

2688021

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to seven children. The home supports children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and attachment issues.

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

This is the first full inspection of the home since registration on 5 October 2022.

The home has not had a manager registered with Ofsted since November 2024.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 January 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from positive relationships with staff. Staff have developed relationships with the children through spending meaningful time with them. Children enjoy their time with the staff and have adults whom they trust. Staff engage in activities with the children that the children enjoy. Activities are used as a reward to celebrate achievements and positive behaviour. As a result, children say that they are happy and feel comfortable and safe in the care of staff who are child-focused.

Staff do not use consequences to manage children's behaviour. They use reflective space and rewards to encourage positive behaviour. This helps children to gain wisdom from their experiences by embracing both their triumphs and mistakes. This has been successful in improving school attendance for one child and promoting independence for another child.

Children are making progress in line with their individual goals. Staff support and encourage children to engage in education. One child is now attending a mainstream school after months of not attending school and is doing well. When children are struggling to access education, staff engage with external professionals to ensure that the right support that meets the children's individual needs is provided. For example, staff are currently facilitating one child to receive education at home. The child is making strides and is accessing more hours of education.

Children are making progress in maintaining good health. For one child, since moving into the home their health and ability to meet their self-care needs have significantly improved. This has been due to the practical help provided by staff.

Staff know the children well. They understand each child's uniqueness. This has been vital in creating a nurturing, safe and empowering environment that supports the children's development. As a result, children have increased in confidence and, for one child, they are now able to build and maintain friendships.

Staff promote children's relationships with their families. When there are conflicts between children and their families, staff help to repair relationships. Consequently, children enjoy quality time with their families. Staff have been instrumental in cultivating and maintaining relationships with the family of one child to prevent them from going missing. This has been vital in helping to keep them safe.

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

Safeguarding processes are clear and transparent. The manager and staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and ensure that they collaborate with other professionals. Incidents are well managed, and necessary actions are taken to ensure

that children are safeguarded effectively. Safeguarding records are clear and comprehensive.

Risks are managed well. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly in line with the changing needs of each child. Children's safety plans are completed in collaboration with the children. This allows for clear communication between the children and staff about their worries and concerns. This also helps children to engage with the support they need to become safer.

Staff are clear on what steps to take when children go missing. They communicate effectively with children following episodes of going missing. This provides them with an insight into why children go missing to reduce the risks. For example, one child said that when they went missing, they were going to a friend's house for gaming because the home did not have the equipment. The home purchased the equipment needed for the child to be able to participate in gaming in the home. Consequently, this contributed to a reduction in the child's episodes of going missing.

Staff work closely and successfully with external professionals. This is a key strength of the manager and the staff. The manager is in regular communication with relevant professionals to ensure that the right support for each child is in place. This has been instrumental in reducing episodes of going missing for one child and providing mental health support for another child. Through the relationships that the manager has developed with mental health professionals, staff have been given additional support specific to the child's mental health needs by the child and adolescent mental health services. This means that their approach to supporting children with these needs is well informed and effective.

Staff receive training in line with the individual needs of the children. Therefore, children receive good-quality support from staff who are knowledgeable and equipped in understanding their vulnerabilities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted. They are an experienced, child-focused manager who leads by example. They have high aspirations for staff as a result children to receive good-quality care. The manager leads with an 'open door' approach. This has created a supportive environment where staff and children can share their thoughts and feelings with leaders and managers.

Staff feel supported by managers and senior leaders. They receive regular supervision and feel valued. One staff member described managers as being present and approachable. The responsible individual is also present in the home and is well known to children and staff. There are opportunities for staff to develop their careers within the organisation. The manager is invested in developing staff by supporting them to progress to senior roles if they choose to. This creates a supportive culture that results in

staff feeling empowered and able to collaborate with managers in the children's best interests.

Children's needs and lived experiences are at the centre of decision-making. The manager carefully considers the impact of moving new children into the home and only does so after careful consideration that their needs are understood and are compatible with the children already living in the home.

Leaders and managers know the strengths of the home and areas for development. The manager and responsible individual know the children well and are proud of the progress they are making. However, some of the record-keeping is fragmented and not easy to access. The manager has a plan to improve monitoring systems to address this and has identified areas to further enhance practice.

Feedback from professionals is positive. Social workers praised the manager for their communication and described them as a 'great advocate' for children. Another social worker said they were 'very happy' with the support being offered by 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
<p>The registered person must ensure that the following items, which may be kept in electronic form, are kept in an accessible manner—</p> <p>children’s case records (see regulation 36);</p> <p>other records (see regulation 37). (Regulation 38 (i) (j))</p>	<p>16 April 2025</p>

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: 2688021

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

Manager: Paul Johnston

Inspector

Chido Mangava, Social Care Inspector

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