

SC069336

Registered provider: Prior's Court Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to 67 children and young people with autistic spectrum and associated conditions. There is an Ofsted registered school within the extensive grounds where the home is set. The home has a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 October 2018

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: 22 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2017	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/07/2016	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(2)(c))</p>	16/11/2018
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13(2)(d))</p>	16/11/2018
<p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <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—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the</p>	16/11/2018

<p>Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (3)(b)(4)(a)(b)(5)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))</p>	16/11/2018

Recommendations

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- In addition to the requirements of this standard, the registered person has specific responsibilities under regulation 34 to prepare and implement policies, setting out: arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect; clear procedures for referring child protection concerns to the placing authority or local authority where the home is situated if appropriate; and specific procedures to prevent children going missing and take action if they do. The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home, e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19) Specifically, bolster records of actions taken to include the decision-making process of when to redeploy or suspend staff and to hold meetings across the safeguarding team.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because they mostly receive high-quality individualised care. Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs. The multi-disciplinary approach of the organisation ensures that children's needs are known and understood. A range of support plans provide guidance to staff. The impact of staff shortages, and the use of agency staff, have led to a more task-focused approach to care. Children's needs are

being met, but there is a reduced capacity to stretch children and help them to progress even further. Agency staff are not consistently assessed to determine if they have the training, ability and skills to meet children's needs. Many, though, work regularly in the home and demonstrate strong skills and understanding of the children's needs. Parents have raised some concerns through the complaints process regarding communication, and the staff have responded swiftly to rectify issues.

Children's views and ideas are sought through a variety of approaches. Speech and language therapists have worked actively to assess individual children's communication and understanding to determine how best to gain their genuine views. An independent advocate has recently started to visit the home to further support children's ability to participate and express their views. Children are offered simple choices throughout the day, such as snacks, drinks and activities. This was evidenced particularly well in the dining hall, where children chose meals and where they would like to sit.

All the houses within the site have been, or are in the process of being, modernised. Children have helped to choose colours and furnishings for the homes. This refurbishment has led to children having to move houses for periods of time, and social stories and other appropriate communication tools have been used to support their understanding of the change. Additionally, impact assessments have been completed to assess suitability of groupings.

Children can access a wide range of activities on-site. For example, staff arranged a 'summer of fun', including silent discos and bouncy castles. Themed activities are planned throughout the year, with flexibility for children to access them at their own level and pace. All children work towards their independence plans, which are personalised to their needs, skills and abilities. This ranges from choosing foods and tidying away, to working in the on-site bakery. Good arrangements are in place for transition planning to adult services. Pathway planning and joint work with partner agencies identify future placements and packages of outreach work for children once they have moved. Support for parents at this key time is strong.

Services are available within the organisation to meet children's medical and emotional needs. Routine health appointments, such as with the dentist or optician, take place on-site to reduce children's anxiety. Processes for administering medication are adequate, and if there is a medication error staff always seek professional advice and investigate how the error occurred.

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

Children's actions and demeanour suggest they feel safe and are confident in their environment. Staff are aware of children's vulnerabilities, and ensure that there are staff available at all times to support children if they become distressed or anxious. Staff are confident about their responsibilities should they have to share any worries or concerns they may have for a child's safety or welfare. Rotas clearly show who the safeguarding officer on call is each day.

There is good evidence of multi-disciplinary and joint agency working when safeguarding or child protection concerns arise. The designated safeguarding lead and others with safeguarding lead responsibility act swiftly, reporting concerns to partner agencies and following any advice they are given effectively. Records are clear and show actions

taken. However, records lack specific detail and the rationale for suspending or redeploying staff. Additionally, there are no regular meetings between staff and a safeguarding lead, which would ensure that staff have accurate and up-to-date information. When concerns have been raised about the practice of agency staff, there is no chronology in place detailing the action taken. This does not enable managers to be aware of any particular support needs or to identify any training required for this particular group of staff.

Behaviour management, including that of self-injurious behaviour, is a particular strength in this home. The child and adolescent mental health professional, who regularly visits the school, and the organisation's psychologist, speech and language therapist and occupational therapist regularly meet with both residential and school staff to review and devise individual support plans. The plans focus on what the child is trying to communicate and set out strategies to reduce the child's anxieties and distress. The staff actively avoid the use of medication to manage behaviour. Each child is assessed to ensure that the plans of those in most need are updated with greater frequency.

Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated as new behaviours emerge. However, staff do not always understand the reasons for some content in the assessments, for example why a child may not enter the kitchen.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders in the home have high expectations and aspirations for the children in their care. They believe children can achieve and progress, and they produce highly individualised plans to support this. The management team has a clear understanding of the progress children are making.

The senior managers have been proactive in suspending new admissions to the home to manage the current staffing shortages. They are aware of the high number of agency staff and vacancies, and the impact this is currently having on the quality of care provided for children, and are seeking creative ways to reach target staff, such as via social media and radio. New staff are starting throughout the coming months, and leaders are focusing on retention, as well as recognising the need to recruit the right calibre of staff.

Longer-standing and experienced staff are generally positive about their work with children and demonstrate a genuine desire to have a positive impact on children's lives. They are frustrated at times, but many acknowledge that managers are trying all they can to improve the staffing situation. A new appraisal system has been implemented over the last year which provides an effective and proactive approach to performance management. Staff have mostly been well engaged with this process. The quarterly reviews provide a strong indication of the staff team's progress towards meeting the organisation's aims and objectives. However, supervision is not being recorded; therefore, the frequency and content of these discussions cannot be evidenced.

Staff training is planned across the year, with staff attending mandatory training and external conferences and courses when possible. In response to a lack of local provision for training staff to the required level, the organisation has set up its own training course. Staff are provided with time to complete the training and assignments. Home managers are undertaking level 5 training courses and are engaging in 'lead to succeed'

sessions. The registered manager keeps up to date on practice developments through attendance at external conferences, professional development groups and peer reviews.

Development plans for the organisation are comprehensive and ambitious. The management team is constantly seeking to improve the service provided for children, and engages regularly with partner agencies to plan how it can achieve this. The registered manager uses her six-monthly monitoring, and reports from the independent visitor, to plan ahead and inform the development plan.

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: SC069336

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Prior's Court Foundation

Responsible individual: Michael Robinson

Registered manager: Sarah Butcher

Inspector(s)

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

Emeline Evans, social care inspector

Anne-Marie Davies, social care inspector

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