

SC407790

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to five children who have additional needs, such as a moderate learning disability, or who require behavioural support. There are several homes in the local area which all link to a school which is owned by the same organisation. Children in the home are a mixture of children who live in the home and children who have term-time education-only stays.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 3 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 2021

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: 14 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
25/07/2018	Full	Good
08/01/2018	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress through their warm and nurturing relationships with staff. Staff are consistent in their approach, which provides a stable environment where children know what is expected of them. Staff are attuned to each child's needs, and children feel well cared for and listened to. A parent said that their child can now interact much better with their siblings and manage their time in the family home much better.

Children's views and wishes are central to the running of the home. Good consultation with children was observed during the inspection with regard to the activities and meals for the evening.

Children have requested a wide range of activities, improvements to their bedrooms and the home. A child who only stays for weekdays was desperate to join a football team but was unable to due to training and game commitments. Staff found a team in his home area and they take him to training weekly so that he can play in the team at weekends. This is a significant distance, but the child is so pleased to be involved in a team. Staff listen to children's views and help them to understand when something they want cannot happen. The recently improved systems for recording children's views are not yet fully embedded in practice. However, the impact of children's views in shaping the service are being captured.

Children attend the organisation's nearby school and have full attendance. Previously, they have not been able to cope with a school setting. Partnership working, including twice-daily handovers, ensures consistency across the school and boarding, which helps children to overcome their barriers to education. Children are engaged in a wide variety of socially and emotionally stimulating activities outside of school. Informal learning opportunities include celebrating cultural events and learning the meaning of them, such as Bonfire Night, Chinese New Year and Easter. Children are also helped to manage their emotions when playing games alone or with others, such as how to wait their turn and to accept if they have not won. These socially important skills help them to maintain their friendships with others.

Children moving into the home benefit from well-planned moves, and they have many opportunities to speak to staff before moving in. Several children have left the home in an unplanned way. This is in part due to issues relating to their placement ending in the education setting. The children's home management team completes a comprehensive review of unplanned endings and implements changes as a result to prevent the same issues in the future. A social worker was complimentary about how much the staff did to encourage a child to return to the home after a period away due to a COVID-19 pandemic national lockdown.

Children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and to understand what this means for them. This includes trying new foods and physical activities. Playing at

the local park has become a regular activity that all children enjoy. Medication is stored securely, and there are clear records of the administration of medications. Children's emotional well-being is met through strong links with the school's therapy teams and, where necessary, child and adolescent mental health services. Children are helped to develop socially acceptable coping mechanisms.

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

Staff understand each child's vulnerabilities and do all they can to protect children. They help children to develop skills to protect themselves, such as how to respond to people in the community who may encourage them to do something inappropriate. This included a child acting out to the inspector how he would respond to someone trying to sell him something on the street. Staff are confident in the processes to follow should they be concerned about a child's welfare and they know how to report concerns and who to report them to. They understand how to escalate concerns within the organisation and the local authority. Managers respond swiftly to safeguarding concerns and involve the relevant partner agencies.

Safeguarding records are clear and comprehensive. Joint working with the designated officer is clear and she is complimentary of how well the home liaises with her and follows her guidance.

Children who are at risk of going missing from care or being exploited are supported through joint working with specialist police officers. Staff are vigilant to any changes in behaviour and share this information with managers and the wider team. When incidents of bullying occur, staff are attuned to the subtle nature of this and respond quickly to any issues. There are clear responses to bullying, and children know it is not acceptable. They say that they are well supported if it happens to them.

Staff recognise all behaviour as a form of communication. They are thoughtful and consider what the child is trying to tell them. They monitor children daily and use set headings for children to follow with easy to understand smiley or exhausted face emojis to describe how they are feeling. This helps staff to stay attuned to the children's moods and to offer extra support to them when they need it. Staff reflect with each other and children when incidents occur. This helps them to understand what went wrong and how best to support a child when they are in crisis.

Children have developed the ability to reflect when they have not responded well or done something they know they should not have done. They have learned to apologise and understand what they are apologising for. This helps them to be mindful of the impact of negative behaviours on others. In one example, a child bought flowers for a member of staff when they had been injured by another child. Children have developed tolerance for others and learned to share communal space, rather than spending all their time in their bedroom.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The managers are highly aspirational for the children in the home. They lead by example, being on shift when children wake up and checking on them when they return home from school. Staff are equally invested and enthusiastic in their care of children. Staff say that they are well supported by the managers and by each other. One described the home as their 'other family'. Staff receive regular supervision, which they find constructive and reflective. They feel that they can contact the managers at any time and that they will always provide support. Staff benefit from the training that they need to meet the needs of the children but acknowledge this has been a challenge to deliver at times during the national and local lockdowns.

Collaborative working with partner agencies is deemed as crucial to supporting children's success. The manager is confident in challenging agencies when she feels they are not providing the children with the care, service or support that they require.

Children's care and progress are regularly monitored and reviewed. This ensures that care plans are regularly updated and relevant. Care plans are developed in line with each child's individual needs. Where necessary, goals or targets are broken down into manageable steps. They are in formats that capture children's interests, such as their favourite characters or hobbies. Children's individual culture and identity are respected across the plans and through the running of the home.

The management team's monitoring of the quality of care provided to children identifies areas for improvement, while reflecting on and celebrating successes. The team is seeking to continually develop the service. Managers utilise reports from the independent visitor, and they respond to any recommendations made. The development of staff's skills to improve outcomes for children is key to all plans. The managers also recognise the need for the environment to remain homely so that children feel valued. Any damage is quickly fixed, and children contribute towards this, when appropriate, for example by going to choose replacement items. Children feel invested in their home as a result.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, prior to placement of a child, they have all the relevant plans from the placing authority. For those who are not children looked after, the registered person must ensure that they have sufficient information from the child's parents and/or carers and other relevant agencies. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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, Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London, Middlesex W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Teresa Coxford

Registered manager: Vanessa Caldicott

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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