

# 1236278

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered for four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or a learning disability. It is owned by a large, national company that also provides education. The property is a large, domestic house with extensive gardens. It is located in a village location with good access to a range of community facilities. The home has been registered for just under one year.

**Inspection dates:** 4 to 5 May 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 21 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

None.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because

- The care provided to all children and young people is not consistently good. The home has experienced a challenging time in recent months due to the deterioration in a young person's emotional well-being and behaviour. While a lot of time and effort has been invested, the situation has drifted due to a lack of decisive decision making and effective escalation of the concerns.
- The quality of individual safety plans and risk assessments needs to improve. While reviews take place regularly, currently information is not clear or detailed enough. Records do not prioritise what are known to be serious risks, nor do they entirely reflect important and specific details and, as a consequence, do not feel accurate or personalised enough to be effective.
- The staff team has not been provided with suitable training in adolescent mental health to enable it to meet the changing needs of children and young people in its care.
- The registered manager's oversight of sanctions requires improvement. There is no evidence that management oversight is providing continuous improvement in the quality of care provided to children and young people.
- As a result of this inspection, five requirements are made.

#### The children's home's strengths

- Three of the children and young people are doing well in this placement. Despite some impact from another young person, they are having positive experiences and making good progress in many areas of their lives, including education and developing healthy lifestyles. There is also good input to support young people to become more independent.
- Relationships between children and young people and staff are good. Key working is effective. Most young people behave extremely well and do not participate in risk-taking behaviours.
- In recent months, there has been investment in developing a new staff framework, which aims to improve recruitment, staff support, training and retention.
- Staff have benefited from the provision of good-quality external training in areas such as safeguarding. Progress is also being made by staff in achieving the expected professional diploma qualification.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/10/2016	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
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure that children's needs are met</p> <p>In order to meet this requirement, the registered person must ensure that staff seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. In particular, when a young person's placement becomes unsustainable, effective action must be taken to ensure a timely outcome based on the best interest of all children and young people. (Regulation 5(a))</p>	18/06/2017
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard (6(2)(b)(iii)), the registered person must treat each child with dignity and respect. In particular, damage caused to the environment due to a child or young person's distress must be repaired without delay and suitable furnishings must be provided.</p>	22/05/2017
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard (12(2)(a)(vi)(c)), the registered person must take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare, and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. In particular, individual safety plans, individual risk assessments and location risk assessments must be explicitly clear and detailed, leaving no doubt that all risks have been fully appraised and effective strategies are in place to reduce such risks.</p>	22/05/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard (13(2)(c)(d)(e)), the registered person must ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child, and ensure that the home has sufficient staff and provides continuity of care. In particular, all staff should be provided with training in adolescent mental health, and the use</p>	31/05/2017

of agency staff should be reduced to ensure continuity of appropriately skilled staff to meet the needs of each young person.	
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p> <p>In order to meet this requirement, the registered person must, within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint, speak to the user about the measure and, within five days, speak with the child. In particular, this includes the use of sanctions or consequences, and the manager's oversight of these practices and records should demonstrate continuous improvement in the quality of care provided to children and young people.</p>	22/05/2017

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

During the past six months, the home has had a challenging time. While good progress had been made initially in setting up the home and settling children and young people in, the increasing needs of one young person have exposed shortfalls. This has meant that not all young people have continued to receive good-quality care and support. The positive influence and impact of the home on all children and young people has been compromised because appropriate action has not been taken quickly enough. While the situation has drifted, more focus is now being given to seek a timely resolution, which is in everyone's best interests.

Children and young people enjoy trusted and secure relationships with the adults who care for them. Key working is embraced positively and young people are having opportunities to enjoy new experiences and develop healthy lifestyles. One young person has recently taken up fishing and told the inspector how much he is enjoying this new hobby, which had developed as a direct result of the influence of his key worker. Good attention is given to encouraging young people to enjoy nutritious food, to learn how to cook and explore diets from other countries. Staff provide good support to children and young people to stay in touch and meet up with their families. Staff recognise the importance of sustaining healthy family relationships, and are also sensitive to the fact that some young people may feel upset or distressed after such visits and may need additional support.

Children and young people are doing well in school. Mostly, children attend the company school, but other colleges are used where appropriate. Over recent months, there has been progress made in improving communication between school and the home, and this is benefiting young people and staff alike. Good attention is given to helping young people develop their practical skills and confidence in a range of scenarios that will

support them as they become young adults and seek greater independence.

