

SC407787

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned by a large organisation. It is linked to a specialist school operated by the same organisation, which the children attend. The home is registered to care for up to six children who have social and behavioural difficulties. The registered manager has obtained the level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has been in post for four years.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 May 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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.

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/06/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/09/2015	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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (b))	31/07/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— promotes their welfare. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)) In particular, this is in relation to recording investigations and the outcome following an allegation made by a child.	31/07/2018
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21 (a)) In particular, this is regarding the use of staff's personal mobiles to share information pertaining to children.	31/07/2018
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	31/07/2018

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	31/07/2018
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Recommendations

- Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Any modifications to the environment of the home must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15. paragraph 3.10)
This is in respect of removing a light bulb from a child's room; permission should also be sought from the parent and placing authority.
- Any sanctions should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

One child moved into the home without an in-depth assessment of his specific disability, how this had an impact on him or the resources that needed to be in place prior to his move. Staff were not trained to understand and respond to his specific additional needs. Managers did not ensure that specialist services already involved with the child remained working with him. Staff were trained in maintaining his support aids; however, a system was not in place to ensure that staff recorded when checks had been completed. Managers cannot evidence whether the necessary vigilance was applied in the maintenance of equipment, which this child is dependent on.

Occasional failure to request advice and guidance from external resources is further evidenced in the decision to pre-emptively restrict a child who was not settling to sleep at night. The light bulb was removed from his main light in his bedroom rather than consulting with behaviour management specialists for advice with regard to the best approach. In addition, the manager failed to consult with the child's parent and professionals involved in his care prior to making this unusual decision.

Children are not consistently encouraged to make amends for negative actions by using restorative practices. The same sanctions are used for all children and are not always relevant to the incident. An example of this is that the sanction for aggression towards staff is a week's ban for paid activities. This does not consider the context or severity of the incident and is explicitly not restorative in nature. There are examples, however, of attempts to repair relationships between staff and children following incidents.

In many aspects, children are doing well and making progress. Staff interactions and engagement with children have a positive impact on them. Children were observed to have good relationships with staff and with each other. One child was observed acting as a positive role-model to a younger peer. The use of 'guess what' notes, in which children's achievements are noted by staff, is effective and these are proudly displayed in children's rooms.

Children are able to exercise choice during their daily routines. Children's meetings enable them to contribute to meal planning, choose activities, share information and express their views.

All the children are attending education. The registered manager works closely with teaching staff to ensure effective communication between them. The majority of the children are doing well academically and making progress. One child who didn't attend school prior to moving into the home was sitting his examinations on the day of the inspection.

Staff equip children to become more independent, in line with their age and ability. One

child is now trusted to walk to the local shops. Another child has learned to budget, shop and cook for himself in preparation for when he leaves the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Managers are inconsistent in their responses to safeguarding issues. One allegation against staff was investigated by the child's placing authority; however, the investigation and outcome were not recorded by the manager. Other safeguarding issues have been dealt with following safeguarding procedures and processes, and actions taken to ensure that lessons are learned.

Specific risk assessments do not identify the additional support needed for a child who has a disability if there is a fire during the night. Additional night-time fire drills have not been carried out or work undertaken with the child to identify the best methods to protect him. A fire drill that did take place was so poorly recorded that it did not provide the necessary information to analyse the success of the evacuation.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place; however, concerns about a child's potential use of ligatures to self-harm were addressed in his behaviour management plan but not in his risk assessment. This means that this serious issue could potentially be missed.

There are failures in food hygiene: food was not adequately wrapped or labelled. There is a risk of children becoming ill through contamination. This poor role-modelling does not provide a good example to children.

Children rarely go missing. Staff supervise children closely when they are in the home and community. There are policies in place to ensure that staff know how to respond should children leave without permission and staff were observed to be vigilant.

The staff have a good knowledge of e-safety. They devise written agreements and set limitations on children's use of mobile phones and social media, which are agreed by parents and children. The staff educate children regarding e-safety risks during key-work sessions and daily conversations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager analyses all incidents, physical interventions and key-work sessions. However, he could not demonstrate how he follows up any concerns with the staff involved. The manager is unable to show the effectiveness of his auditing process and how this improves practice.

Supervision is regular and evaluative. Staff discuss young people's needs, the impact of their role and the development of the service. The effectiveness of supervision is limited by the manager's failure to discuss learning points from incidents and physical interventions.

There is no policy in place for the use of personal phones by staff, which has led to the blurring of acceptable boundaries in communication about children. Leaders and managers failed to recognise and respond to this confidentiality issue.

The manager failed to report a safeguarding issue to Ofsted following an allegation against a staff member. In addition, he did not report to Ofsted a concern regarding a staff member's conduct in a timely manner. This prevents external professionals from overseeing effectively actions taken to protect children.

Staff have updated the children's guide and shared this with the children who refer to the guide and value this document. Responsive direct work with children has taken place, educating children in areas such as personal safety and the danger of lighting fires.

The manager has completed a thorough assessment of the risks in the local area. The manager has updated the risk assessment to include a recent change in building use regarding the adjoining property. The children visited the building site and have been incentivised by financial rewards to discourage them from endangering themselves by trespassing. This has been effective.

Staff speak positively about the support that they receive from the manager and the team. A new member of staff described experiencing a positive induction, receiving relevant training and shadowing a mentor. Staff were observed by the inspector to communicate well with each other to plan activities and how the evening would be managed.

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: SC407787

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Robert Page

Registered manager: Ryan Thirlwell

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector

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