

# 1241836

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 seven 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 residents attend.

**Inspection dates:** 10 to 11 October 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **Good**

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

None.

## **Key findings from this inspection**

This children's home is good because:

- The staff promote a family feel to the home, which ensures that the children feel valued and belong.
- The children feel safe and secure.
- The children make good progress in their education, social relationships and daily living skills.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff failed to identify and report two safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Physical intervention and sanction records are poor and do not enable rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

## **Recent inspection history**

This is the home's first inspection.

## 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>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) (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>	30/11/2017
<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>	30/11/2007

<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>(c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>(e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40(4)(c)(e))</p>	<p>30/11/2017</p>
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## Recommendations

- Appropriate forms of contact should be promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate visits to the child in the home; visits by the child to relatives and/or friends; letters, emails and texts; use of social media and other forms of contact via the internet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.18)
- 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 compatibility between the young people.
- 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)
- 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)
- 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, ensuring children's care plans identify how children communicate how they are feeling.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Carefully planned admissions to the home ensure that the children move into the home at their own pace. Consequently, the children settle quickly. Close partnership working with children's parents enables the staff to devise detailed and individualised plans of care to support a positive transition into the home. The staff successfully advocate on the children's behalf to ensure that plans for the children's future are in their best interests.

The staff's patient and nurturing approach enables the children to trust them and know that their needs will be met. Consequently, the children feel safe and secure, thus reducing their anxieties and enabling them to engage in all aspects of home and school life. As a result, they make good progress in their education, social relationships and daily living skills.

The family atmosphere of the home ensures that the children feel valued and part of their peer group. As a result, children feel more confident to engage with their peers, enabling them to develop friendships and build on their social skills. Children enjoy spending time with each other and the staff. They treat each other with respect, and praise and encourage each other, boosting their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Children are positively occupied, stimulated and able to try new things. A particular favourite is a local disco, which several of the children attend each week. Through accessing activities within the wider community, the children feel more confident in going out and socialising with others. Every achievement, however small, is celebrated, and this encourages the children to try more new and interesting things. A parent said that she 'could not have imagined that (her child) would have been able to go out to a pub and enjoy a meal'.

Well-planned goals and the persistent support of the staff enable the children to maximise their skills in caring for themselves, giving them greater independence and building on their self-esteem. One young person has recently started work experience, while others carry out daily living tasks independently. These represent significant achievements for each individual, providing them with a sense of pride and achievement.

Education is valued and promoted. Each child has good attendance, and those who previously had poor attendance now attend daily. Staff have good relationships with the children's school. The daily handover with the children's school has assisted the staff to take a consistent approach, resulting in the children making good progress in their education.

Close attention to the children's health needs, and effective liaison with health professionals, support children to lead healthy lives. In small steps, the children are developing an understanding of their own health needs and, when appropriate, staff are supporting the children to learn to administer medication by themselves. However, current systems to monitor medication administration are not sufficient to ensure that errors can be identified quickly.

Staff are skilled in using various communication methods, allowing the children to make choices and share their views. However, communication plans for the children are lacking in detail and do not assist staff to provide the right environment and support to enable the children to communicate their needs.

Children's meeting minutes do not demonstrate that the children have the opportunity to engage in vibrant and meaningful discussions. Agendas are solely focused on ideas for meals, activity ideas and birthdays. It is unclear from the minutes the extent to which the children are able to suggest topics.

Staff nurture good relationships with the children's families to ensure that the children are able to maintain important relationships. Staff have developed a good rapport with

parents and regularly keep them updated on the well-being of their child. However, the home does not currently have a computer that the children can use and the location of the home results in poor internet signal. This affects the children's ability to maintain contact with their families, particularly if they cannot communicate verbally or live a considerable distance apart.

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

Children's demeanours indicate that they feel safe in the home. They are relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings and approach staff confidently for assistance or to spend time together. One parent commented that '(their child's) anxieties have significantly reduced. This is because (their child) feels safe and secure.' Staff are watchful without being overbearing and allow the children to try things for themselves.

