

1250521

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

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 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The registered manager post has been vacant since September 2025.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

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 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
28/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
07/03/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home was closed for a short time during the period since the last inspection. At the point of closure, children living in the home were moved out. Although these moves were managed well and in consultation with the children's placing authorities, the closure was particularly unsettling for one child, as they had only recently moved in. Transitions into the home following reopening have been mostly well thought out, and staff have supported children to understand why they are moving into the home.

Children have made good progress since moving to the home. Staff are positive role models and are building meaningful relationships with the children. This has helped the children to settle in well.

Children experience good support and encouragement for their education. One child is now accessing education after a period of non-engagement, and their time in education is gradually increasing.

Children are supported to access the wider community and are developing age-appropriate independence skills. Staff show a genuine interest in children's lives, which encourages the children to engage in activities. One child's social worker noted that the staff had developed bespoke and creative programmes in line with the child's interests to help further the child's learning and keep them active and stimulated.

The health needs of the children are well understood, and any health concerns are responded to promptly. Staff work effectively with external professionals to ensure that children's health needs are met.

Relationships with those people who are important to the children are maintained and encouraged. Children's identity needs are understood, and further targeted training is planned as part of staff development.

The home is well maintained and decorated. Staff encourage and support the children to personalise their bedrooms. Children's wishes and feelings are gathered through natural interactions. Their views impact directly on the changes made in the home.

Children know how to complain. However, they are not always provided with or supported to access a children's guide as part of the moving in process and so do not have access to important information about the home.

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

Children feel safe and settled in the home. Incidents in this home are rare. When incidents do occur, they are well managed, and managers and staff work well with placing authorities and external partners. When children go missing, staff are proactive

in following the home's procedures and they support the children to return home. Staff complete follow up work with the children to ensure their wellbeing and reduce risk.

Staff are aware of the home's whistleblowing policy and feel confident in its use. Leaders and managers strive to learn from incidents, further embedding the safeguarding culture in the home.

Safer recruitment practices are mostly in place. Staff are subject to appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks, gaps in employment are explored and managers take time to understand each individual's work history. However, records do not show suitable exploration of any previous work histories with vulnerable groups. The responsible individual took action during this inspection to resolve this weakness and to amend the policy.

Surveillance in the form of closed-circuit television (CCTV) for the exterior of the property, as well as internal door alarms, helps to keep the children safe. CCTV is also used in the home's cars. The use of CCTV is not clearly communicated to external agencies and appropriate consents for it are not currently obtained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in management. A new manager has been recruited but is not currently registered. Leaders and managers are exercising appropriate management of the home.

Staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of the children at the home and there are robust plans in place to cover sickness and on-call duties.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and managers. Since the home reopened, the new staff team has been provided with ample opportunities for group and individual training to guide them in their roles. Staff receive regular and effective supervision. This provides them with an opportunity to reflect and receive feedback on their practice and performance. Although full team meetings are not consistently embedded, staff value these meetings, as well as individual supervision. Staff unanimously express that they enjoy working at the home.

The home's statement of purpose has not been updated following the changes in management and the staff team.

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 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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))	26 May 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any home using CCTV or other monitoring equipment has a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and wellbeing of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home produces a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age-appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

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: Post vacant

Inspectors

Emma Blake, Social Care Inspector (Lead)
Cassie Martin, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026