

1266838

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to three children. At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home.

The registered manager post has been vacant since December 2020. A manager was appointed in March 2021. However, at the time of the visit, they had not yet submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 August 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2022	Full	Good
11/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2019	Full	Good
08/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are not yet receiving consistently good care that addresses all of their needs. Children's care plans are individualised and child-centred, but they do not provide information about some of the children's needs or clear guidance for staff. This does not help all staff to understand how to care for children safely and effectively.

Ineffective transition planning for one child moving in to the home caused significant disruption for another child. The manager and staff could not manage the child's behaviours. They did not put in place effective strategies to keep both children safe. Consequently, the child had to move out of the home suddenly and in extremely difficult circumstances. This caused further distress and was not a positive outcome for either child.

Although staff place a high importance on education and demonstrate high aspirations for children, not all children have made enough progress academically. Staff do not maintain detailed records about how they support children to engage in or make progress in their education.

The consistent and committed staff team know the child well. The child told inspectors that the staff are kind and provide care, support and guidance. This nurturing approach used by staff is not always reflected in the child's records. Staff have used stigmatizing and unhelpful language, which does not show a good understanding of the child's individual needs or how staff are helping them.

This is a large home with spacious en-suite bedrooms for children. The child was proud to show inspectors their new room, that was personalised with memorabilia of their favourite sports team. However, repairs, including to damaged walls, had not been undertaken in this bedroom before the child moved in. Other children's bedrooms also need repairs and maintenance.

The home is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness, but improvements are required to ensure that it is a homely and welcoming environment and does not appear institutionalised. Staff made some immediate improvements during the inspection, such as removing signage and locks on internal doors, but further action is needed to address standards of decoration throughout the home.

Staff support children to see their families. This has helped some children to re-establish spending time with some family members. One child talked positively about the time they spend with their family and the fun activities they have enjoyed together.

Staff promote children's activities and hobbies. They helped one child to explore their future ambition by arranging a placement at a local fire station. This experience gave the child an insight into the profession. The child was presented with various certificates of achievement that are proudly displayed in the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Individualised risk management plans are in place for each child. However, the quality of these is variable. Risks are not always clearly identified. Management strategies are not always clear or followed consistently by staff.

Staff take action when children are missing. However, staff do not have sufficiently clear plans to reduce risks. This means that some staff may not be aware of all of the risks to children who are missing. The manager's oversight of missing incidents is not robust. The manager has not challenged inconsistent staff practice or ensured that children's plans are updated to reflect changes in risk.

Professionals spoken to said that information-sharing, specifically in relation to significant events, could be better. One professional highlighted a concern that staff had not acted in line with the local authority plan for the child's care. The child has not been supervised appropriately on two known occasions. On one occasion, the child was able to engage in unsafe and criminal behaviour in the community. This has led to significant consequences for the child, which could have a detrimental effect on their future.

All staff are trained in positive behaviour support. However, they have struggled to de-escalate some challenging situations. Staff have used physical intervention to safeguard a child once since the last inspection. The restraint record lacks clarity about the incident, and management oversight is poor. The manager did not challenge staff who failed to support the child in line with their individual plan. Furthermore, the manager did not explore how the child was injured during this incident or take effective action in response to an allegation that was made.

There are some good examples of multi-agency working to support children. However, staff do not help children to understand acceptable behaviour consistently. Incidents of children using discriminatory language and engaging in bullying behaviour are not challenged appropriately. This lack of support does not help children to understand or improve their behaviour.

Staff use sanctions to help children to understand the impact of their behaviours. The use of sanctions is inconsistent. They are not recorded well, and their effectiveness is not explored. This means that sanctions are not yet meaningful or restorative in nature.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager has still not submitted an application to register, despite being in post before the last inspection.

During this visit, inspectors identified significant and widespread failings in the leadership and management of the home. Shortfalls identified at the previous inspection have not been addressed. Leaders and the manager have failed to make improvements, or adequate progress, since the last inspection.

Leaders and the manager have failed to effectively monitor the care provided. Inconsistent staff practices and poor management oversight compromise the quality of care provided to children. This has limited the progress and experiences of some children.

Staff can access online training. Some staff reflected on how this had supported their practice. However, the manager has poor oversight of the training completed to ensure that all staff have undertaken the training. Some staff do not have the skills to safely support children, particularly regarding self-injurious behaviours and substance misuse.

Staff said that the manager is supportive and approachable, and that they have access to supervision. However, supervision does not follow the company's policies, and records are poor. Therefore, leaders could not evidence effective supervision that supports the development of good practice.

The manager has not notified Ofsted about a number of significant incidents that have taken place in the home. This does not support effective monitoring and compromises children's welfare and safety.

The responsible individual was not aware of some incidents that had taken place in the home. Poor record-keeping and ineffective oversight do not demonstrate that leaders and the manager help staff to reflect on and improve their safeguarding practice.

Some records, such as staff rosters and the children's register, were not accurate. The statement of purpose and the review of the quality of care have not been updated and shared with Ofsted. This does not demonstrate effective record-keeping, or that the manager understands the relevant regulatory framework.

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, 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;	29 September 2022

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; and understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(v)(vii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff understand children's emotional and behavioural needs and implement effective and consistent behaviour management strategies to support children. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that staff understand the impact of bullying on children and know how to help children who are displaying this behaviour.	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's risk assessments clearly identify all risks for children and	29 September 2022

provide staff with clear guidance about how to mitigate these risks. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that staff actions are consistent and effective.	
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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that they are effectively monitoring the quality of care provided in the home. Further to this, the registered manager must demonstrate robust monitoring of significant events so that shortfalls in staff practice can be addressed. The registered person must ensure that staff have the necessary skills and training to meet the needs of children living in the home. This includes, self-harm, ligature and substance misuse training.	29 September 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	29 September 2022

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that admission processes are sufficiently robust and plans are in place to manage the impact of children moving in to the home. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that the needs of all children are considered during the admission process. The registered person must ensure that children's relevant plans are followed so that children receive effectively planned and individualised care.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1) (3)(a)(b))	29 September 2022
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected;	29 September 2022

children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 16 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the doors to communal areas, such as the lounge and kitchen, are not locked routinely or as part of a behaviour management strategy.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that out-of-date medication is discarded appropriately. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that it is clearly recorded for whom the medication is intended.	29 September 2022
If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that the appointed manager submits an application to register with Ofsted within the expected timescale.	29 September 2022
The registered person must ensure that—	29 September 2022

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;

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))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that records of restraint contain the details required by regulation. Further to this, when there are multiple restraints within one incident, the registered person must ensure that the required detail is recorded in relation to all of the restraints.

The registered person must ensure that records of sanctions contain the required level of detail and that these are reviewed for effectiveness.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff rosters contain the required detail. Further to this, the registered person must ensure that the register of children is kept up to date with the required information.	29 September 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))	29 September 2022
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. 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—	29 September 2022

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. (Regulation 45 (1) (3) (4)(a))	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information about children in an objective and non-stigmatising way. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. (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: 1266838

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

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

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Emma Thornton, Social Care Inspector
Michelle Edge, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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