

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

# Annual Review and Inspection Report 1998

Registration and Inspection Unit  
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Perth  
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Establishment	Ochil Tower School
Owner(s)	The Management of Ochil Tower School
Manager	Annika Cheney, Marcus Cheney, David Riddell, Hilary Ruprecht and Ueli Ruprecht
Registered for	29
Category of Residents	Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 years of age with moderate or severe learning disabilities
Date of Inspection	23, 24 and 25 November 1998
Inspection Officer	Andy Sloan

Issued	01/02/1999
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## FORWARD

Perth and Kinross Council has a duty, under the Social Work Scotland Act 1968, to inspect residential child care establishments in order to safeguard the well-being and interests of the children and young people living in them. It must carry out such inspections in an even-handed, independent and open manner.

The Council's Standards and Guidance for the Registration and inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools provides the framework against which this inspection, and all others, is conducted. This guidance sets out the detailed requirements which the Council, as both registering and inspecting authority, expects both independent and Local Authority child care establishments in their area to comply with. Copies of this guidance are available, on request, from the Registration and inspection Unit.

The inspection which forms the basis of this report took place over three days and provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of Ochil Tower School.

The report follows the format of the Council's Standards and Guidance for the Registration and inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools, and as such is structured under nine "Aspect of Care":

### **A The Unit's Statement of Functions and Objectives**

### **B Children and Young People's Rights**

### **C Children and Young People's Safety**

### **D Children and Young People's Basic Care**

### **E Children and Young People's Care Planning and Development**

### **F Staffing**

### **G Premises**

### **H Administration and Health and Safety**

Following each Aspect of Care a number of "issues Requiring Action" or "Recommendations for Good Practice" may be detailed. Issues Requiring Action relate directly to the expected standards of the Council and must be addressed. Recommendations for Good Practice are proposals which the Council would strongly recommend the establishment undertakes in order to improve practice.

The Managers of the establishment are required to complete a written 'Implementation Timetable', with time-scales, detailing their response to the findings of this Report. If the timetable is not attached to this copy of the Report, it may be available from the Registration and inspection Unit of the Council.

## INTRODUCTION

The school is situated in the centre of Auchterarder, a small county town 17 miles south of Perth. The school offers day placements and both weekly and fortnightly boarding arrangements.

Ochil Tower is one of five Camphill Schools in Britain and Northern Ireland which provide curative education for children and young people. The school's policy statement describes this as:

"that particular combination of the three areas of house-life, classroom education and therapy inspired by the work of Rudolph Steiner (1861-1925) and Karl König (1902-1966)".

The principles of these men are the basis of the Camphill movements' aims and objectives which, the school states, are realised:

**a** "In a form of community life which recognises Christianity as an essential element in its formation and working. Expression is given to this in the celebration of the Christian Festivals, concern for the environment and mutual care.

**b** in developing shared living situations which recognise the needs of individuals. The staff/client relationship is replaced by mutual relationships based on sharing daily life in all its manifold aspects, including the preparation and sharing of meals, caring for the household and surroundings, creating social events, and so on.

**c** in operating financially so there is a separation between work and payment for work done. Wages and salaries are not paid and financial needs are met on an individual and co-operative basis".

The inspection of the school took place on 23, 24 and 25 November 1998 and this report is based on the following inspection techniques:

- An examination of the pre-inspection questionnaire and related documentation, completed by Ueli Ruprecht, Joint Co-ordinator.
- An inspection of the premises and grounds.
- A systematic research of the school's records and recording processes.
- Interviews with four joint Co-ordinators.
- Interviews with two Houseparents.
- Interviews with four co-workers.
- Discussion with five young people.
- Observation of care practices and worker/young people interactions.

The children's parents were asked to comment, via a postal questionnaire, on the quality of care provided as were all placing Social Workers, Educational Psychologists.

## A) ASPECT OF CARE: FUNCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives was first produced in February 1997 as part of the process towards registration under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The statement describes the school's functions under five categories:

## **1 Physical Development**

To instil a sense of body image, appropriate to each pupil.

To help the pupil master co-ordination of gross and fine motor skills. To encourage the pupils' creative expression through movement.

## **2 Personal Development**

To encourage self-awareness and foster self-esteem such that the pupil learns to accept positively his/her place in the world.

To teach life skills such that the pupil can be led towards independence. To instil a sense of purpose such that the pupil may begin to exercise initiative and motivation in life.

To extend the pupils' possibilities of self-expression.

## **3 Social Development**

To develop in the pupil an ethos of awareness, sensitivity and tolerance towards other people.

To guide each pupil to form and maintain warm and caring interpersonal relationships in a variety of contexts.

To lead the pupil to participate in co-operating in groups and to learn to act out of a sense of community.

To develop the pupils' communication skills.

## **4 Intellectual Development**

To teach a full understanding of the world and of himself so that the pupil can make sense of his environment and of his own place within that environment.

To develop the soul faculties of the pupil in the three areas of thinking, feeling and willing.

To teach the pupil practical skills.

## **5 Moral Development**

To promote a healthy questioning and consideration of all aspects of life such that the pupil learns to exercise his/her own personal judgement. To enrich the life experience of the pupil through the common daily practice of Christian ethos, and most particularly through the common celebration of the Christian festivals.

To instil a sense of personal responsibility for the wider community in the pupil i.e. to awaken the pupils' social consciousness and enable him/her to direct his / her actions accordingly.

The statement provides a comprehensive framework for care practice and clearly lays down an overall sense of direction for the school. Amended versions are available to parents and the school stated that the statement would be available to any placing agency on request.

## **Issues Requiring Action**

1 A number of required amendments to the school's Statement of Functions and Objectives were identified and are highlighted in the relevant sections of this report. These amendments must be actioned at the time of the school's next review of its statement.

