

1211772

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private provider.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on the 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 3 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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: 15 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2019	Full	Good
08/08/2017	Full	Good
08/12/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The registered manager and her deputy are not currently working in the home. The children have experienced a period of instability that has significantly affected their experiences of living in the home.

Children gave mixed feedback to the inspectors about what it is like to live in the home. Children do not always feel fully supported by staff, and inspectors found that some staff do not maintain professional boundaries when working with children. This means that some children are not able to build secure and trusting relationships with those responsible for their care.

Children benefit from individualised care plans and have made progress from their starting points. The in-house therapeutic team supports the staff team in meeting the changing needs of children. Staff are able to challenge other professionals when plans are not progressing and advocate in the best interests of children. This means that children's plans continue to ensure their ongoing development.

Children are engaging with their education plans and attending school. When children are not able to attend school, staff support them with their learning at home. Children have time assigned for their schoolwork and this also includes experiential learning, such as cooking and budgeting.

Children are supported to attend routine medical and dental appointments and engage with health professionals. Staff forge positive relationships with agencies, such as the local sexual health nurse. This helps to educate and support children in line with their needs and stages of development.

Children experience a wide range of activities. When COVID-19 restrictions have allowed, children have participated in football, fishing, horse riding and quad biking. This gives children a sense of achievement and allows them to explore their interests and talents.

Staff ensure that all children have memory books of their time at the home. This includes photos and accounts of holidays and activities they have taken part in. The books also detail the children's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, showing how staff helped them to remain physically and mentally healthy during a difficult time.

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

Children have individual risk assessments that inform staff of the risks children face and outline strategies to keep children safer. However, the staff do not have a good understanding of the children's social media or mobile phone use. Staff do not feel empowered to put in place measures to ensure that children are using their phones safely. This means that children can access inappropriate internet content without staff taking action to address this. As a result, children may be at risk of exploitation, online grooming and bullying.

Some children have raised complaints about the conduct of staff working in the home. An ongoing investigation into these allegations has exposed concerns that staff do not always maintain professional boundaries with children.

The staff have not maintained accurate records of those visiting the home. This means that some visitors may not be recorded, and the leaving times of visitors are not routinely captured. Consequently, managers and staff do not know who is on site or in the building at any one time, so children could be at risk of harm. However, it is positive that action was taken to address this while the inspection took place.

Children told inspectors that staff do not always take action when other children bully or tease them. There are procedures in place to address bullying, but these are not applied consistently. Children who make a complaint of bullying do not always receive an outcome or response from staff. This leaves children feeling ignored and undervalued.

There have been some improvements to the communal areas of the interior of the home. However, there are areas of the home which are unsafe due to outstanding repairs not being identified. Also, some areas of the home have not been cleaned or maintained to a good enough standard. While it is positive that some immediate action was taken to address this, there has been a long-standing lack of attention to, and oversight of, the condition of the home.

Staff have used effective strategies, including the use of physical intervention, to support children's behaviour in the home. This has led to a reduction in negative behaviour. Physical interventions are usually well recorded and demonstrate learning and reflection on incidents. This supports staff's learning and ensures the safety of the children. However, not all records were accessible due to the complexity of the online system. This means that inspectors were not able to satisfy themselves that all physical interventions were recorded in line with the regulations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager registered with Ofsted on 16 November 2020. The manager was not present during the inspection and the visit was assisted by the responsible individual.

Leaders and managers have not maintained an adequate oversight of the standards of care provided to children in the home. The manager has not led the staff team to deliver care in line with the ethos and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. This has resulted in shortfalls in the safeguarding of children and has had a negative impact on their experiences of living in the home.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the training of staff. There are systems in place which are designed to identify training gaps, but they are difficult to understand and do not show what training individual staff have undertaken. This meant that inspectors were not assured that all staff had received the necessary training to meet the individual needs of the children.

Not all staff are receiving supervision in line with policy. There are significant gaps in the recording of supervision, which means the quality of supervision could not be accurately assessed. There was no evidence of constructive challenge or a reflective learning culture within supervision. Leaders and managers therefore have limited oversight of the skills of their staff team, any practice-related issues or the impact of staff practice on the progress and experiences of children.

Managers work proactively with other agencies to build positive working relationships. Feedback from a range of professionals has been positive in respect of inter-agency communication and effective contribution to children's plans. One professional commented that the level of stability provided to a child was the best they had experienced while in care. This shows the potential for staff to create good outcomes for children.

When a child was discharged from the home without notice following a significant incident, leaders completed a review of the placement to ensure that lessons were learned. As a result, there is greater oversight from senior managers in reviewing the appropriateness of proposed placements.

The responsible individual is building stronger relationships with the children, who approach her for help and support. The responsible individual has used her recent increase in attendance to identify shortfalls and progress some improvements. Leaders and managers have been responsive to the feedback from the inspectors.

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, the 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>strive to gain each child’s respect and trust;</p> <p>understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(viii)(ix)(xi)(xii)(xiii))</p>	<p>31 January 2022</p>
<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—</p> <p>that staff</p>	<p>31 January 2022</p>

<p>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;</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)(d))</p>	
<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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(h))</p>	<p>31 January 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept that 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 that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 1211772

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Registered provider address: Priory Group, Fifth Floor, 80 Hammersmith Road,
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Responsible individual: Kerry Maynard

Registered manager: Rachel Ridley

Inspectors

Deb Duffy, Social Care Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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