

SC393567

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is an independent residential home that may accommodate up to five young people who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 July 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff provide a safe environment in which young people make progress in their behaviour, education and social skills.
- Staff work collaboratively with external professionals to promote and support

successful transitions.

- Young people have opportunities to try new things, go to new places and to follow their interests.
- Young people improve their relationships with those significant to them, including parents.
- Managers and staff undertake good safeguarding practice which keeps young people safe.

The children's home's areas for development:

- There are a number of staff vacancies, which inhibits the home's ability to provide continuity to young people.
- Staff who should have completed their level 3 diploma have not yet done so.
- Sanctions have not been recorded in line with regulation.
- Staff have not obtained all the required paperwork for a young person from the placing local authority.
- Young people's risk assessments and the home's location review do not contain all the relevant information.
- Staff have been unable to complete training specific to the needs of individual young people.
- Poor internet and mobile phone reception has affected young people's ability to contact people important to them. It has also hindered staff's responses to missing incidents.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Good
23/11/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/05/2015	Full	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
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person is required to— (2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	21/08/2017
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"). (Regulation 32 (4)(a))	21/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that, within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (a)(i) the name of the child; (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 need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person')— (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and	21/08/2017

(c) within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person— (i) adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii), (b)(i)(ii), (c)(i))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; (b) are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a), (b))	21/08/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home provides a nurturing and supportive environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) In particular, ensure that all parts of the home are maintained and decorated to a good standard.
- The registered person should demonstrate how staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) In particular, ensure that young people's risk assessments are updated after incidents.
- The registered person must ensure staff support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10) In particular, evidence the support provided to young people to reduce challenging or risk-taking behaviour.
- The registered person must ensure that there is a workforce plan in place which contains the information required by guidance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11) In particular, ensure that staff complete training in the specific needs of individual young people.
- The registered person must ensure that appropriate forms of contact should be promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate visits to the child in the home; visits by the child to relatives and/or friends; letters, emails and texts; use of social media and other forms of contact via the internet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.18) In particular, ensure that every effort is made to provide good-

quality, reliable internet and mobile phone reception.

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2) In particular, ensure that bank and agency staff receive supervision.
- The registered person should review the appropriateness of the home's location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include 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 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff support moves into the home positively through well-planned transitions. Day and overnight visits enable young people to begin to develop relationships and experience what it is like to live at the home. One young person has joined the home since the previous inspection. The manager's detailed impact assessment identified that this young person was able to live with the young people already resident, and all areas of how they would interact and have an impact on each other were considered. Staff inform and prepare young people for the arrival of a newly admitted young person. Staff spend time with new young people, developing relationships and supporting them to get to know routines, the home and the area.

Two young people have left the home since the previous inspection. One placement move was planned, the other was not. However, on both occasions staff advocated well on young people's behalf and worked closely with the young people's placing authorities to ensure the welfare of the young person was a priority and at the centre of decisions made.

Close liaison and communication between the home and school ensure young people's educational needs are coordinated and met. As a result, each young person is engaged in education and their attendance at school has improved. Young people are progressing well in their education, with two young people having made significant improvements in their reading ability.

Young people's mental and emotional well-being is supported and improved through staff liaising closely with the organisation's therapist. This develops staff's understanding of young people and informs how they personalise the care they provide.

A wide variety of activities are available to young people. Staff encourage young people to follow their interests and to use their leisure time wisely. This widens and enriches their social experiences.

Young people are being prepared for the opportunities and challenges of adult life. The manager has implemented new strategies to aid young people to develop the understanding and skills necessary for adulthood. This includes supporting young people to manage their money and complete daily chores. A new incentive system has been put

into practice, which rewards young people for completing tasks independently. As a result, young people are taking on more responsibilities and building confidence in their independence skills.

A strong culture of young people's participation is evident. Staff actively seek young people's views on all aspects of the home, including their care plans and the recruitment of new members of staff. The manager ensures that young people are kept informed about changes within the home through a monthly newsletter, and that young people have opportunities to share their views through key-work sessions and monthly house meetings.

Regular key-work sessions promote positive relationships between staff and young people. They also provide regular opportunities to talk through pertinent issues and worries that a young person may have. However, records of key-work sessions contain limited evidence of staff providing guidance and support around challenging or risk-taking behaviour. Consequently, records do not evidence all the actions staff are taking to support young people to develop behaviours that are more positive.

Young people improve their relationships with their parents and siblings. Through staff's consistent support and guidance, young people develop their social skills and become better able to maintain important relationships. However, the home suffers from a poor telephone and internet signal. Both parents and young people commented that this affects their ability to contact each other, and young people report that they are also unable to access their email, which has, at times, caused distress.

