

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC006921
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Five Rivers Childcare Limited
Registered provider address	Five Rivers Childcare, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury SP1 3UT

Responsible individual	Mausumi Maulik
Registered manager	Naome Muzeremwi
Inspector	Angus Mackay

Inspection date	18/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC006921

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The registered manager is an excellent role model for staff and children.
- Staff are skilled, dedicated, enthusiastic and care deeply for the children.
- Staff listen to children, ensuring that their suggestions significantly influence positive change in the home.
- Children make good to excellent progress in education.
- Children with complex issues make good progress in self-esteem, health and developing good social skills.
- Staff have excellent and effective relationships with other professionals, including placing social workers, mental health teams, the virtual school and the police missing persons team.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that, when conducting routine searches of a child's bedroom if it is believed that there is a risk to the child's safety or well-being, staff record this in a location which the registered manager can easily monitor. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- Complete a review and revision of the safeguarding policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

In particular, ensure that the guidance on referring child protection concerns to the local authority is explicit on the procedures to follow at weekends and during the absence of the registered manager. In addition, ensure that all staff are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with it, in particular how to use it to report a concern. Ensure in monitoring control and discipline that these are fair, that staff record rewards in the correct place and that sanctions are time limited.

- Encourage children to see the home's records as 'living documents', supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

In particular, devise a way in which they can add comments to the electronic record.

- Conduct a review of the premises, ensuring that it is suitably located so that it safeguards children effectively and can meet the needs identified in children's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

In particular, expand the range of opportunities presented by the home's location, and how to manage local risks identified by key partners and the manager's analysis of local data.

- Use professional judgement to decide what factors to focus on in the review of the quality of the care provided by the home. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery in the home and how to address them. Support this information with relevant data to evidence the analysis and conclusions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home may provide care and accommodation for no more than five young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home has access to an on-site school and a dedicated psychology service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/01/2016	Full	Good
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good

Children live in a safe, well-managed environment. They like the home and, in particular, love their bedrooms. The registered manager sets the positive nurturing culture of the home by providing structure and guidance to staff and children. She receives good support from her line managers, who ensure that the home is suitably resourced. The manager commenced work on the recommendations for improvement identified during the inspection, ensuring that she completed many of these before the inspection concluded. Children make good progress at the home, with staff support. A social worker said of work with one child, 'Staff have gone above and beyond for her. The improvements in her are very much down to the staff at the home.'

Children have excellent relationships with the staff team. The staff show genuine interest in their progress and greet them warmly when they return from school or trips out. Relationships are nurturing and staff display an excellent knowledge of children's behavioural patterns and triggers to high-risk behaviours, as recorded in risk assessments. This allows staff to intervene in a timely and consistent manner with the children, ensuring that they reduce the likelihood of dangerous or high-risk behaviours in the children. One of the children said, 'I trust the staff a lot. I will talk to them about personal issues. I respect that they have to share urgent or worrying things with others, but I can trust them to make the right decision.'

Children make good to excellent progress in education. Some have overcome significant barriers to learning to make remarkable progress. A virtual headteacher said of one of the children, 'Her progress has been spectacular.' The home aims to engage all children in mainstream education, accepting that many will require significant support and preparation for this from the on-site school. In this setting, children have personal education programmes with high levels of support and engagement from teachers and care staff. Teachers are highly aware of the presenting difficulties that the children have and ensure that they work in a manner consistent with that of the care staff to allow them to manage the children's high-risk behaviours and provide good education. This ensures that children with mental health issues, self-harming behaviours, eating disorders and a range of behavioural issues have a holistic education and care approach in school. Young people are making good progress with this support and enjoy attending school. One of the children described her opinion of the on-site education: 'School is amazing, teachers and staff are really good. They calm me down. The work is amazing: it is a brilliant school.'

Children make good progress with a wide range of often complex health issues. These can include mental health issues, eating disorders, self-harming behaviours and poor physical health. Staff work well with other professionals, aiding children to make slow but significant and carefully monitored progress. The benefits from the work include improved social engagement and self-esteem, and a significant reduction in dangerous and harmful actions. Staff work well with children with significant health issues to enable them to access external college courses in a safe and controlled manner. This gradual and well-monitored approach has shown excellent results. One children and adolescent mental health worker said of staff's work with one young person: 'They have been very supportive. I can't think of a staff team that could have worked with her any better. Through staff's support, medication has been dramatically reduced.'

