

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC362965
Inspector	Jennifer Reed
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Five Rivers Child Care Limited
Registered person address	47 Bedwin Street SALISBURY SP1 3UT

Responsible individual	Richard Marshall Cross
Registered manager	Zoe Adelaide Ratcliffe
Date of last inspection	10/02/2014

Inspection date	15/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The highly effective, individualised care and support young people receive promotes their emotional wellbeing and personal development. This helps to protect them from possible risks of harm, minimises disruptions in their lives and results in excellent placement stability.

Young people enjoy living in this homely environment and they feel safe and secure. They are fully involved in daily decisions about what goes on in their home and they form positive relationships with staff. Young people are making good progress, given their starting points on admission to the home. However, young people do not always follow staff advice and some poor choices lead to disappointing outcomes.

The home is well organised and efficiently run. It benefits from the Registered Manager's 'hands on' day-to-day management, the organisation's leadership and oversight of its operation and the commitment of the stable staff team. Safeguarding practice is robust. However, monitoring processes evidence shortfalls in improving practice standards. No evidence is found that these shortfalls have, to date, had an adverse impact on the safety and welfare of individual young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private, national organisation which operates a number of children's homes. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person at any one time who may have emotional and behaviour difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2014	Interim	good progress
22/05/2013	Full	good
28/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/02/2012	Interim	good progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement of purpose which consists of the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1))	30/01/2015
33 (2001)	ensure the person carrying out the visit shall interview with their consent, children accommodated there and their parents, relatives and persons working at the children's home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion as to whether the conduct of the children's home promotes the wellbeing of the children accommodated there and they are effectively safeguarded (Regulation 33 (8) (a)(i)(ii))	30/01/2015

34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for: monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every three months; and improving the quality of care in the home (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b))	30/01/2015
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Recommendations

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

- monitor, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies and with regulations. Take immediate action to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2)
- review the quality of the system in place to monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 to enable the provider to identify any trends and issues of concern so that all those involved in running and working in the home can continually improve the quality of care they are providing. (Statutory guidance – volume 5: children's homes, 3.14)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people benefit from the outstanding level of care they receive from the competent staff team and they thrive within the longevity and continuity of their placement. Young people feel happy, safe and secure living in this home. The excellent placement stability young people experience helps them to develop a sense of belonging. They regard this home as their 'home' and they are full involved in day-to-day decisions about how the home runs. Young people choose the home's decoration and furnishings and they keep and look after their chosen pets. Their involvement gives them some ownership of their lives. They enjoy living in their family style environment where they are establishing good relationships with their neighbours and becoming an accepted member of their local community.

The secure base and therapeutic approach provided by their home supports young people to make progress in many areas of their lives. Young people are kept safe and they feel safe and secure living in this home. A social worker summarised this by saying, 'young people are very comfortable here. They have been living here for a long time and are settled. This is their safe place.'

Young people are beginning to feel secure enough to risk taking small steps into new areas of life. They are often now able to think about their choices and actions, resulting in them making some positive changes in their lives to improve their future. Their self-esteem and confidence are slowly increasing in response to the development of their skills and abilities. However, it is often difficult for young people to maintain their motivation and progress, given their starting points on admission. Their lack of positive self-regard, anxieties and capacity to effectively deal with difficult life events arising hinders their rate of progress which is variable over periods of time.

Staff support young people to take age appropriate risks as part of their development, while ensuring that they do not engage in activities that pose a risk to their safety and well-being. However, young people do not always take the good information and advice staff offer. Instead, they act on their own feelings and do what they think is best. This sometimes results in poor decision-making which has led to poor outcomes for young people. For example, young people's own choices can involve taking part in risky activities when their welfare is compromised. They behave in ways similar to many of their peers as they grow into young adults; for example, drinking alcohol to excess. Staff support young people to learn from their mistakes and this helps them to learn to take more responsibility for their actions.

Direct work carried out within the home helps young people to reflect on their past and to recognise their level of capability in different aspects of their lives. Young people are learning to take some responsibility for their own learning, welfare and

actions at their own pace. Young people have opportunities to learn independent living skills, although they frequently prefer to rely upon the nurturing care they receive from staff. The home's incentive scheme encourages young people's participation and development of their independent living skills. They take up volunteering opportunities and this helps them to prepare for future employment. A social worker reported that the home had set up a suitable college placement and work experience opportunities to help a young person move successfully towards adulthood.

