

SC408655

Registered provider: The Priory Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a large national provider. It provides accommodation and support for up to seven children who may have a learning difficulty and/or autism spectrum disorder.

The home has had no registered manager since 19 March 2018.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 December 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: 9 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This children's home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 9 August 2018. At that time, three compliance notices were issued. At the monitoring visit on 11 October 2018, the compliance notices were judged as met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/08/2018	Full	Inadequate
04/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/08/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	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
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document. (Regulation 7 (2)(c))	31/01/2019
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	31/01/2019

Recommendations

- Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11). In particular, the registered person should ensure that feedback is given to children regarding the results of investigations into allegations, or that they record reasons why feedback should not be given.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff, who help them to develop their interests and learn through play. One young person is fascinated by different languages and countries. Staff organise regular cultural evenings to reinforce this interest. In addition, trying foods from other cultures has made small, but significant, improvements to his diet.

Direct work with children is meaningful and includes important topics also discussed at

weekly meetings with the children. Staff teach children about a range of issues such as stranger danger, internet safety and healthy eating. Informative leaflets and quizzes, used to check the children's understanding, make these sessions fun.

Education is a high priority; the children have 100% attendance at school. Any issues are dealt with swiftly and efficiently. Good liaison between the home and school enhances the continued learning approach. Home staff and teaching staff ensure good communication, through handovers, daily contact and regular meetings. This integrated working helps children to benefit from the educational opportunities offered.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are met, and they take them to routine appointments and medical checks as needed. Children access the therapeutic support they need, through the organisation's therapists, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and educational psychology. Good links help staff to use strategies that are successful in the school setting in the home. Staff use visual timetables and communication aids to help one young person to manage the evening routine. As a result, his behaviour has much improved.

Children become more independent because of life skills work which assesses all aspects of children's lives and determines how they can achieve progress in all the important areas. A baseline assessment is completed to provide evidence to the children, their parents and professionals about how much they have learned and areas that need a different approach.

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

Safeguarding is a priority in this home. The manager instigated roleplay exercises using safeguarding scenarios and informed the staff about their areas of strength and any areas of weakness. This has enhanced the staff's ability to keep children safe. Quiz cards, held in the office for staff to test themselves, further reiterate the importance of safeguarding issues.

High staff ratios mean that the children receive the level of attention and support that they need. They do not go missing from the home. Staff know what to do if this were to happen. Staff carry identity cards and children's 'grab and go' missing profiles with them when they go out into the community. These missing profiles are readily accessible with the essential information needed if the child did go missing.

Positive messages, rather than sanctions, have been effective in changing the ethos and atmosphere in the home. A reward system encourages good behaviour; this is divided up between a weekly reward and rewards after 20 instances of positive behaviour. This helps the children to improve their self-care and social skills.

The number of physical interventions has significantly decreased. Effective de-escalation techniques are used by staff who know the children well. The environment has improved, and the atmosphere is homely. This has had a positive effect on the staff's and children's morale.

Staff ensure that the children have safe access to social media. They teach them to manage their use of mobile phones safely. Staff have worked with one young person to agree safety measures at his own pace.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The recently appointed manager is a strong leader who leads the staff efficiently and has brought about significant improvements. She is greatly appreciated by the staff. All staff spoken with were highly complimentary about the changes she has implemented, and the high level of support for them and the children. She works closely with the deputy manager to create a strong leadership team. The responsible individual has been an important, regular presence in the home to support the transition period.

Team meetings and supervisions are used to test the staff's safeguarding knowledge and ensure that all staff can contribute to the improvements being made. Staff are motivated to offer a high standard of care for children. These meetings reinforce the senior staff's vision for the service.

A strength of the home is the comprehensive care plans, which are written in consultation with the children. They are involved in the decisions made about them and are able to have their say. Initiatives, such as a box for children to put any 'mumbles or grumbles' in, help them to express their views privately. Any issues are dealt with and actions reported back to children. However, in one case where it was not appropriate for a young person to be told about the outcome of an allegation, the reason was not recorded.

The statement of purpose is in place and has been reviewed to reflect a change of circumstances. However, this has not been sent to Ofsted. The children's guide has recently been reviewed. However, the children were not consulted prior to this review. This was a missed opportunity to include them in the design of this document.

There is a strong ethos of teaching children to express their views. The complaints system is explained to children and reinforced during children's meetings, in discussions with staff and in posters around the home.

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: SC408655

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Priory Group

Registered provider address: Priory Education Services Limited, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector(s)

Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector

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