

1278017

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care, support and on-site education for up to eight children who may have experienced neglect, abuse and/or trauma that has left them vulnerable. The children may have a diagnosis of developmental delay, autism spectrum disorder or learning difficulties.

The registered manager left on home on 26 February 2021. There is an acting manager in post who has not yet registered with Ofsted.

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.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 April 2021

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	requires improvement to be good
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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: 16 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Two children had experienced a settled period at the home. However, the well-being of the children deteriorated following another child's admission in October 2020. This child has a history of trauma. Some staff lacked the skills and experience to de-escalate the arising challenging situations effectively.

At the time of this inspection, a young person who recently turned 18 was living at the home. This arrangement has been agreed with the child's authority so that he can continue to attend on-site education until the end of the school year. A second child moved into the home on the second day of the inspection. One child, who reached independence recently, left the home in a planned way. Staff supported this transition. However, one child experienced an unplanned ending following a serious incident during which a member of staff was injured. The incident was prolonged, required police involvement and was witnessed by two children. The child did not have an identified placement to move into. These events caused the children distress.

Some of the children have learning difficulties, which increases their vulnerability. Staff do their best to try and manage complex dynamics. Sometimes, this is not successful in preventing children from being manipulated or from feeling fearful. At the time of this inspection, the dynamics had improved and the home had become more settled.

Relationships between the home and the on-site school are improving. Different approaches to managing children's behaviour are beginning to be addressed. A lack of joined-up working between the home and the school resulted in an incident not being managed in a way that promoted a child's best interests. Lessons learned following an investigation into this incident are being implemented.

Staff support the children to attend their education at the on-site school. Attendance is good and children make progress from their individual starting points. One child, who had not attended school for a prolonged period, accessed specialist education and therapeutic support.

The accommodation is spacious. Children's bedrooms are personalised and freshly painted in colours chosen by the children. There is plenty of space for children to socialise. However, one child's bathroom is not maintained to a good standard. Arrangements for filling the bath are not suitable. This does not communicate to the child that they are valued. The manager took immediate steps to address the shortfalls during the inspection.

The staff meet the children's health needs. Medication storage and administration arrangements are sufficient. Children are encouraged to develop a healthy appetite.

Menu options are discussed during children's meetings. Staff prompt children to manage their personal care tasks. This helps the children to live healthy lifestyles.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff engage children in a wide range of activities. Children are encouraged to spend time outside. Staff support development of independence skills including shopping, travel and animal care.

The staff support the children to spend time with their families in line with their relevant plans. The staff help to ensure that these arrangements are managed safely. Staff monitor the impact of these arrangements on the children's well-being and provide feedback to social workers.

Most staff build positive and trusting relationships with the children. Staff take an interest in the children's lives. Children's achievements are celebrated. The arrival of new staff into the home has brought fresh energy and the atmosphere is improving.

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

Children's care plans set out how staff should respond to the children's behaviours. However, at times, the staff have not followed a child's plans. For example, de-escalation techniques were not used to manage a child who was struggling to regulate his emotions. Failure to respond to children as set out in their individual plans leaves staff and children vulnerable to harm.

New staff have joined the home. Some staff have not received restraint training. On one occasion, a member of staff used a physical intervention technique that is not one of the recognised holds used at the home or taught as part of the physical intervention training. This resulted in the child experiencing distress and saying that he had been hurt.

In a separate incident, two staff were supervising a child with a known history of unpredictable behaviour. Neither staff member was trained in restraint. A subsequent incident of restraint to manage the behaviour resulted in a serious injury to a member of staff.

The manager and staff follow child protection procedures. Steps are taken to ensure that children are safeguarded following allegations. Staff who are subject to investigations are offered appropriate support. Managers work with the designated officer. However, an internal report did not sufficiently address concerns about a member of staff's conduct. Managers have reflected on the need to make improvements in this area in future.

Children do not go missing from the home. Staff receive guidance on how to respond when they lose sight of a child. Arrangements are in place for children to be supervised online. Children are supervised in the community and are given freedoms relevant to their individual needs and levels of understanding.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Managers did not fully consider the available information before admitting a child into the home. The staff's ability to meet the child's needs was overestimated. Consequently, the children experienced an unsettled period. Managers have reviewed matching processes and are working in partnership with the school and quality assurance colleagues to assess the suitability of future referrals.

Managerial monitoring of serious incidents is not sufficient. A staff member was assaulted on two occasions. Managers failed to apply learning from the first incident. This resulted in a child being left in the care of a member of staff who was not sufficiently trained in managing the child's behaviour.

Neither internal or external monitoring systems picked up shortfalls in the environment before the inspector pointed them out during the inspection. As a result, a child's bathroom was not of an acceptable standard.

Staff receive regular supervision and say that they feel well supported. Individual practice concerns are discussed and recorded in supervision records. However, themes arising over time are not identified and addressed. A failure to monitor and address these themes in staff practice means that children do not receive the best possible care.

Staff experienced a difficult period during which they were tired and morale was low. More recently, things have improved. Motivation has improved and the staff are supportive of each other. Staff have confidence in the new management team. The team is united in wanting to provide good-quality care to the children.

The new managers demonstrate a commitment to addressing identified weaknesses. An experienced deputy manager with a background in therapeutic care is in post. He is working closely with the new manager. Action plans are in place and are being implemented. These changes are beginning to have a positive impact on children's outcomes.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. 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 and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that fixtures and fittings in children's bathrooms are maintained to a good standard.	15 May 2021
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	15 May 2021

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation (11) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that staff follow de-escalation techniques as set out in the children's plans.	
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, ensure that decisions on admissions and matching children consider all relevant information to make an accurate assessment of risk.	15 May 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided at the home.	15 May 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: 1278017

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Leon Brandon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Angela Weston, Social Care Inspector

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