

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC412979
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Priory New Education Services Limited
Registered provider address	80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual	Katherine Bridon
Registered manager	Mary Marsh
Inspector	Graham Robinson

Previous inspection date	30/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC412979

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in an environment where disability not viewed as a barrier to achieving a full and meaningful life.
- Parents and social workers report excellent relationships with staff and are confident that young people are kept safe.
- Young people benefit from receiving a high, consistent standard of care where their needs are identified, and plans, strategies and risk assessments look to address those needs.
- Young people are looked after by a fully committed, dedicated and energetic staff team whose members work collectively to meet the needs of the young people in their care.
- Good educational arrangements and good levels of attendance help young people to make good educational progress.
- Clear boundaries and routines, along with the support of staff, help young people to make good progress in all areas of their lives.
- Challenging and unsafe behaviour is well managed in a non-punitive way that keeps young people safe.
- Strong and trusting relationships are formed between young people and staff. Building trust and getting to know and understand the needs of young people keep behaviour management issues down to a minimum.
- Young people and their parents benefit from having staff that are willing and capable of advocating strongly on behalf of a young person.
- Young people are coached and encouraged to become more independent as they progress through the home, with attainment and achievement celebrated.
- The home provides young people with an inclusive, non-judgemental environment where consultation and choice are part of everyday life.
- The home is well organised and managed.
- The manager has a clear vision for the future and the way the home should develop. This includes improving outcomes for young people by evaluating and improving the working practices of the home.

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

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 (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 registered person must ensure that medication which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23(2)(b))	31/08/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/07/2015	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/06/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
This service is providing a group of young people who have complex and challenging needs with a home where they are well cared for and kept safe. Disability and dependency on others do not prevent them from experiencing a full and meaningful life, either educationally or socially. Full use of community facilities allows young people to experience a fulfilling lifestyle, which helps them to progress well in all areas of their lives. Strong bonds and relationships develop between young people and the staff that care for them. Although verbal communication can be limited, communication levels are high. The motivated, energetic team of staff get to know young people well and can manage their various behavioural traits due to their understanding of each young person's needs. As a result, young people make good progress based on their starting points. For example, a social worker told the inspector she is delighted that, 'he is making good progress. For example with his toileting, which is coming on. He is also developing his communication skills. Each of them is a significant improvement.' A parent reported: 'I am really happy with the progress he is making. He is becoming more independent, communicates better and is very settled.' Young people receive a high consistency of care, which is a reflection of the team-centred approach that is so effective. Underpinning this is a genuine desire among the staff team to achieve for each young person their maximum potential. A social worker observed: 'Staff are fully committed to getting the best possible outcomes for him.' A parent summed up the feelings of others when he told the inspector: 'One of the simple differences we have found is that staff genuinely do care.' The progress young people make is reflected in planning documents, risk assessments, reports prepared for reviews and in the records showing the individual work being undertaken. Planning documents, risk assessments and strategies of how to work with young people are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them current. All are individual to each young person and reflect their specific needs. Parents and social workers confirm that they are kept well informed by staff about any issues that arise. A social worker summed up her discussion with the inspector by saying: 'They are managing him exceptionally well.' The arrangements to meet young people's educational needs are good. All are in full-time education at a special school operated by the Priory Group. The school	

acts as a hub to this and two other homes by providing education and specialist input, such as speech and language therapy, and the services of occupational therapists, a behaviour analyst, a learning disability nurse and a cognitive behaviour therapist. Attendance levels are good, reflecting the good educational progress young people are making, based on their starting points.

The general, daily healthcare needs of young people are fully met through community-based services. Strong relationships with these services allow for healthcare matters to be addressed quickly. More specialist services are brought in when required. Staff are proactive and skilled at spotting health issues that may develop in a group of young people who cannot always articulate that something is wrong. This was highlighted by a parent who said: 'They were brilliant when he had his health scare, making sure everything possible could be done.' Maintaining a good, balanced and nutritious diet, along with daily exercise, helps to promote young people's healthcare needs.

Following an incident notified to Ofsted in April 2016, a full review of how medication is stored, handled, administered and recorded took place. The home has taken a number of significant steps to improve practice around medication. For example, training and monitoring of staff have been increased, along with a number of practical improvements such as using blister packs of tablets. Although the home has taken appropriate steps, working practices around medication need time to bed into daily routines to ensure that the correct levels of consistency are attained.

Activities are pre-planned to make them purposeful, develop young people's social skills and promote good health. This is in addition to providing enjoyment and opportunities for young people to follow their interests and develop new ones. Each young person has had a sensory assessment, and the needs identified as a result of that process underpin each young person's activity programme. Parents and social workers appreciate the level of community involvement enjoyed by young people. For example, one stated: 'He was so isolated before. Now he is getting out in the community and doing activities at a much earlier stage than originally anticipated.'

