

1246834

Registered provider: The Amicus Community (Arundel) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of an independent children's therapeutic community which is accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It provides care for up to 5 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 4 children were living at the home.

The manager post has been vacant since April 2026.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 10 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/06/2025	Full	Outstanding
16/07/2024	Full	Outstanding
28/06/2023	Full	Good
14/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

Children are supported well by staff and are making progress. However, several weaknesses reduce the quality and consistency of practice. Reviews of the use of physical restraints and incidents are not thorough, behaviour records are not always child focused, and consequences are not recorded. This limits managers' ability to ensure children are kept safe and responded to fairly. Children's cultural needs are understood but are not fully reflected in their records. The home environment needs improving, resulting in children living in a space that is not well maintained. Reduced leadership capacity during a transition period further affects the leadership and management's ability to maintain strong oversight.

Inspection judgements

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

The overall experiences and progress of children are judged as requires improvement primarily due to the shortfalls in management oversight of the use of physical interventions and incidents. This means that there are missed opportunities to fully understand the experiences of children and explore alternative strategies to support children in crisis.

Children are doing well in their education and continue to attend school regularly. They are making progress with the support they receive. Staff stay in regular contact with education professionals so that each child gets the right help for their needs. As a result, because everyone works together, children's education is supported even when they find it hard to stay engaged.

Children are well supported when they leave the home. Staff reassure them and keep in close contact with external professionals so that each move is planned and managed smoothly. Children who are staying are also included and involved in the change. This helps children feel safe and reduces anxiety during transitions.

Children take part in a range of activities that match their interests. Staff help them explore different hobbies so they can choose what they enjoy most. They regularly take part in activities such as swimming, football and trampolining.

Children have regular opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings. Weekly link-work sessions encourage them to share their views and concerns, and staff adapt sessions to suit each child's needs. These sessions can also take place in the community to help children feel more comfortable. For example, one child went shopping for a toy of his choice for his session, which helped him talk and feel at ease.

Children's health needs are met and understood. Leaders and staff take time to explore each child's background, including their medical history and past experiences, so they fully understand what each child needs to stay healthy.

While children's cultural needs are understood by leaders and key staff, this information is not fully included or embedded in their records. As a result, important cultural details are not always captured in a consistent way.

The home was untidy and cluttered, and little progress has been made in improving the environment since the last inspection. Leaders explained that recent challenges, including staff changes and a child leaving, have slowed down essential work. As a result, children have been living in an environment that is not as well maintained as it should be.

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

Records do not show that physical restraints are reviewed quickly or thoroughly by managers. Staff and child debrief forms are completed, but staff debriefs rarely involve a manager and child debriefs are often very brief. This means managers miss key opportunities to check that the restraint was appropriate and plan how to prevent similar incidents. This is also a missed opportunity to fully understand children's experiences of being physically restrained. Although analysis of the frequency of the use of physical restraint is completed for children, this does not identify any patterns or circumstances that may cause children to be distressed. Records do not routinely set out what will be done to reduce future risks, leaving children without clear follow-up support.

Behavioural incidents are not written in clear, child-focused language that reflects children's individual needs. In some cases, the wording is negative and could be seen as blaming the child. This means that if children read their records in the future, they may not understand the support they were given when they were struggling with their emotions. This shortfall in recording does not reflect the nurturing care that staff provide in practice.

Consequences are limited to children paying a small amount to repair or replace damaged items, but these are not recorded as consequences. As a result, records do not demonstrate that managers assure themselves that consequences are fair, effective or applied consistently.

When children make allegations about staff conduct, managers act quickly to keep them safe. However, in one recent case, although managers took the right steps to make sure there was no increased risk to children, they did not act promptly when there was a delay from the child's social worker. Managers did not recognise the need to escalate this delay or ensure that all relevant professionals were updated until inspectors raised it. Consequently, a safeguarding process was not followed as promptly as it should have been.

Safe recruitment practices are understood and consistently applied. All required checks are completed, which helps to reduce the risk of unsuitable people being employed to work in the home.

Complaints are well managed. When neighbours raise concerns, managers respond promptly, listen carefully and take action to resolve the issue. Managers ensure that neighbours are kept informed about what is being done, which helps to reassure them and develop positive relationships.

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

The home does not have a registered manager. It is being led by a committed deputy manager, with support from senior leaders. Leaders are taking steps to address this and have recruited a new manager, who is due to start in June 2026.

This period of reduced capacity in the management arrangements for the home has had a detrimental impact on the quality of management monitoring and oversight of the quality of care for children.

Training processes need strengthening. Several mandatory courses are overdue, and reminder systems in place have not been effective in ensuring staff remain up to date. Leaders and managers recognise this and have introduced additional measures to increase compliance and engagement. However, the impact of these actions is yet to be fully evident.

Staff appraisals have not been completed and are now out of date. Leaders report that high levels of activity across the organisation, including work with children and external agencies, caused delays. As a result, staff have not received timely feedback, and leaders' oversight of their performance and development needs has been limited.

Feedback from professionals is mixed. Children are reported to be making progress due to the support they receive from staff. However, one social worker commented, 'The home can feel like a closed world.' This was linked to a worry they had that a child was not able to freely ask to speak to her when they wanted to.

Operational meetings take place regularly. Minutes have incomplete sections, unclear actions, and there is inconsistent discussion of key areas. This reduces clarity for staff and limits staff understanding of priorities and expectations.

Staff feel supported by leaders and managers and receive regular supervision. Staff have reflected on the challenging period faced by the organisation and within the home due to changes in management. However, they remain committed to supporting children.

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— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(e))	5 October 2026
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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(c)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are up to date with mandatory training and yearly appraisals.	5 October 2026

The registered person must make sure all consequences given to children are recorded so that oversight stays consistent and fair. The registered person must make sure that records of children's behavioural incidents are written in caring language that reflects each child's individual needs.	
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— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use 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)(ii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	5 October 2026
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure prompt attention to cleaning the home and areas of the home needing renovation, redecoration or repair and provide a homely environment.	5 October 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they and their staff fully incorporate children's cultural needs into their records to enable them to consistently provide culturally sensitive care that respects and nurtures their identity. This is recognised in good social work practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered person should develop a culture of openness and trust that encourages children to be able to tell someone if they have concerns or worries about their safety. Staff should make available in the home information in an appropriate form which enables children to contact their placing authority to call for a review of their care plan if they have concerns about their safety or welfare. Homes should encourage children to understand they can speak to an independent advocate, independent reviewing officers, Ofsted inspectors or other relevant persons if they have concerns about their safety. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.11)

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: 1246834

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Amicus Community (Arundel) Ltd

Registered provider address: Coach House, Arundel Road, Fontwell, Arundel BN18 0SX

Responsible individual: Rebecca Newton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Chido Mangava, Social Care Inspector
Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

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