

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968



Annual Review and Inspection Report 2001

Registration and Inspection Unit
3-5 High Street
Perth
PH1 5JS

Establishment	Ochil Tower School
Owner(s)	The Management of Ochil Tower School
Manager	Annika Cheney, Marcus Cheney, Margaret Snellgrove, Neil Snellgrove, Hilary Ruprecht and Ueli Ruprecht
Registered for	28
Category Residents	of Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 years of age with moderate or severe learning disabilities
Date of Inspection	20, 21 & 22 November 2001
Inspection Officer	Rachel Gillespie

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FOREWORD

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 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 Education and Health
- F Children and Young People's Care Planning and Development
- G Staffing
- H Premises
- I 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

Ochil Tower School is located unobtrusively off the main street of Auchterarder, a small town 14 miles to the west of Perth. Residential buildings and school facilities are clustered together in grounds which offer seclusion as well as space for outdoor activities. The school provides day placements as well as weekly and fortnightly boarding facilities, with the flexibility to offer respite on an agreed basis. One child is now resident on a 52 week basis. During the year, the school has been in negotiation with both the Scottish Executive and Perth and Kinross Council Registration and Inspection Unit with regard to the school roll. In order for the school to reflect demand from placing agencies and yet not detract from the ethos of the school, it has been agreed that the maximum number of pupils be set at 40, with a limit of 28 for those residential; the current roll is 26 residential and 12 day pupils. The increase in the numbers is reflected in the recruitment of additional staff in the classroom, but otherwise there have been no changes in the care group.

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 movement's 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 20, 21 and 22 November 2002 and the Inspection Officer interviewed 6 joint co-ordinators, 2 house parents, 4 co-workers and 4 young people, as well as talking informally with a number of adults and children. The school's accommodation was inspected, as was a range of documentation, including a pre-inspection questionnaire completed by Ueli Ruprecht, Joint Co-ordinator. The young people's parents/carers were asked to comment, via a confidential questionnaire, on the quality of care; contact was also made with a representative of the placing agency. To facilitate understanding of the organisational structure, it may be helpful for the reader to look at 'Aspect of Care Staffing' first.

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. A revised Statement was published just prior to this inspection, following a review which incorporated those amendments identified in the report of the Annual Inspection of November 2000. The Statement describes the school's functions relating to 5 aspects of development - physical, personal, social, intellectual and moral - and provides a comprehensive framework for child care practice. Copies of the Statement are readily available to all interested parties and its contents are incorporated, comprehensively but more succinctly, in an Information for Parents booklet. Similarly, the school's other publications for professionals and others are updated in line with any changes. The Inspection Officer was also provided with the school's development plan for the period up to July 2002.

During the course of the inspection, it was very evident that the principles outlined in the Statement shape the relationships and activities of all members of the community throughout their day.

ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES RIGHTS

The prevailing ethos of the school is one of mutual respect, awareness of each person's individuality and sensitivity towards a young person's dignity, whatever the level of care required arising from physical, intellectual or social difficulties. New co-workers appear to quickly internalise attitudes of calm, openness and acceptance modelled by more established core members and the children and young people in turn seem to be affected positively by this relaxed, yet structured, environment.

With reference to consultation and communication while the majority of the children and young people currently resident are limited by age or communication difficulties in expressing their views, there are several who are able to articulate their opinions quite fluently. They showed no inhibition in volunteering their observations of life at Ochil Tower, both in the presence of adults and during interview with the

Inspection Officer. Children are encouraged to participate in discussion throughout the day, whether on a one to one basis, in a formal classroom setting or during group activities. Expression of views and feelings is also nurtured by those keyworkers who assist young people in completing a daily diary. One parent's written feedback after a few weeks at the school, stated 'he feels he is listened to' and a co-worker remarked on the 'honesty' of children at their reviews.

Other than informal gatherings, such as mealtimes and evening 'prayers', the main forum for group discussion is the classroom. The first of each day's three lessons, the 'main' lesson, usually follows a theme, which is presented through a variety of approaches, such as practical experiments, visual presentations, spoken word and artistic activities. Care and Education Plans demonstrate that these cover pertinent issues which young people can relate to their own lives, with topics including ecology, biology, nutrition, drugs, child development and family life.

The young people are routinely invited to make choices, for instance selecting from the choice of food available at each meal or deciding how to spend their leisure time and with whom. Archery is currently very popular with all ages, but there is no pressure on people to stay who have lost interest. Similarly, the 'rest hour' after lunch is not compulsory and can be spent according to the child's needs and wishes, so some individuals do have a refreshing sleep, others relax with a book or a jigsaw, and others spend some one to one time with whichever adult is 'on duty'.

