

1241785

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and run by an education specialist service provider. It is registered to care for up to 11 children who have learning disabilities and complex needs that may include autistic spectrum disorders and associated difficulties. The home is located within the provider's school campus, which the young people currently living at the home attend.

There has not been a registered manager in place since 7 July 2017. Therefore, leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
25/07/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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, 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
In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered persons must ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (2)(a)(ii)(iv))	28/09/2018
In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(vi)(vii))	28/09/2018
In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(e)) In particular, ensure that care plans, individual risk assessment and healthcare plans are kept up to date and also read and understood by all relevant staff.	28/09/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	28/09/2018
The registered person must ensure that— (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or	28/09/2018

restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (ii) details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the use of the measure; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii))	
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Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interview when assessing risk and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraph 9.30)

In particular, retain evidence that an independent return interview has been requested and taken place and whether staff have responded to the outcome of this interview.

- Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. Their review should include the identification of any risk and opportunities presented by the home’s location and strategies for managing these. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 15.1)

In particular, identify risk areas relating to children going missing and issues arising from the presence of other children’s homes nearby.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Staff provide a good level of direct care and attention to the children, who make progress while they are here. Shortfalls in safeguarding and the absence of a manager since the last full inspection undermine the overall quality of the support for the children.

Care plans, individual risk assessments and healthcare plans are not of consistently good quality, nor are they always updated following new information or significant changes. Staff do not have the most up-to-date information to meet the children's needs.

Opportunities to educate children in relation to important issues such as fire safety and internet safety are missed. Children are, therefore, unable to learn to keep themselves safe.

Generally, children's views are sought through regular meetings, the use of picture exchange cards and the children's communication methods. Consultations with children are effective: they can make choices in their daily lives.

A reward system motivates children to progress with targets towards increased independence and self-managing their behaviour. Liaison with other professionals involved in the children's care and with their parents ensures a coordinated approach. A parent said, 'They have helped us at home too; he (their son) is able to do things he couldn't do before.'

This multi-professional response is valued by other parents spoken to. One said, 'They organised a meeting with the teachers, doctor and ourselves to help us to prepare my son for a blood test.' Parents and social workers praised the manager and staff for their commitment and care of the children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The failure of staff to follow safeguarding protocols meant that there was a delay in informing external professionals and taking timely action.

Internal investigations regarding safeguarding incidents or staffing concerns lack detail. This undermines the ability for external regulators to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

Fire evacuations are undertaken regularly including at night. Concerns raised by the night staff were acted on. However, evidence of all the measures taken was not available. A new staff member was unaware of the fire evacuation procedure and had not undertaken a fire drill.

Analysis of one child's increase in severely challenging behaviour has enabled managers to consider triggers, trends and strategies to use to reduce this behaviour. In general, use of physical interventions is proportionate and appropriate. However, staff do not always clearly record the techniques used to calm the child, and ambiguous language is used in reports, which does not give an accurate picture of what occurred.

Records of sanctions lack the time of the incident and analysis of the use and effectiveness by managers. Managers are unable to satisfy themselves that the measures are reasonable.

Risk assessments highlight the actions staff should take to protect children when using the internet. Staff trained in e-safety closely supervise and monitor children's use of the internet. Measures such as using software to restrict access to inappropriate sites are agreed with the children. However, there is no written agreement in place to formalise the rules and responsibilities for the children, which misses the opportunity to educate children about why these measures are taken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has been without a registered manager for over a year. The current manager has applied to be registered with Ofsted. She has done her utmost to address the areas of improvement following the last inspection. However, there are still areas that need addressing as highlighted in this report.

Senior managers undertake quality assurance checks and highlight strengths and weaknesses of the service. An external auditor recommends areas of improvement, which in the main are acted on, although some recommendations have been repeated several times.

The manager has not undertaken the designated safeguarding lead training to enable her to fully understand her role and responsibility in relation to keeping children safe. Internal investigations do not evidence that all relevant parties are interviewed or the way in which the action and decisions are made.

Supervisions lack detail and scrutiny. Some are brief and lack accurate recording of the matters discussed. A supervisor failed to explore and report to the manager a concern raised in supervision.

Staff generally supervise children closely to ensure that they do not go missing. However, one child was able to leave the home without staff being aware. The manager consulted with the designated officer and undertook an internal investigation. She took effective action to ensure that lessons were learned and actions taken to minimise the risk of this recurring.

When children go missing, staff follow them and remain in contact with them to persuade them to return. However, the manager could not evidence challenge to the local authority to ensure that children have an independent person to talk to when they return. Staff are not able to learn what may have led to the child going missing.

A comprehensive location risk assessment informs social workers and parents about the risks to children in the local area. It does not address any risks relating to the nearby children's homes or to children who are at risk of absconding from the home.

External professionals and parents appreciate the new manager and the improvements she has made to the care of their children since she has started this role. Communication with the manager and staff is reported to be good. Parents spoken to said that they are kept informed regarding their children's daily lives and any significant incidents.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

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: 1241785

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Registered provider address: Priory Group, 80 Hammersmith Road, London, Middlesex W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector

Melissa McMillan, social care inspector

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