

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 four children. According to the provider's statement of purpose, their aim is to provide a safe and nurturing environment whereby children can thrive and have the same aspirations as any other child, regardless of their background and life experiences. Four children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 4 August 2020 and is suitably skilled and qualified.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

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	good
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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: 7 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good
04/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children thrive in this home and enjoy the safety and nurture it provides. They make exceptional progress and take advantage of the opportunities presented to them.

Staff support and actively encourage children to be key members of the community that they live in. Children are involved in local amateur dramatics, karate, trampolining clubs and cadets. This helps children to develop socially and creatively while also teaching them new skills that they can apply in the home and at school.

The home is well furnished and decorated. Children and staff spend time with each other, playing games, watching movies and having evening meals together. Children's photos are displayed around the home, and there are lots of toys and board games for children to enjoy.

The registered manager works collaboratively with virtual schools and social workers. Together, they advocate for children to attend and increase their time in school. One child has returned to the classroom after not being in school for a significant period of time. Another child has recently sat four GCSEs. This foundation helps children to make good progress and supports them to achieve better life opportunities.

Staff support children to receive the healthcare that they need. They help children to attend their routine appointments and support them to look after themselves and live healthy lifestyles.

Staff support children to spend time with their families safely. Staff work in partnership with parents, allocated social workers and independent reviewing officers to ensure that this time is positive and in the interests of children. Staff supported one child to meet their brother for the first time, and they helped another child return home for Christmas Day. This helps children to feel stable and well supported.

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

There is a very settled atmosphere in the home, and children speak of feeling safe and respected. All children have trusted staff, who they discuss any issues or concerns with. Children become increasingly safe while living in this home, and risks have significantly reduced.

Staff help children to increase their independence when this is appropriate and their risks and vulnerabilities can be managed safely. Free time, with the opportunity to test children's independence and self-management skills, is gradually increased in

line with their ability to cope with extra responsibilities. Children's progress is monitored closely, and any decisions are taken in consultation with social workers, staff and children. This collaboration and cohesive planning help children to increase their independence safely.

Staff support children to use their electronic devices safely. The registered manager ensures that staff understand the procedures for safe internet use. This means that children are clear about the rules and expectations. An independent reviewing officer confirmed that staff have implemented routines for the use of an electronic device, which have enabled the child to manage their use positively.

Staff use praise and diversion techniques when challenging incidents occur. Consequently, physical interventions are rare. Staff encourage children to reflect on their behaviours and think about what the consequences may be. This means that children learn to make good decisions by themselves.

Staff training focuses on understanding the specific needs of children and keeping children safe. Most staff have completed their level 3 qualification and one new member of staff has been enrolled on the course without delay. The registered manager is committed to ensuring that staff are continually developing and are equipped with relevant training. Consequently, staff are skilled and knowledgeable and demonstrate a commitment to understanding the children that they care for.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Other professionals are extremely positive about their working relationships with staff and the registered manager. They also comment on the significant progress that children have made while living in the home.

The registered manager demonstrates a strong sense of ambition and has high expectations of his staff and the children that he cares for. As a result, staff and children feel that they are valued and describe a strong, shared community ethos of helping each other. Children speak highly of the registered manager and value his care and guidance.

The registered manager has a dynamic vision for excellence. He leads by example and demonstrates an unquestionable commitment and passion for providing the highest possible standards of care for children.

Children receive care from consistent staff, with minimal staff changes. Staff are well supported, and the manager encourages and promotes their development to ensure that staff are skilled and confident in their role.

A new responsible individual has been in post since November 2023, although their name does not yet feature on the registration certificate. Before this, she worked in this organisation as a regional manager, and therefore, she has a good understanding of operational processes, policies and procedures.

The registered manager has updated the home's statement of purpose to reflect the change in the home's responsible individual. However, details of staff qualifications and experience have not been shared with Ofsted.

Children have a key to their bedroom door to develop their independence. However, the manager has not kept this under review if children are unable to safely manage this responsibility. For one child, this means that they must seek permission from staff to enter their room due to losing their key. The registered manager agreed that this approach needed to be reviewed and made changes during the inspection.

The registered manager completes regular reviews of the quality of care being provided to children. He advocates for children and ensures that they have access to the services and support that they need. However, his reviews do not specifically include children's views. In addition, some identified actions lack measurable targets. The registered manager had already identified this as an area for development. These shortfalls have not had a negative impact on the outstanding care that children 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 registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure details of the experience and qualifications of staff are included.	1 June 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person must consider alternative measures when staff assess that children cannot safely manage their bedroom door keys. Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure the quality of care review includes the feedback and opinions of children and how any identified actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: 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: Post vacant

Registered manager: Ryan Wells

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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