

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC402385
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Priory Education Services Ltd
Registered person address	5th Floor 80 Hammersmith Road London W14 8UD
Responsible individual	Helen Sharpe
Registered manager	Simon Dyke
Date of last inspection	23/01/2014

Inspection date	25/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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This inspection took place at a point of change within this children's home. One young person has only just moved placement because of his threatening behaviour and another successfully moved into independence. One other young person is successfully moving back home and two new placements have just taken place. Young people have made some good progress since their arrival at the home. Young people have benefited from a coordinated approach to their care, education and therapy. Some young people's behaviour has deteriorated recently to a point where other young people have not felt safe in each other's company.

Overall the home provides an adequate level of care for young people. There are some shortfalls, but also some significant strengths. Some young people make good progress as a result of being at the home. The Registered Manager and staff have good relationships with other agencies and parents so that they can be more effective in meeting young people's needs and keeping them safe. They have a good awareness of the individual needs of young people and the risks that they can take. There is a lot of work done to help keep young people safe and other professionals are clear in their views that young people are as safe in the home as they could be anywhere. Some young people do continue with risk taking behaviours despite the work that is being done.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has established good systems to monitor and review the quality of care to young people.

As a result of this visit, one requirement and three recommendations have been made in relation to staff training, notifications, consultation processes

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2014	Interim	good progress
22/07/2013	Full	adequate
15/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
20/09/2012	Full	good

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
30 (2001)	ensure any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. Regulation 30(1)	03/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is good core training in place to equip staff with the skills

required to meet the needs of the young people placed particularly in relation to managing conflictual behaviours (NMS 18.1)

- ensure the views of the child, the child's family, social worker, independent reviewing officer are sought regularly on the child's care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people are treated as individuals and each case record reflects up-to-date information about their needs that is unique and representative of their backgrounds and identity. This information helps staff learn about young people and how best to look after them. Particular attention is paid to involving young people in their plans of care and future arrangements. Staff use a range of ways to do this that best suits each young person, from attending meetings through to less formal consultation arrangements with carers. Because of this approach, young people's views, wishes and feelings are well known and incorporated into their daily care and future plans.

Young people are fully aware of the ways in which they can raise any issues or concerns about their care. This includes talking to staff, managers or their social workers and there is also a moans and groans box which they can use if they so wish.

Progress has been made by some young people with their education but this has been varied. Staff have supported young people to maintain good attendance at alternative school provisions as well as their own Queenswood school. Individual timetables are negotiated with young people to engage them in their own style of learning and work experience opportunities. Young people have the opportunity to undertake a range of activities and learn new skills.

The home has positive links with parents and have supported young people to maintain links with their families and home towns, for example through regular visits. One parent said, 'My son has come on tremendously since living in the independence flat.'

Young people benefit from living in a reasonably furnished and comfortable home that is kept safe, clean and tidy. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and can arrange their own space to suit their individual choices and tastes. The home's communal areas are decorated to a practical standard and provide enough space for young people to spend time together or on their own. The home have the benefit of an independent annexe which they can use to prepare young people for total independence.

Health care needs of young people are met and young people enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet. Young people build their independent living skills, for example, by carrying out a variety of tasks independently.

Quality of care **adequate**

Generally, the quality of care offered is responsive to young people's individual needs and is sensitively delivered. In particular, key carers as well as other residential staff spend one-to-one time with young people to establish their views and where appropriate, act upon them. Staff are committed to promoting a safe environment although sometimes they have not been able to consistently achieve this because of some young people's current behaviours.

Up to the point of the inspection, young people did not enjoy positive and constructive relationships with all staff and each other. Some young people's peer relationships were fragmented and unstable. Although some young people's behaviour has always been challenging, recent circumstances have seen an escalation in aggressive and violent behaviours. This has impacted on the new placement but since the placement changes have taken place, the young person feels much happier and clearly is building some strong relationships with staff.

Placing social workers are reasonably positive about the care provided in the home and comment positively about weekly updates the manager provides them with about the progress of young people and any incidents that have occurred. One placing authority said, 'Our working relationships with the organisation is excellent.'

Young people are consulted about arrangements and routines on a daily basis and know how to raise a concern if they are not happy about something. Young people's views, wishes and feelings are actively and regularly sought through the young people's surveys and one to one sessions with staff.

