

SC408655

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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 have an autism spectrum disorder.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 30 January 2019.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2019

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2018	Full	Good
09/08/2018	Full	Inadequate
04/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
31/08/2016	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
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	16/08/2019
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (3)(b))	16/08/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (Regulation 35 (1)(b))	16/08/2019

Recommendations

- It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 2.3, page 11)
In particular, ensure that they inform the police if a behaviour strategy for a child includes ringing the police for assistance. In addition, include all necessary information in reports to professionals.
- A close working relationship is essential with those with parental responsibility for them, usually their parents or carers. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 2.5, page 11)
- The home's policies and procedures around the protection of children should reflect any requirements of other relevant legislation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.22, page 44)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the

home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.30, page 45)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff help children to make steady progress. Children respond well to staff's positive reinforcement and the home's reward system. One child, who recently moved in, has settled well and there has been a reduction in the need for staff to intervene using physical restraints.

Both children attend the organisation's schools. The staff have been successful in supporting the children to overcome any difficulties. One child has moved to the sixth form provision early and the staff are helping him to learn tolerance of his peers to ensure that this move is successful.

The children's views are valued by staff. They seek their choices in regard to the day-to-day running of the home in areas such as activities, menus and the decoration of the home. Children are encouraged to participate in activities in the home and in the community. One child has successfully experienced a trip to London, something which he would have previously struggled to achieve. The other child is learning to engage in activities within the home. He invited his friends from school to a barbecue. Despite being given short notice, the manager and staff made sure that this went ahead. He proudly showed his friends around the home.

Children are encouraged to gain life skills in preparation for when they move on from the home. A baseline assessment is completed to identify areas that children need to develop. One child now makes his own snacks and takes responsibility for his room and laundry. Staff support him to slowly increase his independence. The other child is improving his self-care skills.

Staff generally work in partnership with parents and carers. Overall, they are positive about the care that their children receive. One parent said, 'The staff communicate well. They follow the same rules that we have at home.' However, another parent reported that they did not receive weekly reports. This means that they do not always know what their child has been doing. The manager is addressing this issue and will ensure that the reports are sent more regularly.

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

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding policy and procedure. Those spoken to were knowledgeable about whistleblowing procedures and expressed confidence in how to follow these. Concerns in regard to a staff member's conduct were responded to swiftly and reported to external professionals, such as the designated officer, the child's parents and the social worker.

The manager responded appropriately to a medication error. An internal review was undertaken and lessons learned were shared with all staff. Actions were taken to minimise the likelihood of this being repeated.

The close supervision of children means that they rarely go missing. On one occasion, a child left the home and was out of sight of the staff. Staff followed the missing from home protocol and he was located and returned home safely. However, the manager did not request that the child was interviewed by his social worker. This was a missed opportunity for an external professional to gain insight into why he left the home.

Staff demonstrate a high level of concern for children's safety. They teach the children to keep themselves safe through effective direct work, community meetings and daily discussions. Areas such as appropriate touch, e-safety and safety within the home and community are covered. This increases the children's ability to manage when they live independently.

One child's behaviour support plan included contacting the police for assistance if his behaviour escalated. The manager failed to inform the police of this plan. This potentially contributed to a slower response by the police to a serious incident.

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

Responses to staff actions are not consistent. Leaders and managers dealt thoroughly in respect of a staffing conduct issue and medication error. However, this did not occur following an incident involving the manager and another staff member using ground restraint techniques despite their training having lapsed. There was also a delay in informing external professionals and the actions taken to monitor the child after the use of this intervention was not recorded. While it is acknowledged that the use of these behaviour management measures was as a last resort, senior managers failed to undertake an internal review. They have failed to address the seriousness of this issue and to devise a policy to ensure a consistent organisational response.

Risk assessments are not consistent with a child's placement plan. The placement plan does not include that the child can make allegations against staff during physical interventions and actions to take if this should occur. There is a risk that essential information will be missed.

The allegation protocol for one child informs staff to contact the designated persons within the organisation, who will then inform the statutory agencies. This guidance risks a delay in decision making or information not being correctly passed on to those with safeguarding responsibilities.

An impact risk assessment completed for a child moving into the home did not reflect that the move was delayed and that the child moved into another of the organisation's homes temporarily. The impact on the child of this situation and any actions needed to support him were not recorded.

The children's guide is informative. The children have been consulted and report that it is clear and easily understood. Children moving in have the necessary information to know what to expect.

The manager is well respected and valued by the staff. Those spoken to report that she has increased staff morale and confidence. She has implemented a training and development plan to improve the service. She ensures that weekly and monthly checks are carried out. She has met the requirements from the previous inspection and responds to any recommendations made by the external auditor.

External professionals report that their children have made progress since being at this 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: Priory Education Services Limited

Registered provider address: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Tracey Beales

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy: social care inspector

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