

1256417

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to 7 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Five children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2024.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 January 2026

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: 17 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2023	Full	Good
07/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptional care from staff who know them extremely well. Children consistently report that they feel loved, valued and understood by staff. This strong sense of belonging significantly reduces the risk of children going missing from home. A social worker reported that, for the first time, one child is able to believe in themselves and see a positive future, which they attribute directly to the care and support provided by staff. Since moving into the home, children have made remarkable progress and now feel that they have purposeful life plans in place.

Children who previously struggled to engage with education now attend school full time. Staff work effectively with education professionals and are tenacious advocates for children, ensuring that barriers to learning are addressed promptly.

Staff have a deep understanding of children's individual needs, interests and aspirations. This enables them to plan meaningful and enriching activities that promote children's personal development, such as supporting them to participate in boxing training, football and police cadets. Children benefit from regular days out, holidays and shared experiences, which strengthen relationships within the home and significantly enhance children's confidence, self-esteem and sense of identity.

Family members speak very positively about the care and support children receive. They consistently report significant improvements in children's confidence, engagement in education, behaviour and overall quality of life. Staff are described as caring and highly committed to children's wellbeing. Families express strong confidence in staff and are reassured that their children are safe, loved and well cared for.

Children who have experienced multiple moves before coming to live at the home are now settled, thriving and making substantial progress. Staff consistently model positive behaviour and support children to develop respectful, caring and compassionate relationships with one another. The culture within the home is underpinned by warmth and nurture. One member of staff said that 'love is their biggest tool', and children clearly experience this through the quality of care they receive.

Children are meticulously supported to move on from the home when the time is right. Transitions are carefully planned and coordinated with partner agencies to ensure continuity of care and stability. Children leave the home having experienced positive and well-managed endings, reflecting the strong, trusting and enduring relationships that staff build with them.

Research is meaningfully embedded and closely aligned to the individual needs of children living at the home. This moves beyond the collection of information, and

instead supports practical, evidence-informed changes in day-to-day care and outcomes for children. Clear and systematic records demonstrate the impact of research on staff practice. This enables them to track improvements over time and ensures that learning is embedded across the staff team. As a result, staff practice continues to evolve and is increasingly responsive to children's needs.

Staff are encouraged to take ownership of specific areas of learning and development, ensuring practice evolves in line with children's changing needs. As a result, children receive thoughtful and well-coordinated care from a cohesive and reflective staff team.

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

Children feel happy, safe and emotionally secure. They are confident that staff listen to them, and they receive timely support to resolve any worries or concerns. Strong, trusting relationships with staff significantly reduce risks for children. One child said they no longer go missing because they know they are loved by staff at the home.

When children do go missing, staff respond swiftly, proportionately and with genuine care for the child's welfare. Managers work effectively with partner agencies and escalate concerns appropriately to ensure children are safeguarded and supported. Responses are well coordinated and focused on understanding and reducing future risk.

Staff have a strong understanding of the risks children face and they promptly adapt their care and support accordingly. Practice is underpinned by relevant research and reflective learning. Staff use creative and innovative approaches to help children understand their own risks and actively involve them in discussions about their care. This empowers children and strengthens their ability to keep themselves safe.

Creative and individualised reward systems are used effectively to promote positive behaviour. Consequences, when required, are proportionate and linked to the behaviour displayed. Children are actively encouraged to reflect on their actions and take ownership of outcomes. Staff skilfully support children to identify appropriate consequences themselves, fostering accountability and emotional maturity.

Safeguarding arrangements are well embedded, and staff are confident in their safeguarding responsibilities. Incidents are managed promptly and consistently, ensuring children receive clear and predictable care. Children understand expectations, respond well to boundaries and demonstrate increasing emotional regulation.

Staff know children exceptionally well and are highly attuned to subtle changes in behaviour and emotional presentation. They respond quickly when children experience any difficulty and use de-escalation techniques skilfully and effectively. As a result, the use of physical intervention is minimal and only used as a last resort.

Staff demonstrate a strong and reliable commitment to advocacy, and they provide tailored support to promote positive parenting experiences and reduce risks of harm. When concerns about behaviour arise, staff respond firmly yet compassionately, ensuring children understand accountability while maintaining dignity and fairness. Multi-agency working is highly effective and goes beyond expectations. Staff challenge appropriately to ensure children are not unfairly labelled or misunderstood and that their needs and experiences are accurately represented.

Strong and trusting relationships between staff and children are a defining feature of the home. Children feel emotionally safe and secure with staff, and this contributes to increased levels of resilience and helps children develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe both within the home and in the wider community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is highly skilled and demonstrates excellent oversight of the home and the quality of care provided. The registered manager is visible, approachable and well regarded by both staff and children. Children confidently identify leaders as trusted adults and speak about them with warmth and affection. Leadership at all levels is ambitious, effective and focused on achieving the very best outcomes for children.

The registered manager is supported by two skilled deputy managers who know the home exceptionally well and demonstrate genuine passion and care for children. Together with the registered manager, they have strengthened the home's approach to research and development, ensuring that it has a clear and purposeful focus on improving staff practice and progress, and outcomes for children.

Recording and monitoring systems are highly effective. Managers promote a strong culture of reflection, learning and continuous improvement. Leadership is aspirational and child-centred, resulting in high-quality care and excellent outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers have a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the needs of all children living at the home and are unwavering in their commitment to delivering outstanding care. The registered manager and deputy managers are strong and tenacious advocates for children. They are highly effective in progressing children's plans and ensuring that their individual needs and aspirations remain central to decision-making.

Staff demonstrate a highly reflective and analytical approach to their work. This enables them to develop a deep and sophisticated understanding of the individual needs of the children they care for and to continually adapt their practice in response. Staff speak about children with warmth, pride and compassion and readily identify and celebrate children's progress.

Staff report exceptionally high levels of support from their line managers and the wider organisation. Leaders invest significantly in staff wellbeing and professional development, ensuring staff feel valued, confident and well equipped to deliver care to the highest standard. Staff receive regular and meaningful supervision. Staff feel supported to challenge one another and are encouraged to reflect critically on their practice within a safe and supportive team culture.

The registered manager has successfully established and retained a stable, skilled and committed staff team. This consistency provides children with a strong sense of security and continuity and supports the development of trusting, meaningful relationships with adults.

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: 1256417

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: Christopher Kyte

Inspectors

Alexia Hosker, Social Care Inspector
Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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