

SC407790

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited 06244880

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that is part of a national organisation and provides care and accommodation for five young people who have emotional, behavioural and education difficulties and attend the associated residential special school.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 January 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people develop positive relationships of trust and respect with staff. Young people make good progress including in their improved behaviour and social skills.

- All young people have good attendance in full-time education.
- Staff support young people to improve their relationships with their families.
- The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and she is taking action to further improve the quality of care.
- The manager and staff successfully advocate on young people's behalf and challenge other agencies if they have not acted in the young person's best interests.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Sanction records have not been rigorously scrutinised.
- Not all required recruitment checks are completed prior to a member of staff starting employment.
- The manager does not receive regular supervision to support her in carrying out her role.
- Not all staff have completed the required level 3 diploma.
- Case records are weak and do not reflect the work that staff carry out or the progress young people make.
- There was a single but significant medication error.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2017	Full	Good
07/09/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
14/05/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 particular the registered person must ensure that medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (2)(b))	15/03/2018

Recommendations

- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour 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)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- All staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the

impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 11.4)

- For some children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded or out of education for significant periods, it may be necessary to address and work through their past experiences and present needs before they can positively participate in learning activities and formal education. Staff in children's homes will play a key role in supporting these children in line with their personal education plan or EHC plan and recommendations from education and health professionals. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)

In particular, incorporate relevant education targets into care plans.

- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

In particular, ensure that young people's documentation reflects meaningful discussion with young people on how to keep themselves safe and contains their views and opinions.

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, ensure that young people's risk assessments are current and up to date and detail how staff ensure that young people are safe when accessing the internet.

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

In particular, obtain a pathway plan for young people to ensure that staff are supporting young people to move on in line with the agreed plan.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Child-centred decision-making and careful, considerate planning have resulted in positive changes and improvements to the young people's experience and the care they receive. One young person who exhibited extremely challenging destructive behaviour has moved on from the home. Subsequently, there has been a reduction in incidents and the young people are now settled. The staff team has become more confident and able to provide quality time and support to the remaining young people, resulting in the young people making progress in their behaviours, social skills and education.

Each young person is engaged in education. Those who previously had poor attendance now attend daily. The staff support the young people to think about their futures and consider their choices about further education and learning. Currently, the young people's care plans do not include education targets.

A wide variety of activities are on offer to the young people in the home and in the local community. The staff encourage the young people to follow their hobbies and to try new things, such as boxing, football or trampolining. Consequently, the young people are extending their social experiences, developing new talents and boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

Independence skills are promoted by the staff. The young people are making improvements in their daily living and self-care skills, such as helping with chores around the home. A new reward scheme introduced by the staff provides further incentive for the young people to undertake daily living tasks. The young people are generally taking on responsibilities in this respect and are learning valuable life skills for the future. However, currently no young people have a pathway plan in place outlining how they will be prepared for and supported into adult life.

Young people feel they have a voice and say that they are involved in the decisions made about their care and in the running of the home. However, key-work records and young people's meeting minutes do not show evidence of the young people's contributions to discussions about their care and the operation of the home.

The experiences of the young people are enhanced by the good standard of care provided by the staff, which meets their needs. However, case recording is basic and does not demonstrate the depth of work that the staff undertake. Records do not give sufficient information to evidence how the placement is achieving its aims or the progress that the young people are making. The staff have not obtained copies of the young people's local authority documentation, so cannot ensure that the young people's care is being carried out in accordance with their placing authority's plans.

Through sensitive guidance and encouragement, the young people have maintained and improved their relationships with their families. The staff have developed a good rapport with young people's parents and keep them fully informed about their child. Staff work

with the parents to implement strategies in the family home similar to those used here; this provides consistency for the young people and has resulted in increased visits home for some.

Collaborative working with the young people's placing authorities and their parents ensure successful transitions into the home. The manager uses her thorough knowledge of the young people already in the home to determine the ability of the staff to meet the needs of prospective new young people and their compatibility with those there. However, young people's pre-admission assessments do not evidence the manager's consideration of the impact that young people's behaviour may have on others and what staff could do to reduce such impact. Staff provide good support and guidance about the practical and emotional impact of moving into alternative provision to promote a positive move on from the home.