The high levels of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, that exist in the home underpin the high level of consultation that is a feature of daily life. For example, throughout the inspection, staff were observed regularly giving young people choices about what they were going to do and what they wanted to eat. This empowers them to make genuine choices and to have some level of influence on the daily routines of the home.

Preparation for transition into and out of the home is good. For example, prior to the latest young person moving into the home, staff spent a week with him in the

hospital he transferred from. This enabled relationships and an understanding of behaviour to develop, which resulted in a less traumatic transition for the young person involved. Young people also participate in programmes designed to build their practical skills with a view to them living a more independent lifestyle.

Young people benefit from living in an environment that is adapted and organised to meet their needs. They can be hard on the fabric of the building, but quick repairs as well as a desire to provide a homely environment provide a warm, homely atmosphere where they can relax. Bedrooms are single occupancy and are personalised to suit the taste and the needs of the occupant. The overall state of repair and the quality of décor, furnishings, fixtures and equipment are good.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people, who can be at risk and vulnerable due to unsafe behaviour, live in an environment where they are kept safe and where they feel safe and secure. This is acknowledged by social workers and parents. For example, a parent commented: 'They have kept him safe at all times when dealing with his challenging behaviour.' Up-to-date assessments of risk covering the home, locality and activities, along with the regular servicing of safety equipment and good working practices, all contribute towards the environment being kept safe. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding are in place. Training for staff is refreshed regularly and staff can demonstrate an understanding of their role and responsibility in keeping young people safe. Good, professional working relationships exist with the external agencies charged with keeping young people safe. Allegations and incidents linked to safeguarding are reported to the appropriate agencies and in a timely manner. This results in young people benefiting from a multidisciplinary approach to safeguarding issues, which helps to protect them. Clearly defined boundaries along with consistent routines help young people to feel secure. They live in a non-punitive environment where progress and achievement are celebrated and rewarded. High, consistent staffing levels allow for young people with a history of impulsive, damaging behaviour to be kept safe. This results in the number of serious behavioural incidents reducing as young people settle and staff get to know them. Behavioural incidents are monitored effectively. Following an incident, a debriefing	

session allows staff and managers to explore the incident to see whether lessons can be learned and whether it could have been handled differently. This helps to improve practice, reduces the number of incidents taking place and aids consistency. Records of incidents are thorough, up to date and properly kept.

Owing to the nature of the young people's disabilities and learning difficulties, coupled with high staffing ratios, bullying and incidents of young people going missing do not occur and are not live issues in the home. However, procedures are in place and staff are aware of their responsibilities should such incidents occur in the future.

Since the last full inspection, a new manager and a number of new staff have been appointed. A core of longer serving staff remain, with new staff being well supported as they are absorbed into the staff team. Recruitment practice and clearance procedures are thorough and meet regulatory requirements and current guidance. Longer serving staff are rechecked regularly, which is deemed to be good practice. This ensures that young people are only being looked after by staff who have been suitably cleared and recruited.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The current manager took up her post in September 2015. She is suitably qualified and very experienced. She presents as a strong, forceful character who is fully committed to both the staff team and young people. She is making a real impact and has a clear sense of direction regarding where she wants the home to be. The home is well organised and managed. The manager is well supported by an experienced senior team. The whole staff team buys into the ethos, culture and working practices that are being developed in the home. Staff morale is high and this has a positive effect on young people, who live in a happy, cohesive establishment full of good humour and appropriate laughter. The formal programme of staff supervision takes place with consistency, along with the annual appraisal of staff. Staff report that they feel well supported. Senior staff, along with the manager, take an active role in the home and are not isolated from the main staff group. This fosters teamwork and proves an effective component in the monitoring process.	

New staff feel very well supported and are quickly made to feel part of the team. All staff are expected to keep their training up to date through the core staff training programme. Training for new staff commences immediately. Additional training is brought in as required. For example, staff have recently received training in child sexual exploitation, e-safety, the 'Prevent' duty and radicalisation. The training programme improves the knowledge and skills staff possess, giving them the ability to look after young people with ever-changing and more complex needs.

The internal and external monitoring of the home is good. Written reports are produced and used effectively to help populate written development plans for the home. This shows that the managers and senior staff have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and can identify areas that require development.

The home has a good record of compliance. At the previous inspection, no requirements or recommendations were made. However, since the arrival of the new manager, the home has undergone considerable changes. Staff morale and team spirit have improved and working practices continue to develop as staff concentrate on the needs of young people. The families of young people feel well supported and great effort is being put into improving the fabric and appearance of the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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