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

Staff are able to protect young people. They have undertaken training in safeguarding children and understand their role and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. The registered manager is reliable in her reporting and ensures that all child protection concerns are shared with relevant professionals, including the local authority designated officer. Allegations against staff are fully investigated and the evidence trail, from instigation through investigation to completion, is maintained in the home. This allows the manager to oversee and monitor incidents thoroughly.

Young people experience positive relationships with staff. They say they like the staff, trust them and feel able to raise concerns with them. Staff have a good understanding of young people's specific vulnerabilities and the strategies they must implement to keep them safe. However, some aspects of young people's risk assessments have not been updated following incidents.

The management and staff appropriately respond to incidents of young people going missing. The missing from care policy is followed, along with the individualised missing from care protocol of the young person. However, the poor mobile phone signal in the area has, in some instances, hindered staff's ability to contact the police, and this has resulted in inconsistencies in the time staff have reported young people missing to the police. Upon a young person's return to the home, staff support them by contacting their social worker to arrange an interview to help form an understanding of why the incident of missing from care occurred.

In general, young people's challenging and risk-taking behaviour improves over time as

a result of the consistent guidance and boundaries implemented by staff. However, for one young person this has not been the case and he continues to escalate his violence and aggression towards staff. Staff have sought the support of relevant professionals and have worked effectively with them to review his care plan. However, new strategies have not been successful in preventing his behaviour from escalating. Consequently, the manager has liaised closely with his placing authority to find a more suitable placement that better protects this young person, the staff and other young people in the home.

A new incentive system rewards young people with increases in their pocket money for appropriate behaviour. However, records indicate that there have been instances when young people have had money deducted or have been 'fined' for not following the home's rules or for causing damage. The recording of these incidents is not in line with regulation. Young people's behaviours are closely monitored in order to identify triggers to behaviours and develop effective strategies in de-escalating incidents, which then informs young people's behaviour management plans. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort and in accordance with the regulations and guidance.

The home's location review considers many risk factors within the local surrounding community. However, some risk mitigation strategies are weak and do not sufficiently inform staff. The review does not consider implications of the poor mobile phone and internet signal in the area and how this may affect young people or inhibit staff's ability to respond in the event a young person goes missing. The location review lacks evidence of consultation and information from external sources.

The manager has a good understanding of safe recruitment procedures. Since the previous inspection no new staff have been recruited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The current manager has been in post since February 2016. She is a qualified social worker with previous experience in working with children who are looked after. The registered manager has enrolled on her level 5 qualification course and aims to complete this within the required timeframe.

The manager has good knowledge and insight into the young people she supports. She uses this knowledge effectively to inform young people's placement plans and to provide individualised care in line with the home's statement of purpose. The manager has established a supportive home environment, which provides young people with structure and routine. This enables them to make good progress in their health, education and relationships, including those with their family.

The professional relationships between the home and partner agencies are effective. The manager uses her positive relationships to advocate on behalf of young people and ensure they receive the support they require to progress. However, the manager and staff have not obtained copies of young people's most recent local authority care plans, education plans or reviews.

External independent monitoring visits take place and these are suitably challenging of practice. The registered manager uses these reports and internal monitoring to evaluate the care provided in the home and to make improvements.

The registered manager understands the strengths of the home and is aware of areas

for development. She recognises that the home is understaffed and this has had an impact on the home's ability to provide continuity of care and has increased young people's anxieties. As a result, she has reviewed the home's recruitment strategy to seek ways to remedy this. Some areas of the home require refurbishment. The registered manager has a thorough development plan in place to address such shortfalls.

The home's workforce development plan outlines the expectations for staff around supervision and training. However, it does not provide sufficient information on staff's probation period. Supervision sessions for staff are evaluative, focused on the young people and their safety, as well as supportive to staff. However, several bank and agency staff who currently work regular shifts at the home do not receive supervision. This does not equip them with the support needed for their role.

Staff are confident in their roles and say that they are well supported by their manager. Staff are equipped with mandatory training in areas such as safeguarding and behaviour management. However, staff shortages have prevented them from completing training specific to the individual needs of the young people. Staff who should have completed the required diploma have yet to finish it. Consequently, staff have not been able to demonstrate their continued professional development.

Although the home has a high number of staff vacancies, it continues to provide good-quality support and care to young people due to the commitment of the manager and staff and their dedication to their roles.

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: SC393567

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Christopher Wells

Registered manager: Geraldine Hicks

Inspector(s)

Melissa McMillan, social care inspector

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