

2572812

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties. The home is run by a private organisation that operates several registered children's homes.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

A new manager was appointed on 11 November 2024 and has made an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

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: 14 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2025	Full	Good
03/10/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children actively engage in the day-to-day running of the household. They interact naturally with staff and the other children. The children are relaxed in their environment, and their presence is seen and heard throughout the home. The children have input into the decoration of the home, which is well maintained. The children are proud of their bedrooms and are supported to put their own mark on their personal spaces.

Children seek out staff and the manager to have open and regular conversations, and positive relationships are evident. There are ample opportunities for the children to have a voice and relay their wishes and feelings.

Children are supported with their education. Staff have positive relationships with schools and work effectively to promote educational attainment and engagement in line with the children's needs and abilities. A pastoral support officer described staff to be 'consistently clear and supportive'. When the children are awaiting formal provisions, staff engage the children in learning opportunities, both in the home and through educational trips and activities. Children have clear aspirations for their futures.

Children's routine health appointments are maintained. The complex health needs of one child are continuously emerging, and the manager works with the relevant health professionals to ensure these needs are responded to and well met.

Children take part in local activities and enjoy the wider community and what it has to offer. One child is supported to attend West End shows, and another enjoys days out go-karting.

Children's relationships with their families are promoted. The manager and staff are conscious of these lifelong links for the children. When ruptures in these relationships occur, staff step in and support them to help the children repair these.

Staff encourage the children to take risks appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff have regular discussions and educative activities to support the children to gain confidence in their abilities and in decision-making. The staff have regular, focused and sensitive discussions with the children to support them to develop their understanding and capabilities. On one occasion, there was a missed opportunity to support a child who experienced an incident of racism. This was reported to the police and the child's social worker; however, the effect on the child's well-being was not explored or responded to by the staff.

One child is planning a move out of the home. Staff spent time explaining to them when this will happen and showed them photos of where they will be living. Staff

also supported them with a visit to the new provision during the inspection. The child is clear about the plans to support their move on.

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

Children say they feel safe and are safe. They are confident in the staff's abilities to keep them safe and can identify people to go to when they have any worries or concerns. Staff demonstrate an understanding of the children's individual risks and vulnerabilities.

The manager manages safeguarding incidents well. Staff are confident in following the clear safeguarding processes. Professionals say they are well informed and that staff managed safeguarding incidents well. There was an isolated incident in the manager's absence when a notification was not submitted to the regulator. However, this information was shared with other external professionals, and this did not cause any negative effect on the children's safety.

On occasions when the children have made allegations against staff, these have been appropriately responded to by the manager. Immediate safeguarding measures are taken to ensure the children's safety. The manager makes referrals to external agencies when needed, which provides an additional layer of external scrutiny.

Staff rarely use physical intervention. It is only used as a last resort to keep people safe and is proportionate. Staff are trained in the home's model of de-escalation and physical intervention. When incidents do occur, these are recorded correctly, and both the children and adults are afforded the opportunity to reflect and debrief.

The home uses surveillance and has external CCTV in place for security. There are also door alarms on the external exits and bedroom doors, which are activated at night. The use of door alarms is responsive to current and presenting risk. The staff do not have a blanket approach; one child does not have alarms activated currently. However, the regular reviewing of this practice and ongoing consent is not clearly recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has provided a level of stability during a period of instability. There has been a significant turnover of staff. The manager worked tirelessly to minimise the effect of these changes on the children. There is now a secure permanent core team that is supplemented by regular and consistent agency workers. There is a comprehensive workforce development plan in place which is being progressed. Staff are positive and complimentary about the manager and praised her efforts in ensuring they felt supported and held during this period.

The manager is ambitious and has a clear vision for the home. She knows the children well and has developed positive relationships with them, their families and

associated professionals. The manager is developing an emerging shared ethos and culture across the home.

Staff training is monitored and generally well managed. However, there were delays for one new starter accessing training due to the wider organisation transitioning over to a new training provider.

For new starters, the induction and probation plans and expectations are clear. However, supervision expectations are not clear, and there are some inconsistencies across the home's policies for induction and probation, which leaves staff unclear on their supervision entitlements. However, staff say they access regular supervision, feel well supported and that the manager and senior management team are approachable and readily available to them. Agency workers are not afforded formal supervision currently, and this shortfall needs to be addressed due to the frequency they are currently working in the home.

The home's statement of purpose is outdated with incorrect information and has not been subject to regular review. This has the potential to leave stakeholders with a lack of clarity on the role and aims of the home.

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— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. If a home has a website, the registered person must ensure that a copy of the statement of purpose is published on that website unless the registered person considers that such publication would prejudice the welfare of children in the home. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b) (4))	1 July 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, including door alarms, should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should actively support each child to achieve their potential. They should ensure that staff understand and can meet each child's needs. In particular, they should ensure that children are supported and educated following any incidents that occur. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. New staff should be able to access training promptly to prepare them for their new roles. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including agency staff, receive supervision of their practice which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. The frequency

of supervision should be clear for staff, so they know when to expect to have supervision. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. In particular, they should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place in the manager's absence. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 2572812

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

Inspector

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 2025