

2580899

Registered provider: Ar Curam Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to 5 children with social and emotional needs.

There were 5 children living at the home at the time of the inspection and one child was spoken with.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2025.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 June 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 20 January 2026

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
20/01/2026	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/12/2024	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
18/05/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children's experiences are inconsistent due to shortfalls in how they are helped and protected and the leadership and management of the home. This has limited their progress and exposed them to harm. While children benefit from positive relationships, some good education support and well-planned transitions, these strengths are not experienced consistently by all children.

Safeguarding practice is ineffective. Poor supervision of children, inconsistent risk management and ineffective boundaries mean that children are not consistently protected from harm. Responses to known risks are not always robust, increasing children's vulnerability.

Leaders and managers do not ensure effective oversight or learning from incidents, which limits improvement and leaves weaknesses in staff practice unaddressed. Although the manager shows commitment to children and supports staff, this is not consistently translated into practice and safeguarding shortfalls remain.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Periods of instability in the home have had a detrimental impact on children's overall experiences and progress. Although some children have settled, others have been exposed to harmful and distressing experiences. This includes a child being exposed to exploitation and a significant incident of self-harm. These experiences undermine children's sense of safety and belonging.

Ineffective boundaries in the home result in some children spending prolonged periods of time in their bedrooms with little structure or meaningful engagement. This limits opportunities for children to participate in daily routines, build relationships and achieve progress. As a result, some children's experiences are poor and do not support their development.

Staff do not respond to concerns with sufficient creativity or professional curiosity. Staff report difficulties in maintaining stability for children and in managing risk during unsettled periods. This compromises their ability to meet children's needs and improve their day-to-day experiences.

Family members and professionals report that some children make progress, particularly in relation to their confidence and self-esteem. Staff promote an inclusive environment where family members feel welcomed, helping to support children's identity and sense of belonging. Some children enjoy spending time with staff and develop positive relationships based on warmth and respect.

Children are well supported when they move into the home. Clear and thoughtful plans are in place to support their transition, including opportunities to visit the home and meet staff. This approach helps to reduce children's anxieties and supports them to feel more comfortable and familiar with their new environment.

When children experience barriers to attendance at school, managers and staff advocate effectively on their behalf to ensure that they receive the education to which they are entitled. Staff also provide additional support in the home, helping children to complete educational work and maintain engagement with learning.

Children are well supported to move on from the home. Staff take time to prepare children for their next steps, including visiting their new home and helping them to understand what to expect. This approach helps to reduce anxiety and promotes smoother transitions. Children are also supported to develop their independence skills through planned work, ensuring that they gain the knowledge and abilities they need as they mature. This supports their confidence and readiness for the next stage of their lives.

Children benefit from opportunities to experience new activities and environments, supporting their personal development. This includes children attending community-based clubs and celebrating special events. Children have also been on a foreign holiday, helping to broaden their life experiences.

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

There are shortfalls in safeguarding practice, meaning that children have not always been kept safe. In one example, there were significant failings in ensuring that staff took all reasonable and proportionate steps to safeguard a child in the community. While staff took some action to locate the child, they did not maintain effective supervision. This resulted in the child being exposed to significant harm.

Incidents of children self-harming are not always responded to appropriately. During one incident, while staff initially attempted to intervene, they did not take sufficient follow up action in response to the known risk. In particular, escalation and protective measures were not robust, resulting in the child being able to access and ingest medication.

Staff have not been effective in maintaining appropriate boundaries between children. Children access each other's bedrooms and spend extended periods, including overnight, in peers' bedrooms. Some children have also barricaded themselves in their rooms, and staff responses to these behaviours have been ineffective. As a result, staff are not always aware of children's wellbeing, and children are exposed to further harm, including using devices to contact unknown and potentially exploitative individuals despite known risks.

On one occasion, staff failed to follow a child's plan, resulting in the child being left unsupervised. This failure placed the child at significant risk and led to them

experiencing harm. Although this incident was appropriately addressed by leaders, it highlights a serious failure in safeguarding practice.

Complaints made by children are taken seriously. Leaders and managers listen to children's views and ensure that concerns are responded to appropriately. Children receive feedback on the outcome of their complaints, and relevant partner agencies are informed where necessary.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers do not always recognise shortfalls in how children are helped and protected. They do not ensure that direction given to staff is adequate to protect children from known risks, and some decisions made have not been child centred.

When serious incidents occur, managers do not consistently reflect and learn to ensure that safeguarding practice is strengthened. They do not always ensure independent oversight of incidents. This has resulted in missed opportunities to learn from significant events, including a missing-from-home incident that led to a child suffering harm.

Although staff are provided with some support through supervision sessions and team meetings, these have not considered how staff respond to some safeguarding concerns and what learning can be taken from this. As a result, weaknesses in practice remain, placing children at continued risk.

The manager knows the children well and shows commitment to advocating on their behalf to ensure that children's learning needs are met. There is evidence of appropriate challenge to other professionals and a willingness to explore solutions when there are challenges to a child's learning.

The manager has developed a culture where children's views are sought, heard and acted upon. Staff are encouraged to use observation and direct work to understand children's experiences, and this helps children to contribute towards the care they receive.

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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))	26 July 2026
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and	26 July 2026

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)(f)(h))	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2580899

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: Rachel Smith

Inspectors

Kerry Chater, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Emma Gauden, Social Care Inspector

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