

1249715

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up to four children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and who may also display other complexities, such as low-level mental health and learning difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 14 March 2019.

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

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 August 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/04/2019	Full	Good
04/09/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress through the warm and nurturing relationships they have with the small and committed staff team. Progress for one child, whose level of anxiety made it difficult for him to be taken to the park, is such that they now feel able to take foreign holidays by aeroplane with their family. The child's ability to sit in a confined space for an extended period was way beyond parents' expectations. Other positive changes include a child working as a waiter in a busy restaurant over the summer holidays. He has overcome his extreme anxiety, which previously resulted in outbursts of aggression. For another child, previous behaviours that resulted in them breaking or damaging their belongings are no longer evident.

Staff are incredibly knowledgeable about the children and their needs. Children say that the staff are 'very nice and always sort stuff out if there is a problem'. Parents welcome the weekly updates from staff and know they can speak to them at any time. They feel that staff care for children like it is their family home.

Children have developed a strong sense of family and belonging in the home. If a child or member of staff is unwell, they will make cards or buy small gifts for them. Children have increased their empathy and confidence while training and caring for the registered manager's puppy, who is now fully grown and is a firm favourite of the children.

Children attend school daily. This is a significant improvement for those who have previously been out of school and for some who have missed years of education prior to coming to live in this home. Highly effective links with school mean that children benefit from consistent support from teaching and care staff to help them to overcome their barriers to learning. Those who initially struggle to engage in education are afforded the extra time that they need to settle and re-establish their routines. A wide range of out-of-school activities ensures that children develop positive hobbies and interests and stretch themselves to try things outside of their comfort zone.

Children learn about their own and others' cultures through planned and ad hoc events. They go to specialist Caribbean food shops to source ingredients to make meals from scratch, taking the advice of the staff in the shop on how best to use them to their dish. Staff have learned to care for and plait Afro hair to share in the children's experiences. Staff support children to understand what is happening in world events, such as the 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the response to racism directed at football players. In addition, children's plans carefully consider their identity and what makes them individual, such as where their family is from, their pets and who is important to them. The diverse nature of the staff team further helps children to understand difference and equality, for example tackling

homophobia and communicating when English is not a first language. No topic is taboo, and children feel safe to raise their questions with staff.

Children develop healthy lifestyles in the home, and learn what this means for them. Physical and emotional health needs are met through strong joint working with therapy teams at the school, as well as child and adolescent mental health services. Effective links with sexual health and drug and alcohol support services ensures that children are well informed to make healthy lifestyle choices. Children who previously did so, have now stopped using illegal substances since living at the home.

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

Children say that they like being in the home. They have confidence in the staff to resolve any issues or concerns they have. Staff are acutely aware of each child's vulnerabilities and do everything they can to educate them on how to keep safe. Should a child be at risk, staff are well versed in the organisation's safeguarding procedures. They are confident in how to respond should they need to escalate any issues outside of the organisation. There have been no safeguarding concerns in the home. Where children have been at risk at school or while with parents or carers, the records of actions taken are meticulously detailed and show clear responses and identify future approaches to support children to stay safe.

Children very rarely go missing from the home. If they do, there are well-coordinated responses and strong links with local police specialist teams. A child who spends some time with foster carers and was recently missing while staying with them remains in contact with staff. The child says that staff 'really care' about them and they do not want staff to worry. This shows that children value the relationships and care provided to them by staff.

Staff know that all children's actions are a form of communication. They support children effectively to think about what emotion their behaviour is linked to. One-to-one sessions help children to think about how to manage uncomfortable feelings and divert them into a positive activity. Due to this approach, there has been a huge reduction of behaviour incidents as children have settled into the home. The children now make safer choices and previous risks are significantly reduced.

Children are afforded the opportunity to take age-appropriate risks in line with their abilities. They are supported to use the internet safely for socialising and playing games. Sometimes, children are frustrated by the organisation's internet security system. However, staff explain this well and are looking at other approaches to enable children to link their games consoles to the internet, as other adolescents do.

Recruitment is managed centrally. Gaps in one staff member's recruitment have been chased consistently by the registered manager. It is acknowledged that there have been delays throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic to seek overseas police checks. However, the recruitment team has not followed regulation or its own policy when being unable to obtain a second reference.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has an incredibly strong presence in the home and has a calm parental style. Staff are confident in their positive parenting role and create a family atmosphere in the home. The home is well maintained and is warm and welcoming. Communal areas are individualised. Children's rooms are decorated to their taste. Children have helped to paint their own rooms, which has taught them valuable life skills in the process.

Staff are confident to approach managers at any time. They say that they are always available, even when not in the home. Staff feel extremely well supported and have continued to access training throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They meet regularly as a team and feel able to professionally challenge each other to ensure that children receive the best care possible. This cohesive approach results in children benefiting from consistency and excellent outcomes.

The registered manager has monthly oversight of all plans and targets for the children. Targets are regularly reviewed, and adjusted if necessary, to ensure that they are ambitious but remain realistic and achievable for children. For example, staff recognised that a child could not maintain their behaviour targets for a week, so this time was reduced to few days and then increased over time. Targets are in line with education, health and care plans, with staff meticulously identifying any part of the plan where they can provide support.

Children's plans and records are innovative. They are uniquely adapted to the child's needs and understanding. They are bright and written in simple language. They are relevant to the child's needs.

The management team actively reviews all aspects of the service and makes continuous improvements to its practice and approach to care. The team welcomes scrutiny from the independent person and makes good use of recommendations from the independent person to further improve practice.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))	24 September 2021

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: 1249715

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Robert Page

Registered manager: Caroline Duff

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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