

1250521

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional or challenging difficulties. The company also has a school, which children may attend.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 04 August 2020

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/06/2019	Full	Good
18/10/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by staff who are attentive and familiar with each child's personality and needs. Interactions between children and staff are warm and nurturing. Children have an enjoyable time at the home and are supported to make good progress towards goals which are important to them.

The children's education is valued and supported by the staff. Staff work in partnership with education provisions to develop tailored packages that meet the children's individual needs. One child is benefiting from staff supporting their vocational interests within the home. This additional layer of input is providing the child to make informed decisions about their future choices. Through an effective reward system staff celebrate children's achievements and progress. This promotes their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Key working is a particular strength of the staff team. Regular one-to-one sessions are well planned and valued by the staff and the children. These opportunities support the children to explore a variety of subjects that are relevant to them and their current needs. One child has been able to use this space to explore current family issues. Consequently, the children are supported to manage difficult and complex situations that affect them.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. There is a strong ethos of supporting children to celebrate being who they want to be. In one example, a young person was sensitively supported to understand more about their identity, allowing them to explore this individually and within the wider setting without fear of judgement. An inclusive culture which promotes equality and diversity enables children to explore their developing sense of identity and to be happy as themselves.

Staff support the children to maintain family connections. There is a clear focus on what matters to the children. Staff show sensitivity when managing and supporting family relationships. One child had to be informed of the ill health of their mother. The staff member understood the needs of the child and provided the space and time for the information to be shared. Consequently, children benefit from staff who understand what is important to them.

Children move into the home following a considered referral process. Matching is carefully managed and includes a review of the current children's needs and risks. There are some gaps in considering staff skills and location of the home. Although this has not directly impacted on most children's placement, there has been one occasion when the lack of information from professionals has prevented clear and considered matching to occur. The registered manager has used an end of placement analysis to provide learning, that will inform the matching of future placements.

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

Safeguarding children is a priority. Staff are attuned and responsive to the risks that are present for children individually, and as a group. Staff demonstrate good safeguarding practice by following clear procedures when incidents occur. Their consultation with professional agencies is effective and positive for the children.

Children are safeguarded by staff who are well informed. Clearly documented risk assessments provide staff with guidance and support to manage risks in their day-to-day work. Other risks, such as self-harm, are also well understood by the staff, who respond appropriately. Positive behaviour management is promoted. Consequently, incidents and use of physical intervention is kept to a minimum. This demonstrates the managers' commitment to ensuring that children become increasingly safe while having a positive experience of care.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence outside of the home. Staff provide support and individual risk assessments to reduce the individual risk to children. The premises review does not demonstrate that the registered manager has consulted with relevant stakeholders to determine whether risks associated with the home's location presents any risks for the children who currently live in the home. Areas where some children go to independently have not been factored into this review. Therefore, the potential risks associated with the local area, such as known hotspots for drugs and criminal activity have not been explored to consider what this may mean for children's safety.

Children's health needs are supported by staff through careful planning and strong communication with external health professionals. Medication administration is safely managed by the staff.

Safe recruitment practices are understood and implemented by the manager and staff responsible for this area of practice. All necessary checks are in place to ensure that children are protected from unsuitable people working in the home.

The staff keep the home in good order. Children's wishes and views are heard, and they are involved in developing the home. During lockdown the children designed and redecorated the games room to provide an additional area for gaming and relaxing. The manager recognises that there are still some areas that require maintenance. However, this does not impact on the children, and they benefit from a safe place to live.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers are passionate in their efforts to be good role models and trusted figures for the children and for the staff. Staff describe a culture which promotes mutual respect. A thoughtful and inclusive approach from managers promotes a positive ethos where children benefit from genuine care.

Leaders and managers largely understand the home's strengths and areas to further improve. Despite the lack of a clear development and action plan, good progress has been made in bringing about improvements. However, monitoring recording systems

are not consistently used by the registered manager. Therefore, leaders and managers are not readily appraised of the home's development needs in respect of making continuing improvements to the quality of care for the children.

Regular supervision ensures that staff are clear about their goals. This provides opportunities for the staff to reflect on their practice and receive well-being support. Annual appraisals support professional development. This is enhanced by training opportunities. However, staff were reflective that having courses that provide a higher level of knowledge to the specific needs of the children, for example, bespoke autism training would further develop their skill base.

Staff meetings are an important communication arena and are used effectively by the staff. The manager demonstrates good leadership with the range and context of these meetings. The manager and staff maintain a professional approach when communicating with the wider network. They work in partnership with people who are important to the children, and this benefits them by providing them with a consistent experience of care and support.

Significant details such as the staffing structure and the named responsible individual within the statement of purpose are incorrect. Consequently, the provider does not meet this aspect of the regulation by failing to update this key document when such changes occur.

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, 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	31 March 2022
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1)(2)) The registered manager must ensure that all local areas that the children use are considered within the risk assessment.	31 March 2022
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	31 March 2022

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) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Keith Riley

Registered manager: Ryan Wells

Inspector

Rebecca Fisher, Social Care Inspector

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