

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC412971
Inspector	Anne Bannister
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Priory New Education Services Limited
Registered person address	Unsted Regional Office Munsted Heath Road Godalming Surrey GU7 1UW
Responsible individual	Helen Sharpe
Registered manager	Beverley King
Date of last inspection	16/01/2014

Inspection date	19/06/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
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	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children and young people's individual well-being is central to staff practice. Staff see young people in a positive and realistic light. Children and young people are provided with highly personalised care which effectively meets their personal preferences and their individual and diverse needs. Children and young people value staff support and this is especially evident in their relationships with key workers who encourage them to progress and achieve.

Staff demonstrate that they have the skills, motivation and abilities to form very positive working relationships with children and young people and to sustain them. Children and young people make significant progress as a consequence of the high levels of emotional support they receive. One professional said that the child she was responsible for 'is doing marvellously, they are making so much progress. Their communication skills are improving and they are increasing in confidence as they get out more and have many new experiences'.

The home is well managed and is appropriately monitored; although, shortfalls in some records identified during this inspection have not been identified through monitoring; for example, the inadequate recording of the potential impact of a new admission on the current resident group.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides residential and respite care and accommodation for up to four young people with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/01/2014	Interim	good progress
06/06/2013	Full	adequate
25/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
15/11/2012	Full	adequate

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
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated. In particular the home must demonstrate a robust admission process that includes impact risk assessments of any new admission on the current resident group.(Regulation 11 (a))	31/07/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted and the relevant placing authority without delay in accordance with the relevant schedule. (Regulation 30(1))	31/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- demonstrate it regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues arising from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice (NMS 3.21)
- ensure all staff, volunteers and the registered person are properly managed, supported and understand who to whom they are accountable. In particular it relates to the supervision of ancillary staff (NMS 19.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

The home has established good routines, structures and boundaries for young people that ensure they receive consistent care. As a result children and young people are happy in their placement and are achieving positive outcomes in all areas of their lives. Social workers and parents report a development in young people's social skills, as they have increased opportunities to access inclusive community based activities.

Children and young people's needs are comprehensively assessed, in order that very individualised care plans and risk assessments are in place, which support their progress and achievement. The manager has established strong links with families and with other professionals. The positive result of the improved communication is that staff have a real understanding and respect for children and young people's individuality. Frequent contact with families ensures they are kept informed and consulted about all aspects of children and young people's care.

Health needs are well met and children and young people's well-being promoted and protected by safe practices within the home. Children and young people lead a healthy lifestyle and they benefit from receiving good support from staff on health related issues. A parent said 'Staff support me and advocate on behalf of my child when health professionals are not responding to my concerns. As a result my child's health needs are now more adequately assessed and monitored'.

Care staff continue to support children and young people during the education day. The outcome for young people of care and education working so closely together is a consistency of approach, which helps children and young people learn and achieve. As a result children and young people experience an easy transition from home to school each day that facilitates their learning. They live in a stimulating environment that promotes their learning and development.

A parent comments that children and young people are 'being encouraged to develop their independence and life skills while being engaged in activities that are fun and encourage their development. I never thought my child had the ability to achieve the self care skills they are now developing , for example, laying and clearing the table after meals'. A social worker commented ' the young person has been given opportunities to access inclusive community based activities, which prior to be admitted to the home were proving extremely difficult to experience'.

Quality of care **good**

The quality of care children and young people receive is of a high standard. However, although the admission process assesses the home's ability to meet the individual needs of the children and young people seeking placement, documentation fails to fully reflect the impact a new admission may potentially have on the current resident group. As a result both professionals and families raise this as an area for development. One person comments that 'Where possible new children joining the home should have more compatible needs' Another says 'At times the mix of young people don't fit easily, they do not necessarily seem compatible as a group, they live as individuals who happen to share the same house'. Staff have an awareness of this and do ensure, where appropriate, children and young people have opportunities to socialise with other young people with similar abilities and interests.

Staff always place the well-being of individual children and young people at the centre of their practice. They are very knowledgeable about individual children and young people's levels of understanding and comprehension associated with disability. As a result, staff engage appropriately and provide the support and reassurance children and young people need to reduce their anxieties. They understand how best to communicate with individuals in ways that children and young people are familiar with and easily understand. This enables children and young people to express their wishes and feelings and make choices. A parent said 'my child is making progress in all areas of their life. Staff are skilled at planning how to support their progress but at a pace they are able to achieve things rather than be stressed by them. I know from their manner that my child is very happy there.'

Staff work with young people in an understanding, compassionate way, providing individual support and reassurance. Carers say staff are 'fantastic' with the children and young people and having increased ability to make their needs and wishes known.

Staff understand children and young people's behaviours in the context of their needs and disabilities, therefore goals and strategies are both realistic and achievable. Equally any changes or concerns are easily recognised to ensure that young people's welfare is a priority and is safeguarded. As a result instances of challenging behaviours are lessening in frequency and length.

