

Ochil Tower School

School Care Accommodation Service

140 High Street
Auchterarder
PH3 1AD

Telephone: 01764 662416

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 28 March 2018

Service provided by:
Ochil Tower School

Service provider number:
SP2003002133

Care service number:
CS2003009785

About the service

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The conditions of registration are:

1. Belvidere will provide accommodation to a maximum of 7 pupils.
2. Elmtree will provide accommodation to a maximum of 4 pupils.
3. Priory will provide accommodation to a maximum of 5 pupils.
4. Rowan will provide accommodation to a maximum of 6 pupils.
5. Sycamore will provide accommodation to a maximum of 7 pupils.
6. Coach House will provide accommodation to a maximum of one pupil.
7. To comply with the current staffing schedules attached dated 12 November 2010, which must be displayed together with the certificate.

At the time of the inspection Elmtree and Coach House were not being used as residencies.

Ochil Tower School is an independent, non-denominational school for children and young people with additional support needs, aged between 5 and 18 years. It provides care and education for both residential and day pupils through the curative education approach which combines social care, education and therapy and is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, adapted by Karl Konig, the founder of the world-wide Camphill movement. The Care Inspectorate does not regulate the education service and solely focused on the quality of service provided to resident pupils.

The five houses and three school buildings are set in grounds located unobtrusively off the main street of Auchterarder, enabling the school to be part of the local community. The grounds offer facilities for gardening, rearing animals and play activities as part of the curriculum.

Day-to-day management is the responsibility of four joint coordinators who, with other experienced and permanent co-workers whose home is the school, form the core group members. Other co-workers, many from overseas, spend a year or more at Ochil Tower assisting with care and education. There is also a small number of paid care staff and ancillary workers.

At the time of the inspection the school was going through significant change in relation to the management and staffing arrangements. The four joint coordinators were in the process of handing over management responsibility to a chief executive officer, head of care and head of education. The new post holders will not be resident on campus.

What people told us

During the inspection we met a significant number of children and young people. We had discussion with some of the children and young people and observed all of them interacting with each other and staff. The children who could communicate with us indicated that they liked being at the school. The observed interactions with each other and with staff were very positive and we refer to this further within the body of the report.

We sent out Care Standard Questionnaires asking for the views of the people who use the service. We received 13 completed questionnaires; many of these were completed by parents. Comments included:

"Amazing school, staff and environment, Ochil Tower have changed my son's life for the better and given us all tremendous hope for (child) future"

"We cannot fault the staff involved in his care or teaching, we have seen a vast improvement in our son since he started"

"They are great with him and have brought him on fabulous"

"This is the best school I have ever been to. They always want the best for me and any other pupils"

"Ochil Tower have helped him become more independent and the progress he has made is beyond our wildest expectations"

"The staff are wonderful caring people.....communication is excellent"

"There is always a peaceful, calm feeling when you visit the school which is wonderful"

"School has been a godsend to me"

"They are committed to helping him achieve his best".

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We discussed their own improvement plans and quality assurance systems which identified their priorities for development and how they were monitoring of the quality of the provision within the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Within Ochil Tower School children and adults lived the community ethos and spirit which provided rhythms and routines to help young people feel safe and comfortable.

Children experienced a nurturing environment where they benefited from secure, trusting relationships and caring interactions. The staff were very attuned to young people's varying and often complex communication difficulties and were able to support and engage with them in communication.

We saw evidence of some staff helping young people to manage their relationships, giving them direction and support.

The extensive campus is well used by staff and young people as a therapeutic environment. Physical well being was promoted using access to the school's extensive grounds with lots of activities held outside in the fresh air.

Children enjoyed high quality, nutritious, attractively presented food. Meal times provided a social opportunity where people could be part of the larger group or more private situation dependent on their needs and wishes.

Staff we spoke with demonstrated an understanding of safeguarding children and knew what to do if they had any concerns. This needs to be further developed to ensure that everyone has an understanding of adult support and protection. **(see Recommendation 1)** The service could also build on knowledge and understanding of the hazards of social media and use of the internet, particularly in relation to child exploitation.

Systems to promote good health were in place and all children had clear registration arrangements with a GP. Systems for ordering and recording receipt and storage of medication were effective. Systems for administering medication appears to be effective, however audits needed to be more robust. **(see Requirement 1)**

All of the children had behaviour management plans and risk assessments. However we would like to see these written from a more proactive model, exploring options to proactively support rather than reactive. We stressed that all behaviour management plans and risk assessments should be made in conjunction with the team around the child including parents.

