

1233899

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to two children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were two children living in the home. One child was spoken to during the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2023

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: 14 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
02/03/2022	Full	Good
13/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children move into and on from the home in a sensitively planned way. Before children move in, staff spend time getting to know them and provide them with explanations about the home and the staff who work there. This helps the child settle into the home.

Children living in the home have built trusting and secure relationships with staff. Staff invest time in children. They listen to them, protect them and promote their welfare. Staff are proud of children's progress and achievements. As a result, children can develop a sense of permanence and belonging.

The children are making good progress due to the individualised care they are receiving from the staff. The care provided meets their needs and supports them to develop self-confidence, independence and resilience.

Staff prioritise children's health and well-being and encourage them to attend routine health appointments. This supports the children to remain in good health.

One child returned to school after the summer break and another child is being actively supported to seek education, employment or training. Relevant plans are in place to support the children with their education. The manager and staff are building positive relationships with education professionals and employability services to support the children with their education and employment.

Staff support children to see their families. Staff have good relationships with family members, which means that the children can maintain relationships with people who are important to them. One parent said, 'Staff have been good to [name of child] and have helped support me too.'

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard, except for the kitchen, which requires redecoration and new fittings. Some minor shortfalls identified in one of the bathrooms and bedroom require attention. The garden areas were overgrown and could be made more inviting for the children to use.

The inspector observed positive and caring relationships between staff and the children. The children live in a happy, relaxed, safe, hazard-free home where staff treat them with dignity and respect.

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

The safety and welfare of the children are at the centre of staff's practice. The manager and staff know the children well, and understand and follow their care plans and risk management plans. The children's risk assessments address their

vulnerabilities and include clear strategies for staff to follow. This helps staff to keep the children safe.

One child said they feel safe and happy living at the home and are supported to stay safe by the staff. Parents and a social worker expressed the same opinion.

Staff undertake a range of safeguarding training, including training on exploitation, self-harm and internet safety. This means children's risk-taking behaviours are understood and managed well by the staff. Staff would benefit from training on substance misuse and autism to further enhance their skills.

Staff are trained in physical intervention and de-escalation. They have not had to physically hold a child. They have been able to de-escalate any verbal outbursts effectively. This supports good relationships to be maintained between the children and staff.

On occasions, one child has gone missing from home. However, these episodes have significantly reduced from when they first moved into the home. Staff use their professional curiosity to safeguard the children. They follow missing-from-care protocols and consult with relevant professionals such as police and social workers to share their knowledge, minimise risk and to return the child home safely.

When allegations are made, leaders and managers take appropriate action to share the concerns with the local authority designated officer and the child's school. This ensures the child remains safe in school and at home.

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

The manager has a relevant childcare and management qualification. There is a stable and committed staff team that has high aspirations for the children. There is a strong ethos of teamwork. Staff said that there is honest communication and there is a sense of shared ownership in their practice.

Staff morale is high. Staff are motivated and speak highly of the leadership of the home. They describe good levels of support and a culture of positive challenge and reflective practice. One member of staff said, 'I feel we are a strong team, we are quite tight, provide consistency and share good communication.'

The manager makes good use of supervision, during which supportive and reflective discussion takes place. The staff have received an annual appraisal of their performance; however, this would benefit from including feedback from professionals who have worked with the member of staff over the year and from children who live in the home.

The manager's six-monthly review of the quality of care is completed within required timescales and provides some detail about children's outcomes. The review would

benefit from more evaluation, clearer plans for development and feedback from stakeholders, which would help to support the home's ongoing improvement.

The manager does not have robust reviewing, monitoring and evaluation systems in place to support the home's development. Although the manager takes action to address shortfalls, the system she uses does not allow her to have a clear understanding of the home's strengths, weaknesses and progress.

Shortfalls identified in the condition of the home, staff training and management of the home were not impacting negatively on the children's care, safety, well-being or progress.

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
<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (2)(vii)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring the redesign and decoration of the kitchen are completed and that the kitchen drawers and worktops are made good and fit for use. Also, ensure the garden areas are well kept and weeds removed and grass cut. Also, ensure the blinds in one child's bedroom are fixed and the redecoration around the window and skirting board in the child's bathroom is completed.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	22 October 2023
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	22 October 2023

This specifically relates to the manager ensuring she has effective monitoring and reviewing systems in place to oversee the day-to-day running of the home.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff receive training in substance misuse and autism. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure they have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in regulation 45 at least once every six months. They should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. The registered person should obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders to inform the review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: 1233899

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: Heather Rooke

Inspector

Julie Elder, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023