The home has been refurbished, resulting in significant improvements to the environment. Young people now live in comfortable, well-maintained accommodation, which is attractively decorated. This helps the young people to feel valued and appreciated.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Consistent boundaries by the staff and a shared mutual respect with the young people have resulted in a significant decrease in incidents of challenging or risk-taking behaviours. Young people experience positive relationships with the staff. The young people trust the staff, feel able to open up about their frustrations and respond well to their guidance. Consequently, the young people are learning to identify their feelings and manage them positively.

Improvements in the young people's behaviours have meant that the staff have not had to use a physical intervention for over nine months and there has been a reduction in the use of sanctions. However, records of sanctions have not been rigorously monitored and evaluated. In a minority of cases, sanctions have not related to the behaviour and the staff have not been consistent in the type of sanction used for the same behaviour. This approach does not aid the young person in learning from their actions.

Young people report that they feel safe and are able to share their concerns with the staff and the staff will act on them. There have been no complaints and all safeguarding concerns have been reported and investigated appropriately. All of the staff spoken to demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibilities in keeping the young people safe.

A proactive response by the staff to the young people going missing from care has resulted in a decrease to just two incidents of young people going missing since the previous inspection. If the young people do not return to the home, the staff search for them in known areas and work with the police to ensure their safe return.

Staff are aware of the individual vulnerabilities of the young people and take action to

mitigate and reduce the risks to them. However, the staff do not update the young people's risk assessments as soon as new risks present themselves. Strategies to keep the young people safe online are weak. The young people's risk assessments do not advise of all actions necessary to protect the young people. Case records do not evidence any meaningful conversations about this matter with the young people to equip them to keep themselves safe.

Generally, all necessary recruitment checks are implemented to ensure that only people deemed suitable are employed to work in the home. However, in a minority of records a full employment history and verification of reasons why members of staff left roles where they worked with children were not obtained in line with regulation.

In one case, poor implementation of medication administration procedures resulted in confusion about the required dose for a young person's medication. Consequently, the staff did not know whether they had been providing the young person with the prescribed dose. This had the potential to compromise his health.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is extremely passionate about her role and the support she provides for young people. She has been instrumental in developing the confidence and competence of the staff team to provide good-quality care. Young people, parents and staff spoke highly of her characteristics: she is viewed as approachable and fair and she has made improvements in the home. The manager has a good knowledge of what is happening in the home and of the young people she supports. The newly appointed assistant manager supports the registered manager in running the home effectively.

Young people's voices are valued and acted upon by the manager and her staff team. They advocate for young people and ensure that their views are heard by all professionals involved in their care and used to inform the young people's care planning.

Proactive and positive relationships with external professionals help the manager and her staff team to work effectively with other agencies to ensure that the young people's packages of care meets their needs. The manager and the staff successfully offer professional challenge when necessary to ensure that decisions are made in the young people's best interests and support them to progress.

The manager is committed to improving the quality of care for the young people. She has a good oversight of the home and understands its strengths and the areas that require development. The additional scrutiny and recommendations made by the independent visitor aid the manager in her development of the home. However, the manager has not received supervision recently. Consequently, she is not supported to reflect on and develop her own practice.

Staff are confident in their roles and say that they are well supported by their managers. The manager is quick to address any poor practice to ensure that the young people receive good-quality care. Regular and effective supervision of the staff ensures that

they deliver consistent care to the young people, enabling them to make progress in their behaviour, social and independence skills and personal development. All staff undertake training to meet the young people's needs and enhance their professional development. However, over half of the staff are yet to complete their level 3 diploma to consolidate their practice and learning as required by regulation.

The manager's and the staffs' commitment to the young people and their willingness to support each other has resulted in a strong team around the young people. As a result, the numbers of staff vacancies has significantly reduced and the young people receive good, consistent support from reliable staff members who know them well.

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: SC407790

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Robert Page

Registered manager: Lisa Moores

Inspector

Melissa McMillan, social care inspector

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