

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC393567
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Priory Education Services Limited
Registered provider address	5th Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London, W14 8UD

Responsible individual	Graeme Cheyne
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Melissa McMillan

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC393567

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Young people live in a nurturing and supportive home environment, which provides them with consistency, structure and routine.
- Young people become part of their wider community, experience positive enriching activities and are able to expand their circle of friends.
- Young people are learning valuable life skills for the future.
- Young people say that they feel safe in the home and trust staff.
- The manager is extremely passionate about placing the specific needs of young people at the forefront of her practice and is highly aspirational for the development of the home.
- Although there has been a delay with the manager's application to register with Ofsted, she provides strong leadership and effective management.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 prepare and implement a policy ("the missing child policy") setting out the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission. (Regulation 34 (4)(a))	22/11/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person must ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each young person and the arrangements in place to protect them. This includes ensuring that all relevant information is contained within their risk assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person must ensure that when considering new placements they fully consider the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people and evidence their judgement supporting compatibility with existing residents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person must ensure that recruitment procedures safeguard young people and minimise potential risks to them. In particular, ensuring that all the required checks as specified in schedule 2 are completed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person must ensure that there is a workforce plan in place. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is an independent residential home that meets the needs of five young people who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It provides accommodation for young people who attend the local associated residential special school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/05/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/06/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Although the manager's application to register with Ofsted has been significantly delayed, she has successfully managed the home for the last seven months. The young people and the staff team benefit from her stable leadership and Ofsted has now received her application to register. Young people live in a nurturing and supportive home environment, which provides them with consistency, structure and routine. This enables some young people to make positive improvements. Some young people have made good progress in education and their attendance has improved. One young person is now attending college and aspires to attend university when he completes his course. However, two young people who no longer reside at the home did not maintain consistent good attendance despite staff encouragement and guidance. This means that they did not benefit fully from the opportunities made available to them. Staff value young people as individuals and are responsive to them. This provides the foundation to enable young people to trust staff and develop their confidence. Humour and banter are shared by all in the home and young people enjoy spending time with each other and staff. Young people become part of their wider community, experience positive enriching activities and are able to expand their circle of friends. Staff support and enable young people to take part in numerous activities in the community. For example, young people attend a local rugby club and football club, as well as participating in community groups and volunteering opportunities. Young people are learning valuable life skills for the future. They are making improvements in their daily living and self-care skills, such as cooking small meals, cleaning their rooms and helping with laundry. This also helps them to make a positive contribution to the home, building on their confidence and self-esteem. The organisation provides additional support to young people through access to a psychodynamic therapist, a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist when needed. Staff liaise closely with young people's therapists and other medical practitioners. This approach ensures that young people's physical and emotional needs are met to a good standard. Young people's views are important to staff. Staff ensure that young people are kept up to date on what is happening in the home through a creatively developed newsletter. Young people are routinely consulted on the look of the home, and	

they strongly contribute to food and activity decisions. To support young people to share their views, the manager has arranged advocates for the young people.

Transitions into and out of the home are well planned. Young people are able to visit the placement on several occasions, including taking part in activities and having overnight stays. This provides young people with the opportunity to meet staff and to get to know the home and other young people in order to aid a successful transition.

However, impact risk assessments vary in quality. Some do consider the impact of a new admission on the existing group and consultations with the existing young people living in the home have taken place. However, the impact risk assessment for one young person, who is no longer living at the home, lacked in-depth analysis of how their existing behaviours may influence other young people living at the home or how these risks could be mitigated. Because of the poor consideration given to how the new young person's behaviours may affect the existing young people, effective strategies were not put in place to prevent a negative impact on existing young people. As a result, there was an escalation of behaviours and an increase in incidents.

However, the manager's referrals tracker document demonstrates that she has learned from this experience. She now fully considers all referrals prior to them coming to the home and the impact their behaviours and risks will have on the existing group. Her evaluation demonstrates that she puts the best interests of young people living at the home at the centre of her practice.

Young people are able to maintain a sense of belonging within their families and to benefit from ongoing family support as they reach independence. This is as a result of sound arrangements for contact which allow young people to renew, build and maintain relationships with significant family members.

Some gaps were found in medication administration records, which had not been explained. This is not good practice and could have resulted in medication errors. The manager is now carrying out regular audits to improve staff practice and prevent this from happening in the future.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe in the home and trust staff. Staff have suitable training in safeguarding. The manager takes action to ensure that all concerns are reported and investigated appropriately and that matters are effectively addressed to protect young people.	

