

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC407790
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
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	Tristan Paul Mabey
Date of last inspection	17/09/2014

Inspection date	22/01/2015
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Previous inspection	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people benefit from receiving a good standard of overall care. Outcomes for young people are outstanding particularly given their poor starting points. High levels of care, support and guidance ensures young people have their individual needs met. As a result a vast majority of young people make excellent progress in their personal development, behaviour and learning.

Young people are cared for by a team of committed and skilled staff who understand their individual needs. The importance of developing and nurturing positive relationships is a key strength of the home. This approach enables young people to explore their issues in a safe and supportive way. A majority of staff practice was seen to be extremely good, although errors were observed in the administration of medication.

Young people live in an environment that promotes their well-being. Young people say they enjoy living at the home and feel safe. They are given clear guidance and support to help them to understand the consequences of their negative behaviours and to find better ways to express their feelings.

A holistic approach to care planning, assessment and review results in individualised care programmes which meet the specific needs of each young person. Such an

approach incorporates the model of care being provided at the home. The availability of expert advice ensures young people have their health, behavioural and psychological needs met as part of a holistic package of care.

Young people live in a home that offers them a very high standard of accommodation. The home environment is predominately free from hazards although a lack of robustness in fire safety was identified.

The management team are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and aspire to providing the best care and intervention. The ethos of the home is young person centred with a clear commitment to meeting the individual needs of young people and promoting their progress and development in life.

Two requirements and one recommendation are made as a result of this inspection.

Full report

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 educational difficulties and attend the associated residential special school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/09/2014	Interim	improved effectiveness
17/01/2014	Interim	good progress
13/08/2013	Full	good
03/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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
21 (2001)	The registered person shall make suitable arrangements for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home; in particular ensure that staff administer medication appropriately (Regulation 21 (1))	28/02/2015
32 (2001)	Subject to paragraph (1A) the registered person shall after consultation with the fire and rescue authority - take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment; in particular ensure that fire doors close fully when released from emergency release	28/02/2015

	mechanisms (Regulation 32 (1) (a))	
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Recommendations

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

- All staff understand, share and implement the home's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children; in particular that appropriate decisions are made regarding the playing of computer games when such games have been rated for adult viewing (NMS 3.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. Young people receive excellent levels of care and make significant progress as a result. Individualised support helps them develop their life and social skills with a vast majority of young people improving their behaviour, learning, levels of self-esteem and general outlook on life. Despite the unstinting commitment and efforts of staff some young people have made less progress. In the few instances this occurs staff remain committed to the young people concerned to ensure they are fully supported through difficult periods.

Young people say, 'I love living here (the home)' and feel looked after and cared for. The young person group remains very stable with just one young person moving on and one new young person moving in. Such little change helps the home to remain predominantly settled where a sense of permanency and stability prevails.

Young people generally enjoy good health. The approach in addressing their emotional well-being is particularly thoughtful. Where young people have struggled with mental health issues staff provide unstinting support and care within a holistic approach that includes expert advice and guidance. As a result a vast majority of young people improve their levels of confidence and feelings of self-worth.

Young people live in a home that fully promotes their learning and personal development. The daily routines of the home revolve around learning with staff working tirelessly to support and encourage young people in their education. As a result there is a strong culture and expectation to engage in education which is absorbed by the young people themselves. This has meant them making exceptional progress given their starting points. For example young people who previously did not attend schooling for long periods of time now consistently achieve 100% attendance. Excellent levels of communication with the organisations school ensure a joined up approach in assisting young people to achieve to the best of their abilities.

Young people benefit considerably from a home that promotes the importance of developing and maintaining contact with parents/carers and friends. Contact arrangements are established at the point of admission and known by staff who provide sensitive support to ensure the feelings brought up by these are carefully considered. Excellent joint working occurs between the home and parents/carers which enable young people to receive consistent messages regarding their behaviour. Young people are encouraged to develop appropriate relationships with friends in the community which results in an environment which is homely and family orientated.

Young people are encouraged and guided to develop self care and independence skills. The current age range of young people means that they are some years away from the need to implement pathway plans, such as working toward semi-

independence. However opportunities are constantly provided to assist them to learn skills which will help them in their future lives. For instance going shopping for meals, budgeting for them and then being supported by staff to prepare and cook the meal itself. A young person commented that, 'I have learned loads...I can now cook different meals and can look after myself'.