## **B) ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS**

Throughout the days of the inspection co-workers and young people talked warmly of each other, with co-workers; appealing to share a sensitive approach to their interactions with pupils. They stated that the process of raising people's awareness of their rights was mainly carried out on an informal basis: and usually when individual issues were raised by the young people themselves. It was also stated that classroom discussions on the subject of young people's rights also took place.

Some of the short term co-workers interviewed, whilst demonstrating a positive ethos to their work, found it difficult to articulate the methods of practically upholding children's rights e.g. to privacy, confidentiality and access to records. In this respect the inspection Officer acknowledges the possible tensions between Traditionally viewed" social work rights and the practical living arrangements which: a Camphill philosophy entails, but co-workers must continue to be made aware of the care practice principles of privacy and confidentiality.

The school has facilities for receiving visitors which are welcoming and although the individual houses do not have space for young people to meet privately the large house, Belvidere, does possess a meeting room which can be used. Two of the houses enable young people to have appropriate access to private telephone facilities although the situation in Belvidere and the Priory appears less satisfactory.

The vast majority of young people share bedrooms and whilst this may inhibit some young people's desire for privacy the inspection Officer accepts the school's position that the sharing of bedrooms is both generally welcomed by the young people and forms part of the school's philosophy. It was brought to the Officer's attention, however, that in one particular case where two young people shared a bedroom, one displayed unhygienic behaviour which impinged on the rights to privacy and dignity of both young people.

Information on young people is held both in the main school building and in individual houses. Arrangements for the storage of children's files in the houses appear satisfactory and the young people's main files are stored in a filing cabinet in the school office. The filing cabinet itself is not lockable although the office is secure.

The school has recently produced a "children's handbook" which was developed with some of the pupils. It has been supplied to all parents of children attending and is a colourful document which is attractively presented. The handbook contains a variety of relevant information including details on co-worker responsibilities, accommodation, daily routines, arrangements for receiving visitors, how to complain and care and control measures. The young people interviewed were aware of the existence of the handbook and volunteered a variety of information from it, including "Childline" details and arrangements for pocket money.

The Inspection Officer positively acknowledges the young people's recognition and retention of the information contained in the handbook and believes it will be a positive source of future reference. It was also noted, however, that the recent introduction of the material just prior to the inspection meant young people were more likely to recollect it. Subsequent inspections will evaluate whether the young people continue to be supported in using the handbook as a reference point for their basic rights in the school.

The school possesses a simple and straightforward complaints procedure which is detailed in both the children's and parents' handbooks. The co-workers interviewed were aware of their responsibilities and confirmed that they would sensitively respond to any issues brought to them by young people. The young people themselves were clear that should they have any concerns they could raise them with either their parents or a co-worker.

## Issues Requiring Action

- 1 The Children's Handbook should detail the arrangements for, and rights of, young people to access files and records.
- 2 The Handbook may not be an appropriate venture for providing information to some young people at the school. An assessment of other possible methods should be made.
- 3 The practical application of young people's rights to privacy, confidentiality and access to records must be formally reinforced to co-workers.
- 4 An assessment of young people's access to private telephone facilities should be initiated and the necessary revisions to the school's telephone system carried out.
- 5 Discussions on young people's rights within the school should be formally recorded. This record should include details of the items discussed and young people's questions.
- 6 The young person who displays unhygienic behaviour and is referred to earlier in this aspect of care should be provided with their own room.
- 7 The complaints procedure must make it clear that all complaints are centrally recorded and signed by both the cc-worker receiving the complaint and the young person making the complaint.
- 8 The stage at which complaints are recorded and details of the recording format should be explicitly explained in both the children's and co-workers' handbooks.

## C) ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY

The young people interviewed perceived Ochil Tower School as a safe place to live and be educated. The high adult: child ratios allow a high degree of supervision and co-workers stated that the safety of the young people in their care was their paramount concern.

Relationships between co-workers and young people appeared trusting, with the young people comfortable in the company of those caring for them. Both young people and co-workers participate in the daily routines of residential life and this sense of partnership engenders a relaxed and stable atmosphere. On the days of the inspection the disparate needs of the residents were sensitively and promptly met, with cc-workers quickly reacting to situations where the needs of one young person might impinge on the needs of others.

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives contains a clear policy and written procedures for reporting and responding to abuse and the school has a named Child Protection Officer. The child protection procedures are also detailed in both the cc-workers' and parents' handbooks and appropriately detail the responsibilities of those involved. A number of minor amendments are, however, required to ensure complete clarity.

All workers knew the identity of the Child Protection Officer and they understood that should they suspect potential abuse that this should be reported immediately. The short term co-workers did not, however, appear to share an awareness of the range of abuse which young people may experience or have a knowledge of the signs which could indicate abuse was currently occurring. There was also a degree of confusion over who had responsibility for recording such issues and the recording format to be used.

The school has a comprehensive policy on care and control which emphasises both the school's positive approach to the promotion of a safe and caring environment and also the belief that all

young people's behaviour has meaning. The policy details a variety of measures which may be utilised by co-workers including: sending a child to his/her room for a limited calming down period; loss of privileges, earlier bedtime by up to one hour, the allocation of extra tasks related to the misdemeanour and increased supervision. Those sanctions expressly prohibited are also listed.

The co-workers stated that sanctions were hardly ever required and that separating a child from the group was the most commonly used "measure" if a young person's behaviour was inappropriate. The young people interviewed perceived co-workers as fair and were able to confirm that "separation" was the usual consequence of actions which might be disruptive.

The recording of care and control measures at the school is haphazard, with brief references made in daily contact sheets. The Inspection Officer could not confirm whether all measures were recorded and co-workers were unsure if this was required standard practice.

