

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 owned by a private company. It provides care for up to three children and young people who have social and emotional difficulties. The manager has been in post since May 2018 and registered with Ofsted in September 2018.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 July 2019

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

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/04/2018	Full	Inadequate

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
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child– imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation. (Regulation 19(1), (2)(f)) This refers specifically to making sure that there is a clear reparation agreement that the child understands, that the repayment total is not excessive, that instalment payments are documented and that the progress of the reparation is shared with the child.	07/10/2019
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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(vii)) This refers specifically to when sanctions are imposed.	07/10/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people are very happy and settled in this home. Staff are friendly and create a very homely, warm and welcoming environment. Because of this, children and young people are relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings and achieve a strong sense of belonging in this home.

Children and young people experience stability in this home and receive the support that they require from staff to make good progress from their starting points. With staff commitment, such progress has included regular attendance and good achievements at school for one, and gaining and sustaining employment for another. Children and young people's learning is well supported by staff. This means that their confidence and self-esteem improve and, ultimately, their independence is promoted.

Staff are very child-focused and ensure that children and young people are included in their planning and review arrangements. This helps children and young people to feel valued, to identify their achievements and to appreciate the continuous progress that they are making.

Staff communicate regularly with parents and professionals to ensure that they are kept up to date with progress. One social worker commented: 'Communication by staff is fantastic. He has a great relationship with his key workers. Since he's been here, his behaviour has improved. I believe this is testament to the settled environment and that he loves them.'

Children and young people say that staff listen to them and make sure that their views are heard. Staff are proactive in seeking children and young people's views and wishes and making sure that these are considered and responded to. An independent advocate commented: 'Staff are creative in their thinking, and their contact with me came from the young person's frustration at not feeling listened to. They were supportive, and they put him at the centre of what they do. They understand his needs and were eager to promote his best interest.'

Children and young people are healthy. Staff encourage them to be active and eat a healthy, nutritional diet. The home's location enables children and young people to have easy access to plenty of indoor and outdoor activities and leisure pursuits to help them to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Staff also encourage children and young people to attend after-school clubs to ensure that they have additional opportunities to have fun and socialise with friends. Children and young people are happy that they can invite their friends to their home and that staff will welcome them and treat them like good parents would. This makes children and young people feel comfortable and reduces the stigma that some can feel about being in care.

Parents and professionals spoken to were complimentary about the home and the positive care and support that children and young people receive. One parent said: 'He is comfortable, and I know he feels safe there. Staff have got him on the right path. I'm very happy with the care he receives. They keep me up to date and are very patient with him. He is a different child now.'

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

Children and young people say that they feel happy and safe at this home. They are in no doubt that staff care about them and aim to keep them safe from harm.

Children and young people's risk-taking behaviours and triggers are clearly described in their individual risk assessments. These documents provide staff with good strategies and guidance that are known to help in reducing children and young people's personal risks and vulnerabilities. For example, successful use of such strategies has seen a decline in aggressive behaviours, the misuse of illegal substances and self-harming behaviours.

Children and young people understand and respect the home's rules and boundaries. The good and positive relationships that they share with staff contribute significantly to promoting this. Children and young people feel that staff treat them fairly and, because they care for them, set boundaries only to help them and keep them safe.

Since the interim inspection in March 2019, there has been no further incidence of children and young people going missing from this home. Staff are familiar with the authority's local protocol and the home's procedures, should this occur.

Staff manage children and young people's behaviour effectively. They use learned de-escalation techniques positively and rely on the quality of their relationships with children and young people to defuse potentially challenging situations. Accordingly, physical intervention is seldom used.

Children and young people understand that positive behaviour is rewarded in this home and that there are consequences when their behaviour is less acceptable. Overall, the sanctions, when given, are fair and proportionate. However, in one case the inspector found a financial reparation to be excessive and the reparation agreement poorly recorded. The manager took steps immediately to amend this. Some records were incomplete and failed to show that the manager was routinely monitoring the effectiveness of sanctions made.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is effectively managed by a qualified and experienced registered manager. She has achieved her level 5 diploma in leadership and management for children and young people's residential care. The manager is committed to continuing her own professional development and research. She has recently completed a training course to further teach and develop staff experience in the use of behaviour management

techniques.

The manager and staff know their children and young people well. They share a firm grasp of children and young people's needs and can identify the progress that children and young people have made since coming to this home.

The manager and staff are committed to providing a high standard of care and support to children and young people. Staff work in good cooperation with each other. As a staff team, they have some delegated authority to manage their staff rota, and they do so effectively. These improved staffing arrangements ensure that children and young people experience greater consistency and continuity in their care.

Staff report morale to be good and said that they felt well supported in their role. All staff, including the manager, benefit from regular professional supervision and have participated in an annual appraisal. Staff spoke positively about the company's training programme and identified more opportunities to develop their practice.

The manager and staff team have recently completed a critical review of the home's performance, which has proved to be a positive exercise, identifying the home's strengths and weaknesses.

The manager uses both internal and external monitoring processes to inform the home's improvement and continuous development. The manager reports having 'healthy debates' with the home's appointed independent person and learning from the process. Reports supplied to Ofsted portray regular and robust scrutiny of the home and provide the reader with a clear understanding of the home's performance and children and young people's progress.

Requirements made at the the previous interim inspection in March 2019 have successfully been met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Catherine Friend

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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