

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC060118
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Five Rivers Child Care Limited
Registered provider address	Five Rivers Childcare, 47 Bedwin Street, Salisbury SP1 3UT

Responsible individual	Mausumi Maulik
Registered manager	Farraday Crews
Inspector	Heather Chaplin

Inspection date	17/08/2016
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

SC060118

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The staff and registered manager show exceptional resilience in responding to challenging incidents and behaviour. They only call for police assistance when absolutely necessary, which reduces the contact that the young people have with the criminal justice system.
- The young people have access to a very good range of positive, constructive and healthy activities to help occupy their time and broaden their horizons.
- The young people are helped and supported to tackle long-term medical and dental problems, which requires courage and resilience. This enables them to improve their health and helps to prevent further deterioration in long-standing problems that pre-date their arrival in the home.
- The staff team are keen cooks and provide a good variety of wholesome, nutritious meals for the young people. Home cooking, clear structure and boundaries provide the cornerstone of the home's nurturing care.
- The staff team is well managed and supported, both within the home and from senior managers, to help them provide high-quality care to the young people.
- The home is well decorated and the bathroom has been refurbished. The garden is an attractive and relaxing outdoor space for the young people to enjoy.

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 recommendations:

- Ensure that the children in their care understand their rights as a child looked-after, or child living in a children's home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements. In particular, ensure that this information is contained within the children's guide. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 23 and 24, paragraphs 4.19 and 4.22)
- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. In particular, ensure that the young person's individual risk assessment either includes details of the social worker's child sexual exploitation risk assessment outcome or is cross-referenced to it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered for one child irrespective of gender, aged from 11 to 17 years. Children placed here may have complex emotional and behavioural difficulties which require care in a single-child home.

This setting is one of several children's homes, a small specialist school and a fostering service which are owned and operated by a private company. It is jointly managed with another home, which is situated approximately 12 miles away.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/05/2015	Full	Good
09/12/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/07/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Over the past two years, there have been a number of management changes in the home and its sister provision. Until the registered manager returned from maternity leave in October 2015, a combination of very challenging placements and overstretched interim management arrangements had a negative impact on some of the former residents and staff in both homes. This situation has much improved, and this home now provides a stable and nurturing place where individual young people can feel safe and begin to re-establish structure in their lives. The staff team has been strengthened and now works together very effectively under experienced and skilled leadership. For the current young person, this has led to good progress and positive outcomes. Outcomes for previous residents have been variable, according to the precise nature of their individual needs. The staff worked exceptionally hard to engage with one young person who came to live in the home between the previous full and interim inspections, and who has now moved on. At the time of the interim inspection, they were relatively stable, but soon after this, discussions with their social worker about moving towards independence triggered very extreme behaviour. The acute anxiety that this young person felt was compounded by pending court dates for previous offences, variable compliance with medication and the lack of support from child and adolescent mental health services. Between January and March of this year, a series of serious incidents including assaults on staff resulted in the court imposing bail conditions that the young person could not return to the placement. Although the eventual outcome for this young person was not positive, this was precipitated by actions that were outside the home's control. Some progress was being made when the crucial discussion about moving on took place. The young person learned some independence skills, and was actively seeking apprenticeships. They had improved in their ability to follow a routine, and managed to sustain this placement for several months. The home does not readily give up on young people, and in response to the deteriorating situation, the registered manager ensured that the staff team had access to increased levels of clinical consultation. The staff team showed extraordinary resilience during this placement, so the young person may at some	

stage in their lives look back and realise that adults can be committed and consistent in their care.

The present young person has not previously been looked after in the care system, and is unsettled because they are in the middle of care proceedings. This young person is working hard to try to return to her family, and outcomes for her have so far been positive.

After two years out of education, the young person is behind in her learning and has found it difficult to engage with a classroom situation. She has struggled with learning alongside younger children in the company's own school. However, she has been willing to work with staff from the school and has built up to over 22 hours per week of home tuition. Discussion with the young person showed that she now appreciates the importance of learning, because she is actively seeking extra help with certain subjects. The young person has identified areas where she has particular skills, and she has some plans for her future career.

The young person said that she enjoys the company of some of the staff team, and has benefited from some of the activities they have shared. Her uncertain care-planning situation is very difficult for her and until she knows what the future holds, it is hard for her to invest in all the opportunities available.

The young person's health has improved since arriving in the home; for example, long-standing dental problems have been treated. She also has the opportunity to attend a local gym.

The young people have a good diet. Although they do not enjoy all the foods offered, the choices presented are healthy and well balanced. There are some very skilled cooks on the staff team, and home-cooked food is very much part of the home's ethos.