As previously stated, the school presents as possessing a relatively tranquil atmosphere and violent incidents appear rare. Each house possesses a small book to record such incidents and co-workers were aware of their recording responsibilities in this care practice area. The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives contains guidance on the principles of dealing with violent situations and this is also contained in the handbook provided to all co-workers.

The school has written guidance detailing the procedures to follow should young people go missing or abscond. The school stated that there have been no incidences of absconding in the past year and co-workers were aware of their responsibilities should such an occurrence arise.

### **Issues Requiring Action**

1 The school's child protection policy states that procedures "will be directed by documents issued by local agencies". The policy should make explicit that Perth & Kinross Social Work Services is responsible for ensuring that enquiries are made into allegations or suspicions of abuse. If the allegations refer to abuse at the child's home or home area this is a matter for the placing authority.

2 Short term co-workers are provided with limited training in child protection as part of their foundation course. This is currently carried out at the end of September and lasts approximately 1% hours. Training in the care practice areas of both care and control and violence and aggression are equally limited.

On an annual basis the majority of adult carers at the school are short term co-workers and with this high proportion, training in the above three areas must be increased. The school must develop specific training packages with, it is recommended, external trainers. This must ensure that all co-workers are offered an appropriate level of training with which they can then competently undertake the tasks they may be faced with.

3 The school must ensure that a clear record of all care and control measures used is maintained. This must include the date, names of co-workers and young people involved and the reasons or consequences of this disciplinary measure.

4 The Inspection Officer noted that two incidents in one house were not recorded. To ensure the accountability and safety of both staff and young people all incidents must be fully detailed in the appropriate recording format.

Some incident recordings did not comply with the requirements of the Registering Authority. All incident records must contain:

- i The name and age of the young person.
- ii The date and time of the incident.

- iii The reason for the use of the control measure with a full account of events leading up to the incident and other measures attempted prior to physical control.
- iv An accurate description of the control measure.
- v Details of any injury sustained and by whom.
- vi Any first aid or medical treatment necessary.
- vii The names of staff involved and whether they were participant or witness and their signatures.
- viii The names of the children and young people witnessing the incident.

5 The school policy statement on violence and physical restraint states that:

"Physical restraint may be used as a last resort to prevent harm or injury to any individual (including the perpetrator) or serious damage to property". It also adds, however, that "physical force may also be used if it is necessary for a child to leave a group situation and is unwilling to do so, for example, if a major disturbance is being created during a mealtime".

The circumstances in which physical restraint may be used in this context require to be clarified.

### **Recommendation for Good Practice**

1 The books used by the school to record violent incidents are very small. To encourage and facilitate comprehensive recording it is recommended that A4 size books are utilised.

## **D) ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BASIC CARE**

The routines and living practices of daily life are viewed by the school as an integral part of the therapeutic experience which is offered. The school adheres to what it terms the "rhythm" of daily life, which means that transitions between different activities during the day are differentiated by brief periods of calm and quiet. The co-workers stated that activities were normally undertaken in a calm and methodical way, with co-workers and young people sharing experiences equally. This sharing of experiences also includes such areas as assisting with household tasks and other domestic chores.

This stated ethos and culture was reflected in the experiences of the Inspection Officer who evidenced both the "natural flow" of young people's daily living experiences and the consequent calmness and relative serenity of potentially challenging social situations. This does not mean, however, that the school was either subdued or oppressive. There were certainly episodes of uninhibited behaviour and periods of "chattering" and extreme noisiness but the overriding atmosphere of the school was of mutually agreed orderliness.

The school's daily routines centre on the individual houses, with young people rising at approximately 7.30 am with breakfast at 8.00 am. The main school lesson begins at 9.00 am and there is a mid morning break between 10.40 am and 11.15 am. The young people then return to their classrooms and lunch, at 12.50 p.m., is served in the individual houses. Following lunch all the young people enjoy a "rest hour", where they may read or sleep, and afternoon classes then run from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. After school the young people can take part in a range of activities and "supper" is held at approximately 5.45 p.m. Bedtimes for the young people depend on their age and vary between 8.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m.

The young people appeared well clothed although responsibility for purchasing and maintaining clothes remains with parents. The school provides pocket money on a weekly basis, with the

amount dependent on age. These transactions are recorded although minor amendments to this practice are required.

All young people are supplied with toothbrushes and toiletries and Houseparents confirmed that choices of toiletries were available to young people. The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives states that personal care and support is given "with an awareness of the young people's need for privacy and dignity" and cc-workers believed that this was fulfilled whenever intimate care was required.

The young people's leisure time is filled with both outdoor and indoor activities and walking appeared a firm favourite with both young people and co-workers alike. The school possesses a range of outdoor play equipment and has a playground with swings, sandpits and a seesaw. The Inspection Officer also evidenced a range of books, toys and games in each house and community singing also takes place.

Televisions are not used as the school believes that the young people benefit more from other recreational facilities. Trips to the local shops, library and Perth Swimming Pool are undertaken on a regular basis and a number of young people have recently been supported in pursuing the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. This is to be commended.

The school has a minibus, camper van and car, all of which appeared in good condition.

Mealtimes at the school are relaxed occasions beginning with a brief period of quiet and a blessing. The main meal of the day is at lunchtime and the menu supplied to the Inspection Officer evidenced a varied and well balanced diet was offered. This main meal, although served in the individual houses, is cooked in Belvidere's main kitchen. "Supper time" is the responsibility of individual Houseparents in each home.

The young people confirmed they enjoyed the food that was offered and on the days of the inspection the meals were tasty, nutritious and served in satisfactory quantities.

The school employs a part time cook and as far as possible the school uses organically grown fruit and vegetables from their own gardens. Bulk purchases are also made from cash and carry stores and wholefood shops.

Co-workers stated that although young people would be allowed snacks between meals, due to the needs of the young people cared for prior permission would usually be required.