Young people have a say in the running of the home and its development and they receive good support to help them make informed decisions about their care. Young people's inclusion in planning and decision making within the home contributes to their high level of satisfaction with the care and support they receive. A young person said, 'This is my home and I like living here. My bedroom is just how I want it.'

Young people maintain agreed contact with their respective families and their friends and family regularly visit them in their home. Their friends can sleep over and they are made welcome when they come to stay. Young people enjoy doing the same things as their friends and this helps them develop their social skills and to develop and maintain friendships.

Quality of care

outstanding

The qualified and committed, stable staff team look after young people exceptionally well. Staff provide an outstanding level of well-considered, personalised care that effectively supports young people to flourish in their development and progress. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of individual young people's abilities and vulnerabilities and show sensitivity in meeting their diverse needs. The home purposefully works with young people, external agencies, families and placing authorities to bring about positive outcomes for young people in placement. A social worker said, 'staff do their utmost to meet the young person's needs; they are very well cared for. Staff really care about them and do huge amounts to help them.'

Detailed placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management strategies provide clear guidance to staff about how best to provide support and help to meet the individual needs of young people. The well-managed staff team have high aspirations for the young people they look after. Staff demonstrate a strong level of commitment to achieving successful outcomes for individual young people. Well-established relationships exist between staff and young people. These robust, stable relationships underpin the high quality of consistent care provided to young people and this supports the development of young people's trust in adults. Young people speak very positively about their overall experience of living in this home, emphasising how good it is that they can keep pets.

Staff appropriately seek specialist advice and support from professionals to ensure

young people are safeguarded and make substantial progress in all areas of their lives. The home works collaboratively and effectively with therapeutic workers within the organisation and with other professionals from external agencies to provide an exemplary standard of personalised care to individual young people. The staff team forges strong working partnerships with key professionals to deliver focused care to meet young people's needs. Staff carefully consider how to embrace and effectively support individual young people's cultures and diverse needs. Staff ensure that young people do not suffer discrimination or are bullied for being 'different'. Staff sensitively address and respond to young people's unique needs in all aspects of their care and they work at each young person's pace.

The outstanding vigilance of staff and good access to therapeutic resources, strategies and interventions, results in young people receiving excellent support to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Staff take great care in looking after young people when they are sick or have specific health needs. Young people appreciate the kindness and support they receive when unwell. Staff provide healthy meals and encourage young people to develop a healthy lifestyle, including getting enough exercise and rest each day. This helps to sustain their good health. The home's administration of medication is robust and medication is securely stored, ensuring young people's welfare is promoted and they are safeguarded.

Due regard is given to young people's age and ability when assessing if it is safe for young people to self-medicate; this supports their developing independence. Staff also support young people to develop a wide range of independent living skills that includes both the completion of practical tasks and the development of social skills and emotional resilience.

The home is well furnished and maintained. It is very much the young people's home, reflecting their preferences and tastes and organised to suit their lifestyles. At the time of this inspection, the home was festively decorated, providing a colourful extravaganza of tinsel and Christmas ornaments to rival Santa's grotto! Arrangements are in place for young people to go out to complete their Christmas shopping, and for their family members to visit over Christmas and take part in preparing and cooking the Christmas lunch. One young person said, 'my family come every Christmas'.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Safeguarding considerations and young people's well-being are central in all aspects of the home's care practices. The implementation of the home's policies, procedures and robust safeguarding practices underpin the good level of protection provided to young people in placement. Staff are extremely vigilant in their monitoring of young people's behaviour, welfare and progress. Their diligence enhances the good protection of young people. Changes in young people's health and behaviour are quickly noted and swift action is taken to support young people's emerging or

changing needs.

Staff are helping young people to learn how to keep themselves safe from harm. Young people receive good advice and support from staff and specialist workers and this knowledge helps young people to make more informed decisions about their welfare and safety. The home effectively manages any identified risks to young people. Staff help young people to become aware of likely risks they may encounter in their daily lives and they learn what they need to do to minimise these factors. Young people are increasing their awareness about risky relationships and behaviours and this helps to promote their future safety and welfare.

