

SC486479

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children. Its statement of purpose states that children accommodated have complex needs, which may include autism spectrum disorders and complex associated difficulties.

Ofsted registered the manager in September 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

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: 4 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/05/2019	Full	Good
02/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
26/09/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled in their home. Staff are attentive to the needs of the children and there is a commitment from staff to ensure that children have the tools they require to prepare for adulthood. Staff carefully structure routines using non-verbal and verbal communication tools. This helps children to feel less anxious about the uncertainties the new day may bring. The daily routines assist children to build their personal care skills, attend education and access the community without fear.

Staff at the home are skilled at supporting children to develop and learn. However, staff do not have the tools or knowledge that they need to fully support one child who is exploring their identity.

Children are encouraged to learn about their cultural background and a proud display in the kitchen celebrates the uniqueness of different countries, allowing the children to learn about different traditions. Children have non-verbal sign posters which help encourage them to eat a varied diet. This has enabled one child to broaden their diet. Children's artwork is proudly displayed in the home's hallway, including recent hand paintings of fireworks completed by the children in preparation of bonfire night. Children have been able to have fun and use art to learn about culture, diet and to develop social skills.

The home is shaped by the voice of the children. Staff listen to the children and have a deep understanding of their needs. Staff are able to recognise changes to children's lives and adapt their practice to ensure that children can manage change calmly and effectively. When children move into the home, away from the home or experience changes in their family circumstances, staff support them sensitively to make sense of events and to adjust to change. This helps children to feel valued and cared for.

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

Staff ensure that positive behaviour is promoted in the home. Sanctions for negative behaviours have been abolished and replaced by a 'Connect to Correct' process using a range of communication methods to restore relationships in a positive and developmental way. Bespoke rewards are used to encourage children to further develop their independence and self-care skills. This has created a positive environment where children strive to achieve. This has led to an increase in positive behaviours by children. As a result, for some children, who previously required physical intervention for high-risk behaviours, there has been a decline in the frequency and severity of these behaviours.

When children do display high-risk behaviours, staff are acutely aware of things that may upset them and they use a range of calming techniques to support children. This reduces the need for restraint. Children's care plans give staff clear direction

and help them to work collaboratively to support children. This allows children to maintain their dignity and build on their ability to manage their emotions. One parent commented on how incidents with family had reduced as a result of strategies the child had developed at the home.

Children benefit from having a number of skilled staff to support them with their day-to-day lives. This has meant that no children have been missing recently and children are given individualised support to stay connected to family and friends online. The manager has ensured that children have bespoke plans in these areas and staff understand these plans. This has allowed children to maintain relationships with those who are important in their lives safely. This helps children to feel connected with people who matter to them and reduces their vulnerability to exploitation.

Social workers are positive about the way staff communicate with them and keep them informed. During a recent incident involving a child in school, there was good communication between the manager, social worker and school. This enabled the child to benefit from a joined-up response to the incident. However, the child is still awaiting input from a specialist agency to support them to explore their gender identity. The manager has chased this, but has not involved all of the child's professional network to ensure that this support is put in place. Staff are not trained to deliver this support, which means that this child is not currently receiving support to help him negotiate an issue that is causing him anxiety and which is having an impact on his behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has ensured that children have maintained structure and routine during a period of change in the home. There have been significant changes in the leadership team over the past 12 months. The manager has reduced the impact of this on the quality of care by developing existing staff into more senior roles in the home. This has provided children with consistency and a continuity of care while navigating various challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

The manager has maintained good oversight of all areas of the home. He has ensured that children are well cared for and that staff work in line with children's plans. Staff feel supported by their management team and children benefit from the commitment of the staff. Staff receive regular supervision which focuses on staff development and considers examples of safeguarding scenarios to ensure that staff are equipped to keep children safe. These sessions are generally well recorded; however, one session was not available at inspection. This showed a gap in management oversight of these sessions.

Parents and social workers unanimously praised the manager and staff at the home regarding the communication, the progress children have made and the commitment of staff to maintain relationships with family. This effective partnership work has helped children to move between living with family and at the home while continuing to build progress in their life skills.

The manager ensures that safe recruitment practice means all children are cared for by suitable people. The home is well maintained. Children have fun. They enjoy their home and spend their time baking, creating art or dancing in an environment where risks are reduced.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to support children to safely explore their gender and identity. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))	15 December 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should play a full part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that others play their role and deliver the high-quality support that is needed, including access to specialist services. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.4)
- The registered provider should ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions are kept and ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC486479

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Mark Goodenough

Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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