### **Issues Requiring Action**

1 A health and safety assessment should be carried out on the school's "high wire slide" and arrangements for its use formalised.

## **E) ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

The young people appeared to the Inspection Officer to be in good health and cc-workers stated they dealt promptly with any health concerns or problems. Each young person's file detailed relevant health or medication issues and a joint cc-ordinator at the school is responsible for co-ordinating and supervising medical and health practices.

The majority of young people are registered with the local GP and the school has a qualified Art Therapist "on site". An Occupational Therapist visits twice weekly and speech therapy is planned to be made available in the coming year. Dental screening and treatment for young people is made available through a local health centre in Perth.

As the school follows the principles of Rudolf Steiner homeopathic medicine is offered through the school's own doctor who visits approximately once a month. This arrangement was put into place in consultation and agreement with the local GP. The school stated that parents must also provide written consent for each homeopathic consultation and prescription. A sample of files examined by the Inspection officer evidenced that this occurred.

The School is currently ensuring that all parents have signed emergency medical treatment consent forms although this has not, as yet, been completed.

The administration of medication is recorded through separate pro forma's for prescribed medicines, household remedies and homeopathic medication. Care practice appears satisfactory although the medicine cabinet in one house requires to be transferred to a more secure location. The recent publication of the Crown report, which dealt with the supply of household remedies within residential establishments, will also necessitate changes to the school's current medication practices.

The school stated that health education was usually carried out on an informal "one to one" basis and the Inspection Officer noted that a paper on sex education was to be presented to the Core group by a joint co-ordinator.

As a Rudolf Steiner school Ochil Tower basis it's education on the Steiner Curriculum, although the school's Statement of Functions And Objectives states that all subjects contained within the national 5 to 14 curriculum are covered. Classes are made up of between 4 and 10 pupils and each class has one class teacher and a number of class assistants. The young people interviewed confirmed they enjoyed their time in the classroom setting.

### **Issues Requiring Action**

1 The Inspection Officer acknowledges the efforts of the school to secure the receipt of completed medical emergency consents from parents. The remaining forms should be supplied to the school as a matter of urgency.

2 The planned paper on sex education should be presented to the Core group and a framework for the education of young people in this area be developed and operationalised.

3 The medication cabinet in Belvidere should be moved as its location may allow young people to access it without being noticed. The security of all medicine cabinets in the school should also be reassessed to ensure an appropriate degree of security.

4 The requirements of the Crown report should be operationalised by the school as a matter of urgency. A copy of the report and its main requirements is included with this report.

### **Recommendation For Good Practice**

1 It is recommended that the school initiates a plan to replace its current medication storage cupboards with purpose designed versions.

## **F) ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The majority of children resident at the school are placed by Education Authorities although this is usually due to specific preferences by parents that their child is educated at a Camphill community.

The Schools admissions procedure acknowledges that admission to the school can be an anxious time for both parents and pupils. The procedure therefore incorporates a pre-placement visit and a joint co-ordinator has responsibility for collating relevant reports and co-ordinating the admission with the placing agency.

The decision on whether a placement is offered is made by the admissions co-ordinator in conjunction with relevant teachers and house parents. The school's statement of Functions And Objectives states that the first three months are viewed as "a trial and assessment period" and that an initial education and care plan will be sent to both parents and the placing authority at this stage.

The young people interviewed confirmed that their admission to the school had been a positive event and stated that the workers had been both friendly and welcoming on their arrival. Co-workers appeared to understand the possible difficulties and worries that new people might face and they were also aware of the feelings of other young people when new residents entered the school.

The school's present care planning process was developed as part of its registration under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and whilst the sample of files examined by the Inspection Officer evidenced that each child possessed a formal plan, the school had obviously found the formulation and review of plans a challenging exercise. The care planning format itself is impressive, although the assessment of young people's needs and suggested "work programmes" require to be refined. Many of the plans for the young people highlighted "global" needs and therefore the related objectives tended to appear general and rather vague. It was also evident that despite the schools aim to review and update the care plans on a bi-annual basis that this had not occurred in all cases.

The Inspection Officer acknowledges that the school was aware of these issues and also recognised that the associated review process also required to be improved. There was little sign that the review and care planning processes were practically integrated and information to parents did not, at times, appear to accurately reflect the young person's needs.

The co-workers stated that the young people were involved in the care planning and review process, where appropriate, and review records evidenced that young people did attend these meetings. The young people interviewed confirmed that they attended reviews but were less sure of their direct involvement within the care planning process.

The school states that it aims to foster and maintain good and regular contact with parents and that parents are routinely kept informed of any illness, development or "significant happening". They are formally invited to reviews and parents meetings are also held once a term. Whilst there appeared to be a genuine commitment from the school to communicate with parents this was one area that parents, via their feedback, believed could be improved. The Inspection Officer found little evidence in the young people's contact sheets of pro-active contact with parents, although co-workers were adamant that this occurred. This issue must be placed in the context, however, of the almost unanimous view by parents that the care their child received at the school ranged from good to excellent.

### **Issues Requiring Action**

1 As previously stated, the Inspection Officer acknowledges that large changes were required in the schools previous care practice in order to develop the current care planning and review process. It is also noted that significant improvements have been made and that both the care planning and review processes are at early stages of their development. It is expected by the Officer however, that:

i All young peoples care plans are reviewed and updated six monthly.

ii The young people's recorded needs, the tasks required to meet these needs and the related timescales are accurate, detailed and realistic.

iii That the review and care planning processes are effectively integrated and accurately reflect the individual needs of the young people concerned, the issues which require to be actioned and how it is planned that these will be addressed.

iv That reviews occur on a six monthly basis.

Subsequent inspections will examine, in detail, whether the school care planning and review processes meets these expectations.

2 Those workers responsible for co-ordinating and completing care plans require to develop their knowledge and skills with regard to this care practice area.

