

2506856

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 is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have social and emotional difficulties.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 May 2019

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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None		
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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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (b)(c)(d))	15/07/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(v)(vi))	15/07/2019
The health and well-being standard is that—	15/07/2019

the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to ensuring that psychological advice and therapeutic support are accessed without delay, to promote children's emotional well-being.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(h)) Specifically, ensure that communications and meetings are documented, monitored and reviewed to inform and implement improvements.	15/07/2019
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This refers specifically to case records being complete and up to	15/07/2019

date, with relevant plans and reports.	
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Recommendations

- Each child's talents and interests should be understood and nurtured. Staff should also support children to try activities that are 'new' for them. The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Currently, there is only one young person living at this home. He is very settled, having moved here from another children's home run locally by this company. Overall, he is making good progress and enjoying stability living at this home.

The young person shares positive and trusting relationships with staff. One professional commented, 'I have seen a massive improvement since his move to [name of the home]. He is more positive and happier and has built good relationships there. Staff provide him with good boundaries and with very clear expectations. I couldn't fault them.'

The young person feels involved in his care planning. Staff regularly consult him and make sure that his views and wishes are considered and influence his day-to-day care arrangements. Consequently, he feels that staff care about him and listen to him. Discussions with his keyworkers and other staff are regularly documented. However, not all records are written with enough detail that fairly reflects the young person's voice.

The young person is clearly continuing to make good progress from his starting point. A notable reduction in his risk-taking behaviours, such as going missing from home and criminal offending, has greatly improved his safety and well-being.

Staff encourage the young person to understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, including the benefit of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Staff actively

discourage smoking, and because of this he has significantly reduced his smoking habit, which was a health concern for someone so young. He feels pride in his achievements and is developing more maturity and self-confidence.

Although the young person enjoys lessons with a personal tutor who attends the home, this is only for a few hours a week. It is of concern to staff that he is not yet receiving full-time education after many months in placement. This delay in the placing authority securing a more formal arrangement has compromised the young person's education progress at this time.

Staff have not yet been successful in encouraging the young person to participate in many fun and recreational activities outside the home, which would bring him in contact with others of his age. This means that the young person has little opportunity to make friends and socialise with peers.

The young person keeps in touch with his family through regular phone calls and weekend visits home, supported by staff. These arrangements are enjoyable and reassuring for the young person, who misses living with his family.

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

The home provides a welcoming and safe environment for young people. The young person said that he feels safe here and protected by staff. He is aware of the home's plans to promote his safety and can identify his own progress in keeping himself safe. This has positively influenced his self-esteem and confidence.

Since he came to this home, there have not been any incidents of the young person being missing or incidents of offending, which were previously of concern. However, staff are practised and familiar with the home's procedure and protocols should such events occur.

Staff make good use of targets and incentives to motivate and encourage positive behaviour. For the young person currently in the home, a points system has proved effective in maintaining his positive behaviour. He enjoys tracking his progress, and this has also boosted his self-esteem.

Risk assessments are generally well written, providing good narratives to help staff understand the young person's individual risks, previous history and the action required to reduce or mitigate those risks. However, a rating system used to judge the level of risk tends to confuse the reader rather than add clarity to the document.

Staff have good access to child protection and safeguarding training. This ensures that they are suitably skilled, and their knowledge is up to date and in accordance with good practice. Staff are trained and familiar in dealing with challenging behaviour and situations. They use de-escalation, negotiation and restorative practices effectively and have so far avoided the need for physical intervention.

The home is still in the process of recruiting more staff. Arrangements for staff recruitment and selection have been observed to be robust. These promote the safety of young people by ensuring that adults are fully checked and vetted as suitable to work with children and young people before working at the home.

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

This is the home's first inspection following registration with Ofsted. The manager is relatively new to his role, having previous experience of working in children's residential care but not in a registered manager post. He successfully registered with Ofsted in January 2019 and is currently working towards his level 5 diploma in residential care leadership and management. He has recently completed further training, widening his knowledge and skills, further promoting his personal professional development.

Staff said that they feel well managed and supported in their roles. They receive regular supervision, and all have benefited from an annual appraisal since moving to this home from other homes run by the company. Although some staff meetings provide further support, these are not consistently recorded to ensure that all staff understand their content and decisions made.

During this inspection, it was identified that some relevant plans were missing from one young person's personal record, and these were not immediately available in the home. This shortfall meant that staff did not have access to important planning documentation to inform the young person's day-to-day care in the home.

The manager is not yet showing enough confidence in working with other professionals to ensure that young people's needs are met in a timely manner. For example, the manager has not challenged a placing authority about a significant delay in identifying a school for the young person. This has resulted in the young person being denied the opportunity of full-time education and consequently the ability to make good education progress.

Furthermore, the manager has not taken decisive action to follow up a health referral, made by another professional, that was declined due to lack of clarity. Again, this means further delay in the young person receiving a service.

The manager's scrutiny of the home is developing but not yet robust. However, the manager's monitoring routine is being supported by the company's external monitoring arrangements. The manager values the independent person's knowledge and experience and has responded well to advice and guidance provided. This is helping to inform the home's development and improvement planning as the manager has not completed a quality of care review because the home has not yet been operating for a six-month period.

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 differences 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: 2506856

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: Simon Matthews

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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