

1250521

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Four children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 4 August 2020.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 28 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good
04/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, the home has been fully occupied, with the same four children living there. The inspector met all four children and spoke to three of them. The children provided positive feedback. The interactions between children and staff are highly positive.

Children experience high-quality care. Managers and staff are consistently focused on the children's well-being and best interests. Children consistently exceed expectations, making progress well above their starting points. All four children have lived in the home for over 12 months, two of them for more than four years. Children have clear long-term plans. When children's plans are not clear, the manager has advocated for the child and challenged the placing authority to provide clarity.

Staff and children have excellent relationships. Staff genuinely care about the children they care for. They know them very well, including their strengths and needs. They know how to communicate with and support each child individually, for example, supporting a younger child with creative role play. This successfully encouraged the child, who would have otherwise refused to take part in a task or activity.

Children's views and voices are listened to and acted on. There is evidence of children's voices in their plans, daily records, in a 'you said we did' book and in the manager's reviews. One child has expressed a wish to move to independent living and the manager has advocated for this with the child's local authority.

Children's health and well-being are well promoted. Staff understand children's physical needs well, and ensure children have access to necessary local services. Healthy day-to-day routines and diets are encouraged. There is an effective medication management system in place. Staff place a high emphasis on supporting children's emotional well-being, including seeking additional intervention when needed.

Children thrive in their education settings. The manager has strongly advocated for children's education outcomes. All four children attend school or college. One child has part-time employment. Staff strongly encourage children to go to school, and fully support education daily.

Children receive help to prepare for independence. Assessment of these skills are made when children turn 16, and plans are made collaboratively with children to help them prepare for adulthood. Plans include supporting children to learn budgeting, how to stay safe, time management, self-care and cooking. These plans are fully individualised to ensure they are meaningful and relevant.

Children are helped and supported to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Staff have supported family relationships, including advocating for

one child's overnight arrangements, supporting children to visit family in other parts of the county and supporting one child to go abroad with their partner.

The home is furnished to a high standard throughout. The rooms are large and spacious, and decorated in a manner that children like. All aspects of the home are clean and tidy, well decorated and well furnished. An outside annex provides an additional space as a video gaming room.

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

Children feel extremely safe and well supported. They are carefully safeguarded and protected. When incidents occur, staff have a strong understanding of safeguarding procedures and follow these.

Staff use detailed risk assessments and plans. These cover a range of topics, including children's daily routines, risk of self-harm or exploitation, violence or aggression, and safe use of the internet and mobile devices. Staff know the children well and can identify their triggers and risks. The staff use effective measures in response to any incidents.

The home's approach to supporting children to reduce risky behaviour and develop positive behaviour is exemplary. Children and staff work together to identify areas of risk or areas for development and goals are agreed. This means aims are highly individualised, and realistic for the child to reach. Children take pride in achieving their goals. Aims are reviewed frequently with the child's involvement, as well as progress being monitored and reviewed by the manager.

Staff take a considered and consistent approach to reinforcing positive behaviour. They remind children of boundaries, praise good choices and offer rewards. Key-worker sessions happen frequently to follow up on any aspect of care or risk. This comprehensive and coordinated approach has led to incidents drastically reducing for all children.

The use of physical intervention is exceptionally rare, and when used is always a last resort. Records show that staff actions are proportionate and justified, with good evidence of management oversight and debriefs.

Children rarely go missing from the home. However, when children leave the home without permission, staff react quickly and follow agreed protocols. Records show extensive efforts to find children. Staff work with other agencies, including the police, to help children to return safely. The missing-from-care policy and individual missing-from-home records are detailed and effective.

The manager has created a detailed local area risk assessment. This identifies areas of risk in the local community and includes local agency information and crime statistics. It is updated regularly. Following an incident in the local area, the risk assessment was updated extensively to ensure any future risks in the area were mitigated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is highly experienced and established. They have a strong track record of striving for the best standards of care for children and continue to pursue the best possible outcomes. They are supported by an equally experienced and committed deputy manager. The manager, deputy manager and responsible individual share high expectations and aspirations for children.

The home has an exceptionally stable staff team, with minimal turnover. Staff feedback is entirely positive. Staff value their roles and feel enthusiastic about helping the children to flourish. This is a further example of the home being a stable environment that enables children to thrive.

The manager maintains extensive oversight of the home. Team meetings take place regularly and staff are frequently updated outside of meetings on matters arising. The manager has created simple but effective tools to ensure good monitoring and auditing. All documents are reviewed and evaluated by the manager or a senior member of staff. This ensures that checks are in place to help maintain a high standard of care for children.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. Staff have excellent inductions, which include comprehensive training. Additional and ongoing training takes place for more experienced staff which is specific to the needs of the children. New staff said that they feel supported by senior staff members and help is always willingly given whenever they ask questions or for support.

Supervision sessions take place regularly for all staff. Staff are positive about these. Informal ad-hoc supervision or discussions are also welcomed. This helps create an open and honest culture where staff can seek support and improve their practice.

The manager and staff have developed excellent relationships with a network of local professionals and agencies. This includes local authorities, police, schools and colleges. Feedback from external professionals is unanimously positive.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

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: 1250521

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit 73 and 74 Maple Leaf Business Park, Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5GD

Responsible individual: Sophie Wood

Registered manager: Ryan Wells

Inspector

Daniel Rankin, Social Care Inspector

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