### **Recommendations For Good Practice**

1 Details of the schools admissions procedure should be incorporated into the parents handbook for information.

2 Whilst the Inspection Officer believes the school is genuinely committed to communication with parents it does appear to be of variable quality. Awareness should be raised with all co-workers about the importance of pro actively communicating with parents, not simply when something happens to their child. This should always be recorded.

3 Co-workers may also benefit from a greater understanding of "focused communication" with parents in order that they pass on relevant and informative information rather than generalities. There requires to be an awareness of the difference between "chatting" to parents and communicating with them about their child, his or her needs, and the issues currently relevant to them.

## **G) ASPECT OF CARE: STAFFING**

Ochil Tower School operates as a company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish charity with its own Management Council. The property at Ochil Tower is, however, managed by Camphill Central Scotland Trust, which also owns Camphill Blair Drummond near Stirling (a training place for young adults with special needs) and Corbenic Camphill Community near Dunkeld (a village community for adults with special needs).

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives states that the Management Council has legal responsibility for the management of Ochil Tower and two of the schools "joint co-ordinators" are currently resident council members. Both of these workers believed the school was appropriately supported by the Council and stated that they enjoyed a good working relationship with council members. The Management Council meets approximately every two months and meetings are formally minuted.

The management structure of the school may be termed "group management", that means that no one individual is "in charge" rather management decisions are shared by a group of individuals. This process of "collective decision making" is carried out by a number of "joint co-ordinators", who are long term co-workers and members of the schools "Core group". The schools statement of Functions and Objectives states that the responsibility for the spiritual, cultural, social and economic well being of the school rests with this Core group. Responsibility for the day to day management, as an integral yet specific aspect of life at the school, is carried out by the "joint co-ordinators".

At the current time there are thirteen long term co-workers at the school, twelve are Core group members and five are joint co-ordinators. The school states that the appointment of a joint co-ordinator and membership of the Core group is not dependent on age or length of stay but a willingness and ability to take both specific and overall management responsibility for the school. All the joint co-ordinators at the school have relevant childcare experience and are Social Work qualified or possess either a Certificate in curative education or a Rudolph Steiner Teaching Certificate, This will be an ongoing condition of the schools registration that all joint co-ordinators hold a relevant qualification.

The "Co-ordinators", in addition to having joint management responsibility for the running of the school also have specific responsibilities for certain care practice areas. These are : medical, therapy and house parents; teachers, training and professional -development; admissions, reviews, child protection and health and safety and finally correspondence and finance.

Each of the co-ordinators has between one and three other co-workers assigned to support them in their duties and there are also two associated "working groups" for house parents and teachers. These groups monitor the work of these specific care practice areas and are chaired by the relevant joint co-ordinator. They meet fortnightly and meetings are minuted.

The management structure is complex but the long term co-workers involved stated that it operated efficiently and effectively. The Core group meets twice a month and meetings have an agenda and are minuted. Care group members believed the meetings were constructive and positive occasion's which appropriately focused on the management arrangements and functions of the school. There is no individual supervision structure for joint co-ordinators although it was stated that the school's Management Council were currently examining this issue.

Four of the Core group members are also " house parents" who have responsibility for one of each of the four houses at the school.

Each year the longer term co-workers are joined by approximately eleven or twelve "short term co-workers". These are young people, usually aged between eighteen and twenty five, who normally spend a year at the school helping within both the residential setting, as "group parents", or within the classroom as class assistants. Two of these workers are currently in their second year at the school, attending the Course for Curative Education in Aberdeen.

Each co-worker, in their role as a "Group Parent", is given responsibility for between one and three young people, depending on the young person's needs. The co-worker is then "attached" to a house at the school for the duration of their stay.

The vast majority of these co-workers come from the continent and are taking a "year out" between either school and higher education or before they commence full time employment in their native country. They undertake a week long induction programme prior to the young people arriving at the school and they are also supplied with a "co-workers handbook" which details the schools policies in such areas as fire procedures, practical living arrangements, care and control and child protection. This co-worker information is a valuable reference tool for co-workers and the school is to be commended for its production. The content of the introductory week, however, contains only approximately one hour forty five minutes dedicated to "child care" issues.

Following the co-workers induction period an individual tutor is assigned to each co-worker and a review is carried out at the end of the first term to assess the individuals suitability for the work at the school. Those present at the review include the co-worker, class teacher, house parent and individual tutor. The meeting is minuted and copies are retained in the co-workers file. Each of the files examined by the Inspection Officer contained a copy of this review and the co-workers themselves said they were constructive but comprehensive meetings which also allowed them to raise any issues they wished.

Following this review "appraisal tribunals" then take place three times a year (at Christmas, Easter and Summer terms). These meetings are also minuted and comprise of the same individuals that attended the initial review. This process of review and assessment of new co-workers is to be commended and is vital to the monitoring of care practice due to the large influx of inexperienced workers which come to the school each year.

Ongoing supervision and support of co-workers takes place through "House Meetings", which occur approximately once every two weeks and also individual meetings between house parents and co-workers. House meetings appeared to occur consistently throughout the school and are recorded, although the occurrence and standard of individual supervision sessions with co-workers appeared to be more variable.

The co-workers themselves stated that core group members/ house parents were always accessible and believed that their working relationships with the longer term co-workers were positive and supportive.

There is no "shift system" in operation at the school as the ethos is one of a "shared living situation". This means that for all workers their "day" lasts from the time children rise in the morning until they go to sleep in the evening. This appears to the Inspection Officer to be an exhausting schedule and co-workers are only entitled to three days off every two weeks. Some of the short term co-workers acknowledged that their workload was "tiring" but they all appeared to positively accept their responsibilities and believed that the concept of them "working" was an inaccurate definition of their living arrangements. They also stated that it was possible to create time for themselves during the day if the young people were either at school or during "rest hour".

