improvements in the young person's emotional and physical health in a relatively short time.
- Managers need to take a firm and robust approach in escalating concerns with other agencies in relation to shortfalls in young people's care plans, such as further education and pathway planning.
- The home is well managed by a dedicated registered manager, who is supported by an experienced deputy manager. The management team is child-focused and provides good leadership to a small, consistent staff team.
- Staff employed at the home are subject to full organisational vetting procedures, and do not start work in the home until all appropriate checks are complete. This ensures that young people are protected from persons who may present a risk to them.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Where the placing authority does not provide the services needed to meet a child's needs in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, 2.8).
- Local authorities have a duty under section 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, which includes, as set out in guidance, seeking a school or other education setting that is best suited to the child's needs ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, 5.5).
- Ensure that key-work sessions are used in a way to listen to, involve and respond to young people, to help them understand matters relating to their care ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, 4.10).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is a privately run children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for one young person with behavioural/emotional difficulties and/or learning difficulties.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>This is the home's first inspection since it was registered on 18 December 2015. The young person is clearly comfortable in his home, where he has the opportunity to spend time alone or with staff. The home environment is warm and welcoming, and is personalised with photographs of him. A well-planned and thoughtful admission ensured that he was familiar with his staff. It gave him a good understanding of what to expect and how staff would care for him. This proactive and helpful approach meant that the young person was able to settle quickly into his new home, affording him a sense of belonging and security.</p> <p>Staff provide clear, consistent boundaries and routine. They invest their time with him, taking an interest in his experiences, listening to his views and supporting him in situations which cause him anxiety. The young person is supported to contribute to his own placement plans and his weekly activities. This process is effective in helping him to gain a good understanding of his specific needs, and how he can achieve his individual targets and goals.</p> <p>Formal key-work sessions provide opportunities to discuss areas of intervention, such as keeping safe and healthy living. Records of these sessions lack the young person's views and comments. These would assist staff to evaluate his understanding of what has been discussed, and assist both staff and the young person in planning future sessions.</p> <p>The managers and staff value young people's education and have a good understanding of barriers to learning, and how their past experiences can cause difficulties within a school setting. Along with the young person they have explored his preferences and interests, supporting him to visit the local college so that he</p>	

can plan for future jobs. They provide routine, with daily activities to help the young person to learn skills to prepare for the transition to adulthood by teaching him how to budget, cook and do his own laundry, for example. The lack of formal education provision and the absence of a formal agreed pathway plan have been identified by managers and discussed with the relevant professionals on a number of occasions. The home's manager needs to take a robust stance and to escalate these shortfalls to a higher level.

Staff encourage and support the young person to stay healthy. He is registered with healthcare professionals and, since arriving at the home, has attended appointments to promote his general health. These measures ensure that his physical, mental and psychological needs are met. A member of staff said, 'X had never been to the dentist or had his eyes tested. Since being here, we have helped and encouraged him to understand the importance of looking after himself. He's been to the dentist and optician recently, which is a massive development.'

Staff support the young person to engage in a variety of activities in the community. They know his likes and dislikes, and strive to identify a range of activities which are based on his hobbies and interests, such as bike riding. Staff have sourced a local youth centre which will help the young person to make positive relationships with young people who have similar interests and beliefs. These opportunities and experiences help to build self-confidence and self-esteem. A member of staff said, 'X is involved in planning his weekly activities and he really enjoys the outdoor adventures like biking. This gives him a sense of achievement and the drive to try more experiences.'