The adults also take their views into account, exemplified when the young people express a preference for a particular room mate, or co-workers note a compatibility and consult with the two people concerned before making a decision. Specific interests are catered for, such as pets, fishing, musical instrument tuition etc. There are several pets which belong to the whole community such as Pedro, a former guide dog, and rabbits, but a new pupil with his own 'family' of hamsters and gerbils is able to keep his pets in his room during term time.

There is a particular recognition of the need for co-workers and parents to act as advocates for those less able to communicate, in order to safeguard their interests. Some authorities have a children's rights officer whose visits are welcomed. During the last year, the school has had additional funding from some authorities for speech therapy for individual children, with Forth Valley Health Trust providing co-workers with Makaton skills. Symbol boards, scanned on to computers, is another means of improving the communication of those with language difficulties and so enhancing their ability to express their views and feelings.

In providing information for children and young people, the school's Children's Handbook covers all the areas detailed in the Standards and Guidance. It is attractive in its design and lay-out, although its usefulness is limited to the more able child. In response to action required in the previous inspection report, last year the school used computer graphics to produce an alternative book, based on an 'Inclusive Writer' format; however, co-workers confirmed that it was only meaningful to a very small number and generally children became aware of their rights by more practical manifestations exemplified by adults in day to day life. Some young people were aware of Childline but were somewhat vague about its role.

The adults, both core group members and co-workers, presented as being knowledgeable about young people's rights, demonstrating their application daily throughout their interactions. New co-workers indicated that the thorough grounding in this area during the induction week built upon their previous understanding, perhaps reflecting a general higher profile for human rights in many countries. The right to express one's individuality and to develop one's full potential is fundamental to the ethos of Ochil Tower and is evidenced by the respect and sensitivity shown to that individual in working with him/her.

All those interviewed, both adults and young people, indicated that there was due attention given to privacy and confidentiality. as evidenced by the following:

- Adults knock and wait for permission to enter a young person's bedroom. Young people who wish to lock their rooms may do so. While generally this is rare because there is a mutual recognition of the privacy of each other's space, one new pupil very much felt the need to carry around his set of keys, perhaps reflecting his previous experiences of residential care where this respect for other people's property could not be taken for granted. It was noted that a lock for another young person in the same house was an item on the agenda of the house meeting.
- The availability of access to telephone facilities in a private space, as well as a public area, in all the five houses.
- Carers' sensitivity towards issues of gender and sexuality, especially in respect of the young people requiring assistance with more intimate aspects of personal care. The young person's own preference

is taken into account in allocating workers, who are given advice on the best approach, in terms of their intervention and their demeanour.

- Storage of case files: current ones, which include the child's daily log, are kept in each house in a locked room, while historic records are stored in the main office, which is kept locked when not in use.
- All young people knew of their right to read their files, some assisting their keyworkers to complete their diaries, with the information being replicated in the daily log. Others choose not to exercise their right to access their files, giving a variety of legitimate reasons.

The complaints book, which has no new entries, is located in the main office, as all adults were aware. Some young people did not appear to know of its existence but viewed this of no consequence as they do not consider their concerns as formal complaints as such. Rather, they are comfortable in talking to various adults who listen and take appropriate action to the satisfaction of the young person. Likewise, the school endeavours to create a sense of openness, receptiveness, ongoing dialogue and partnership with parents so that issues can be raised and addressed without the need to invoke the formal complaint procedure detailed in the school's policy statement and elsewhere. This approach is crucial in respect of certain pupils who are more articulate and vocal, minor grievances and threats of phoning Childlike or other agencies being a common response to difficulties or as a means of testing adults out.

ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SAFETY

It is inherent in the regime of the Camphill movement that community life involves adults and young people sharing each other's space in school, at home and in all social activities. Most co-workers' sleeping accommodation is adjacent to that of the young people so they are at hand on a 24 hour a day basis. This availability, similar to that in a domestic setting, facilitates the development of close relationships, mature dependency and a high level of supervision, all contributing to a sense of stability, security and continuity for young people whose needs are particularly complex. Some house parents are also teachers and the practice of co-workers, in their capacity as classroom assistants, being responsible for young people different from those who they care for in a home setting allows the young people access to alternative adults with whom to share any anxieties, while the ongoing daily dialogue between all adults facilitates an early response to any identified issues. One joint co-ordinator highlighted the transparency of shared living as a safeguard for children, in that most interactions of adults and children take place in a public arena, and any inappropriate or poor practice is quickly identified and dealt with.