As previously stated most co-workers "live" in the houses although some reside in a flat owned by the school in the town centre and some in a caravan in the school grounds. All the short term co-workers stated that they were content with their living and sleeping arrangements. Waken night cover at the school is not provided.

The school states that all co-workers take part in a one year "Foundation Course in Curative Education and Social Therapy". The course is run by Core group members and co-workers attend four sessions every two weeks with each session lasting approximately one hour. This is a commendable commitment but, as with the "induction week" the course framework requires to be revised to ensure due priority is given to the safeguarding care practices of child protection, care and control, violence and physical restraint and recording. The Inspection Officer noted, for example, that there was only one session on "Meeting challenging behaviour" and one on Child Protection, both of which were scheduled for September.

Core group members have also undertaken a variety of training in the past year with two currently undertaking the Camphill course in Curative Education at Northern College, Aberdeen.

The school does not advertise as part of its recruitment process for short term co-workers as most potential co-workers enquire personally as to the availability of vacancies. The school's statement of Functions and Objectives details the vetting procedure although, following an inspection of co-worker records, this requires to be revised to ensure the guidance is comprehensive and transparent. It was noted with very serious concern that the school was not in receipt of an SCRO check for a co-worker currently working at the school.

## **Issues Requiring Action**

1 Joint co-ordinators and other Core group members, as those individuals delegated to managing the many facets of the schools operation, have a range of complex and heavy responsibilities. As such it is essential they are appropriately supervised. An individual supervision structure must therefore be developed to ensure these longer term co-workers are both kept accountable and supported in their work.

2 The induction week for new co-workers is a positive practice which aids consistency and team building. The Inspection Officer is also aware of its purpose as an introduction to Anthroposophical curative work. There requires, however, to be a far greater emphasis on direct childcare practice issues such as care and control, child protection, violence and physical restraint and recording. The schools introductory week should therefore be revised to ensure that these areas are given an appropriate priority and prominence.

3 For the school to have a new intake of inexperienced workers each year means additional safeguards require to be in place to ensure these individuals are supported, monitored and made accountable for their practice. The tutorial system is an important aspect of this but regular and ongoing supervision on a house basis is also essential. The school must ensure that an individual supervision structure operates at the school which everyone is aware of and which provides regular i.e. once a month minuted meetings between house parents and co-worker.

4 The foundation training course requires to ensure that co-workers are appropriately trained in the areas of :

i Care and Control.

ii Violence and Physical restraint.

iii Recording.

iv Child Protection.

The current time allocated in the course is inadequate and a greater emphasis on these subjects is required. They should also be presented at the beginning of the course. The Inspection officer would also strongly recommend that external training experts are used to present these courses rather than purely being carried out "in house".

5 The school's recruitment procedure should be revised to ensure:

i That cc-workers only start work at the school following receipt of a satisfactory police check. No worker must ever be in contact with young people prior to this being received.

ii That the quality of references received on behalf of the co-workers are satisfactory. Several references evidenced by Inspection Officer were from friends of co-workers and this is inappropriate.

### **Recommendations For Good practice**

1 The responsibilities of house parents should be detailed more comprehensively in the school statement of Functions and Objectives.

2 The recording format for house meetings developed by "the priory" should be adopted throughout the school.

3 Core group members should attend the extended training sessions in the care practice areas detailed in Issues Requiring Action.

## **H ASPECT OF CARE: PREMISES**

Despite the schools "town centre" location the school is tucked away from the main street within seven acres of its own park land.

The school consists of a number of buildings, of which the largest is "Belvidere" a Victorian mansion house which accommodates eleven young people. A converted coach house accommodates a further seven pupils and two more modern properties, the "Priory" and "Elmtree" accommodate six and four young people respectively. There is also a large hall with a stage, separate classrooms, co-worker accommodation and a range of utility buildings. As previously stated the school also has its own flat in Auchterarder which is used for co-worker accommodation.

The school's residential accommodation is in a satisfactory state of repair and in general terms furniture and fittings, which are of a basic design, are in adequate condition. The standard of decor and furnishing varies markedly between Belvidere and newer properties and it was noted that a sink in one young person's bedroom in the large house was badly cracked.

All the school's property was clean and warm on the days of the inspection and the young people confirmed that this standard was consistently maintained. At the current time a number of bedrooms accommodate three young people and it is a condition of the school's registration that this ceases by 2001. It is also the case that there is no spare bedroom provision in which a young person could sleep away from disturbance by others. The school has, however, detailed plans for the construction of a new house to meet these requirements.

Young people may request a lockable cabinet to keep valuable belongings secure in their bedroom, although this option has only been taken up by a small number of the current resident group.

### **Issues Requiring Action**

1 The broken en-suite sink on the second floor of Belvidere must be replaced immediately.

### **Recommendation for Good Practice**

1 A plan for the redecoration of bedrooms in Belvidere should be developed.

## **I) ASPECT OF CARE : ADMINISTRATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY**

It should be noted that certain of the school's procedures and recording processes are detailed in earlier parts of the report and reference should be made to these sections. In general terms, however, the standard recording at the school is still poor and does not ensure the accountability and safety of co-workers and safety of young people. With the exception of the 'Coach House' major improvements in recording are required in almost all areas. The Inspection officer does not wish to labour the point but basic recording principles such as dating and signing entries, comprehensive daily recordings and legibility were not being fully met. It is acknowledged, however, that the content of young people's case records was framed sensitively and respectfully.

The school has recently developed a new set of fire safety recording procedures and these will be more fully evaluated at the school's next Annual Review. The school's fire alarm system and fire fighting equipment are annually inspected although Tayside Fire Brigade's Fire Safety inspection report detailed a number of requirements which were passed to the school for action.

