

1241785

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run by an education specialist service provider. It is registered to care for up to 11 children with autism spectrum disorder and associated difficulties. The home is located within the provider's school campus, which the children currently living at the home attend.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2018.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last inspected this setting on 20 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 April 2021

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: 22 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/07/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress through their strong relationships with the staff who care for them. The periods of national and local lockdowns have increased bonding between children and staff, promoting a better understanding of children's needs. Staff spend time with children, playing games, reading or relaxing. This creates a homely atmosphere in what is otherwise an unkempt environment.

Close joint working with the on-site school supports consistency across the home and school settings. Staff from school helped in the home to support children when they were being home schooled. This has created an increased understanding of the children's abilities and needs in both settings. The partnership working with the educational psychologist and external therapeutic services leads to some well-informed approaches to supporting children, although at times there have been some significant delays in securing support.

Staff encourage independence skills, prompting children sensitively to complete tasks by themselves. Children were seen making cups of tea, choosing snacks and deciding on their evening activities. This approach teaches important life skills as it helps children to make informed personal choices. Children are encouraged by the staff to make their beds and open curtains. This routine provides children with consistent daily routines and promotes their independence skills. A parent commented they were 'shocked' by how independent their son now is.

Staff use communication tools with children that are consistent with those used within their educational setting. This improves children's communication skills and helps them to reach their individual goals more quickly. Despite some good practice in this area, not all staff are proactive in using communication skills and/or aids from education in the home setting, particularly when children decline to use them.

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

Children are confident in their home and comfortable with the staff who support them. Staff fully understand the children's individual needs and specific vulnerabilities. They do all they can to keep children safe from avoidable risk, while allowing them to explore and try new things.

Staff respond effectively to safeguarding concerns. They talk confidently of their responsibility in protecting children, and they understand how to respond to and report on any safeguarding concerns. Records of actions taken and responses to safeguarding concerns are comprehensive, providing clear oversight of all investigations. The managers demonstrate strong joint working with the designated officer in the local authority and other relevant professionals.

Staff recognise that all children's actions and behaviour are forms of communication. They are skilled in understanding what children are communicating and use agreed approaches to reduce anxiety. Staff are confident in their approach to helping children when they are upset or distressed. They use a variety of tools to aid the child in expressing what is worrying them.

Children's care and support plans are not consistently clear on how to respond to the different behaviours. However, staff are able to explain how they would support children when they are in crisis. Physical intervention is rarely used, with staff reading cues and redirecting children to avoid the need to physically intervene.

The current state of the environment is of concern. It is recognised that repair and redecoration has been taking place and that some of the issues were exacerbated by COVID-19 and the inability to paint and repair the home while children were being home educated. The responsible individual had already highlighted that the home was not in a suitable state of repair and has compiled an action plan with the estates team. Work was underway during the inspection, although some of the materials being used to repair bathrooms in particular are not sturdy enough to meet the complex needs of the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been absent from the home for significant periods in the last year. The deputy management team has excelled during this time, ensuring that the home is well run and that children have received consistently high levels of care. The staff team has remained stable throughout the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and they are complimentary about how the deputy managers have supported them through such challenging times.

Staff have benefited from increased frequency of supervision over the last few months. The recently implemented supervision template allows for personal reflection and a focus on learning and development. Staff appreciate supervision sessions and say that they find them useful.

Training has continued throughout national and local lockdowns. However, some training is overdue, with particular regards to specific children's needs and diagnosed conditions. A small number of staff are past the timescale for completing a suitable level 3 qualification. The management team has plans to ensure that these staff complete this as soon as possible.

Managers regularly review children's plans and targets and have effective systems in place to keep track of children's progress in meeting the targets identified in their relevant care plans. Good joint working with partner agencies is evident throughout children's plans and targets. The managers challenge the professional network effectively when they feel that more is needed to meet children's identified needs.

The quality of written care plans does not always match the quality of care practice in the home. Some information is missing or contradictory. In one example, the need

for a child to wear a protective helmet was not identified in all the care plans relevant to the child.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))	11 June 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	11 June 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- The registered person should ensure they make best use of information from internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 1241785

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Lorraine Sadler

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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