

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	15/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC402406
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	Clive Coombs
Registered manager	Karen Lewis-Farr
Inspector	Dawn Bennett

Inspection date	15/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC402406

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Staff are not supported by the organisation to complete required qualifications, specialist training or continuing professional development. This does not equip them to consistently best meet the complex needs of the young people who live at the home.
- Professionals, staff, young people and parent feedback is not consistently used to help develop or improve the service. This limits the opportunities they have to positively influence the care young people receive and the home's operation.
- Staff, young people, parents, and placing authorities do not have access to a Statement of Purpose that contains the information required by the new Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards. This does not help them to determine if this home can meet a young person's needs.
- Staff are not always effectively supported to develop strategies to help young people address behaviours that cause harm to themselves, the environment and others. This slows the progress made by young people.
- Young people fail to develop and reach their full educational potential because staff do not have the knowledge required to understand each young person's educational targets. When a young person's attendance is not in line with their agreed education plan, staff are not proactive in challenging education professionals to ensure issues are quickly addressed.
- The environment is not personalised and does not provide a homely place for young people to live and feel they belong.

The children's home strengths

- A strong and effective Registered Manager supports a resilient and dedicated team of staff.
- Staff are fully committed to meeting the very challenging needs of complex young people. They have supported young people through a very difficult period which has seen a high level of self-harming behaviour, criminal damage to the home and environment and assaults on staff.
- Through sustained commitment and some effective work with other professionals and partner agencies, staff are beginning to see young people make improved progress in some areas of their lives.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The positive relationships standard- 11 In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person is required to: (2)(a)ensure that staff – (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; (iii) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (v) Communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child's understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding.	31/07/2015
Review of the quality of care- 45 The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating- the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children; and considering the opinions of parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(2)(b)(c)(5))	31/07/2015
Statement of Purpose- 16 The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulations 16 (1))	31/07/2015
Employment of staff-33 The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	31/07/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of their children. This specifically relates to the personalisation of the home ((The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to understand each child's education and training targets and their next steps for learning. If a child's progress is not in line with their agreed targets or next steps, staff should seek expert advice from education professionals, such as the Virtual School Head, SENCO, learning mentor or teacher. Staff must challenge the child's education or training provider if the child does not receive sufficient support to progress as outlined in their relevant plans ((The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28, paragraph 5.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is run by a private company.

The home's Statement of Purpose indicates that the age range will be between 10 and 18 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/10/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Sustained Effectiveness

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Since the interim inspection in January 2015, staff and young people have experienced a range of challenges. One young person has remained living at the home. One young person has moved on after police raised safeguarding concerns relating to behaviours with peers in the local community. Two new young people have moved into the home. All young people display behaviours that interfere with and effect progress in other areas of their lives. They also have an influential and detrimental effect on each other. Staff work hard to develop respectful relationships between themselves and young people. Over the last month, this hard work has seen positive progress for young people in some areas of their lives. Staff also developed positive relationships between themselves, professionals, parents, and partnership agencies. For example, the Registered Manager has had proactive meetings with some placing authorities to monitor high levels of incidents and the on-going impact of the placement for one. This regular contact results in effective working relationships and good shared insight into young people's progress. A social worker stated: 'The staff seem to have a very good ability to develop relationships with the residents. They have seemed to have worked hard with my young person to help him manage periods of high anxiety and stress. I believe that the staff have a good level of support from the therapeutic team attached to the house and work with the young people as directed, towards the achievement of good outcomes.' Some young people have good school attendance and make good academic progress. Throughout all the behavioural challenges, attendance at school has been consistent for those young people and provides an aspect of stability in their lives. Other young people struggle to engage with schooling and their part-time educational provision. Staff promote aspects of learning. For example, they transport young people to educational placements on time. However, they do not have a professional understanding of educational terminology or up-to-date knowledge of the quality of each young person's progress. As corporate parents, they also lack rigor in challenging educational partners when young people are struggling to attend and progress. This does not help young people to reach their full educational potential. Young people learn independence skills within the home and local community. They enjoy managing budgets, shopping for food and cooking meals. Some young	

people are involved in regular clubs in the local community. This develops their interests and provides them with opportunities to develop a new network of friends.