Staff have helped to build the young person's self-confidence and self-esteem. They understand the obstacles to engaging with and trusting professionals. With patience, encouragement and an understanding of past experiences, they have assisted the young person to manage these fears and anxieties in a relatively short period of time. This has resulted in the young person participating in his review meetings and engaging with probation. This means that he is able to give his views and opinions, and to be a vocal part of the discussions when planning his future. A member of staff said, 'Even though I've not been here long, I can see from his records how he has made really good progress in a short space of time. He is now engaging more with his social worker, independent reviewing officer, probation and youth offending worker. He stayed in his looked after children's review for the full meeting yesterday, which is amazing, for him.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>The young person came to the home with high levels of risk-taking behaviour, such as going missing. These behaviours have recently been reduced, because staff help him to understand the importance of making the right choices. Staff work collaboratively with specialist agencies, such as the youth offending team and police, to ensure that he has the right level of guidance and support. This has resulted in the young person being able to manage free time more safely and to develop appropriate friendships. An independent reviewing officer said, 'X now has more free time because he's not going missing as much. Staff are helping him to understand the risks, and this is good progress for X.'</p> <p>Crisis prevention and management plans are individual, and highlight young people's known risk-taking behaviour. Behaviour management strategies are clear and well thought-out. For example, young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation are afforded high levels of supervision at the start of their placement. Staff appropriately challenge young people and stop them leaving if they feel that they are at serious risk if they are allowed to leave the home. Young people are aware of this and are clear about what they need to do to establish trust and build up their free time. This is because staff talk to them about their behaviour and keeping themselves safe. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in how young people are making better choices about keeping themselves safe, and have increased the amount of time they spend away from staff.</p> <p>Managers and staff have a good insight into the young person's particular emotional needs. They understand how his frustrations and anxieties may impact on these. They work sensitively with him to ensure that he has sufficient opportunity to talk about issues which may worry him. Staff anticipate situations which have the potential to cause a change in behaviour, developing plans with the young person to help to manage these more successfully. Consequently, he is learning what safe and acceptable behaviour is, and is making better choices to this effect. As a result, the use of physical restraint has not been necessary.</p> <p>Staff take a collaborative approach to keeping the young person safe. Managers and staff work closely with external safeguarding agencies and professionals to ensure that young people are safeguarded. Good information relating to young people's risks is shared to promote a multi-agency approach to helping young people to manage their behaviour, risks and vulnerabilities. A staff member said, 'we have good relationships with placing authorities and police, and he can see</p>	

that we are all working together to keep him safe.’

Staff have constructed a location risk assessment. This is based on information from a range of agencies. Amongst other things, this has been a good opportunity to give the young person and staff first-hand knowledge of their local community, including about those associated with child sexual exploitation. Consequently, staff are better informed to help young people manage their risks and vulnerabilities, and young people can make informed choices about keeping themselves safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The home is run by a dedicated, experienced manager who holds a social work degree. She is on target to complete the required management qualification within the timescales set out in the Children’s Homes Regulations 2015. She manages another of the organisation’s homes and is supported by an experienced deputy manager. The manager is child-focused, and is highly thought of by her staff and the young person who lives in the home. She maintains a good level of management oversight, ensuring that the home is consistently run in the best interests of the young person. The deputy manager said of the registered manager, ‘Laura is a dedicated manager who is driven. She is child-focused and supportive of all the staff. She has made a really good impression on me.’</p> <p>The registered manager has a good knowledge of the young person and is able to identify the progress he has made since admission. She clearly has a positive relationship with him, which provides her with good opportunities to obtain the young person’s views about various things, to find out how they are doing, and to offer appropriate advice and support. The young person was observed seeking the manager’s views and advice on various matters throughout the inspection, because he values her opinions and trusts her. A social worker said, ‘The manager has a good grasp of the young person and he has made a good relationship with her.’</p> <p>The home is well staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the young person. The staff team is suitably qualified and competent in the delivery of good-quality care and support for the young person and his family. Staff who are not in their probationary period are either appropriately qualified or working towards the required qualifications within the timescales. Staff have a good relationship with the manager, and receive regular supervision and appraisal. Mandatory training is</p>	

up-to-date, and staff have completed online training on radicalisation. This assists them to identify and understand the associated risks, and to take appropriate action to ensure that young people have support that they need.

The home is consistently managed and is effective in meeting the aims and objectives outlined in its statement of purpose. Child-focused practice is embedded in the home's ethos and has resulted in the young person making good progress. A social worker said, 'X has very complex needs. Over the last six weeks things have turned around, and he is engaging with us more and has a good relationship with the staff.'

The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths. Admission planning is good, and ensures that the young person has consistency and stability. The manager works hard to address any shortfalls. For example, she has identified that the young person's education and pathway plans need to be determined. Together with the responsible individual, she has decided to escalate this. This focus on improvement will ensure that the young person receives a consistently good level of care.

Staff employed at the home are subject to full organisational vetting procedures, and do not start work in the home until all appropriate safeguarding checks are complete. This ensures that young people are protected from persons who may present a risk to them.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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