

# 1241785

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 privately owned and run by an education specialist service provider. It is registered to care for up to 11 children who have learning disabilities, and focuses on caring for young people who have complex needs that may include autistic spectrum disorder and associated difficulties. The home is located within the provider's school campus, which the current young people attend.

**Inspection dates:** 25 to 26 July 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	inadequate
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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:** This is the home's first inspection since it was registered on 24 January 2017.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection**

Not applicable.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Extremely poor recording provides an unclear picture of young people's experiences and progress.
- Ineffective strategies to engage young people in education, or to support them to make positive changes to their behaviour, are one of the causes which led to two placement breakdowns.
- Safeguarding procedures have not been implemented correctly and records are poorly kept and inaccurate.
- Managers have failed to identify or rectify significant failings.
- Managers do not sufficiently understand the roles of other professionals and, consequently, have been unable to challenge decisions or advocate effectively on behalf of the young people.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people have positive relationships with staff and enjoy their company.
- There is a range of activities for young people to take part in.
- High staffing ratios ensure that young people are well supervised and kept safe.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the home's first inspection since it was registered on 24 January 2017.

## 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 children's needs are met.</p> <p>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>(b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;</p> <p>(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p>	28/09/2017
<p>7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered persons must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(2) (a) (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>(iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care;</p>	28/09/2017
<p>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard the registered person must:</p> <p>(2) (x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans;</p>	28/09/2017
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(2) (a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking</p>	28/09/2017

<p>into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>(ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p>	
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must—</p> <p>(2) (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	28/09/2017
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure that children—</p> <p>(1) (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(b) that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>(i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>(ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and</p> <p>(iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with</p>	28/09/2017

<p>arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;</p> <p>(c) that each child's relevant plans are followed;</p> <p>(e) that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>(i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs;</p>	
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure systems in place to monitor medication administration are rigorous.</p>	28/09/2017
<p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (Regulation 32(2)(a))</p>	28/09/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>(a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>(iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>(iv) a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>(vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>(vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>(b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>(i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>(ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>(c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35(3)(a)(iii)(iv)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	28/09/2017
<p>The registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. (Regulation 39(1))</p>	28/09/2017
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement</p>	28/09/2017

occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(b))	
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## Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that the children's home provides a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15 paragraph 3.9)  
In particular, ensure that all parts of the home are maintained and decorated to a good standard.
- Children who cannot or choose not to verbalise, have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and respected in the same way as other children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.24)  
In particular, ensure that children's care plans identify how children communicate their feelings.
- The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- The registered person must ensure that there is a workforce plan in place. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.8)  
In particular, ensure that it contains the information required by the guidance.
- When considering new placements, the registered manager should fully consider the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)  
In particular, the registered manager should evidence their judgement of the compatibility of the young people.
- The registered persons must ensure that appropriate forms of contact should be promoted and facilitated for each child, including other forms of contact via the internet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.18)  
In particular, ensure that they provide access to Skype.
- The registered person must ensure that the supervision of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 62, paragraph 13.1')  
In particular, ensure that staff receive regular supervision as detailed in the home's workforce development plan.
- The registered persons must further develop and consolidate the assessment of the suitability of the location of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

## Inspection judgements

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

Parents, young people and social workers spoken to during the inspection said that young people make progress while living at the home.

Records are poorly kept and, as a result, it is difficult to track the progress that the young people make, or to identify triggers when young people's behaviours change or become more challenging. For two young people, staff were unable to identify the reasons for their deteriorating behaviour, or to put in place effective strategies to manage this.

Most young people attend school and are making progress with their education. The educational needs of a minority of young people who arrive at the home with poor attendance at school are not being met. The staff have been unable to engage these young people in meaningful day-time activity or to achieve their return to school.

Plans for young people moving into the home, or for those moving on, are poorly recorded. This makes it difficult to see what preparation, planning or risk assessments take place. In practice, one social worker spoke positively about the preparatory work the staff did with one young person and their family that helped make the move successful.

Young people's participation in decision-making in the home is limited. While a number of young people have communication difficulties, minutes of young people's meetings do not demonstrate vibrancy and meaningful discussions. The agendas are solely focused on ideas for meals, activity ideas and birthdays. It unclear from the minutes the extent to which young people are able to suggest topics.

Weak communication plans for young people provide limited information on how young people communicate their feelings, particularly if they are unhappy or in pain. Several staff did not feel confident or skilled in communicating with young people who use Makaton or the picture exchange communication system (PECS) to communicate. Poor facilities in the home prevent young people from accessing Skype. Social workers and parents have raised this as a concern. For many young people with communication difficulties, this is a vital resource to help them to keep in contact with their families.

Young people appeared relaxed and comfortable with staff and shared many smiles. Those who were able to, told the inspectors that they liked the staff and enjoyed spending time with them and their friends in the home. Staff have positive relationships with young people's families and try their best to support young people to maintain their important relationships.

There are a variety of activities on offer to enable young people to have fun and to keep occupied and stimulated. Staff use resources including the sensory room to cater for young people's sensory needs. Trips out into the community support young people to develop their independence skills and widen their social experiences.

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

Weak assessment and management of risk has resulted in omissions of some key risks from young people's assessments, and strategies to protect them are not sufficient. Poor communication has resulted in significant information not being shared. As a result, staff are unaware of all young people's current risks and how to manage them. For example, an incident involving a young person accessing unsuitable websites and receiving inappropriate texts messages was not included in his risk assessment. Evidence that staff are providing education on online safety was limited and does not demonstrate that young people are being given the tools to keep themselves safe.

