

SC023646

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 registered to accommodate and provide care for up to seven children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2007.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 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: 6 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2021	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
06/03/2019	Full	Outstanding
05/12/2017	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 from their starting points. Children and staff talk positively about their experiences of living and working in the environment, frequently using words such as 'family' and 'home' to describe what it is like to be there.

Staff provide highly effective one-to-one support based around well-developed and individualised care plans. Staff track children's progress closely against all elements of the child's care plan, including risk, health, education and emotional and social development. This enables staff to focus on what really matters for each individual child and adapt quickly to new areas of need as they arise.

Staff create an extremely safe space where children know that they can share anything with staff, including their worries, concerns, fears and anxieties. One way in which they do this is by adopting a principle that 'no conversation is off limits'. This helps to create a culture of openness, honesty and transparency.

Children who have previously struggled to make progress in education are now engaged and enjoying learning. Staff advocate effectively to ensure that every child finds the best possible school setting in which to maximise their potential.

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

Staff are acutely aware of the current pressures that are affecting access to some support services for children. In some cases, staff have arranged private healthcare and mental healthcare to prevent children from experiencing unnecessary waiting times.

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

Staff attribute the effectiveness of safeguarding in the home to the quality and strength of partnerships with senior leaders within the organisation and external partners involved in the safeguarding of children.

The safety and well-being of children are prioritised throughout the referral and assessment process. The registered manager places great emphasis on the effective

matching of children who are coming to live at the home. She will confidently challenge professionals if she has any doubts about referral decisions.

Staff demonstrate a depth of safeguarding knowledge and experience. There is always someone available with the knowledge and experience required to make effective safeguarding decisions.

Staff carefully review any incidents at the home. They are able to step back and review decisions and outcomes, and take prompt action when there is room to improve practice.

Staff nurture highly developed relationships between the local safeguarding partnership and the missing persons team, which help to ensure that the number of missing incidents is very low. The manager has also been asked by the local missing persons team to contribute advice and guidance to other organisations on effective missing persons strategies.

Children seldom go missing because the home is their safe space and this makes children want to spend time there. Staff deliver proactive responses to children who do go missing, and always make sure that children experience a loving and caring return to home.

Staff allow children to take positive risks and recognise that sometimes they make mistakes. However, staff support children to learn and grow from this process.

Staff ensure that children are at the centre of their own safety and risk management planning. Children take an active role in defining what they need to do to keep themselves safe.

The registered manager encourages staff to use up-to-date research and guidance to enhance their practice. A recent initiative included using a staff member's expertise around gaming, technology and social media to review and enhance online safety practice in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has high expectations for children and the staff team. She explains the staff role as 'to meet and exceed the expectation of a good parent'. Leaders hold themselves and the staff to extremely high standards and expect total dedication to the children at all times.

In turn, staff have high levels of confidence and trust in the leadership of the home. Leaders display immense pride in their team and, through effective supervision and training, have created a staff team that demonstrates high levels of autonomy and confidence.

Leaders have remained in post at the home for several years, providing consistency and stability for children. As a result of their experience, leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of the children and staff whom they support.

Staff and children feel valued and invested in. They have a strong voice in day-to-day decision-making. Staff say that they have opportunities to challenge constructively and share their views. Leaders always approach this dialogue in a reflective and open manner.

Leaders are not complacent and are driven to continually improve the quality of care and support at the home. They are keen to explore new ideas and everyone, children and staff alike, feel involved in this process. This sense of inclusion engenders a real sense of pride in the home for all who live and work there.

Leaders use effective systems for monitoring the home to create ambitious development plans. Leaders are very clear about what works well, but they are always willing to adapt to new ideas if they improve the quality of children's experiences.

Leaders have created a strong and positive culture at the home. They work collaboratively with children, staff and wider professional networks, keeping children at the heart of everything they do. As a result, children say that they 'love' being at the home, and they are achieving excellent outcomes.

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: Unit 73 And 74 Maple Leaf Business Park,
Manston, Ramsgate CT12 5GD

Responsible individual: Keith Riley

Registered manager: Tiffany Healy

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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