Quality of care

good

The importance of nurturing relationships between young people and staff is a core ethos of the home. Staff are very mindful of the specific needs of each young person in their care and show considerable insight into how these should be met. Staff are focused on delivering sensitive and thoughtful care which places the emotional wellbeing of young people as a guiding principle of practice. As a result young people are able to build meaningful relationships, make progress and in turn improve their confidence and levels of self-esteem. Social workers note that, 'staff are fully committed to (name of young person), impose fair and strong boundaries and help them make progress'.

The views and opinions of young people are promoted fully. A suitable complaints procedure is in place with details of how to raise concerns or complaint being contained within the young person's guide. These include contact information for other relevant agencies such as independent advocacy services and Ofsted. No complaints have been made since the last inspection with excellent levels of communication with young people, parents/carers and social workers ensuring all parties are included in issues as and when they arise. Young people's meetings take place regularly which enables them to raise questions, consider the dynamics of group living and make requests. In recent months young people have influenced the décor of the home, activity planning and menu choices. The high levels of communication and quality of relationships mean that young people are able to express their views easily and openly within an environment where they clearly have a voice.

The high standard of care planning ensures young people have their individual needs comprehensively assessed at the point of admission and reviewed regularly thereafter. The admission procedure involves visits being made to young people and their families/carers, teachers and social workers. An excellent plan was put in place for the newest young person admitted whereby the Registered Manager and keyworker visited the young person for several days prior to them moving in. This process also meant staff currently working with the young person shared information and indeed they visited the home themselves and helped staff to decorate the young person's room in the same way as their previous bedroom. This is an outstanding example of practice.

The cultural needs of young people and their backgrounds are fully considered as a main part of their care plan. This approach enables staff to gain a clear

understanding of where young people come from and how they see themselves. For instance ensuring important dates, anniversaries or celebrations from their home area are highlighted in plans for the coming year. The known risks of young people are considered in particular detail to enable the home to appropriately assess how to care for them. These high quality care plans guide staff in how best to care for young people that they follow in practice.

Regular reviews of care ensure the support, guidance and care provided to young people is considered against their progress at the home. The home ensure parents/carers and those responsible for young people are involved in such meetings and indeed the young people themselves. This results in a joined up approach where young people are central to participating in decision making. The combined process of assessment and review enables all parties to be aware of the effectiveness of intervention strategies and where necessary amend them to meet changing needs.

Young people have their health care needs met in a holistic manner which ensures their physical, medical and, in particular, emotional needs are responded to as part of a joined up approach to looking after them. Health care plans outline how such needs are to be met. All young people are registered with the local doctor's surgery with staff supporting them to attend routine medical appointments. The organisation has their own therapy team, based at the school, where expert support and guidance is readily available as a key component of each placement. This includes speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and counselling. This means young people have easy access to direct intervention programmes to address their feelings and behaviours while staff benefit from regular advice and analysis of the effectiveness of the strategies they implement.

The storage of medicines is safe although appropriate administration procedures are not always followed. All medication is suitably stored in the office with regular stock checks and records being accurate. Only staff who are trained in the administration of medication give them out. However during the inspection despite staff signing out medicines for young people correctly they then passed the medication to a different member of staff to give them to the young person concerned. As a result the staff member signing the medicine out did not witness them being taken. There was no evidence to suggest this was common practice and the member of staff realised shortly afterwards what they had done and was able to explain the correct procedure. However this incident must be seen as posing some risk of harm to young people.

Young people benefit from a range of purposeful activities which allows them to experience a variety of meaningful pursuits. The activities programme allows for structure, flexibility and choice and promotes the importance of community involvement. Regular trips take place to local swimming pools and leisure centres with young people being encouraged to attend clubs in the community. For example young people attend the local army cadet force which they say they enjoy and clearly participate fully in. Staff are proactive in engaging young people in active pursuits

with bike riding currently a favourite pastime.

Young people live in a home that offers them a very good standard of accommodation and facilities. The home is adorned with pictures of young people and their interests which creates a homely atmosphere where young people are valued. Young people have personalised their own rooms which adds to a feeling of belonging. Where appropriate young people are supported to keep pets, such as snakes, with staff ensuring these are looked after extremely well and only under strict agreement. As a result young people are able to take responsibility, learn excellent pet care skills and benefit hugely from the whole experience.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The home is adequate at safeguarding young people. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure new staff are suitable to work with young people. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and display a sound appreciation of child protection protocols and procedures. When issues arise they are notified to all relevant parties including the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and police in a timely manner with robust actions taken to safeguard young people which includes close liaison with social care.