The home prominently displays key children's rights and safeguarding information for young people to access, independently of staff. Young people are fully aware of how they can raise any concern they may have. Young people are confident that they can tell staff exactly what they think about matters and they also know how to make a complaint to their social worker or senior managers within the home's organisation.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and demonstrate competence in their knowledge and understanding of sound safeguarding practices. The home appropriately notifies all relevant agencies of any significant incidents and works collaboratively in partnership with other safeguarding agencies to protect young people.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are low. When such incidents do occur, staff make every effort to find young people and to ensure their safe return at the earliest opportunity. A social worker reported that, 'staff go through the right processes when young people do not return to the home. Firstly, staff go out and look for them. They report young people as missing to make sure they are found as soon as possible.'

Care practices promote the positive behaviour of young people. Individual behaviour management plans and risk assessments provide staff with clear guidance and strategies on how to support young people consistently and effectively when they display negative behaviour. Young people respond positively to the praise they receive from staff in response to their increasing ability to better manage their difficulties. As a result young people's episodes of unacceptable behaviour have markedly decreased and they are making significant progress in this aspect of their lives.

Regular fire and health and safety checks are undertaken for utilities and services, premises and grounds and activities. These actions contribute to ensuring that the home's environment is physically safe and appropriately secure for young people and staff to live within.

The organisation's recruitment and selection practices ensure that new staff are suitably vetted and do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant

checks have been completed. Visitors to the home are closely monitored. These rigorous processes help to prevent unsuitable people from having access to young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager was promoted to manage this home by the organisation in November 2013, and was registered with Ofsted in April 2014. The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake this position. The Registered Manager leads the staff team with a 'hands-on' management approach, working occasional shifts and providing a visible presence in the home during the working week. The Registered Manager has set up well organised management systems to ensure the effective and efficient running of the home. Management systems are generally working very well and the Registered Manager demonstrates a good oversight of the home's operation. However, the missing person's protocol and individual health action plan for one young person had not been updated to reflect their changing health circumstances. This shortfall in scrutiny of records has not resulted in any risk to the individual and the Registered Manager agreed at the inspection to swiftly update these documents.

Leaders and managers have not been effective in identifying that the home has not fully implemented the requirements of recent legislative changes. For example, the home's statement of purpose does not provide any information about how the home ensures children's rights are promoted, and does not include any details regarding the outcomes of the home's location risk assessment. Furthermore, monitoring processes are not fully compliant. Firstly, the independent monthly visitor does not regularly seek the views of parents and significant others to gain their opinions about the quality of care provided to young people. Secondly, although the Registered Manager undertakes regular monthly monitoring of the home's operation and completes a written three monthly report, the report does not contain sufficient detail to meet regulatory requirements. Trends and patterns are not clearly evaluated to lead to improvement, and the effectiveness of the home's care practices are not commented upon within the report. Reporting omissions hinder the recognition of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and reduce the identification of areas for improvement in practice.

The stable staff team provides young people with continuity and stability in their placements and the home works collaboratively in partnership with families and agencies to look after young people well. A placing social worker stated that communication between the home and the local authority was very good. They noted that the staff team's detailed knowledge and understanding of young people was helpful in decision making at review meetings and their contribution added value to planning for young people's futures.

The organisation provides a good range of training opportunities, relevant to the work undertaken by the staff team. Staff complete induction training standards within the first six months of their employment. Thereafter, staff undertake the Diploma Workforce level 3 award. The majority of staff are suitably qualified with the remaining staff working towards the required qualification. This equips them with developing knowledge, skills and competence to work with and meet the specific needs of young people. Staff report positively about the range of training opportunities offered to them.

All staff receive regular supervision and appraisal and attend team meetings. These structures support them to look after young people very well and ensure staff performance is continually monitored. Moreover, staff can raise and discuss particular issues as well as developing strategies to ensure that young people are well looked after.

The home's statement of purpose is available on request to families and placing authorities. This document sets out the aims and objectives of the home and contains pertinent information about the care and services young people can expect to receive. Young people receive relevant information about the home and how it operates within their welcome pack on or prior to admission. The stated aims and objectives of the home are well-embedded in practice.

The home's records are securely stored. Staff support and involve young people in understanding the contents of key documents relating to their care.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.