

SC478616

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home registered with Ofsted in October 2014. It offers care for up to four children aged from nine to 17 years who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2023.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 September 2025

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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/12/2024	Full	Good
25/07/2023	Full	Good
09/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children newly admitted to the home are welcomed with warmth and sensitivity by a highly skilled and nurturing staff team. Staff demonstrate the ability to help children settle quickly, building trust and emotional safety from the outset. Moves into the home are thoughtfully planned and executed, with staff working closely with families and professionals to ensure children feel secure and understood.

Staff place a strong emphasis on education, recognising its central role in each child's development and future opportunities. This year, every child has benefited from a tailored education plan. Staff have worked diligently to overcome barriers to learning, including those arising from previous disruptions or unmet needs. As a result, children are engaging positively with their education, showing increased attendance, motivation and academic progress. Staff work closely with education professionals to maximise stability and increase children's chances of success.

Children with complex health needs receive highly individualised care. Staff consult effectively with health professionals to ensure that children's medical needs are met consistently. Staff demonstrate clear understanding of each child's health profile and respond with compassion and competence. Children are supported to understand and manage their own health, promoting independence and self-confidence.

Staff celebrate every milestone, whether academic, personal or health-related, reinforcing children's sense of achievement and self-worth. The team's commitment to holistic care ensures that children thrive across all areas of their lives.

Staff have supported two young people into semi-independence this year. Transition arrangements are excellent. The staff's rapid reactions to swiftly changing plans for one child enabled a successful move into further education and a very positive outcome.

Staff pride themselves on the amount of support they provide to children even when they have left the home. This year staff continued to support a child through some highly challenging personal circumstances in the months after they left the home. This enabled the child to work through some complex challenges while still feeling supported and empowered to make their own choices.

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

Children living at the home experience a high level of safety and protection, even when facing elevated vulnerabilities in both their personal lives and community settings. The registered manager has embedded a culture of proactive safeguarding, underpinned by a well-trained staff team. Training is not only comprehensive but also tailored around the unique risks and needs of each child. This has empowered staff to manage complex safeguarding scenarios while promoting children's independence and autonomy.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of each child's individual vulnerabilities and respond with thoughtful, personalised safety planning. These plans are dynamic and evolve with the child, ensuring that risk is managed without limiting opportunity. As a result, children can participate fully in community life, education and social activities, supported by robust protective measures.

Safeguarding records are well maintained. Staff ensure that all incidents, including missing episodes, are documented with clarity and precision. Chronologies are detailed and include all relevant inter-agency communications, strategy meetings and outcomes. This level of documentation supports transparency and accountability across the team.

The registered manager plays a pivotal role in multi-agency safeguarding work, fostering strong partnerships with external professionals. Their active involvement in joint meetings and strategic discussions ensures that children benefit from a cohesive and consistent safeguarding response across all areas of their lives.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Following a period of leadership change, the manager has prioritised the development of a more stable and consistent leadership structure. In collaboration with the responsible individual, she is laying the groundwork for long-term stability and continuity in the home.

The registered manager has quickly identified areas where staff felt less confident and perhaps less willing to work on their own initiative. She has worked hard to support staff through this and is already making progress in creating more accountability across the entire senior team in the home.

The registered manager maintains a strong focus on creating positive outcomes for children and everything that she does has the child at the very centre of her thinking. Her leadership is not only aspirational but deeply practical, rooted in a clear vision for care that she consistently models to her team.

A key strength of the manager is her ability to navigate and manage complex interpersonal dynamics between children. She brings insight and emotional intelligence to situations that require careful balancing of individual needs, group harmony and therapeutic boundaries. Her approach fosters stability and emotional safety, even in moments of challenge. She has worked closely with her team as they have learned to navigate some of the more challenging relationships between children.

Staff are highly complimentary about the quality of supervision and support both formal and informal. Staff talk about the accessibility and availability of the manager when they need advice, support and guidance.

The manager is also forward thinking. Following on from last year's inspection, the manager has worked on both the home and staff development plans adding clarity and accountability to some ambitious targets for the development of practice at the home.

Feedback from professionals is overwhelmingly positive. The manager is widely respected as a strong advocate for children and a trusted partner in multi-agency work. Her reputation for integrity and child-centred practice is well established.

Children speak highly of the leadership team, expressing confidence that staff are always in their corner. The manager has created multiple avenues for children to share their views and influence decisions, ensuring that their voices are central to the running of the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. Each home must have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: SC478616

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: Angela Jarvis

Inspector

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

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