Young people can see how they progress and have aspirations for the future. Young people stated: 'I don't take drugs anymore and I haven't been in as much trouble with the police', 'the whole staff team are brilliant. They have listened to me and have helped me learn to cope' and 'I have completed my exams and hope to do well'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Young people are now beginning to learn strategies to manage inappropriate behaviour. However, there have been high levels of self-harming behaviour, damage to the home and environment and assaults on staff. This resulted in a period of increased use of sanctions and physical interventions. When this was not effective, the police were called. Damage to property and assaults on staff resulted in criminal charges being brought against young people. Concerns about the complexity of the group of young people has prompted the involvement of senior managers as well as the organisation's quality assurance team. This resulted in the organisation taking some positive actions. For example, notice was served on one young person's placement. However, due to the complexity of the young person's needs, and the stage of his schooling, notice was withdrawn and the placement continued. The organisation supported the placement with additional staff resources. As a result, the young person has completed exams before moving placement. The input into the home by the organisation during this time has at times focused on looking at systems and staffing numbers rather than supporting staff to develop the quality of their practice and professional skills. For example, specialist training, such as in preventing self-harm, was delivered only after new young people were placed. The staff team have not received necessary behaviour management input to support them with alternative strategies for managing the environment and specific behaviours exhibited by this complex group of young people. Management support has not looked at the quality of care or reviewed the management of such challenging behaviours; consequently, some strategies have been employed that have not always been effective. For example, sanctions given after serious incidents have not always been effective or restorative. 'Reparations' for damage to windows have resulted in young people owing large sums of money. The large	

sums owing, and the lack of interest from the young people wanting to know when they will be paid off, indicates this sanction has not been effective in changing behaviour.

Some sanctions have contributed to staff difficulties in managing the group of young people in one place and have not helped to reduce incidents. For example, when staff have 'grounded' young people, this prevents staff from separating and distracting them with positive activities away from the home.

Over the last month, because of court intervention and more coordinated proactive working between staff, managers and the home's therapist, incidents have reduced. For example, incidents of self-harm, including those that required hospitalisation, have significantly reduced. Incidents of damage to the home and environment have reduced and the house has been redecorated. Incidents of sanctions and physical interventions have also significantly reduced.

Throughout this unsettled period the staff team have effectively managed and reduced other negative behaviour. For example, historical patterns of missing from care prior have stopped. There have also been no complaints. The Registered Manager discusses all possible safeguarding concerns with the appropriate authorities and none resulted in strategy meetings.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home has a Statement of Purpose but it is not in line with the new Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards. This does not support placing authorities in making an appropriate placement that will effectively meet the assessed needs of a young person. Staff have not received training in the 'relationship model' referred to in the Statement of Purpose. Staff who have worked for the company for a long time are not provided with any training to help them progress. The staff team are working tirelessly to meet the needs of complex young people but without the adequate professional training required to ensure they have all the skills necessary to achieve consistent good outcomes. The organisation is not currently ensuring all staff have access to the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare, or an equivalent qualification. Specialist training that relates to the specific needs of young people living at the home is also not readily available and often takes place after a young person is placed.	

The organisation's regional management team have recognised training shortfalls. Provision has just been made for staff to access the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare locally and a programme of training to enhance mandatory training has just been implemented with the aim of ensuring that in time, staff become professionally qualified and skilled.

The Registered Manager took up post in November 2014 and is appropriately qualified and experienced. Staff are effectively supported. They attend regular staff meetings and supervisions sessions that enable them to reflect on and develop practice. The Registered Manager, and therapist attached to the home, also use team meetings to run training sessions for staff. The staff team have found these sessions invaluable.

There are some good relationships with partner agencies and families. A social worker stated: 'The Registered Manager and staff involved with the child on my caseload have worked very closely with me to understand his needs and in the management of his daily care. I have been promptly informed of any incidents that have occurred and received all associated reports within the next working day. I am also aware that the staff group have maintained close contact with the child's parent throughout the period of the placement and also the Community Mental Health Service involved with the child. As such I would comment that they have maintained a high standard of partnership working.'

A regular cycle of quality assurance monitors young people's progress and produces a range of information about how well the home is operating. This includes monthly independent visits as well as the Registered Manager's internal quality assurance and monitoring routines. When concerns were raised earlier in the year through these processes, the organisation also conducted quality assurance visits. These processes effectively identified some shortfalls and resulted in some improvements through action and development plans. The Registered Manager has addressed these effectively.

Although monitoring and evaluation of the service is undertaken by the Registered Manager, this does not routinely include formal feedback from professionals, parents, staff or young people. Consequently, stakeholder feedback is not used to shape and inform the home's development or improvement. Quality assurance processes are not used to evidence the actions taken arising from any consultation, especially with young people.

Senior management, the Registered Manager and staff acknowledge this has been a very difficult period of time, but say they feel young people have over the last month have made real progress in some areas. Significant work has been undertaken to achieve this. However, there is still work required: to ensure positive relationships developed result in sustained improved outcomes; young people due to move on do so successfully, and the staff team are equipped to meet the needs of any future young people before they move in.

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 looked after children 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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