

# 1241836

Registered provider: The Priory Group

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 children who have complex needs that may include autism spectrum disorder and associated difficulties. The home is located within the provider's school campus.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since January 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 25 to 26 March 2019

**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:** 23 March 2018

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

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/10/2017	Full	Good

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the responsible 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 responsible person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)) Specifically, ensure that all risks to a child are recorded together with the risk reduction strategies.	01/05/2019
The responsible person must ensure that—  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— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the responsible	01/05/2019

<p>person, or a person who is authorised by the responsible person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the responsible 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p>	
<p>Ensure that the responsible person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that understands the impact 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. (Regulation 13 (2)(f))</p>	01/05/2019

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the importance of who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life story work or other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

Specifically ensure that any direct work done with children considers their particular personal experiences and circumstances.

- Ensure that 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, email 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)

Specifically ensure that children who are a long way from their family home are able to reliably video call their families on a regular basis.

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people strongly benefit from the stability of their home. Most young people have lived there for years, and there is a stable, long-term core staff group that has seen young people develop and change over a period of time. This stability enables young people to benefit from a high standard of individualised care.

There are strong, positive attachments between staff and young people, and this means that young people are physically well cared for and feel emotionally secure. A parent said, 'The setting is like a family, and young people are emotionally connected to the home and staff.'

This nurturing climate means that young people are enabled to make progress. All have good school attendance, and some have made huge strides in their speech, in their confidence and in demonstrating less anxious and obsessive behaviour.

Understanding young people's views is a priority in this home. Young people complete regular questionnaires and fully participate in the weekly house meetings where they choose their favourite foods and activities for the week ahead. They are also involved in their daily care as much as possible, for example stating the medication they are due to have and signing for it.

There are effective links between the young people's questionnaires and any issues they may raise. For example, if young people say that they do not know how to complain, this is followed up either at the young people's meeting or in a keywork session. On occasion, the direct work completed with young people as a group does not reflect their individual personal circumstances, and this can lead to confusion.

Young people thrive on anticipated, busy and enjoyable daily experiences. As a local authority social worker said, 'The daily structure meets both young person's needs for familiarity, consistency and predictability.' Some young people benefit from attending local clubs such as Brownies and Explorers, and other young people enjoy swimming or ice-skating.

Some young people have very regular stays with their families, and staff strongly support those vital bonds by contacting families with any news and updates about young people. Some young people live far away from their families, and the home's internet links are not always reliable. This reduces young people's ability to stay in touch as closely as possible with their families.

Transitions into and out of this home are not frequent. When they do happen, they are carefully planned and involve all those who are crucial to the young person's well-being. Transitions happen at the young person's pace, and social stories are used both with the

moving young person and his home group. This careful attention to detail helps such moves succeed for all.

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

Generally, risk assessments of young people are soundly recorded and appropriately updated. However, one young person did not have a significant safeguarding risk detailed and, therefore, the best strategies needed to respond to this were also absent. This does not promote keeping the young person as safe as possible.

Young people in this home do not always understand dangers, for example stranger danger or those arising from inappropriate behaviour in public. Staff work well to help young people appreciate these risks and use appropriate tools to do so. Young people demonstrate their trust in staff by telling them if they are worried about something, and staff encourage this behaviour by praising them for confiding in them.

Young people do not go missing from this home. A combination of fair staff ratios and a safe campus helps to prevent this. However, appropriate procedures are in place should this behaviour become a concern.

Staff's extensive knowledge and understanding of young people are usually sufficient to manage behaviour by their use of distraction techniques. If the young person's behaviour is unusually challenging, staff can work with the clinical team to develop strategies. Generally, this valuable resource resolves the issue in partnership with staff.

However, following consultation with the children and young person's mental health service and the social worker, staff used brief periods of door-holding to try to keep a young person safe. Indeed, this practice appeared to reassure the young person, but it was not recorded as a restraint. This lack of standardised restraint recording means that these incidents were not subject to the appropriate detailed scrutiny that is required for all restraints.

Sanctions are appropriately used. They involve others such as social workers and the young person's family, and this transparency offers a further check on them. The young person is also engaged as much as possible, both in giving their view and in signing the record.

The physical environment of the home is kept safe by appropriate environmental checks. The home is on a secure campus next to the school and contains safe opportunities for exploration.

Recruitment practice is safe and thorough. There are effective working relationships with the local authority designated officer, and managers are appropriately prompt in seeking their advice.

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

There is an effective, experienced and qualified permanent registered manager in place. She is very well supported by the responsible individual who is based adjacent to the home and knows young people and staff well. Together, they set a culture in the home that wants the best for each young person.

The home is fully staffed and young people benefit from several very experienced and appropriately qualified staff. This staff group is positive about staff members' training, and staff feel supported in their roles. They are enthusiastic about their immediate team and, as one said, 'I still really enjoy seeing our young people develop and thrive.'

Recently, in the absence of the registered manager staff were under stress because of a young person's then-unresolved, severe behavioural issues. The remaining management team did not deal well with the issues presented, nor with staff's anxieties. Fortunately, this phase was short lived, and, following a thorough process, the young person is calmer, and staff have had their confidence restored. There is now a highly appropriate plan in place to enable staff to learn lessons from this experience.

The statement of purpose is a good reflection of the home's objectives and is kept up to date by the registered manager. Notifications are appropriately made and reflect effective action taken by staff to keep young people safe.

Young people's case records are well kept and are usually up to date. They present a full picture of the young person's needs and aspirations and include valuable and regular one-to-one keywork sessions. Young people are involved as much as possible in contributing to their records, such as detailing their likes and dislikes and signing documents.

Routine monitoring of young people's files and all their records is systematically and thoroughly carried out by both the registered manager and the responsible individual. The independent visitor routinely produces detailed reports with monthly action plans, that are completed by the registered manager before the next visit. This comprehensive monitoring system means that generally routines and processes in the home run smoothly, and this enables time to be prioritised for working directly 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 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:** The Priory Group

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

**Responsible individual:** Hannah Cox

**Registered manager:** Kathleen Bridge

## Inspector

Bridget Goddard, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019