

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 who may experience social and emotional difficulties. Six children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been in post since August 2023 and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
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: good

Children are happy and make progress at this home. They are cared for by staff who are consistent in their approaches. As a result, children have positive and secure relationships with staff.

The home is welcoming and well presented. Areas of the home have been redecorated and the games room has recently been refurbished. Communal areas are well furnished and provide children with opportunities to relax and socialise. Children's bedrooms are spacious and encapsulate their interests and hobbies.

All children are engaged in education. For some, this is significant considering their starting points and previous time out of school. Staff support children well to maintain their educational placements and make progress with their education. This includes taking children to school a significant distance away from the home to ensure there is consistency in their learning. Children respond well to the emphasis that staff place on the importance of education. As a result, children are starting to take responsibility for their own education.

Children's views in the home are well understood by staff and are obtained through a mix of one-to-one work and manager consultation. Planned weekly one-to-one sessions are supplemented with ad hoc sessions. This has enabled children to contribute to some of the changes that have happened in the home, such as the refurbishment of the games room and identify any individual requests that children have.

Children have positive daily experiences. They access a range of activities and attend a variety of clubs, such as football and Scouts. Following management consultation, children were able to enjoy a recent holiday. The holiday was a success, enjoyed by all and there are already plans in place for another.

Staff use creative ways to capture children's memories, events and some of their progress. For instance, staff use 'sparkle' and 'memory' books to showcase children's experiences. Children enjoy looking at these and can see how much progress they have made.

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

Children's risks are, in the main, well understood by leaders. All children have a range of risk assessments and personal support plans to help guide staff on how to best look after them. These are usually reviewed regularly. However on one occasion, following a recent incident involving children, risk assessments were not reviewed or updated in line with a personal safety plan developed for one child. This means staff had conflicting information to safeguard children. Leaders did not react

to emerging changes of children's behaviour and, again, this information was not considered as part of risk management strategies.

Children do not go missing from the home. Strong relationships with staff allow children to feel safe. These relationships, along with the skill of staff, have helped to ensure that serious incidents are infrequent and restraints less so. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of how to calm and de-escalate behaviour that challenges. Consequently, there has been one incident of restraint in recent months. This incident was responded to by staff effectively and the child had the opportunity to talk it through and reflect on what happened.

When concerns are raised about children, managers and staff liaise with external safeguarding professionals promptly and diligently. This has helped to develop effective partnership working with external professionals, ensuring that children are at the centre of important decisions.

Safer recruitment processes are effective. They feature an extensive interview, which includes an assessment in the home, and questions devised by children. This means that leaders take appropriate action to ensure that all staff are safe to work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a change to the leadership and management arrangements since the last inspection. A new manager who has previously been the homes deputy manager, and responsible individual have been appointed and are new in post.

The new manager is supported by the suitably experienced deputy manager and a new interim deputy manager. There has been good preparation and support for all management changes, through supervision, sharing information and training during the leadership and management changes. This has helped staff to fully understand their roles and responsibilities along with the individual needs of children.

The new manager has clear aspirations for the home and what he would like to achieve. He is dedicated to expanding the knowledge and skills of the staff team and is implementing a new strategy to help further develop these skills. All staff are positive about this and are already developing a greater understanding of their work. Staff are confident that the new manager is having a positive impact on their practice and children's daily experiences. He is deemed approachable and available to staff and responds well to both concerns raised and any requests that are made.

Leaders and the manager have good understanding and oversight of the progress that children make. This is captured through review reports and placement plans.

All staff receive regular and effective supervision. This includes a good level of reflection and allows staff to reflect on some of the challenges of their role. The manager has a strong focus on research-based practice and ensures that he and the

team continue to develop their skills. Learning from research is shared in supervisions and team meetings.

The manager is making improvement to monitoring systems to further develop his oversight. The recent quality of care review demonstrates that the manager has a good understanding of the successes and challenges of the home. However, this level of scrutiny is not mirrored in visits by the home's independent visitor. This is because reports provided by the independent visitor reflect positives of the home and do not provide the challenge that leaders need to make further progress. This has been identified by leaders, who are proactively addressing this.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))	28 February 2024

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: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector
Chris Warren, Social Care Inspector

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