There were significant gaps in paper work to evidence success and progress and statutory obligations such as LAAC reviews. Whilst we recognised that this could be as a result of local authority issues we stressed that the school needed to be more proactive in making expectations clear, particularly at the start of placement. In addition, some of the plans and risk assessments were out of date or did not fully evidence success or changes to strategy. **(see Requirement 2)**

Whilst we saw some evidence of transition planning, this was not evidenced across the service. The evidence we saw was procedural in relation to transitions and did not capture the holistic day to day living and planning for development into adult hood. **(see Recommendation 2)**

At a recent visit to the school we made a requirement. We said that:

To protect and promote the rights, safety and well-being of all children and young people experiencing the service, the provider must ensure that physical restraint of children and young people is only ever carried out in exceptional circumstances and after all other practicable attempts have been made to reduce the risk of significant harm.

At this inspection we found that staff were now clear about what constituted restraint and permissible methods of restraint. We saw that a process was in place for recording incidents including physical interventions. When we looked at these we felt they could be more detailed in respect of identifying exceptional circumstances and what steps were taken to proactively support children. Managers need to audit and clarify why the restraint was needed, develop strategies to reduce restraint and measurement of progress for each individual young person. **(see Requirement 3)**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 3

1. In order to ensure the effective administration of medication, the provider must ensure that there are robust procedures in place to audit medication processes and records for audit of medication are available at inspection.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/110 Regulation 4(1)(a) - a regulation that a provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: By 1 July 2018

2. In order for staff to work effectively with children, the provider must ensure that care plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments are produced as a result of multiagency discussion including parents. The plans must be reviewed in line with current legislation.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/110 Regulation 4(1)(a) - a regulation that a provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: By 1 July 2018

3. The provider must ensure that robust procedures are in place to audit incidents. Records must identify why the restraint was needed, strategies to be used to reduce restraint and measurement of progress for each individual young person.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/110 Regulation 4(1)(a) - a regulation that a provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale: By 1 July 2018

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. We recommend that managers further develop the adult protection policy and procedure and ensure that it is fully understood by staff.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 3: Care and protection

2. Systematic plans for transition including timescales and identified tasks should identify how staff can plan for day to day experiences to support young people into adulthood.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 16: Leaving school

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Ochil Tower presents a welcoming environment, within beautiful surroundings where attempts to provide a family type environment appeared to be successful. In addition, the school uses the outdoors effectively to provide children with a holistic experience. The school is committed to eco sustainability where children are engaging with their environment, caring for animals, planting and growing and recycling.

We found that staff worked hard to provide a consistent and structured environment for the young people whilst recognising independence and individuality.

We saw that there had been investment in the houses. They were well presented and a pleasant environment for children. In some houses there were things that helped self esteem such as photographs and certificates of achievement. We would like to see more of this in all of the houses.

Great care and attention had gone into the building of the purpose built houses. This care and attention continues with further building work on a life skills centre for pupils.

Infection control and training for staff could be more structured, making it more effective. For example more robust cleaning programmes within houses and food hygiene training for all staff and volunteers. (**see Recommendation 1**)

The school had started to do risk assessments for health and safety in some areas, however we identified significant environmental risks were not being assessed or addressed. We said that managers need to evidence a more systematic and methodical approach to health and safety and a clearer overview of protective measures within each of the houses. (**see Requirement 1**)

The school had a sensible approach to security; however need to be continually vigilant in promoting security.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. In order to protect the safety of children and staff, the provider must ensure that robust procedures are in place to audit environmental risk. From this, they must produce an action plan to identify how they will minimise environmental risk and ensure that this is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect progress and /or effective maintenance.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/110 Regulation 4(1)(a) - a regulation that a provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users

Timescale: By 1 July 2018

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Managers should review cleaning processes within houses to ensure that all cleaning tasks are effectively completed. In addition all staff should undertake food hygiene training.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 5: Comfort, safety and security.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

At a recent visit to the school we made a requirement. We said that:

To promote the safety and well-being of all children and young people experiencing the service the provider must ensure that the service is at all times sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of the children and young people experiencing the service.

At this inspection we found that the service had sufficient staff available at all times to meet the needs of the children. We saw consistency in staffing the core staff teams. We stressed the need to maintain the consistency for young people despite the imminent fundamental changes within the senior team.

