

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 seven children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. At the time of this inspection, six children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2017.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

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: 16 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
10/03/2020	Full	Outstanding
04/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit from the care and support of highly skilled staff. Children and staff develop deep relationships of trust. This gives children the stability and consistency they need to thrive. Staff show a high degree of nurturing to children, which enables the children to make significant progress in all areas of their life from their starting points.

Children make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives, including education and social and emotional development. Children sustain high attendance rates at school. Staff skilfully support children who struggle to engage, helping them develop the confidence and motivation they need to succeed. Leaders also challenge placing authorities robustly if there are any delays in finding appropriate education placements for children.

Staff have vastly improved systems for tracking and reporting on progress for children. They make clear links to agreed targets in children's care, health, education and risk management plans.

Staff use research well to enhance their knowledge of the specific needs of children. For example, they look at ways to support children with autism spectrum disorder to create homely bedrooms that suit their sensory needs. This has resulted in a major improvement in the quality of life for one child, who now has a highly personalised space of which he is really proud. Staff also showed high levels of empathy and sensitivity when looking at effective ways to support children with special educational needs in dealing with bereavement and loss.

Children have benefited from access to agencies who specialise in supporting bereaved children to process grief and move forward from the trauma of loss. This has helped children to understand the impact of loss on their sense of self and behaviour. They have learned ways to channel their mood and emotions into positive actions.

Staff support children who have a range of complex emotional and behavioural issues to understand the impact of their early years' experiences. Staff have enabled children to recapture their childhood, creating positive memories and life experiences during their time at the home.

The home is currently being fully redecorated. Children recognise the investment in their surroundings and in turn always treat the home with respect. Communal areas were clean, spacious and full of age-appropriate toys, books and games.

Parents and external professionals hold the staff and manager in high regard. They spoke of huge changes they can see in children's confidence, emotions and behaviour.

One parent said, 'Firstly, the staff are amazing, and [name of child] really likes everyone, which is a big thing. The whole family are grateful and delighted that [name of child] has excelled so much since he has been in the care of [the home].'

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

Staff have a well-developed understanding of the specific risks and vulnerabilities of each child at the home. Staff are confident with all internal and external safeguarding processes and use reporting systems effectively. They form strong partnerships with all professionals involved in the support network around children.

Staff keep a clear focus on managing risk effectively and this has led to significant reduction for all children in behaviours such as going missing, self-harm, vulnerability to exploitation, aggression and behaviours that challenge.

Staff have almost eradicated the need for any physically restrictive interventions in the home. In view of children's earlier placement histories and presentation when arriving at the home, this is a remarkable achievement.

Staff create clear risk management plans that contain lots of direct input from the children. Children take an active role in creating strategies that work for them and in doing so learn important skills about keeping themselves safe.

Staff have carried out research and put together a learning resource that includes information about some key areas of safeguarding practice, including hate crime, contextual safeguarding and self-harm. They put this research into practice to provide effective support for children.

Children have also been engaging in online learning, followed by discussions with staff around topics such as racism, homophobia and misogyny. Staff use current affairs to trigger important conversations with children about positive relationships and respect.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The experienced and enthusiastic registered manager demonstrates a clear vision and expectation around standards of care and support in the home. She has an advanced understanding of the specific needs of children in her care and is committed to providing the best possible outcomes for children.

Staff feel confident and well supported by the entire leadership team. Staff say that personal supervision is of excellent quality. Leaders have a clear understanding of the emotional challenges of the job and the impact this can have on staff. They

mitigate this with regular formal and informal check-ins with staff. The registered manager has also created an open and supportive culture amongst the team. Staff spoke of everyone looking out for each other and recognised the need for regular check-ins and debriefing throughout the working week.

Staff benefit from excellent training and induction tailored to the individual needs of children. They have had access to high-quality training this year around gender and identity, autism spectrum disorder and the impact of trauma.

The registered manager works hard to form strong and effective partnerships with professionals and agencies that provide additional support for children. She gave a clear example of the home's excellent inter-agency work when supporting a child through a sudden bereavement. Regular strategy meetings and discussions enabled staff to help the child through an immensely challenging period.

The registered manager is committed to an inclusive and safe culture that respects difference and champions equality. Children are safe to explore their identities and express themselves in a space that celebrates their uniqueness.

The registered manager makes effective use of internal and external monitoring to create ambitious action plans that focus on the continual improvement of the home. She is clear that there is always something new to learn, or an innovative approach to understand, that enhances the quality of life and improves the outcomes of children in her care.

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: Keith Riley

Registered manager: Stacey Wells

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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