

1236387

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 owned and run by a national private provider. The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who have learning disabilities and/or presenting behaviours that occur when children are under high levels of anxiety. The home shares a site with another registered children's home and the organisation's two schools, which the children living in the home attend.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 25 October 2016.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2018	Full	Good
22/11/2017	Full	Good
30/01/2017	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
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))	13/10/2019

Recommendations

- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children told the inspector that they feel fortunate to live in this home, and professionals voiced their great satisfaction with placements. An independent reviewing officer said, 'I'm so, so pleased for the child. She has been able to continue activities that were important to her and started new ones. She is already eating better and is more active.' Children are particularly positive about the activities they join in, whether pursuing their own interests or doing things as a group.

The manager and staff have a tremendous ability to help children embrace challenges, either by making them enjoyable in themselves or by enabling children to get satisfaction from achieving something at the end of it. Examples include a 'toothbrush party' which exuberantly and successfully promotes teeth cleaning, and enrolling children in the local library's summer reading challenge.

Staff will tenaciously work at something to get it right for children, such as making travel arrangements for visiting family or promoting the highest possible level of participation in education. Children see the efforts staff make for them and frequently respond well to it. One child who did not attend school before coming to the home now loves going and

likes to read and learn spellings with adults in the home. The staff had noticed that the child could spell words correctly in a list, but not in the context of a sentence, and this prompted them to help her progress further with her spelling. Writing exercises are now improving her spelling too.

One child spoke about using gym equipment, another demonstrated a dance routine and a third has achieved a purple belt at kick boxing - all of which showed their enjoyment of exercise. Staff tirelessly promoted these activities, sometimes with children who were initially reluctant to get involved. One parent praised staff for persuading her daughter 'to do something new, which is very hard for her'. This was just one area of progress she had seen; others include her daughter improving her self-esteem, expressing feelings and being able to make a plan to work through problems. Such developments are a result of the concentrated work that staff undertake.

Children see themselves as making changes for the better; one child will sometimes say, 'the old me would not have done that' when she has risen to a new challenge. Children's views are included in documentation and their ability to participate in formal planning processes is assessed so that it is implemented at an appropriate level.

There is a strong sense of children and adults experiencing life together in the home, with the focus on enhancing children's opportunities and celebrating their achievements. A member of staff commented, 'We are proud of, and brag about, our girls – homes, parents, school - they all get told!' As this inspection found, there is plenty to tell.

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

The manager and staff are skilled at understanding and assessing risks. Strategies to keep children safer are well thought through; helpful advice is sought, and then applied with the aim of the strategies being as unrestrictive as possible. Staff give children the tools and confidence to manage their own safety, so they are less inclined to put themselves in dangerous situations. As a result, most children have fewer incidents than they did when they first came to live at the home.

The team quickly identifies where strategies are not effective or need to be reviewed. In one example, it was evident that a child needed more specialist help and this was swiftly sought. The manager was robust in advocating for a significant change to the child's care plan, having a thorough understanding of the situation and clear analysis of the potential harm to the child, her peers and staff of continuing as they were. A social worker wrote at the time, 'I really feel that the outcome for her could have been very different if it weren't for your interventions.' The team went to inordinate lengths to reassure the child concerned that they were not rejecting her, even if they could no longer safely care for her. This included staff visiting the child in their own time.

During the inspection, a member of staff did not return the medicine cabinet key to the key safe but left it on a desk. Although this was in the staff office, which children do not normally go into, this lapse allowed the possibility for a child to access medicines or to take the key.

Staff maintain a safe and nurturing environment that promotes stability and routine for the children. Their calm and measured approach reduces the children's anxieties. Effective distraction and de-escalation techniques reduce the staff's use of physical interventions with the children. When physical intervention does become necessary, it is followed by helpful conversations with the child, to assist them to understand what happened. Consequently, children learn to develop improved coping skills.

Staff competently use up-to-date risk assessments that address the known vulnerabilities for each child effectively. These documents describe particular indicators that children are at heightened risk, based on perceptive observations, and the actions that staff should take to reduce the risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has thoroughly addressed the recommendation made at the last inspection, such that the area of equality and diversity is now a significant strength. It has been the subject of considerable thought by the staff team and of work with the children. Staff have assessed the level of understanding that each child has of different elements of diversity and how best to address these. Staff have noticed a reduction in comments made by children about peers who appear different to them.

The home's ethos of developing children's life chances and maximising their range of choices is enthusiastically and determinedly shared by every member of staff. This is evidenced in a variety of ways, including progress reports and monthly summaries for each child. Adults in the home are quick to see when children are not making expected improvements and take action to address it. Sometimes this is done by introducing a new strategy or by enlisting the help of other professionals.

A record is made of children's suggestions for what they would like, together with what staff then did. This demonstrates that adults have taken up several proposals, and children are pleased that they have had worthwhile ideas that have made a tangible difference to their home.

The manager routinely helps the staff to learn from incidents and the experience of caring for the children. She monitors incidents, and from this monitoring identifies issues to take forward. Her placement summaries identify both strengths and areas for improvement for the team to consider. Less typically, two examples have occurred where staff did not receive a debrief following their involvement in a physical restraint. This was a missed opportunity for valuable reflection and learning. This omission was an oversight by the manager, who forgot to complete the debrief following the staff's return from holiday.

The manager is thorough in working with other professionals, advocating for children and seeking the best outcomes for them. This is exemplified by the 22 action points that she is monitoring that have arisen from meetings with a child's school. The manager is also keen to offer support and help to the education staff team, to share the home's understanding of what works for individual children and to use the relationships the

home's staff have built up to help children to engage more productively.

The home has a very stable staff group that has many years of experience. The manager encourages workers to develop specialist interests and additional knowledge through identifying relevant training and responsibilities. These are promoted through effective supervision and appraisals. Staff have confidence to use their initiative to research new ways of working, such as introducing tools to help children to recognise unhelpful patterns of thinking.

The team takes pride in its teamwork. As one member said, 'Under pressure we pull together and work to our strengths, supporting each other to support the children.' Parents and professionals alike highly commend the team's level of care and dedication for the children and their families. One mother remarked, 'I can't rate the manager and my child's key worker highly enough – God knows where we would be without them.' Staff forge such positive relationships by being able to speak knowledgeably about the children, and by communicating their care and understanding of each of them.

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: 1236387

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Registered provider address: Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Robert Page

Registered manager: Hannah Bolton

Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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