Children improve their relationships with others and develop friendships, community links, and religious and cultural contacts. Some of the children have experienced significant barriers to social inclusion yet made significant progress, with staff assistance. Some are at high risk of sexual exploitation, and receive constant and consistent guidance from staff and health professionals to aid their safety in the community. A virtual headteacher commented on the work of the care and teaching team, 'This child was completely cut off from the wider community. They got her out to places of worship and into work experience. Care staff and teachers worked together on this. She is now part of the community and they have successfully integrated her into college.'

Children make good progress with developing confidence and social skills. Staff work with them in one-to-one sessions, encouraging positive personal interactions. They encourage children to develop self-help and personal care skills. Some children have made dramatic improvements, with this assistance. Individual programmes recognise the varying needs of the children, with some working on very basic skills and others taking control of large areas of their own care. One young person said that she regularly cooked at the home, sometimes by herself and sometimes with staff. She commented, 'I think this is the best place. The education is amazing, the food is amazing, and staff and children cook together. I cook meals by myself and think that they are good. Let's just say that everyone comes for seconds!'

Children learn how to make safe decisions, and how to influence and effect change in the home. Some children are working at understanding social cues and how to stay safe, both in the community and when using electronic media. Others have a significant voice in the home, and in decisions about their own care and the environment they live in. One young person was extremely proud of her effective and meaningful part in recent staff recruitment. Another explained how she used public transport and could shop with staff, but make her own choices and pay for them. Young people are progressing socially, and improving their confidence and good decision-making skills, with skilled support from staff.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good

Children feel safe at the home and trust staff implicitly. They feel protected from harm by staff actions and feel that they can confide in them. Children know how to make a complaint and understand the child protection procedures at the home.

Staff maintain detailed risk assessments on the children. They regularly review these, marking any changes clearly so that all staff can follow them. The risk assessments incorporate guidance from the child and adolescent mental health service team (CAMHS), the social worker, the school and primary healthcare professionals. They are effective guides to staff actions, aiding them in identifying and managing significant risks. Staff reduce children's risks and use the guides to avoid unnecessary police involvement in managing challenging behaviours.

When children go missing, staff have well-coordinated responses to safeguard them. The current group of children have not gone missing although they have, on one occasion, absented themselves from staff supervision. Staff complete the recording of absences on a separate sheet, not in the missing person's log book, making analysis of events more difficult. The registered manager altered the recording system of absences during the inspection to make it easier to monitor them. Where young people have gone missing, staff search for them and implement local procedures for children missing from care. The local police missing person's service praised the staff for their effective work in reducing risk to children who are at risk of sexual exploitation. She said, 'They have been really amazing. I have a close relationship with the manager and this helps us to work together to reduce the risk for these children.'

The manager applies rigorous recruitment checks on all appointments. She recruits staff in line with guidance on safe recruitment, applying all checks to ensure safe appointments. The recruitment process includes input from the children at the home. One wrote questions and asked the manager if she would use them in the pending recruitment exercises. The manager used the questions, enhancing the selection process and the meaningful involvement of the children in the safe selection process. The author of the questions said, 'I was really pleased that the manager agreed to use my questions. It made me feel really good. I did not realise that I was so clever. It felt really good to be involved.'

Staff's use of rewards and sanctions aids in maintaining good order in the home. Staff discuss them with the children and try to ensure that they are directly relevant to the behaviour, are always fair and, when possible, are restorative in nature. However, staff have occasionally incorrectly entered positive comments in the sanctions field, leading to a possible confusion in monitoring these. In addition,

there is no field showing the duration of the sanctions on the electronic record. The registered manager monitors sanctions, ensuring that they are fair and, restorative in nature. In addition, she evaluates them for effectiveness after a suitable time to judge their impact. The considered use of sanctions and rewards has helped children to make improvements in their social skills and behaviours, reducing negative behaviours and increasing positive interactions.

