

1245980

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides assessment places for up to six young people from the Birmingham area. It is part of a private organisation.

The statement of purpose indicates that staff work with young people to determine their short- and long-term needs. Staff interventions, combined with referrals to other professional services, are aimed at helping young people to achieve improved outcomes.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced and has been in post for several years.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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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	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: 26 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/08/2017	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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vi))</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only allow an individual to work at the home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(b)(3)(d))</p>	31/08/2018
<p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that there is a record of the actual rosters worked and a record of any persons who work at any time at the home.</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the</p>	31/08/2018

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 work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b))

Recommendations

- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements, where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need (regulation 31(1)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, make the records of work done with young people easy and engaging for them to read. Give them copies of pieces of work done so that records continue to help them in the days and weeks to come.

- No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home should be from an external agency. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)

Inspection judgements

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

Seven young people have lived here since the last inspection. Three young people have moved on following their assessments, and one of these was an emergency move following a serious incident. Three young people have made some progress while living here, including improving their social skills, re-engaging in school and learning independence skills. One young person wrote to his key worker, 'You have helped me progress so far in the past few months and I can't thank you enough for what you've done for me.'

Four young people presently living in the home are not experiencing consistent and well-organised care. Over half the staff team is currently either off sick or currently not working at the home. This shortfall in staff has necessitated the need to use a high volume of agency staff. Young people do not know who is working with them each day and do not have good relationships with some of the staff. This inconsistency means that staff are not undertaking enough planned, meaningful day-to-day work with young people to address their health, well-being and behavioural needs.

Young people said that they like the manager because he makes himself available. Young people enjoy healthy food that the attentive cook provides. One young person said, 'I have definitely changed. I can talk for myself and stick up for myself now.' Young people's families said that it feels homely and that staff are 'polite, caring and communicative'.

Young people are not interested in their records and staff do not read one another's work. As a result, young people do not remember or put into practice significant things that they have learned, and staff do not develop their practice.

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

Most young people are placed here for assessment when their unsafe, risk-taking behaviour has caused family breakdown. Staff's approach to helping and protecting young people is not always well organised. Staff do not always know where young people are, or who they are spending their time with. Staff do not always work together to anticipate and minimise incidents. Staff do not always know straight away when a young person has gone missing from the home. One young person told the home's independent visitor, 'If something kicks off, we (the young people) have to run and get staff to help.'

Despite this, some staff spend good-quality time with young people. They use restorative approaches to good effect when young people's behaviour causes damage or harm to others. They alert young people's social workers and families promptly about incidents and encourage their involvement in helping to address young people's

behaviour. As a result, most young people are relatively settled most of the time.

The manager is proactive in giving young people helpful information and advice about how to protect themselves. The manager designs and uses workbooks and questionnaires to help young people recognise how they can be at risk of radicalisation, exploitation and the effects of taking illegal drugs and alcohol, or getting involved in violent and criminal activity.

The manager also designs and delivers training to staff about the link between young people's behaviour and their past experiences. He encourages staff to empathise and accept young people just as they are. He believes that this helps young people's self-esteem so that they can confidently make safer choices for themselves. However, some staff have not changed their practice enough to ensure that young people get consistent help.

Staff, including managers and senior staff, are not always signing in and out of the home. It is unclear who has worked and when. On some recent shifts, over half the staff come from an agency. Managers and staff are not routinely obtaining full information that shows each agency member of staff's suitability before accepting them onto the rota. Staff are not checking agency staff's identity and suitability against this information before they start a shift. These shortfalls make it harder to eliminate poor practice and unsuitable people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is ambitious for every young person. He is a proactive and innovative leader. Young people look to him for support and advice. He is a stable, helpful influence on young people at a time when six members of staff are off sick, and four members of staff are currently not working at the home. One young person's social worker said, '[Young person] opened up to the manager for two hours – that is amazing.'

The manager has recently identified serious concerns in respect of a few members of staff practice. He has acted promptly in conjunction with senior leaders in the organisation to ensure that young people are safeguarded. The local authority designated officer has deemed that the concerns do not meet the threshold to necessitate an investigation.

Some members of staff are inspired and upskilled by the manager. One staff member said, 'His training on positive working practice, such as compromise, empathy and flexible decision-making, has given me an overall view of understanding triggers and behaviour patterns, and personality being based on background environment, upbringing and past events. It has made me understand confidently how to implement and be consistent.' A senior leader in the organisation said, 'The manager thinks outside the box for conflict resolution – what he says has purpose.'

The manager uses supervision sessions to good effect to inspire staff, including agency

staff, and check on their feelings and motivations. Three members of staff have not completed the required level 3 diploma in residential childcare within the required timescales.

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: 1245980

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

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

Responsible individual: Dale Berry

Registered manager: Junior Patterson

Inspector

Rachel Britten, social care inspector

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