

2630934

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 offers care for up to five children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspection of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

This is the home's first inspection.

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

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

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there was one child living in the home. During the inspection, the experiences of another child who had previously lived at the home were considered. This child only lived in the home for a month as the provider felt that it could not meet his needs.

Staff ensure that the home is welcoming and well maintained. The child living in the home has made changes to the living environment, and has her own pet. This child-centred care means that the child feels proud of where she lives.

Staff have established positive and trusting relationships with children and are sensitive when responding to their feelings. For one child, the staff have developed a 'self-soothe' box of things to help her relax and feel safe. This practice empowers the child to recognise her own feelings and develop strategies to manage her emotions.

Staff recognise that education is important. To support the child while they wait for an education placement, staff have implemented a timetable that includes a variety of stimulating and academic tasks. This demonstrates a commitment from the staff to help children progress.

Children engage in a range of activities. This includes horse riding, singing lessons, cinema trips and attending the local gym. Staff are passionate about seeing the children have fun and they collect photos from trips to add to memory books. This helps children develop new interests and make supportive relationships.

The written documents are clear and up to date. The care plans capture children's views, and children are encouraged to provide feedback on the care provided. This means that staff are providing individualised care and the children's wishes and feelings are considered.

Staff have been effective in improving children's physical and emotional health. Children are registered with local health services and attend routine appointments. Specialist mental health services are sought when required, and sessions are planned and suited to the wishes of the children. In addition, information from clinical assessments is used to inform care plans and staff practice. This means that care meets children's identified needs.

Staff understand the importance of children spending time with families. Staff support children to see loved ones in the community and also on video calls. The manager also ensures that staff call parents weekly to provide updates on care. This ensures that parents remain a part of the child's support network and supports the long-term care plan.

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

Staff understand the children's known risks and what actions they are expected to take to keep children safe. The risk assessments provide clear guidance for staff about how they should respond to known risks and behaviours. In addition, when appropriate, the manager shares assessments with external professionals to ensure that staff are offering the best response to vulnerabilities. This means that staff are informed and competent when responding to risk.

Staff respond to challenging behaviour appropriately; the use of restraint is only used when necessary. Staff use incentives effectively; this includes praise and individualised reward charts. This helps children understand the impact of their choices.

Staff are creative in their approach to support children and to reduce risk. Staff discuss behaviours with children and try to implement alternative behaviour suited to their interests. For example, when a child is feeling anxious, instead of spending time in her room, she will now ask staff to take her for a walk or to have a hot chocolate. As a result, for this child, her ability to manage her emotions has improved.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure that the home is physically safe. The home has a location risk assessment; however, it does not consider data about criminal activity in the local area. This is a missed opportunity to reduce risk and to fully review the home's location.

When required, staff seek support and guidance from external professionals. One social worker told the inspector: 'The home's response to safeguarding is fantastic and communication is clear.' This supports the well-being of children living in the home.

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

The new registered manager is suitably experienced and is working towards a level 5 diploma in management. The manager is motivated and passionate about the future of the home.

Staff told the inspector that they enjoy working in the home and feel confident. The manager provided examples of working flexibly to support the home and to cover shortfalls in the rota. This has helped to create good staff morale, which has a positive impact on the care that children receive.

Staff receive regular supervisions, and these consider how staff are working with the children and any improvements that can be made. When staff are subject to a period of probation, supervisions are not provided in line with the home's statement of purpose. This means that some staff are not supported effectively and this is a missed opportunity to reflect on practice and development needs.

The manager understands the importance of a skilled workforce. All staff are up to date with mandatory training. In addition, training has been sourced to help the staff understand the specific needs of the children. This supports continuous professional development and ensures that staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

The administration of medication is not consistent. There are recording errors on medication sheets, and occasions when staff have not followed the instructions on the prescription. The manager completes monthly medication audits; however, he has failed to identify the shortfalls. While this has not had any serious consequences so far, it has the potential to do so.

The child living in the home said that she knew how to make a complaint but did not know what would happen following this. The manager has not ensured that the children's guide helps children to understand the home's complaints procedure and what action would be taken to respond to a complaint. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that policies are clear for the children and has the potential to affect children's ability to raise concerns.

The manager does not have effective systems in place to monitor and review the care provided. For example, a child's care plan stated that the local authority would provide her with a tutor, but one has yet to be provided. The manager has failed to escalate this shortfall to the local authority within reasonable timescales. As a result, this has had an impact on the child's experiences in the home.

Children's case files do not contain all the information required. These shortfalls have not been addressed by the manager. This means that staff do not have all the information they need to provide coordinated care.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. The registered person should also use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvement in the quality and care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that all staff receive supervision in line with the home's statement of purpose. In addition, the manager should ensure that monitoring systems are in place to evaluate the care provided and respond appropriately to shortfalls.	20 January 2021
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that medication is administered to children as prescribed.	20 January 2021

The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the need for a child’s up-to-date care plan to be in place.	20 January 2021
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are aware of the complaints procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 22, paragraph 4.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the children’s guide helps children to understand how to make a complaint in line with the home’s complaints procedure. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of the location includes the identification of any risks 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)

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: 2630934

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: Sophie Nicholls

Registered manager: Nathan Walters

Inspector

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

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