Staff are alert to any potential risks and actively engage with the children to help them develop an understanding of risks and how they can keep themselves safe. As a result, children maximise their independence and are learning to take on more responsibility for their own safety in a safe environment.

Good risk management ensures that the staff are alert to the children's specific vulnerabilities. However, there have been two incidents of staff failing to identify or report safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. This meant that the registered manager was not able to take the appropriate action in a timely fashion to safeguard the children.

Managers take their responsibility to safeguarding extremely seriously. When they have become aware of a safeguarding concern, or an allegation against a member of staff, they alert the designated officer and take the appropriate steps to protect the children. Managers have taken action to reiterate the staff's duty to protect the children and to challenge and report concerns to managers as soon as possible.

Delays in notifying other agencies of significant events have hindered the relevant authorities' responses, including the regulator's ability to ensure that managers have taken action to safeguard the children.

The safeguarding policy currently does not refer to self-harm or suicide, as required by guidance. This may result in staff not knowing what actions to take to protect children and young people in these instances.

High staff ratios and comprehensive risk assessments ensure that the children rarely go missing. There has been one incident of a child going missing since the previous inspection. Staff diligently followed the home's missing protocol and notified all relevant professionals, including the police, to ensure the child's safe return.

Consistent expectations and boundaries ensure that the children feel safe and secure. Staff work patiently with the children to develop appropriate coping strategies to manage their anxieties. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in incidents requiring staff to physically intervene. Sanctions are used by the home to support the children to reflect on their behaviours and learn what is, or is not, acceptable. However,

in a minority of cases, the sanctions used have not been reparative in their nature. Records of physical interventions and sanctions lack clarity and detail to enable rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

The home's location review considers many risk factors within the local surrounding community. However, some of the information within the assessment is incorrect and does not provide accurate information to staff. The location review lacks evidence of consultation and information from external sources. Consequently, staff's knowledge and understanding of risk factors in the local area may be hindered.

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

A good standard of leadership ensures the home is managed in an efficient and effective way. The manager was registered with Ofsted in January 2017 and holds relevant qualifications alongside a wealth of experience and expertise. Although the manager was not present during this inspection, it was evident that she is passionate about placing the specific needs of the children at the forefront of practice and ensuring that they enjoy a positive experience in the home.

The manager is supported by a strong and effective deputy, who has an excellent understanding of children's previous histories and the reasons behind their behaviours. She uses her knowledge and understanding to guide and inform staff's practice to ensure that they provide a child-centred approach.

Children receive individualised support within a safe and caring environment, thus enabling them to grow and develop. The consistent care provided by the manager and her staff team enable the children to make progress in their behaviour, social skills, independence skills and personal development. The children are well matched and this, along with the family feel of the home, ensures that the children feel valued and belong. However, the manager does not currently evidence the decision-making around matching.

Good professional relationships exist between the home and partner agencies. The registered manager and her staff team are clear about their responsibilities and liaise closely with a range of professionals for the benefit of the children.

Effective monitoring of practice identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The manager uses her findings from quality assurance systems and the independent monitoring reports to inform her development plan. She regularly reviews actions to ensure that children receive an improving service.

The manager has a good knowledge of recruitment practices and has ensured that only appropriately qualified and vetted staff are employed to work with children. The majority of the staff are suitably qualified or are undertaking the course for the required level 3 qualification. Staff said that they have undertaken relevant training to care for the children and feel confident in their role.

Effective supervision supports staff's professional development, but also ensures that poor practice is quickly addressed. Children's needs and goals are regularly reviewed and discussed to ensure that the children continue to receive good quality of care.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** 1241836

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

**Registered provider:** Priory Education Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** 5th Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

**Responsible individual:** Hannah Cox

**Registered manager:** Kathleen Bridge

### Inspector:

Melissa McMillan, social care inspector

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