During the inspection, the inspector was aware of a safeguarding investigation which the local authority had been conducting. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations(s) were considered (when appropriate), alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform judgements. Staff had acted appropriately in managing the incidents in question. Despite there being no complaint or other notifiable action, the registered manager had reported the disturbances to all relevant bodies and complied with a local authority investigation by the designated officer in the local authority which ultimately resulted in no further action. However, the investigation revealed some gaps in knowledge in the staff team regarding exactly when to report incidents. The detailed policy on safeguarding lacked absolutely clear guidance on the actions to take at weekends when staff had serious concerns about child protection issues. In addition, the inspection identified difficulties in communication, both from the placing authority, and to and from the host local authority safeguarding team, which had exacerbated difficulties in resolving this issue. The provider has commenced a review of the safeguarding policy and practice, and has arranged refresher training in safeguarding for staff. The local authority is addressing communication issues to ensure that its systems cause no future delays in communicating matters of concern to it.

When children's behaviours place them or others at risk, staff have conducted searches of their rooms in accordance with the home's policy. In addition, CAMHS has advised on regular checks in response to high-risk behaviours, such as self-harm. Staff always record these searches. However, they are not all recorded in the search log, making scrutiny of their effectiveness and adherence to correct practice guidelines difficult to enact. Staff actions have aided in reducing incidents of self-harm. However, it is sometimes difficult to track the outcomes from the searches.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

The manager has been the registered manager of this home since 6 March 2012.

She is a qualified teacher with lengthy experience, and has relevant social work qualifications in care and management. Staff and children admire her and respect her firm leadership of the home. One of the children said, 'The manager of this home, I love her. She is the best manager ever. I have had some terrible managers in other children's homes. She does tell me straight, which is what I like. If I am misbehaving, she will tell me.'

The manager maintains a development plan for the home, outlining key objectives for the coming year. She has written this with a very strong focus on the children at the home and ensuring that they live in a safe environment where they can thrive and develop. A significant part of the development plan focuses on the admissions policy, committing to maintaining high occupancy levels, but only with a suitable and safe balance between the children accommodated and new admissions. The plan has challenging but achievable targets. These include the engagement of children and relevant others in moving the service forward through consultation and acting on their ideas.

In addition to the development plan, the manager completes a six-monthly review of the quality of care in the home. She supplied a report for the period January to June 2016 to HMCI. The report has a good structure, commenting on each of the quality standards, and provides a helpful overview of the operation of the home. However, it lacks sufficient data to evidence fully the statements made. It includes a helpful development plan for the next six months which the manager has based on this half-yearly analysis. The manager includes in the review an updated Ofsted request for information form, providing evidence of some notable achievements in the home. The report evidences a good understanding of the areas for development in the home.

The manager maintains and reviews an assessment of the suitability of the location of the home. The assessment identifies some of the benefits of the location and the most significant threats. However, it is not a fully comprehensive assessment of the full benefits of and threats from the area, and how staff manage these to the benefit of the children.

The independent visitor supplies helpful reports containing interviews with children, staff, social workers and, when possible, family members. The reports contain a helpful evaluation of the functioning of the home and comment directly on how the staff are promoting children's well-being and safeguarding them effectively. The independent visitor submits the reports to HMCI in a timely manner, enhancing their effectiveness as a monitor of safe practice in the home. The manager uses the suggestions and the highlighted actions in these reports to aid her focus on improvement, meeting quality standards and providing good care to the children.

The statement of purpose is comprehensive, structured and provides a clear outline of how the staff seek to provide care at the home. It clearly addresses all the required areas and provides helpful structure charts incorporating staff experience,

qualifications and pictures of all staff. In addition, it includes a detailed and comprehensive workforce development plan outlining the current and planned training for the staff team. The staff all receive a copy of this statement and provide care in line with the stated ethos of the home.

Staff maintain electronic records on children. They are easy to access and provide a comprehensive record of the work undertaken with them. Children sign agreement to care plans, healthcare plans, risk assessments and other records. However, there is no facility on the electronic record for them to record their views on these plans and records.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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