

SC412979

Registered provider: Priory New Education Services Limited 07221650

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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 with learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 July 2017

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: 16 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people live in a non-judgemental environment, where disability is not recognised as a barrier regarding integration into community life.

- Highly dependent young people receive a high standard of care that is underpinned with individualised care plans, strategies and assessments of risk designed to meet individual needs.
- All young people living in the home are in stable, long-term placements in which they have thrived and made steady and continuous progress in all areas of their lives.
- Good educational arrangements, coupled with high levels of attendance, help young people to make good educational progress.
- The home has a good record of keeping vulnerable young people who can be challenging and prone to self-injury safe at all times.
- Strong and trusting relationships are formed between staff, young people and their families. Parents are united in providing positive feedback regarding the levels of support they themselves receive from staff.
- The whole process and procedure around the previous manager leaving and appointing a new one has been well planned and managed.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Although kept in a good state of repair and good order, parts of the home are beginning to date and look tired.
- The slippage noted in some areas of refresher training for staff needs to be halted and addressed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/08/2016	Full	Good
30/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/07/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Plan and implement a rolling programme of refurbishment to meet the short and longer-term needs of the home to create a more welcoming environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, section 3.7)
- Ensure that the timescales set for refresher training to be completed by all staff are strictly adhered to. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, section 10.11)
- Ensure that, when revising and updating the home's statement of purpose, a copy is forwarded to Ofsted. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, section 3.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All the young people living in the home have done so for some time and have benefited from living in a stable, long-term placement where they have grown and developed. Disability and being dependent on others does not preclude them from enjoying a full, meaningful lifestyle. The support they receive from staff, plus the close support of their families, helps young people to progress well in all areas of their lives.

This view is supported by parents and others. For example, a parent told the inspector, 'He has been there for over five years. I am so pleased with the way he has come on. I wish he could stay there and not have to move.' Another parent said, 'He is making so much progress. He loves it there and the staff are brilliant with him and us as a family.' A social worker reported, 'I cannot fault them. The work staff have done with him, his family and us is excellent.'

The levels and consistency of care that young people receive are high. Although mostly non-verbal, communication levels between staff and young people are good and underpin the strong bonds and relationships that are created. An energetic staff team has the skills, abilities and commitment to meet the complex and individualised needs of the young people it cares for.

Progress can be evidenced by tracking the range of planning documents, assessments of risk and the strategies used to manage behaviour. They are reviewed and updated regularly, which keeps them current. The balance between protecting and keeping young people safe, and giving them new experiences and pushing their boundaries, is well managed. A social worker summed this up when commenting on staff, 'They excel at keeping him safe while ensuring that his liberty is also safeguarded.'

Each young person is in full-time education, attending a special school operated by the

Priory group. Attendance levels are high and reflect the good progress young people make educationally. The school acts as a hub to this and other homes by providing education, along with specialist input, such as speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. In addition, young people benefit from the support of a behaviour analyst, learning disability nurse and cognitive behaviour therapist.

The home accommodates some young people with complex health needs. The strong relationships the home has created with a range of community-based services ensures that the everyday health needs of young people are addressed. More specialist support, such as mental health and paediatric services, are brought in when required. These, along with the services available through the school, ensure that young people's physical, emotional and mental health needs are being well met.

In May 2017, Ofsted was notified of an incident linked to the administering of medication. The organisation carried out a full investigation, resulting in the areas of concern being rectified. A review of the systems and arrangements for storing, administering and recording medication in the home shows that they are appropriate, safe and work well, providing that staff follow them at all times.

The promotion of fitness and good health is an area that is under constant review. For example, a revision of the menu has just been concluded, with a more nutritious diet being introduced. This, coupled with regular exercise, planned for each young person on a weekly basis, helps to improve their overall health and levels of fitness. For example, two young people have recently lost some weight, with both looking healthy and well.

High staffing levels allow young people to try and develop new interests, as well as supporting their favoured activities. Activities are pre-planned to make them purposeful, develop social skills and promote good health. Most activities are community-based, which allow young people to see and experience what the community has to offer as well as developing their social networks. In discussion with the inspector regarding the range of interests and activities her son enjoys, a parent commented, 'His social network and diary is better than mine.'

Individual levels of communication and consultation between staff and young people are high. For example, staff were regularly observed asking young people to make choices about what they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it. This gained positive responses from the young people. These procedures give young people some control over their lives, along with experiencing a sense of achievement.

Preparation for transition to adult life is good. Developing skills that support greater independence commences immediately after admission to the home. Young people are encouraged and assisted to take on responsibilities, such as keeping their room tidy and developing skills such as cooking and using household equipment, like a vacuum cleaner. Two young people were observed choosing and preparing their own breakfasts.

Staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people. For example, staff are currently working closely with an adult service in preparation for a young person due to move on. This helps to ensure that the new staff understand the young person's needs and how best to manage him. Arrangements have been made for time to be spent in the new placement so that the young person has familiarity and is comfortable in his new

surroundings.

Young people live in an environment that takes account of individual needs and tolerance levels as a result of their autistic spectrum disorder. They can be damaging to the fabric of the building, but staff are quick to ensure that repairs take place quickly. As a result, the overall quality regarding the state of repair, décor, furnishings, fixtures and equipment is reasonable. However, some areas of the home are beginning to look tired and dated.

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

Vulnerable, highly dependent young people, who can be at risk due to unsafe behaviour, live in an environment where they are kept safe and where they feel safe and secure. Up-to-date assessments of risk, the regular servicing of safety equipment, and good working practices contribute towards keeping everyone in the home safe.

The home has good contact and relationships with those external agencies charged with keeping young people safe. The safeguarding procedures in place are understood by staff, who recognise their own role and responsibilities regarding young people's safety. All staff receive initial safeguarding training. However, refresher training in safeguarding, along with some other areas, has stalled for some staff.

Young people live in a structured environment with clearly defined boundaries and regular routines, which help them to feel safe. Impulsive challenging and destructive behaviour is well managed by a staff team that operates a non-punitive regime. The team members have the understanding and knowledge of how best to manage young people in the least intrusive way. For example, they can recognise anxiety, distress and frustration, and know what to do to address those feelings before they lead to a serious behaviour management incident.

Behaviour management is monitored effectively by senior staff. For example, all incidents that require physical intervention are reviewed and monitored effectively. Reasons linked to occurrence and patterns are identified with a view to reducing the number of incidents that take place. This system is meeting with some success, as overall incidents of physical intervention are decreasing. This was acknowledged by a social worker who told the inspector, 'There are far fewer incidents of physical intervention than there used to be. He is really settled and doing well.'

High staffing levels, coupled with the nature of young people, mean that issues such as bullying or young people going missing do not occur. Appropriate procedures are in place should a young person go missing, but these procedures have not yet been tested.

Since the last inspection, the post of manager has become vacant. In that same period, some new staff have been appointed, although a core of longer-serving staff remain. Recruitment practices and clearance procedures are thorough and meet regulatory requirements and current guidance.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The changes linked to managing the home have been managed effectively, with little impact regarding the everyday routine and running of the home. The previous manager left the home in a positive state and no time has been wasted in appointing an interim manager. It is understood that a permanent appointment is imminent. The whole process and the procedures implemented to find a replacement manager have been well planned and managed.

The interim manager is well supported by experienced senior staff and a team of care staff who support the ethos, culture and working practices that have developed in the home over recent years. The morale of staff is high, which is reflected in the energy, laughter and good humour that abounds in the home. This has a positive effect on the young people who benefit from living in a happy, relaxed environment.

Staff report that they feel well supported by senior staff. A formal programme of supervision takes place consistently, along with annual appraisal. This allows for issues, working practices and staff development to be reviewed and discussed. This level of support and the review of performance helps staff to understand the implications of their actions. This gives them a greater appreciation of their responsibilities and the impact that their working practices have on young people.

Staff have access to a variety of training programmes. They also have a route into becoming professionally qualified once probationary periods have been successfully completed. The basics of initial training are in place, with staff receiving the appropriate levels of training as they progress. However, refresher training for longer-serving staff is an area of slippage and one that needs to be addressed to ensure that skills are refreshed and refined regularly.

The internal and external monitoring of the home is taking place within the required timeframe and meets with regulatory requirement. Written reports are produced and used effectively, which has helped to populate the current written development plan. This provides evidence that managers have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and can identify areas that require development.

The statement of purpose was revised and updated in May 2017, with a more recent update made to take account of the current staffing complement. However, copies of revised statements have not been received by Ofsted for some months, which is an area to be addressed.

The home has a good record of compliance. Following the previous inspection, no requirements or recommendations were made. The home, despite changes to management, continues to function well. It provides young people with a safe environment, where they are encouraged to develop skills that will serve them well as they approach adulthood. Working partnerships with external agencies and families are a strength of the home. This allows those people that matter to each young person to have influence in the way that the young people are cared for and how plans for their future are reached.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC412979

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory New Education Services Limited 07221650

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

Responsible individual: Wendy Sparling

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Graham Robinson, social care inspector

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