The majority of young people's risk assessments are comprehensive and detail all known risks, to inform staff of the actions they must take to protect young people and themselves. One young person's risk assessment did not detail all of the known risks which included verbal and physical aggression and a history of damaging property. This absence of information could have resulted in staff not being aware of the actions they must take to reduce the risks for this young person. However, staff's understanding and current safeguarding practice has meant that this young person has not yet displayed the previous challenging behaviour since coming to live at the home.

Young people do go missing from the home but such incidents have reduced since one young person left the home. Staff are responsive and proactive when missing incidents occur. They attempt to make contact with the young person and search for them to ensure that they return to the home safely. The manager takes action to evaluate all incidents and staff's recording to improve practice. However, young people's individual protocols and risk assessments do not explicitly state what individual preventative strategies are necessary to prevent a missing incident from occurring, although staff ensure that young people receive an independent return home interview on their return. The home's missing person policy does not make reference to return home interviews. This risks new staff being unaware of the importance or the need for them to take place.

Behaviour management focuses upon praising and rewarding positive behaviour. The home has introduced a new incentive system, which supports young people to develop personal targets and reward them when they have achieved them. This has been successful in supporting young people to develop more positive behaviours.

Staff use their positive relationships with the young people to underpin behavioural expectations in the home. Young people are encouraged to talk about their feelings and to use alternative methods to express these more positively without resorting to aggressive behaviours. Staff use sanctions fairly and proportionately. Sanctions focus on reparation, encouraging young people to reflect on their behaviour and recognise the consequences of their actions.

From their starting points, some young people have made excellent progress in their behaviour. One young person commented: 'I used to kick off a lot, but I now realise that this can have huge implications. I now think things through more.' As a result, there has been a significant reduction in incidents requiring physical intervention for this young person. However, this is not the case for all young people in the home. One young person's placement was ended by their placing authority due to an escalation in the young person's poor behaviour. Incidents requiring staff to intervene using physical intervention have also increased for another young person. Staff are aware of the reasons for the escalation in both young people's behaviour, and recognise that these are linked to factors external to

the home. Staff continue to work with young people's parents and placing authorities to review their strategies to ensure that they remain effective in supporting young people to manage their behaviour and express their feelings more constructively.

Prior to employment, potential employees undergo safe recruitment checks. However, on one occasion the reasons for leaving employment with children were not verified as required by regulation. During the inspection, the manager took action to obtain this information.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
In accordance with Ofsted's framework guidance, the absence of a registered manager for the last nine months results in a judgement of inadequate. Actual management arrangements have been stable and an application from the current manager has now been received by Ofsted. The manager has been in post since February 2016 and has enrolled on a level 5 management course. She is a qualified social worker and has a wealth of experience in working with young people who are looked after. The manager is extremely passionate and places the specific needs of young people at the forefront of her practice. She is highly aspirational for the development of the home. The manager provides strong leadership and effective management. She fully understands the strengths and shortfalls of the service and is using quality assurance systems effectively to develop the service. Her drive and determination to want the best for young people has resulted in a responsive and caring atmosphere. The manager has a good oversight of the service and evaluates all aspect of practice to identify trends in young people's progress and in staff's support, in order to drive continuous improvements within the home. Independent visitor reports are completed within the required timescales. They are comprehensive and support the manager in developing the service. The manager's development plan is of a good standard and clearly sets out her aims. These include increasing young people's participation within the home and wider organisation, and how she will develop the service to better support young people to achieve their potential. The manager does not have a current workforce development plan but she is acutely aware of staff's skills deficits and their training	

needs.

Although relatively new in post, the manager has forged very effective working relationships with external colleagues, including placing social workers and the police. These have positively contributed to young people's well-being.

Staff are equipped with mandatory training in safeguarding, first aid, fire awareness, food hygiene and behaviour management. Staff have also completed training in substance misuse. This was a recommendation made at the previous inspection and will better equip staff to support young people with these particular needs. Half of the members of staff have obtained the required level 3 diploma. All other members of staff are currently enrolled on the course to develop appropriate skills to care for young people.

Staff report that they feel well supported by the management team and that they receive regular supervision. Supervision provides staff with the chance to review and reflect on young people's progress and needs. It also provides them with an opportunity to review their own performance and development needs, the running of the home and how best to develop and improve the standard of care and support provided. Records demonstrate that the manager is taking action to develop her team to ensure that staff continue to provide a good quality of care to young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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.

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