Cc-workers appeared aware of their basic health and safety responsibilities although the Inspection Officer noted that in Belvidere a large canister of bleach and other cleaning materials were located where they could be easily accessed by young people. Each house operates an accident book and co-workers were aware of their existence.

Co-workers were provided with First Aid training by St Johns Ambulance as part of their induction week and guidance and First Aid safety and hygiene are contained in the co-workers handbook. Each house also possesses a first aid kit.

### Issues Requiring Action

1 An audit of recording procedures requires to be carried out to ensure the quality of recording is to an acceptable standard. The school possesses the appropriate formats but the content contained therein must be improved as a matter of priority.

2 A written health and safety assessment should be carried out by each house to ensure cleansing materials are securely stored.

## PLAN OF ACTION

The report highlights a number of Issues Requiring Action and Recommendations for Good Practice. There is a requirement that a plan of action be produced, detailing what will be done in relation to these findings. Establishments are also reminded, however, of the obligation to comply with all the standards as detailed in the Standards and Guidance for the Registration and Inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools.

Both the plan of action, and this report are publicly available and further copies may be supplied on request. Young people and parents/guardians will be made particularly welcome when approaching the Registration and Inspection Unit to either obtain a copy or to have any aspect of the report discussed with them.

The officer would like to take this opportunity to thank the young people of Ochil Tower School for their welcome, openness and contributions during this inspection. The full co-operation of co-workers and joint-co-ordinators is also acknowledged.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Plan of Action / Timescale
<p><b>A Aspect of Care: Functions and Objectives</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. A number of required amendments to the school's Statement of Functions and Objectives were identified and are highlighted in the relevant sections of this report. These amendments must be actioned at the time of the school's next review of its statement.</p>	<p>Amend Statement of Functions and Objectives Autumn 1999</p>
<p><b>B Aspect of Care: Children And Young People's Rights</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. The Children's Handbook should detail the arrangements for, and rights of, young people to access files and records.</p>	<p>Up-dating Children's handbook to include a section on Access to Records May 1999</p>

**IMPLEMENTATION TIMETALBE**

<b>Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice</b>	<b>Plan of Action / Timescale</b>
<p>2. The Handbook may not be an appropriate venture for providing information to some young people at the school. An assessment of other possible methods should be made.</p> <p>3. The practical application of young people's rights to privacy, confidentiality and access to records must be formally reinforced to co-workers.</p> <p>4. An assessment of young people's access to private telephone facilities should be initiated and the necessary revisions to the school's telephone system carried out.</p> <p>5. Discussions on young people's rights within the school should be formally recorded. This record should include details of the items discussed and young people's questions.</p> <p>6. The young person who displays unhygienic behaviour and is referred to earlier in this aspect of care should be provided with their own room.</p> <p>7. The complaints procedure must make it clear that all complaints are centrally recorded and signed by both the co-worker receiving the complaint and the young person making the complaint.</p>	<p>Assess process of how young people with severe communication problems are provided with information and facilitated to make use of it. May 1999</p> <p>To be included in the Training Course Sessions Ongoing</p> <p>Building Alterations to be made in Belvidere and the Priory Summer 1999</p> <p>Include procedure in Statement of Functions and Objectives, ongoing implementation Summer 1999</p> <p>An assessment of the particular situation is to be carried out (frequency, nature and views of the young people sharing) and action to be taken on the findings. April 1999</p> <p>Forms and Statement of Functions and Objectives to be updated Summer 1999</p>
<p>8. The stage at which complaints are recorded and details of the recording format should be explicitly explained in both the children's and co-workers' handbooks.</p>	<p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives Summer 1999</p>
<p><b>C Aspect of Care: Children and Young People's Safety</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. The school's child protection policy states that procedures "will be directed by documents issued by local agencies". The policy should make explicit that Perth &amp; Kinross Social Work Services is responsible for ensuring that enquiries are made into allegations or suspicions of abuse. If the allegations refer to abuse at the child's home or home area this is a matter for the placing authority.</p>	<p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives Summer 1999</p>

**IMPLEMENTATION TIMETALBE**

<b>Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice</b>	<b>Plan of Action / Timescale</b>
<p>2. Short term co-workers are provided with limited training in child protection as part of their foundation course. This is currently carried out at the end of September and lasts approximately 1 1/2 hours. Training in the care practice areas of both care and control and violence and aggression are equally limited.</p> <p>On an annual basis the majority of adult carers at the school are short term co-workers and with this high proportion, training in the above three areas must be increased. The school must develop specific training packages with, it is recommended, external trainers. This must ensure that all co-workers are offered an appropriate level of training with which they can then competently undertake the tasks they may be faced with.</p> <p>3. The school must ensure that a clear record of all care and control measures used is maintained. This must include the date, names of co-workers and young people involved and the reasons or consequences of this disciplinary measure.</p> <p>4. The Inspection Officer noted that two incidents in one house were not recorded. To ensure the accountability and safety of both staff and young people all incidents must be fully detailed in the appropriate recording format.</p> <p>Some incident recordings did not comply with the requirements of the Registering Authority. All incident records must contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The name and age of the young person.</li> <li>ii) The date and time of the incident.</li> <li>iii) The reason for the use of the control measure with a full account of events leading up to the incident and other measures attempted prior to physical control.</li> <li>iv) An accurate description of the control measure.</li> <li>v) Details of any injury sustained and by whom.</li> <li>vi) Any first aid or medical treatment necessary.</li> <li>vii) The names of staff involved and whether they were participant or witness and their signatures.</li> <li>viii) The names of the children and young people witnessing the incident.</li> </ul>	<p>Up-dating of Training Procedures Summer 1999</p> <p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives and Format of Recording Summer 1999</p> <p>Up-date Recording Forms and Statement of Functions and Objectives</p>
<p>5. The school policy statement on violence and physical restraint states that:</p> <p>"Physical restraint may be used as a last resort to prevent harm or injury to any individual (including the perpetrator) or serious damage to property". It also adds, however, that "physical force may also be used if it is necessary for a child to leave a group situation and is unwilling to do so, for example, if a major disturbance is being created during a mealtime".</p> <p>The circumstances in which physical restraint may be used in this context require to be clarified.</p>	<p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives Summer 1999</p>