Young people's needs and vulnerability are assessed in detail on admission and includes considering their impact on the existing group. Appropriate measures are put in place to keep them safe for example by engaging them in developing their own risk assessments. This approach has been used particularly well to enable young people to consider their own vulnerability when away from adult supervision. Young people clearly understand the rationale of this process and gain greater insight as a result. This was most telling when one young person explained to a new young person why the assessment was necessary and what they had learned from it. The young person noted, 'when I was first here I could not really be trusted...I have calmed down loads and doing my own risk assessment has really helped me'.

Staff work extremely hard to keep young people safe and to assist them to lessen the risks they present to themselves and others. A majority of young people make excellent progress in reducing their problematic behaviours. For example in significantly reducing the occasions they use aggression or violence. Other young people have found it harder to take staff advice and have engaged in self-harmful and offending behaviours. On the rare occasions these have occurred staff use the strong relationships they share with young people to discuss the issues and in turn minimise the number of repeat incidents. When decisions have been made for young people to move on from the home due to continued high risk behaviours they are given excellent support from staff who are close to them. This includes liaising closely with their parents/carers and assisting them with their transition to new placements. Such an approach ensures young people do not feel isolated or rejected from staff who genuinely care about them.

For the most part young people play computer games which are age appropriate. However a game rated as suitable for 18 year olds was being played regularly by young people with the Registered Managers agreement. This is contrary to Pan European Game Information (PEGE) which potentially means they were exposed to inappropriate material only deemed fit for adults. The game in question was removed from the young person's bedroom and subsequently placed in the staff office.

Staff assist young people who have histories of running away from care to significantly reduce such behaviours. This includes engaging them in the reasons they had run away previously and helping them to find better coping mechanisms when they experience stress, anxiety or anger. For some young people being encouraged to walk around the outside of the house allows them enough time and space to calm down. This individualised approach coupled with strong relationships has seen the home successfully assist young people to stop running away. No episodes of young people being reported as missing have occurred since the last inspection.

The use of physical intervention is appropriate. The use of restraint is rare with none recorded since the last inspection. The home has a policy and procedure for staff to follow that sets out clear expectations and guidance for the use of physical intervention. This is in line with regulations and is followed in practice. Staff receive training in physical intervention with a philosophy of de-escalation being enacted in practice leading to an atmosphere where restraint is only used as a very last result.

In general health and safety matters are given a suitable priority in the home however faults were identified with the effectiveness of some fire doors. Regular servicing and testing of appliances occur including gas and electrical items which ensures they are fit for purpose. Fire fighting equipment is regularly tested alongside fire evacuation drills involving young people themselves. However during the inspection it was found that several communal fire doors did not close fully when they were released from their holding mechanisms. Despite routine checks being completed recent alterations to the doors had weakened their ability to close shut. Therefore they posed some risk of harm being caused. The doors were repaired to full working order during the inspection.

Leadership and management

good

Good leadership ensures the home is managed in an efficient and effective way. The manager was registered with Ofsted 18 months ago and holds relevant qualifications alongside considerable experience and expertise in residential care. He is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and displays passion and determination in meeting the specific needs of young people. The managers enthusiasm is reflected throughout the staff team which results in a vibrant and caring atmosphere. Positive feedback was received from care professionals with

social workers noting that, 'the home is committed to meeting the individual needs of young people...and persevering with them to help them progress'.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. Shortfalls identified on this occasion were acknowledged and addressed with urgency.

An up-to-date Statement of Purpose is in place that sets out clearly the aims and objectives of the home and the services provided to young people. A similarly useful young person's guide provides such information in a young person friendly format.

Young people are looked after by a motivated and well supported staff team. Good numbers of staff are on duty at all times to meet the needs of young people. When required additional staff are deployed to provide extra support to young people who need it. This assists in managing their most challenging behaviours and reducing the risks they may be others or themselves. Staff say they receive, 'great support' from the manager and senior team and note that morale is, 'excellent'. Formal supervision occurs regularly and is used positively in developing practice and expertise. A good induction, training and development programme is in place. This enables staff to gain a clear understanding of the needs of young people and assists them to develop their skills and practice.

Appropriate monitoring processes are in place which ensure standards of care are routinely assessed and evaluated. The Registered Manager completes in-depth monthly reviews of care provision. The reports provide a detailed review of the quality of care on offer and in particular the progress of each young person. Regulation 33 visits are completed monthly by a member of the organisations quality assurance and compliance team. The subsequent reports offer a suitable critique of care which alongside highlighting strengths of the home also sets out areas for improvement.

Records are stored securely and are maintained accurately. Documents compiled on young people provide
a clear picture of their life and progress living at the home.

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.