Children and young people know how to complain and their complaints are treated seriously. Action is taken quickly to make improvements. The manager takes the lead and sometimes responds to the young person in writing. This helps the young person to understand what has been done as a result of their complaint, and consideration should be given to introducing this approach as expected practice.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

The manager has not been effective in providing clear leadership and effective decision making in relation to a young person's changing needs. This has led to the safety and well-being of all children and young people being compromised.

There are shortfalls in the quality of crucial documentation, such as safety plans, individual risks assessments and the location risk assessment. A safety plan that has been in place for more than six months is now out of date, despite it being reviewed regularly. It appears that the document has not been scrutinised to ensure that it contains all relevant information about a young person's circumstance, and what practices have been agreed to keep all young people as safe as possible. Individual risk assessments are overly lengthy and follow a corporate format, which negates from a clear identification of the most serious risks. The location risk assessment has not been reviewed in recent months, and specifically in relation to increasing risks that are now apparent.

The manager is keen to promote an ethos that encompasses a restorative response when children and young people misbehave. It is known that this approach is more meaningful and helps young people understand the impact of their behaviour and why they should seek to improve it. However, when incidents do occur, staff do not consistently respond in a restorative way. For example, a child was not allowed access to his Xbox following a concern being reported about bullying. This approach, which is a sanction, does not help the young person to reflect on how it might feel to be bullied, only how power over another can be exerted in certain circumstances. There is also a need for the manager to ensure that records about these incidents include evidence that both the member of staff and the young person are spoken to about the incident, as well as demonstrating how the manager's oversight has led to continuous improvements in the quality of care young people experience.

In other respects, most children receive good help and protection. They behave well and respond positively to clear and consistent boundaries and expectations. Following a previous requirement, arrangements are in place for independent return home interviews to be carried out. There has been just one incident of a young person being missing from care since the home opened. Following this incident, the individual protocol was reviewed to ensure that it reflected more accurately the age and independence of the young person involved. Physical interventions are seldom used and at the lowest level necessary. There is good oversight and reflection of these incidents when they do occur.

Careful recruitment and regular monitoring of staff takes place to ensure that children and young people are cared for by suitable adults. A plan to over-recruit has been put in place to reduce the future likely need for agency staff. Currently, agency staff are being used to provide additional staffing. Their role and responsibilities in the home are clearly defined and they are supervised by a senior member of staff on duty at the same time. Any concerns that arise about staff conduct are swiftly acted on and shared with appropriate external agencies and in accordance with statutory guidance. The local designated officer commented that she felt that staff at the home were very open in their dealings with her and asked for her advice when incidents occurred.

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

Leaders and managers have not been consistent in making clear decisions and escalating effectively their concerns about the sustainability of a young person's placement at the home. While there is no doubt that a great deal of time and effort has been invested in this matter, the initial delay in giving formal notice to a placing authority has meant that the situation has drifted. This has meant that the changing and complex needs of the young person have not been met. As a result, other children and young people have been negatively affected and the safety of all children and young people has been compromised. During this inspection, the registered manager acknowledged that lessons would need to be learned from this experience, and is committed to supporting the timely transfer of the young person to a more suitable provision identified by the placing authority.

The inspector and manager spent time during this inspection talking about the importance of a thorough pre-admission assessment of needs, including an impact risk assessment, in establishing a compatible resident group in the future.

While, in recent months, staff have benefited from a range of training and support, there has been a failure to recognise the value in providing all staff with specialist training in adolescent mental health. This has meant that staff have not acted at all times with the welfare and well-being of children and young people as paramount. For example, the extensive damage caused by a young person to their bedroom has not been positively responded to. Broken windows have been replaced, but extensive damage to walls and furnishings has been left. The manager and staff have been mindful of remedying damage and removing items that present a risk to personal safety, or further damage to the environment, but have not considered the emotional impact for a young person continuing to occupy a bedroom that so clearly reflects his personal trauma and distress.

Good progress is being made in staff achieving professional qualifications, and the manager is mindful of expectations around timescales. External training has also been sourced in some specialist areas, such as safeguarding and child sexual abuse and exploitation. The manager has praised the quality of this training and is keen for staff to benefit from more training like this in the future. A really positive development has been the investment in a new staff framework which aims to improve recruitment, staff support, and training and retention.

## **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:** 1236278

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Priory Education Services Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Clive Coombs

**Registered manager:** Adam Court

## Inspector

Norma Welsby, social care inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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