**IMPLEMENTATION TIMETALBE**

<b>Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice</b>	<b>Plan of Action / Timescale</b>
<p><b>Recommendation for Good Practice</b></p> <p>1. The books used by the school to record violent incidents are very small. To encourage and facilitate comprehensive recording it is recommended that A4 size books are utilised.</p> <p><b>D Aspect of Care: Children and Young People's Basic Care</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. A health and safety assessment should be carried out on the school's 'high wire slide' and arrangements for its use formalised.</p> <p><b>E Aspect of Care: Children and Young People's Education and Health</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. The Inspection Officer acknowledges the efforts of the school to secure the receipt of completed medical emergency consents from parents. The remaining forms should be supplied to the school as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>2. The planned paper on sex education should be presented to the Core group and a framework for the education of young people in this area be developed and operationalised.</p> <p>3. The medication cabinet in Belvidere should be moved as its location may allow young people to access it without being noticed. The security of all medicine cabinets in the school should also be reassessed to ensure an appropriate degree of security.</p> <p>4. The requirements of the Crown report should be operationalised by the school as a matter of urgency. A copy of the report and its main requirements is included with this report.</p> <p><b>Recommendation For Good Practice</b></p> <p>1. It is recommended that the school initiates a plan to replace its current medication storage cupboards with purpose designed versions.</p>	<p>Up-date format of Recording Summer 1999</p> <p>Safety Review to be carried out and guide lines established May 1999</p> <p>Presently followed up with parents May 1999</p> <p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives Summer 1999</p> <p>All medicine storage to be assessed and cabinets replaced if necessary Summer 1999</p> <p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives Summer 1999</p> <p>All medicine storage to be assessed and cabinets replaced if necessary</p>



**IMPLEMENTATION TIMETALBE**

<b>Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice</b>	<b>Plan of Action / Timescale</b>
<p>2. The induction week for new co-workers is a positive practice which aids consistency and team building. The Inspection Officer is also aware of its purpose as an introduction to anthroposophical curative work. There requires, however, to be a far greater emphasis on direct childcare practice issues such as care and control, child protection, violence and physical restraint and recording. The schools introductory week should therefore be revised to ensure that these areas are given an appropriate priority and prominence.</p>	<p>Training, Supervision and Support to be up-dated Summer 1999</p>
<p>3. For the school to have a new intake of inexperienced workers each year means additional safeguards require to be in place to ensure these individuals are supported, monitored and made accountable for their practice. The tutorial system is an important aspect of this but regular and ongoing supervision on a house basis is also essential. The school must ensure that an individual supervision structure operates at the school which everyone is aware of and which provides regular i.e. once a month minuted meetings between house parents and co-worker.</p>	<p>Training, Supervision and Support to be up-dated Summer 1999</p>
<p>4. The foundation training course requires to ensure that co-workers are appropriately trained in the areas of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Care and Control.</li> <li>ii) Violence and Physical restraint.</li> <li>iii) Recording.</li> <li>iv) Child Protection.</li> </ul> <p>The current time allocated in the course is inadequate and a greater emphasis on these subjects is required. They should also be presented at the beginning of the course. The Inspection officer would also strongly recommend that external training experts are used to present these courses rather than purely being carried out "in house".</p>	<p>Training, Supervision and Support to be up-dated Autumn 1999</p>
<p>5. The school's recruitment procedure should be revised to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) That co-workers only start work at the school following receipt of a satisfactory police check. No worker must ever be in contact with young people prior to this being received.</li> <li>ii) That the quality of references received on behalf of the co-workers are satisfactory. Several references evidenced by Inspection Officer were from friends of co-workers and this is inappropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p><b>Recommendations For Good practice</b></p>	
<p>1. The school's statement of Functions and Objectives states that a "training course group" operates. This is a positive vehicle for co-ordinating co-worker training but the group did not appear to be currently functioning. The school should assess the benefits of such a group and either re-instate it or omit it from the statement.</p>	<p>Training Course Group is already in operation</p>
<p>2. The responsibilities of house parents should be detailed more comprehensively in the school statement of Functions and Objectives.</p>	<p>Up-date Statement of Functions and Objectives May 1999</p>
<p>3. The recording format for house meetings developed by "the priory" should be adopted throughout the school.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

**IMPLEMENTATION TIMETALBE**

<b>Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice</b>	<b>Plan of Action / Timescale</b>
4. Core group members should attend the extended training sessions in the care practice areas detailed in Issues Requiring Action.	Ongoing
<p><b>G Aspect of Care: Premises</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. The broken en-suite sink on the second floor of Belvidere must be replaced immediately.</p> <p><b>Recommendation for Good Practice</b></p> <p>1. A plan for the redecoration of bedrooms in Belvidere should be developed.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Summer 1999</p>
<p><b>I Aspect of Care: Administration and Health and Safety</b></p> <p><b>Issues Requiring Action</b></p> <p>1. An audit of recording procedures requires to be carried out to ensure the quality of recording is to an acceptable standard. The school possesses the appropriate formats but the content contained therein must be improved as a matter of priority.</p> <p>2. A written health and safety assessment should be carried out by each house to ensure cleansing materials are securely stored.</p>	<p>Survey of current practice to be carried out Summer 1999</p> <p>Assessment of Current Practice and implementation of recommendations Summer 1999</p>