

SC023646

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 seven children. According to the provider's statement of purpose, it aims to provide children with warmth and nurture and an environment where they can grow and develop.

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living at the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2007. The registered manager was absent at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 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: 19 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2025	Full	Outstanding
06/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
14/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
06/12/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptional support from a dedicated and skilled staff team. Staff and children share warm, affectionate and trusting relationships. From this stable base, children achieve outstanding outcomes and make significant progress. Children and staff speak positively about their experiences of living and working at the home, describing each other as a 'family'.

Staff help children understand their identities. Children feel safe talking to staff about their heritage, culture and life stories because of the positive relationships they have built with them. Staff engage in regular, meaningful conversations that help children make sense of their background and personal experiences. Staff worked proactively with one child's family to gain a deeper understanding of their cultural needs. Staff use this information to inform their practice with the child.

Children participate in a wide range of activities and sports, which promotes their wellbeing and enhances their social skills. One child has hugely improved their confidence because of swimming lessons arranged by staff. Another child has learned new skills by joining a rugby team. Birthday celebrations are personalised according to children's interests, and children have been on holidays where they have created happy and lasting memories together.

Children are supported through a carefully graded approach that helps them develop independence skills, such as managing their finances. A committed staff team helps children overcome barriers to their personal development, which in turn promotes their independence. One child, who was not previously confident, now takes responsibility for arranging and getting their hair cut. The support staff provide equips children with life skills and prepares them for adulthood.

Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated meaningfully. With support from a stable staff team, one child has made continuous progress in developing their social skills. Staff recognised the significance of this child's participation in a sports day event at school and ensured that it was commemorated accordingly.

Staff are persistent and creative at supporting children to achieve educationally. All children are engaged in learning, structured routines and purposeful activities on a consistent basis. Children are encouraged and supported to engage in voluntary work and work experience. When one child's college attendance waned, staff worked collaboratively with the college to ensure that appropriate support was in place. Staff use incentives and rewards to motivate children to invest in their education. This approach resulted in one child successfully achieving qualifications and attending their school prom.

Children's health needs are taken seriously, and staff are creative in ensuring that children remain active. One child uses a virtual reality headset to help them stay active. This innovative approach built on the child's existing interests to promote positive health outcomes.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are treated with paramount importance. Regular children's meetings take place with active participation from children. Incentives are in place for children, which encourages them to engage with communal mealtimes. This is a good opportunity for children to deepen their relationships with one another and provides a platform for children to be involved in decision-making in the home. Furthermore, the registered manager consults children individually and ensures that their views are responded to in a timely way.

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

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and demonstrate a high level of vigilance in relation to risks affecting children. They are alert to emerging and known risks and take timely, appropriate action to reduce potential harm. Children are consulted about and contribute towards their safety plans, which helps them to take more ownership of their safety. This strong safeguarding culture ensures that children are consistently protected and feel safe in the home.

Staff develop strong partnerships with professionals and loved ones in each child's support network. This collaboration has directly helped to reduce risks affecting some children. Staff worked with one child's family to create consistent boundaries and to help the child repair the relationship with their parents. This child now enjoys regular family time and can verbalise their feelings about these experiences in a clearer and calmer way.

Staff show curiosity in children's lives and are acutely aware of changes in behaviours and presentation. For one child, staff responded promptly to a noticeable change in behaviour. They demonstrated professional curiosity and took appropriate action by carrying out a room search to help identify any underlying concerns. Staff provided impactful learning with the child about substance misuse and worked alongside the child to help them understand the risks.

Staff are aware of the risks associated with social media, the internet and smartphones. They help children to use this technology more safely and know how to respond when concerns arise. Staff and leaders demonstrate high levels of professional curiosity to ensure that safety plans associated with technology are proportionate and suited to children's needs. Staff maintain a balance between providing appropriate supervision and allowing children the freedom to explore in a safe and responsible way.

Incidents are rare because staff are well attuned to the children's needs. The use of physical intervention is sometimes necessary to keep children safe. Leaders have effective and meaningful oversight to ensure that measures are proportionate and safe. Children are supported by trusted staff to express their feelings and understand what

happened. Any learning arising from incidents in the home is communicated clearly and transparently with external professionals.

Staff make excellent use of the multi-agency networks around children. They are proactive, ensuring that the networks around the child are working cohesively and effectively together. This ensures that children's needs remain central to care and safety planning and that children get the support and resources they need.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an experienced registered manager who has high aspirations for the children and the staff. Leaders hold themselves and the staff to high standards and model the expectation of total dedication to the children. Managers take children's views seriously and spend dedicated and purposeful time with them to hear their opinions and wishes.

Managers encourage a culture where staff advocate tirelessly for children. Whether they are discussing plans for children's futures or helping children to obtain a passport, staff always go the extra mile to ensure that children achieve the outcomes that they both want and deserve.

Staff morale is high, and there is very little staff turnover in the home, which can be attributed to an effective and supportive leadership team. Due to the minimal turnover, children receive care from a familiar and stable staff team that provides excellent continuity of care.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They receive regular, reflective supervision that encourages their development. Leaders are attuned to the emotional demands of working at the home and offer staff regular formal and informal support. Leaders foster a culture of openness and mutual support, with staff recognising the benefits of these discussions for their wellbeing and learning.

The registered manager has excellent oversight over the home. She recognises quickly where there are areas for development and takes effective action in a timely way to escalate or resolve any issues.

Managers have built excellent relationships with children's professional networks. Professionals speak highly of the management team and its ability to effect change. One social worker said, 'Staff are approachable, friendly and consistent.' Another social worker said, 'The staff are exceptional.'

No recommendations or requirements were identified at the time of the inspection.

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: SC023646

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Registered provider address: Units 73 And 74 Maple Leaf Business Park, Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5GD

Responsible individual: Sophie Wood

Registered manager: Tiffany Healy

Inspectors

Stephanie McDonald, Social Care Inspector
Tash Williams, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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