

2682837

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 7 children who may experience social, emotional or mental health difficulties. There were 3 children living in the home at the time of inspection.

The home is run by a private organisation that operates several registered children's homes.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2022.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 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: 29 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2024	Full	Outstanding
24/05/2023	Full	Good
14/02/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are settled, happy and receive an outstanding level of care from staff they trust and who know them well.

Children make sustained and exceptional progress across all areas of their development. Staff use imaginative play and multisensory activities to help one child use verbal communication more confidently. One family member said, 'He has come on leaps and bounds. He couldn't talk when he moved into the home, but he chats away now, which is excellent and such a big change.'

Children are at the centre of decision-making. The support provided by staff is tailored to children's individual needs and personalities. Staff plan and curate visual and thoughtful interventions to help children understand their own experiences and the experiences of others. Staff speak to children with respect and work with them to help manage individual difficulties. As a result of the modelling from staff, children speak with empathy and care for each other.

Children have fun and are encouraged by staff to participate in a stimulating array of activities that reflect their individual interests and talents. One child who is passionate about animals is excited to have recently started horse riding lessons. A professional said, 'The home have done so much to accommodate anything [the child] likes or enjoys.' Older children enjoy attending the gym, playing football and gaming together with staff and friends.

Staff prepare exceptionally well for when new children move in and ensure that children feel welcomed to the home. The registered manager carefully assesses how any changes might affect the children already living in the home and works closely with professionals to ensure that plans are child led. When children move out of the home, staff ensure that preparations are made ahead of time so that children know what to expect. On one occasion, a child moved out of the home in an unplanned way. Staff took action to ensure that this ending was concluded positively for the child.

Children are supported to maintain good health and wellbeing. Staff encourage children to participate in activities that support a healthy lifestyle and teach them how to safely manage their health conditions.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of children to identify and support progress in a nuanced and meaningful way. This ensures that each child's achievements are understood within their own context and celebrated accordingly. Staff are proud of the progress that children are making.

All children in the home are engaging in education that is tailored to their individual needs. The manager and staff advocate strongly for children to ensure that they are

receiving the right support and are able to excel. One child who was not previously engaging in education is now making outstanding academic progress and working towards their GCSEs.

Children have high aspirations for their futures, from pursuing careers such as professional football to progressing into further education. Staff nurture their ambitions through encouragement, guidance and providing them with intentional opportunities to flourish.

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

Staff understand the risks affecting children exceptionally well. Staff provide targeted support to strengthen children's feelings of safety, stability and emotional wellbeing. One professional said, 'Staff appear well prepared and confident when responding to challenging situations. They use de-escalation appropriately and maintain a child-centred approach. Their responses are measured and consistent, which helps the [child] feel safe.'

Staff help children to reflect on their own actions and feelings so that they can repair relationships and build respect with one another. When children behave in a way that has consequences for others living in the home, staff ensure that all children receive immediate support to ensure their needs are met and the impact on them is minimised.

Staff support children to develop the skills to build positive and safe personal relationships. Staff sensitively engage children in age-appropriate conversations, exploring complex topics, such as consent, sexual health and factors that may affect children's decision-making, such as grooming and capacity. This work is underpinned by clear values of respect and aims to promote self-esteem and accountability.

Children's risk assessments include relevant history and offer staff clear guidance to respond to concerns. The manager is responsive to changing risks, providing effective safeguards and strategies to enable staff to meet the needs of children. Children are encouraged to be part of that journey and contribute to their own safety planning. This helps children to reflect on the positive changes they have made.

Staff practice in response to risk is not reactive or overly restrictive. For a brief period, physical adaptations were made to the home environment in order to keep children safe. However, these were removed at the earliest opportunity once the risk reduced. When necessary and proportionate restrictions were put into place, they were reviewed and monitored closely by the registered manager.

There has been just one occasion when a child went missing from the home. This was managed well. Staff looked for the child and worked closely with the police and the child's parent to locate the child and ensure that they returned home safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a skilled and experienced manager who leads by example and demonstrates unwavering commitment to the children. She provides consistent, stable and highly effective leadership, offering clear guidance, professional containment and skilful advocacy for children. Her understated but relentless drive to achieve the best possible outcomes for children creates a culture of high aspiration and reflective staff practice.

There is a strong focus on staff development and wellbeing. The manager ensures that all staff receive any required training that is specific to the needs of children. Staff training and development are further enhanced and refreshed in meaningful and creative team meetings. Leaders and managers promote a reflective culture with a consistent drive to do better for children.

Staff feel valued and there is good staff retention. They feel able to access the support they need from managers to undertake their roles and very much enjoy working at the home. This means that children are cared for by staff who are well resourced and emotionally resilient.

The high quality of the recording in the home enables staff to easily understand the needs of the children as well as their strengths, progress and vulnerabilities. The child-focused nature of the recording provides children with a clear and reliable history of their time living at the home.

Staff have plentiful opportunities to reflect on their practice critically and transparently. When there have been challenges, staff have respectful and strengths-based conversations to determine the positive outcomes and the learning. They treat children with unconditional positive regard and consider the child's experience as an important source of understanding and improving practice.

Managers and staff maintain good relationships with children's loved ones and professionals. Social care professionals are positive about the care that children receive, the communication from staff and the progress that children are making. There is excellent collaborative work, which helps children to receive effective, coordinated care. One professional said, 'Staff are approachable and responsive when contact is needed, which helps maintain a shared understanding of the [child's] needs.'

Leaders understand the importance of good oversight and have effective systems in place to support quality assurance. Leaders are receptive to feedback from an independent person and take effective action in a timely way. The registered manager rigorously reviews the quality of care in the home. Through her detailed analysis, she is able to formulate clear plans that have meaningful impact for the children living in the home.

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: 2682837

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: Julie Scrivener

Inspectors

Gemma Bullen, Social Care Inspector
Tash Williams, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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