

1266838

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company.

The home provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The post for a registered manager is vacant. A new manager is in day-to-day charge of the home.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 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: 22 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2024	Full	Good
20/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One child has lived in the home since the last inspection and is making progress. One other child recently moved into the home and is settling in well and building good relationships with the staff team.

Another child moved in and on from the home in quick succession. This was due to the staff team being unable to meet their complex needs that were not known to the staff team or placing authority prior to the child moving in. The previous manager did not consult with the child's wider network to gain additional information in preparation for the child moving in. This means the child received an unplanned ending and a subsequent move to another home.

The manager and staff understand the barriers to education for children. They work with the child, placing authorities and virtual schools to address the barriers and look at more suitable options for education that meets the children's individual needs. Staff provide opportunities for informal learning, such as developing life skills and staying healthy. This supports the children to work towards their aspirations and future goals.

Children's health and emotional health and wellbeing needs are understood and met by the staff team. Children are registered at local health services and attend routine health appointments. The staff regularly support the children to attend specialist health appointments. This ensures that the children receive the correct support and guidance in a timely manner.

Staff understand children's backgrounds, family dynamics and friendship groups. The new manager has adopted new ways of working around a child remaining in touch with a previous child who lived in the home. This has supported the child's views, wishes and feelings, coupled with ensuring that the friendship is appropriately monitored. Staff build a rapport with the children's family and friends to support them to see each other and stay connected. This supports the children with their sense of identity and belonging.

Staff ensure that they create and capture memories for the children. Staff and children take part in activities together, such as going on mini breaks to London, trampolining, shopping, celebrate birthdays and attend concerts. Photographs capture the shared times together so that the children can look back at their time living in the home.

The home is decorated to a good standard and provides a conformable space for the children to live in. The children choose their own bedrooms and personalise them to their own taste.

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

Staff understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities and know what action to take to safeguard the children. Risk management and care plans provide the staff with guidance on how to reduce and minimise risks and how to support the children to meet their needs. However, one child's risk assessment did not show clear risk reduction measures and strategies to be used by the staff in relation to substance misuse. This means that any new staff joining the team may not be clear on what action to take if the risk is presented.

Staff receive training in safeguarding, child protection, illegal substances and alcohol, eating disorders and attachment to support the children in their care. The number of safeguarding incidents has declined since the last inspection and allegations are rare and well-managed. The manager takes appropriate action and communicates effectively with other professionals to ensure that the children remain safe living in the home. However, on one occasion the regulator was not notified of a serious incident in a timely manner.

On occasions staff have had to hold children to keep them and others safe. The previous manager has reviewed staff action, and the holds used and deemed them proportionate and necessary to keep the child safe. However, on one occasion the recording for one hold was not recorded fully and the responsible individual did not review a hold the previous manager was involved in. Also, staff who have used consequences for the children, although fair and proportionate are not spoken to by the manager. This means there is a missed opportunity to effectively evaluate staff practice, and the effectiveness of the intervention used.

Complaints received have effectively been investigated by the leadership and management team and sufficient outcomes gained. Any shortfalls identified in staff practice have adequately been addressed. This ensures that staff remain safe to work with the children.

On occasions when children have been missing from home. Staff are proactive and look for the child and work with the police and family members to locate the child and return them home safely. Children have a return to care interview and staff talk to them about why they went missing and how they can be supported in the future to return home.

One child shared that they felt happy and safe living in the home, they said, 'I really love living here, I have someone to talk to if I have any worries. I feel really safe here. If I am ever sad the staff team are brilliant and always there for me to speak to and I always settle right down.'

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

A new management structure has recently been embedded in the home. The new manager has worked for the organisation for several years prior to becoming the manager and is the registered manager for a sister home in the organisation. She has a relevant childcare qualification and is working towards the management qualification.

The manager has good day-to-day oversight of the home, staff, and children. She is visible in the home and is supported by a qualified deputy manager. The management team speak highly of the children and share aspirations for their future.

Staff are responding well to the new management structure. One member of staff said, 'The house is beautiful, the staff and management are wholly child centred and hold child protection and safeguarding of children of the utmost importance.' Another member of staff said, 'We have recently had a change in management which has been very productive to both how the house is ran and the care and safeguarding of the children.'

New staff receive a thorough induction that provides them with a detailed programme of training and guidance for their new role. Staff who have worked in the home for a long period of time have recently refreshed their knowledge and understanding and identified gaps in their learning. This supports staff to develop their practice and leads to consistency in care and support for the children.

Staff receive regular supervision and training, attend team meetings, and have had or are planned to have an annual review of their practice through an appraisal. This allows the manager and staff to reflect on their practice to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the children.

Monitoring and reviewing systems are being streamlined and strengthened by the new manager to ensure that relevant information is captured to inform the quality-of-care review. Leaders or managers have not submitted the last quality of care report to Ofsted. This does not allow the regulator to scrutinise the children's progress and quality of care in a timely manner.

The shortfalls identified on the inspection relate to the previous management of the home. The recommendations raised at the last inspection are met.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. Specifically, the registered person must ensure that adequate risk reduction measures and strategies to be used by the staff in relation to substance misuse are clearly documented in the child's risk management plans. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	25 May 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;	25 May 2025

the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must—	25 May 2025

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed and;

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. Specifically, the manager should speak with the existing group of children's social workers and seek information from professionals and family members of the referred child where appropriate to do so. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people and the regulator. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

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: 1266838

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Registered provider address: Unit E, Baron Way, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle
CA6 4SJ

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector
Jon Dutton, Social Care Inspector

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