The staff were committed to a compassionate and nurturing approach with children. They spoke positively about the children and were kind and caring. Children looked for cuddles and staff engaged them in conversations or interactions.

All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council and had opportunities to pursue training to meet conditions of registration.

An annual training week provided staff with updates in core training such as child protection. Whilst we saw individual training records for staff, we could not see a clear training plan across the service. The service should establish a training plan across all staff groups including robust monitoring of gaps in learning need. (**see Recommendation 1**)

Staff we spoke with said they received regular, helpful and supportive supervision. We found that the regularity of supervision varied dependant on roles. However, when we looked at supervision records we found that the stated timescales were not always met. A process for recording supervision was in place however was not used effectively across all staff. We assessed supervision could be more reflective on the actions, practice and tasks and used more proactively to inform planning for the children. (**see Recommendation 2**)

We found that both permanent staff and volunteers had been subject to appropriate fitness checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. After reviewing the safer recruitment policy and procedure we suggested that more emphasis is placed on fit persons checks for permanent staff. We also said that there needs to be more evidence of consistency of skype interviews and robustness of checks for the right work in the UK for volunteers. (**see Recommendation 3**)

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. Managers should develop a cross service training plan based on monitoring of learning need and from this provide a training programme for all staff.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 7: Management and staffing

2. Managers should review the staff supervision policy and procedure to ensure that timescales for supervision are realistic, recording is consistent and provides evidence of reflective practice planning and professional development.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 7: Management and staffing

3. Managers should review the safe recruitment policy and procedure to reflect better emphasis on fitness checks for permanent staff, consistency in use of Skype interviewing for volunteers and evidence of right to work in the UK.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation - Standard 7: Management and staffing

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We recognised that the school management and leadership team were embarking on a period of significant transition. We stressed that this time was crucial in order to establish a robust strategic overview of all aspects of the service. We found gaps in recording of audit systems and whilst we appreciated that certain individuals held that knowledge and overview, we stressed the importance of a systematic methodical approach which was easily accessible to the appropriate individuals.

We found it difficult to navigate through the records held between paper and electronic systems and suggest a more streamlined approach to manage this. We would also like to see a more rigorous approach to the information used to inform incident analysis.

We have seen, over the years of regulation, that the management team had established a strong ethos within the school community. They recognised the critical importance of maximising the opportunities for children in order to promote potential and support better chances in life.

The management team led by example and were clearly committed to the children. In order to drive forward change there needs to be a more structured approach towards an established development plan with action points, timescales and effective measurement processes. This needs to include procedure, process and policy for

the vision of the forthcoming service for 18 -21 year olds, including identifying training needs prior to implementation.

Whilst we did not speak to any members of the board during the inspection we saw that there were processes in place for board overview of the service. We were, however, concerned that minutes and reports to the board did not accurately reflect the outcomes of a recent visit from the Care Inspectorate and a local authority. We were reassured about this during feedback and assured that the board would be fully updated of the outcomes of regulatory events. We were told that a member of the board is actively involved in the residencies and we will explore this further at future inspections.

The requirements and recommendations we have made within quality themes care and support, environment and staffing are all reflective of the improvements needing to be made within management and leadership.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the board of governors develops a schedule of planned visits to residencies where they can observe practice and identify areas for improvement.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation Services: Standard 7 - Management and staffing

This recommendation was made on 3 March 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We were told that a member of the board is actively involved in the residencies and we saw evidence of this in board minutes. We will consider this further at future inspections.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the school should review care plans to further reflect the GIRFEC guidance and make use of the SHANARRI indicators and wellbeing wheel to assess pupil's progress and develop strategies to help them achieve their potential.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation Services: Standard 6 - Support arrangements

This recommendation was made on 3 March 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We saw some reference to GIRFEC within care plans, however this could be further developed.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that all incidents are closely monitored and when necessary result in changes to risk assessments.

National Care Standards, School Care Accommodation Services: Standard 5 - Comfort, safety and security

This recommendation was made on 3 March 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Whilst we saw that incidents had resulted in changes to risk assessments, we have made a requirement in relation to auditing and recording of incidents.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
19 Jan 2017	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
4 Mar 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
4 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
5 Sep 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
18 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
30 May 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
20 Nov 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 5 - Very good
9 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings
		Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Nov 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
12 Jan 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
13 Oct 2010	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed
19 Mar 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed
2 Oct 2009	Announced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 6 - Excellent Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
4 Sep 2008		Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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