Staff ensure young people's health is promoted. They are registered with the local doctor, dentist and opticians. Their emotional wellbeing is promoted through the sessions with the in house therapist who visits weekly. Young people are encouraged to make healthy food choices and expand the range of food they will eat. They are also encouraged to engage in physical activities.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people's welfare and safety is promoted by well-informed staff who are trained in key aspects of safeguarding and child protection. Young people rarely go missing from the home. Appropriate procedures, risk assessments and links to outside agencies are in place should this become an issue that staff have to manage. Staff know how to respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse or report concerns about a young person's safety. When needed, managers work in partnership with external agencies to ensure the home's protocols and policies are followed in relation to keeping young people safe.

Currently, over a short period of time, some young people have not always felt safe in the home and this is because of their peers' disruptive and aggressive behaviours. Staff work hard to try and minimise the impact of these circumstances by using and

following individualised behaviour risk management plans. However, young people are sometimes reluctant to respond positively to staff interventions and continue to escalate their behaviours. Police have been involved recently in dealing with young people's behaviour. This is despite staff using their training and skills to try and prevent such events from occurring in the first place. It would appear that there are differing responses from some staff in dealing with these behaviours. Some staff do appear confused in recording some of these incidents in the appropriate recording systems. The team continue to work with the in house psychologists to help young people overcome their current behavioural difficulties. There is also support from the therapy team (PACCT) to enable the staff to work more proactively to enable better outcomes for the young people.

Young people are rewarded for good behaviour as well as being sanctioned when their behaviour falls below what is expected. Discussions about what is and is not acceptable are frequent and rewards are given for good progress and adhering to their weekly programmes.

Young people benefit from the home being physically safe and secure. The environment is maintained well and regular safety checks ensure that equipment and utilities work safely. Fire prevention equipment is in place and serviced according to professional guidance. Internal fire drills and fire equipment checks are regularly undertaken to ensure everyone can respond appropriately in an emergency.

The home's recruitment process is thorough and helps to ensure that only those who are suitable to work with young people are employed.

Leadership and management

good

Young people live in a home that is efficiently managed. The Registered Manager is very experienced, skilled and qualified and has been managing this home since March 2012. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose and it has been reviewed in line with the regulations.

There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at all times to care for young people. Some changes within the team have occurred but the team work hard to minimise the impact of these circumstances on young people. Most staff are suitably qualified with newer members of the team working towards an appropriate qualification or completing the organisation's probationary and induction programme. The manager has already identified the need to have a more consistent approach to managing behaviour and has identified some specific training to support staff in this area of practice.

Staff talk positively about the support they receive from the Registered Manager and each other. Supervision and appraisal meetings are carried out regularly, which enables staff to reflect on their daily practice and relationships with young people.

However, currently the appraisals do not take into account any views of the young people.

The Registered Manager and provider organisation have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. The manager carries out regular checks on key areas of the home's operation to ensure young people's needs are being met. In addition, information is provided in weekly progress reports and sent to the placing authority social workers. Young people are regularly canvassed for their views about the home and their experiences of being in care. However, there is as yet no formalised approach to obtaining the views of young people, their parents and other professionals which could be used to develop and shape services for current and future young people.

The children's guide is of a good quality and provides young people with information that is important for them to know and understand.

There is an independent Regulation 33 visitor who is experienced, thorough and well prepared to challenge. The manager also undertakes his own regular monitoring and the Regulation 34 reports are sent into Ofsted at the required intervals. The manager has a clear development plan in place which highlights the progress he wishes to make over the coming 12 months.

Team meetings also take place regularly, which allows the whole staff team to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them. It also enables all the staff to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer. Currently the Registered manager is developing his staff through enabling them to keep up to date with changes to the regulations and getting them more familiar with the national minimum standards and evaluation schedule.

There has been two complaints referred to Ofsted which was thoroughly investigated as part of this inspection. The evidence gathered has concluded that some of the concerns expressed were acknowledged by the manager and there was clear evidence to demonstrate what has been put in place but a majority of the complaint was unfounded with clear evidence to back up their practice.

The manager usually makes appropriate notifications to the relevant bodies as required ensuring important information is shared with the right professionals about young people's welfare and safety. However, there was one occasion when the police were called to the home but no notification was sent in to Ofsted. This has no impact negatively on young people.

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.