

2483718

Registered provider: Ar Curam Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private provider. It provides short- and long-term care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, five children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

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: 5 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2023	Full	Good
14/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
19/01/2022	Full	Good
23/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspector spoke to three children during the inspection.

The home is warm and welcoming with separate areas of the home for children to spend time in and enjoy activities. There are photos of the children on display throughout their home. The children have personalised their bedrooms, which are decorated to suit their tastes. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

Children are supported to explore their interests. They enjoy spending time with staff and can get involved in a variety of activities to widen their experiences. For example, one child has been on their first holiday. Each child has a memory book that is filled with photos of activities and outings they have enjoyed with staff and each other. This provides children with a lasting record of their time living in the home.

The children enjoy spending meaningful time with their family and friends. The staff communicate well with children's families and friends to help children maintain positive relationships. One child's relationship with their parent has significantly improved since they moved into the home. Families say that staff keep them updated and support their relationships.

Children know how to make complaints. They say that they feel listened to by staff and receive feedback if they have an issue. Advocacy is promoted in the home, and advocacy services have attended children's meetings. This has helped children to have a good awareness of what they offer and how to access support. When complaints or allegations are made, a robust investigation takes place. The outcome is fed back to children, and restorative work between staff and the children is carried out to help repair relationships.

Children are supported to develop the skills they will need in preparation for adulthood. Staff challenge the relevant local authorities if they feel that children need additional support to help them move on from the home. Children moving to independent living said that staff have supported them to develop skills so that they feel ready to live independently.

Not all children are attending school. Staff advocate for children to have an education provision, and they escalate any issues to the local authority. Some children have made positive progress attending education since moving into the home; however, others are not regularly attending. There is not always a structured plan of activities to encourage educational learning for these children. This means that not all children are motivated to learn.

Staff who sleep overnight in the home have a bed in a communal area of the house. The manager has not considered what this means for children, and this has resulted in unnecessary restrictions on where the children can go in their home.

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

Children are better protected because staff understand children's individual risks and ensure that safety plans are updated when any changes occur. Risks to children are quickly escalated to the local authority for a multi-agency response. Staff also follow up any concerns with direct-work sessions, which have been effective in helping children to understand what poses a risk to them and how to keep themselves safer.

Some children go missing from the home. Staff know what to do when this happens, and they are knowledgeable about each child's missing-from-care protocol. The document that staff share with police when a child is reported missing is accurate and regularly updated. There is clear management oversight of missing-from-care episodes to help recognise patterns of concern for children. Staff use their knowledge of children to help them return home safely and have conversations about what prompted them to go missing from the home. This gives children the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and discuss worries and concerns with staff.

Children receive the support they need to help them manage their feelings and behaviours safely. Staff use their positive relationships to de-escalate situations effectively where children are angry or upset. One educational professional said that they have used staff's advice to de-escalate incidents in school. When children are physically restrained, this is a last resort. Physical restraint is used proportionately to keep children safe. The records of physical restraints provide a clear description of how the children have been held. Discussions with children take place within 24 hours, including the offer of an advocate. There is good communication with family and other agencies following all physical restraints. This helps to ensure that practice is safe and that staff are accountable.

Staff build trusting relationships with children. This helps staff to carry out work with children about their risks and life experiences. Children can discuss their past experiences, thoughts and feelings. This has helped children to feel safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively by an experienced manager who has high expectations for the standard of care children receive. He knows the children well and is ambitious for what they can achieve. This embeds a positive culture across the staff team where they advocate on behalf of children and provide them with a good standard of care.

There have been several staffing changes over recent months. The manager has worked well with the current staff team and used regular bank staff to support consistency for the children. There is now a permanent staff team in place. New staff shadow established staff before they start to work independently in the home. This means that

children get to know new staff, and new staff start to learn about children's individual needs.

There is a robust recruitment process in place. Staff are suitably vetted before working in the home. They are supported through a comprehensive induction and training offer to become skilled and knowledgeable. They receive regular supervision, and the manager provides effective oversight and challenge where required. This assures leaders and managers that staff can provide safe care.

Staff say that they feel listened to and supported. Staff participate in regular reflective supervision sessions and team meetings. This provides them with the opportunity to discuss their practice and think about how this impacts on children and what additional learning they might need. As a result, staff continue to develop the skills they need to support children effectively.

Leaders and managers actively monitor the quality of care provided to children. The registered manager has clear processes in place for auditing records and monitoring across the home. When children move on from the home, the manager reviews practice and the children's experiences to develop the service and improve experiences for other children.

The manager has built strong relationships with multi-agency partners who are supporting children. Feedback from all professionals is positive and highlights that the team of staff are proactive with their communication, knowledgeable about the children and will escalate any concerns.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff have an appropriate sleeping area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that where children are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, staff work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

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: 2483718

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ar Curam Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Richard House, Sorbonne Close, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6DA

Responsible individual: Zak McIlhargey

Registered manager: Michael Saunders

Inspectors

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector
Deb Duffy, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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