

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC393567
Inspector	Bridget Goddard
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Priory Education Services Limited
Registered person address	5th Floor 80 Hammersmith Road London W14 8UD
Responsible individual	Helen Sharpe
Registered manager	Alison Jane Foster
Date of last inspection	16/12/2013

Inspection date	25/06/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is an independent residential home that meets the needs of 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
16/12/2013	Full	adequate
05/07/2013	Interim	not judged
23/01/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
03/10/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure that proper provision is made for the welfare of children accommodated. This specifically relates to ensuring timely routine, and events reporting to the local authority (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	04/08/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training. This specifically relates to new staff receiving behaviour management training covering both strategies and the role of the police in crises (Regulation 27 (4) (a))	04/08/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. This particularly relates to involvement with aspects of their plans for example, their health plan (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well-maintained and decorated. This particularly relates to the condition of carpets in the home. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people have strong relationships with staff who they feel understand them well. Some say of particular staff, 'he's very smart, you don't have to say anything he knows how you are feeling from your face'. Other young people say, 'you can make really good bonds here, because they care about you'. These positive relationships help young people to develop appropriate attachments and assist them in developing a good sense of themselves as valuable individuals.

Young people have regular access to routine and specialist medical practitioners. Young people's health has improved, some are less prone to extreme behaviours and others have greatly improved their physical health. Some young people have begun to take responsibility for managing their own health needs and this reduces their episodes of risky behaviour.

Some young people have a particularly strong role in the home, for example helping to put together maintenance check lists. Other young people contribute to staff interviews. This together with learning routine, domestic skills helps young people prepare for independent living. Much of the skill based learning that young people do is in partnership with the school. There are very strong daily links between the school and the home and all young people attend the same school. All young people have very good attendance at school and consequently their achievements have at least caught up with their peers.

Most young people benefit from regular contact with their families and for many this is increasing. Some parents are heartened by the improvements in their child's behaviour and are open to learning the way this has been achieved. These increased strong bonds help to secure a vital long term means of support for young people.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people have good relationships with staff, who they see as being concerned for their welfare. They say, 'it's like there not in it for the money, they know you really well and it's a bit of family really'. They regret recent changes of staff and miss some of them, but think the new ones seem 'nice as well'. Most young people usually respond well to staff direction, but recently there have been episodes of significantly negative behaviour. This is now no longer the case and young people are able to reflect that the home is now 'better' and 'much calmer'.

Staff have promoted this positive engagement with young people both through their effective relationship building and by involving young people in the life of the home. Young people are routinely involved in food and activity choices on a daily basis and this helps them invest in maintaining a positive home.

Staff contribute appropriately to individualised placement plans. The home has some attractively designed sections of the plan ready for young people's involvement. However they are not yet routinely involved in for example, their health plans. This limits young people's own abilities to make, everyday, healthy choices. However, staff are usually effective at promoting young people's best health for example, in respect of young people with chronic health conditions. Local authority colleagues say that the home supports such young people well.

Regular contact with school staff helps support consistent behaviour management and staff appropriately use these opportunities to also discuss how young people's school achievement can be improved. The partnership between the home and the school also enables young people to have access to a wide range of leisure activities especially sports based ones.

Although relationships between local authority colleagues and staff, particularly the manager, are usually effective there are some communication shortfalls. Routine updates as well as communications about significant incidents are not always received in a timely manner. This does not promote young people's welfare or effective decision making.

Staff appropriately identify young people's cultural needs, and take steps to meet these. Medication administration is sound and dispensing is conducted with appropriate attention to detail. The home is generally well-kept, but some aspects, for example stair carpets, are overdue for refurbishment. The home is well- designed with bedrooms that young people are proud of, and comfortable communal spaces. Young people are generally pleased with their home environment describing it as 'homely'.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people generally feel safe in this home and trust staff. They say, 'there is always someone to talk to'. However, there have been recent examples where the levels of aggression between young people have led to them not always feeling safe. This is compounded by newer staff being insufficiently prepared for extreme incidents and by a lack of clarity amongst staff over the role of the police in such situations.

Bullying is not currently an issue in this home. Staff are aware of bullying risks and discuss them. They then implement suitable strategies to minimise risk. Where

necessary, to protect young people they will appropriately take further steps.

Individualised risk assessments effectively reflect young people's histories and the impact these may have on their current behaviour. This detailed knowledge means that consequences and rewards can be personalised. Young people think that, ' Staff are okay when they give you consequences, even though you are cross at the time you know they are being fair'. Restraint is used as sparingly as possible and only in appropriate circumstances.

Young people have individualised missing protocols which detail action to be taken at various time points. This helps ensure missing young people are well-monitored and kept as safe as possible. The home has been successful in reducing the level of missing for some young people. Local authority colleagues note that this helps them engage more effectively with the both the home and with education.

Young people live in a safe environment and checks to maintain this are routinely and satisfactorily carried out. Appropriate care is taken with staff recruitment in relation to checks and interviewing. This minimises the possibility that unsuitable people could work in the home.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home has an effective registered manager in place who is appropriately qualified. She is well-supported by her immediate manager and has addressed all the recommendations from the last inspection. Young people are positive about her leadership, as are local authority colleagues who praise her commitment to keeping in touch. This is in contrast to comments made by such colleagues about general staff communication. Local authority colleagues also note that the manager, 'is really knowledgeable and interested in young people'.

Since the last inspection the home has experienced significant staffing changes but the manager now has a sufficiently large team in place which she has recruited. She is also putting into practice some new systems to assist effective processes. Once this new team has settled in, the home will be well-placed to make further improvements.

A generally appropriate, training package for staff is in place but this does not include behaviour management skills at a sufficiently early stage of employment. This has demonstrably left staff members ill-equipped in crisis situations. Leaders and managers are aware of this shortfall and have plans to amend this.

There is a detailed development plan in place and an appropriate Statement of Purpose which is currently being updated to reflect new staff appointments. The manager previously supervised all staff and these sound arrangements are now changing to reflect the new staff team. This will allow the manager to have more of

an oversight of key areas for example, young people's progress and outcomes. There is a well-advanced plan for detailing these using individual graphs to monitor young people across all key areas, which is currently being discussed with staff and managers.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.