The home is appropriately located and provides very high quality accommodation that meets children and young people's needs. It is furnished, decorated and equipped to a high standard. Bright, homely and well equipped indoor and outdoor activity and play areas provide a range of opportunities for children and young people to develop their skills and socialise with their peers. The home is located within the local community, which promotes inclusion for children and young people with disabilities.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Promotion of the safety and well-being of children and young people continues to be the priority of the full staff team. Staff are well aware of the vulnerability of the children and young people they care for. All staff are trained in safeguarding and are knowledgeable about safeguarding policies and procedures. This means that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know exactly what they need to do to protect young people.

Children and young people are safe and protected within the home because staffing ratios are planned in line with their assessed needs. Incidents of children and young people going missing from this home have not occurred. Protocols with the police are in place to help ensure that children are returned quickly, should any incidents of going missing occur.

Care staff receive regular training in behaviour management and physical intervention techniques to ensure that they have and maintain their skills in managing children and young people's behaviours safely. On such occasions it is applied in accordance with the legal framework, ensuring that children and young people are managed in a way that keeps them safe and avoids injury. Where children and young people experience or display challenging behaviours their care plans include a range of behaviour management strategies. The plans also include information about what triggers may cause them distress. This informs staff of possible stressful situations that can be monitored and avoided to reduce challenging behaviour incidents.

There are no significant concerns relating to how the home manages children and young people's behaviours. However, the records of staff de-briefing following an incident are not signed and senior managers monitoring of the records are not always completed. There is therefore, not always a record to confirm that managers are satisfied with the manner in which staff have managed a situation. There has been no use of sanctions; which is appropriate given the assessed needs and understanding of the children and young people accommodated in the home.

Recruitment practice protects the vulnerable children and young people cared for and ensures that staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual children and young people.

Notifications to Ofsted are generally made within appropriate timescales. However, there has been one incident when management have failed to promptly notify Ofsted of an issue relating to the behaviour of an ex member of staff, outside of the work setting, that raised concerns about their suitability to work with children and young people. The manager sought advice from the local authority designated person who is happy that the action she took promoted the safety and welfare of young people in her care. This failure to notify Ofsted appears to be an isolated incident and is contrary to other high quality records maintained that relate to young people's safety and welfare.

Leadership and management

good

The home is now managed by an experienced and fully qualified manager. She has a clear vision for how the home should operate and achieving positive outcomes is central to all practice. She was appointed in July 2013 and has been the Registered Manager since December 2013. She is ensuring the home provides a strong, child-focused service that is conducive to children and young people developing and maximising their potential.

The inspection confirmed clear partnership arrangements underpin all practice and there is very positive feedback about the impact the new manager has had on the quality of service provided. Staff morale is high and a professional feedback that 'Nothing is too much trouble, all staff go the extra mile to ensure young people's needs are met. There have previously been difficulties retaining staff, however, management changes have contributed to a greater stability in the staff team, which has a very positive impact on the continuity and quality of care provided.'

The organisation has its own comprehensive induction process for each new starter. It equips staff with the skills necessary to carry out their roles. It covers all key issues such as behaviour management, safeguarding, first aid, safe medication handling, food hygiene and fire safety awareness. All new staff also undertake the Children's Workforce Development Councils induction standards relating to employment in the social care sector. As a result children and young people are cared for by a committed team of staff who have a range of skills and experience. This enables staff to provide good support to the young people. All staff either hold or are working towards a recognised qualification. Staff feel very well supported by the manager, and by one another, they say 'We are now a really strong staff team, we are well supported by managers and we also support one another. It's a really good place to work'.

While care staff practice is monitored and developed through frequent professional supervision and appraisal, ancillary staff are not receiving regular supervision and support. As a result they do not have an overview of issues such as behaviour management practice to equip them with the skills and knowledge to whistle blow to senior manager's if they observe any practice that gave them cause for concern. This omission does not impact significantly on children and young people as ancillary staff only have contact with them for brief periods during school holidays.

Monitoring of the home by the Registered Manager and a representative of the organisation is generally sound. However, reports of their findings by the Registered Manager descriptive and lack evaluation. This the means of addressing any shortfalls raised are not always identified within the reports. This deficit has been identified and a new format for the Registered Manager's Regulation 34 monitoring reports has recently been introduced. This aims to evaluate the impact and value that living at

this home is having on children and young people's lives and identify how practice could be further improved. The new format aims to detail the strengths and weaknesses of the home, identifying areas for development.

The home has an effective development plan in place. Examples of recent improvements include the development of the outdoor play areas. Some of the areas identified in the plan, such as refurbishing of the bathrooms, have already been implemented, which shows that it is a working document.

Children and young people's records provide an appropriate account of their life, experiences and plans for the future. Young people's files are stored securely ensuring their rights to confidentiality and privacy are maintained.

All parties involved with the home are confident that any issues of concern raised with the manager impacting on young people's welfare are promptly addressed. One person commented 'The manager is very approachable, she listens, understands the importance of the issues we raise and responds with patience to our requests. We work together to achieve the best outcomes for our child'.

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.