The home has promoted positive contact between the present young person and family members. This is carefully structured and managed in line with the local authority's plans. Any concerns arising from contact are raised with the placing authority and are reviewed promptly.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. The previous requirement, in relation to providing details of behaviour leading up to physical intervention, has been met.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The young people in this home are kept safe from harm. The staff team is well trained in safeguarding and team members know how to respond to any young person who they consider to be at risk. For example, contact between the young person currently in residence and certain friends had been suspended due to concerns. A multi-agency review was held the day after the inspection. Although this caused some tension and concern for the young person, the professionals involved wanted to ensure that the young person was safe. After the inspection, the registered manager confirmed that contact with the friends has now been reinstated. This shows that the service works effectively with other professionals to gather and review important safeguarding information in the young person's best interests. The home has an effective behaviour management policy, and each young person has an individual plan which includes permitted interventions. Restraints have been used appropriately and are recorded and monitored well. Consequences for challenging behaviour have also been appropriate and restorative in nature. The young people receive rewards to encourage them to behave well. These are generally positive, although discussion took place during the inspection about the ethics of allowing young people to take on the considerable responsibility of looking after a pet after staff had intervened to rehome a pet rabbit, because the young person was not ready to take on every aspect of its daily care. The home has recruited several new staff since the interim inspection. The main staff files are held centrally at head office. The secondary files within the home itself contain most of the information required by Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, and the remaining documents were produced during the inspection by the human resources department. The information held by the service overall is sufficient to help to safeguard vulnerable young people from contact with unsuitable adults. The young people enjoy a good-quality, homely and safe environment. The home has robust procedures for managing health, safety and fire checks. Fire alarms are tested weekly and drills are conducted at sufficiently frequent intervals to ensure that young people and staff understand the evacuation process. Any maintenance issues are responded to promptly. The home sustained high levels of damage during a previous placement, but this has all been repaired. The home is a small house in its own grounds, situated on a very busy A road. The grounds are protected by a high fence and a gate with a keypad exit, which would slow down a young person rushing out onto the road impulsively. The code is	

available to the young people, staff and visitors, so that their exit from the garden in an emergency is not impeded.

The home has a relaxing lounge, dining area and a small but workable kitchen. Upstairs, there is a bathroom, the young person's bedroom, sleeping-in room and staff office. All the rooms are nicely decorated and clean, and the young person's bedroom is checked every day, because one of their targets is to keep it tidy.

One particularly attractive feature of the home is the large garden. There is a decking area with table and chairs, so that the young people and staff can eat meals outside when the weather is suitable.

The home assesses any risks to the young people effectively. Risk assessments are clear and contain positive strategies to help staff make decisions about day-to-day care. There is a local authority risk assessment on the potential for child sexual exploitation on file. The home's own risk assessment does not mention child sexual exploitation, so discussion took place about the advisability of cross-referencing the two documents to help staff access all relevant information. A recommendation has been made.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home has an experienced and knowledgeable registered manager who has just completed her level 5 qualification in leadership and management. The registered manager returned from maternity leave, working four days per week, in October 2015. She is now full time again. During the year in which the registered manager was away, the former deputy manager looked after this home and its sister establishment. Initially, the sister home had one young person who was only resident in school holidays, so this was manageable. When that young person moved into the sister home full time, and both the homes were occupied, the split management arrangements were not effective. Serious incidents in both homes had an impact on the young people and on the staff teams. The interim manager left in September 2015. The registered manager returned to two services that both required substantial leadership to bring them back to the required standard. The company made a positive decision to leave the sister home vacant until the manager returned to full-time hours. This has enabled the manager to concentrate	

on this home. There is now a deputy manager in each of the two homes, and the service is establishing a separate staff team for the sister home. This will provide a more robust staffing and management structure. As the two homes have not both been occupied at the same time for over a year, the improved staffing and management structure has yet to be tested. The registered manager said that the plan is for her to spend two days in each home, and the remaining day undertaking supervision or spending time in the setting where she is most needed.

Over the past 10 months, the registered manager has worked hard to rebuild and consolidate her team, which has now stabilised. The staff group is represented by a balance of ages, genders and a wide range of life experiences, to guide and support the young people.

The manager's return and positive impact on the home resulted in a rating of sustained effectiveness at the interim inspection on 12 January 2016. The single requirement made, about the recording of physical interventions, has been met.

The staff receive very good quality training, including child sexual exploitation and attachment theory. The company supports staff in their own personal development, and this may include encouraging them to achieve degree-level qualifications in psychology and other social care fields. All the staff receive regular, good-quality supervision and an annual appraisal, to help guide their practice and professional development.

The registered manager has re-established the previously lapsed programme of internal monitoring, and has a good system in place. She has produced a clear and evaluative Regulation 45 report to help structure a programme of development. The home also has a development plan and a workforce development plan, with specific targets. There is a clear system of accountability within the organisation, with the quality assurance manager reviewing the information received about the home from various sources. There are monthly visits from the independent visitor, who prepares detailed reports to further support the home's improvement.

The senior management structure has also been reinforced since the previous inspection, with a new safeguarding lead, and the former postholder moving to a quality assurance role for the whole company. The organisation has also strengthened its clinical services, so that staff are better supported in responding to highly complex and challenging behaviours. The present young person's needs are better matched to the skills and experience of the staff team than some previous placements, resulting in improved outcomes.

The registered manager has made appropriate and timely notifications to Ofsted regarding significant events within the home. This helps to ensure that the regulator is aware of important developments and areas of risk.

The home fulfils its statement of purpose, which is an effective and accurate

document. There is an attractive children's guide, which provides good-quality information for new young people arriving in the home. The guide contains details of external professions who may be contacted for help and support, but does not include the contact information about the children's commissioner. A recommendation has been made.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016