

2580899

Registered provider: Ar Curam Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated. It provides short- and long-term care for up to 5 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2025.

There were 5 children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector spoke with 4 of the children.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 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	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: 3 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Outstanding
06/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
18/05/2022	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Relationships between some children are not well managed to reduce risks. Staff have not consistently implemented boundaries or strategies to discourage negative relationships between some children. This has contributed to 2 children's disengagement with education and with care and support in the home. For one child, there has been an increase in risks that include exploitation, misusing substances and refusing to share their whereabouts.

Some children are making progress with their education, and staff work well with schools. However, when children struggle to attend, this affects their daily routine, and staff are not always proactive in response. This means that some children spend long periods in their bedrooms and are not always offered structured activities to encourage learning.

Concerns about children's plans are not always escalated effectively to the local authority. The lack of progress in reviewing the plan for 2 children has resulted in notice being served on one child's placement. This decision is significant for both children, and there is uncertainty about their relationship and future.

Children are welcomed into the home following a planned introduction to the home, staff and other children. However, careful consideration of individual risks and how these may affect other children are not fully considered.

Children do not always receive feedback when they make a complaint. Children say that they know how to make a complaint but do not always feel listened to. When children do raise an issue, staff do not always follow this up to provide children with feedback. This does not reassure children that their concerns are being heard and addressed.

Staff build trusting relationships with children. Children say that they feel able to talk to the staff, and staff understand how to communicate effectively with each child. For example, staff are implementing strategies for one child following advice from their in-house psychologist, and another child is supported to use emotion cards. This helps children to discuss how they are feeling and share their worries or concerns.

Children's health and wellbeing are priorities for staff. The children are registered with local dentists, doctors and opticians. When children struggle with attending appointments, staff are creative and work with external professional agencies to ensure that children have their health needs met. This has helped 2 children make progress with attending health appointments.

Staff encourage children to get involved with a variety of activities. Children enjoy spending time with staff, experiencing days out and holidays. Staff actively promote

activities that are specific to children's likes and interests, such as football, swimming and horse riding. Two professionals said that their children have developed socially due to the support and experiences staff offer. This promotes children's overall wellbeing.

When children move on from the home, staff support them with well-thought-out move-on plans. The manager advocated for one child's plan to be amended to support them with a stepped approach to independence. Staff then use their positive relationships to keep in touch with children. This can include ad hoc discussions, support with finances and the provision of food.

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

Children's risk assessments and safety plans do not clearly identify their current needs and risks. The plans do not provide staff with guidance on how to reduce the risk of harm, which prevents staff from knowing how to respond. This can lead to children receiving inconsistent care from staff.

Some children are at continued risk of exploitation. Staff have not recognised risks around this for one child, which means there have been no actions to reduce risks effectively. Furthermore, limited work is carried out with children to help them understand exploitation risks. This prevents children from learning strategies to keep themselves safe.

Staff use effective de-escalation strategies to support children when they are struggling with their emotions. Physical interventions are rarely used. When they are, these are to keep children or others safe. This is then followed up with discussions with the children and staff and with a review by managers to help staff and children to reflect and learn from incidents.

Staff are proactive when there are concerns about children harming themselves. Staff provide children with support and reassurance. This is followed up through discussions with children, helping them to understand their emotions and learn strategies. This helps children learn new ways to manage their emotions more safely.

The manager takes effective action when concerns are raised about staff practice. An investigation is completed, which is sensitive to the children's views and experiences. Furthermore, the manager works well with the multi-agency team to ensure that actions are followed up promptly. This quick response keeps children safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff say that they feel supported by the management team. There has been a new manager in post since the last inspection. Their transition into the role has been well managed to help staff and children get to know the new manager and adjust to the change.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of care provided to children. The manager has a clear process for auditing and monitoring all aspects of the home and uses independent visitor reports to support further learning and development.

Team meetings are held regularly and provide staff with consistent messages about standards of practice. Staff receive training to meet children's specific needs, including access to therapeutic advice and support. The team's learning culture means that staff continue to develop and gain the skills that they need to support children and understand the children's changing needs.

The manager and staff build positive relationships with multi-agency professionals and parents. Feedback from professionals and family members identified that they are kept well informed and know what is going on for their children. This helps children to get a consistent response from the people who are working with them.

Staff are provided with regular practice-related supervision sessions. Staff receive support for their wellbeing, and appropriate challenge is offered to their practice. Supervision provides the manager with an overview of staff development needs. However, reflection discussions on their practice or its effect on children are limited. There are missed opportunities to learn from experiences.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; and manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	4 March 2026
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; and help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child.	4 March 2026

(Regulation 7 (1)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii))	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— 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. (Regulation 5 (c))	4 March 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff support children who are not attending an education to sustain or regain their confidence in education and are engaged in suitable structured activities. ('The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the effect that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive practice-related supervision that allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 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

Inspector

Natalie Clark, Social Care Inspector

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