Poor implementation of safeguarding policies resulted in correct procedures not being followed. Since the home's registration, there has been one incident requiring a referral to the local authority's multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Staff and the home's designated safeguarding officer did not follow statutory guidance or the home's safeguarding policy when responding to this concern. Although, in this instance, the managers' poor practice did not have any impact, their actions could have hindered the relevant authorities' responses, such as those of MASH or the police, and compromised any investigation and its outcomes. Poor recording of this incident resulted in a sparse, inaccurate account of the actions taken. This causes confusion and hinders the managers' ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the home's safeguarding procedures and practice.

The home's safeguarding policy provides clear guidance to staff on what they should do if a safeguarding incident occurs. However, it does not contain information to advise staff on the actions that they must take to counter self-harm and suicide as required by guidance.

The high level of supervision of the young people is such that they are unlikely to go missing. There has been one occasion when someone has left the home without permission. Staff stayed with the young person and subsequently guided him back to the home.

Young people's progress in displaying behaviours that are more positive has been variable. Staff and parents were able to describe the improvements young people had made; however, poor recording has meant that this was not sufficiently reflected in young people's files. There is a lack of evidence of purposeful work with the young people to support them to achieve positive changes. Records of responses to young people's behaviours focused on restricting and sanctioning rather than encouraging and rewarding. When young people's behaviours have deteriorated, staff had a limited understanding as to why this occurred.

Records of sanctions and physical interventions are poor. Staff do not have sufficient understanding of what is required by regulation when recording sanctions. As a result, no sanctions have been recorded, although some should have been. When necessary, staff use physical intervention appropriately and only as a last resort. However, staff do not consistently record all the required information for a physical intervention. This compromises the manager's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of young people's



behaviour plans and to monitor staff practice.

The home's location review considers many risk factors within the local community. However, it lacks evidence of consultation and information from external sources, including safeguarding concerns or crime rates within the local area.

During the inspection, and contrary to the home's policy, the door to the medication room was found to be unlocked on four occasions. Staff complete counts of the amount of medication left in stock for each young person on a weekly basis. Inspectors were informed that other audits of medication practice had been completed, but these were not provided during the inspection. Consequently, inspectors cannot be confident that quality assurance systems are sufficient to identify if errors have occurred.

Staffing levels are high, reflecting the complex needs of the young people and ensuring that young people receive the level of support that they require to remain safe. The high staffing ratios and staff knowledge of each young person reduce the risk of harm.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

There are serious managerial failures in the oversight of the home, which have led to significant failings not being identified or addressed. The inaction of the managers raises concerns about their knowledge and ability to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

There is currently no registered manager in place. The appointed manager has been in post for seven months and Ofsted is yet to receive an application for his registration. The manager has completed a level 4 management qualification and is in the process of completing the level 5 management qualification.

Managers have a poor understanding of their own and other professionals' roles and responsibilities. This has significantly impeded their ability to challenge decisions or advocate on behalf of the young people. As a result, concerns have been left to drift, resulting in an escalation in incidents that adversely affect the well-being of young people and the others they live with. Managers' insufficient understanding of safeguarding procedures has meant that they were unable to identify poor practice and recordings in order to improve practice.

Managers have failed to notify Ofsted of a serious incident. As a result, the regulator could not evaluate practice and ensure that all appropriate actions had taken place to protect the young people.

Ineffective monitoring has resulted in managers having an extremely poor oversight of the home and a limited understanding of its weaknesses. The manager has failed to evaluate all aspects of the home adequately and, as a result, remains unaware of its shortfalls. The areas identified for improvement in the reports completed by the independent visitor have not been addressed. Such failings question the competence of the management of the home.

Poor placement plans and records provide an incomplete picture of the young people. Care plans and risk assessments are incomplete or out of date. Staff have failed to obtain necessary paperwork from the local authority and, in some cases, the current and future plans for young people are unclear. These failings and inadequate monitoring

systems have resulted in managers and staff having a poor understanding of how young people are progressing or how their experiences can be improved.

Records do not evidence staff conversations with parents or professionals. As a result, young people cannot be assured that staff and managers are working with others to promote their safety and well-being.

It is unclear how managers ensure that they are identifying and responding appropriately to young people's concerns. The complaints procedure relates solely to complaints from parents or carers and does not refer to complaints from the young people. The complaints procedure is not explicit enough about how verbal complaints are dealt with. Although there have been no complaints since the home's registration, none of the 'Moans and Groans' forms are signed off by the young person, so it is not clear if they are satisfied with the responses or not.

Current recruitment practice does not ensure that only appropriately vetted staff are employed to work with young people. Records show that the service has not verified the reasons why candidates have left previous employment involving work with children or vulnerable adults, as required by regulation. Discussions with those responsible for recruitment identified that they were unaware of this requirement.

The home's workforce training strategy does not cover the information required by guidance and provides a limited overview of the expectations for managing poor performance.

Staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the timescales stated in the home's statement of purpose. Supervision records of managers and staff indicate that there are concerns about their competencies and abilities. However, records lacked evidence of how these concerns had been addressed.

Team meeting minutes demonstrate that there are weekly meetings, which enable a broad discussion of key issues and the young people's needs. However, minutes are brief and do not demonstrate clarity of decisions, actions and timescales.

Staff training records demonstrate that every effort is made to ensure that staff have the skills and training required to work with young people.

## **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:** 1241785

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

**Registered provider:** Priory Education Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Priory Education Services Limited, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

**Responsible individual:** Hannah Cox

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Melissa McMillan, social care inspector

Natalie Trentham, Her Majesty's Inspector - Social Care

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