As stated before, adults' interactions with young people are based on sensitivity and respect such that the uniqueness of each individual is taken into account, with encouragement to develop their potential with a view to maximum independence and a strong sense of self whilst not allowing the freedom of one young person to impinge upon that of another. This is a significant point in that the school has pupils with a wide range of both physical and learning disabilities and associated problems; some are more physically vulnerable than others and some present more challenging behaviours. In trying to meet their respective needs, the relative risks have to be weighed up and a decision made. Sometimes this can be relatively clear cut in that a child will be told he/she cannot participate in an activity 'because you aren't ready to play with us'; this is not seen as a punishment but as a means of children learning to know what the rules are for certain social activities what is best for each child is considered. During the week of the inspection one child's foster carers were asked if the young person could go home for two days, to diffuse a situation which the adults could not have anticipated or prevented but was potentially dangerous to others. The school recognises that it is a fine line between trying to meet the particular needs of one child by containing certain behaviours with a consistent and effective adult response which hopefully will be time limited as the child learns more acceptable outlets for frustration and failing to pre-empt behaviour which endangers other people. A thorough knowledge of each child and their predictable behaviour is essential and possible due to the continuity and experience of carers, as exemplified by one child where co-workers were able to identify traits so out of character that a speedy and unprecedented referral for psychiatric assistance was made, so preventing any undue stress to the child or his fellow residents.

The school has a clear written statement on care and control measures which can be used, as well as those which are forbidden. These are also listed in the Children's Handbook. The young people voiced the views of the adults that the most common practice was to separate the child from the situation, often spending a brief period in his bedroom, with or without staff supervision. Other ones used regularly include allocation of extra tasks related to the misdemeanour, loss of privilege, such as an outing and early bed-

time. In most cases, the young person saw this response not only as justified but as a constructive response. Again, the practice of involving the young person in examining his behaviour and suggesting an appropriate consequence himself is seen as fostering maturity, self control and problem solving skills. This proactive approach to behaviour management is viewed as positive and supportive by the young person and contributes to a relaxed and non threatening environment. There is no distinct log to record such measures and the Inspection Officer accepts the arguments of the core-group that to list every incidence of time-out in a bedroom would be stigmatising for those whose difficulties require such a response on a regular basis, where such action is part of a planned response to modify behaviour, rather than a sanction for someone knowingly and wilfully breaching a code of accepted behaviour. The term 'sanction' is also inconsistent with their philosophy of childcare, because of its connotations of punishment. 'Consequence' is seen as a more accurate description: accordingly it was suggested that when such decisions are made, co-workers should highlight any such recording in the child's daily log by adding a 'C' in the margin, for the convenience of the Inspection Officer and anyone else monitoring such incidence.

During the last year the school has adopted a new recording format for recording of violent incidents, which covers the requirements of the Registering Authority, although the amendments suggested and made at the time of the unannounced inspection in March do not seem to have been transferred from the computer to those proformas in use in various houses, leading to some confusion in interpretation of participants in what were well recorded incidents. There have been only four incidents involving the same pupil and managed with minimum use of physical intervention by the same joint co-ordinator; the school views any such action as an unfortunate necessity and a procedure only to be carried out by one of the experienced and suitably trained core group, where possible - their almost continuous presence means this is a feasible restriction. Other incidents are recorded in the child's daily log; the school must give guidance to new co-workers on what it has agreed constitutes a violent incident, so that there is consistency in which incidents are recorded on the proforma and which in the child's daily log. Violence and physical restraint incidents are kept at a minimum due to the environment, which is conducive to tranquillity and more controlled expression of feelings, yet their prevention is high on the school's agenda. Accordingly, two years ago the school acted upon the concerns raised in an earlier inspection report! by arranging for all workers to participate in TCI training provided by an external trainer, on an annual basis in October. However, the input was not felt to be particularly appropriate to the needs of the children at Ochil Tower and there was too much emphasis on physical restraint. The alternative approach CALM was considered, but with similar reservations, so it too was recently cancelled. Instead, the school has arranged for SIRCC (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care) to present their three day course on Challenging behaviour and young people with learning disabilities.

There have been two incidents of absconding, involving the same young person in August this year; the person was soon found in the local vicinity, but an alarm has been installed on the stairs of Belvidere to alert co-workers more quickly on those occasions when supervision is not so overt, as at night time. The School's Statement of Functions and Objectives indicates a comprehensive policy involving both risk assessment and a missing children's file, including photos, personal details and ways to facilitate police and others in tracing a child as soon as possible.

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives contains a clear policy and written procedures in relation to Child Protection, covering working practice (e.g. safe caring as a protection for young people and workers); awareness-raising and education of young people; screening, and awareness training, of co-workers; and recording. Training has benefited the short term co-workers, who appeared to have a working knowledge of the subject, were able to evidence the indicators of a whole range of abuse, and knew how to deal with and pass on any concerns. Basic child protection, lasting a day, is now done in house, rather than through external agencies, but the school does access other training events, such as those provided by Perth and Kinross Council, a recent one looking at the impact of a parent's mental health problems on a child.

ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BASIC CARE

The Camphill movement comprises communities of adults and vulnerable children living, learning and working together whereby healthy social relationships are formed and the needs of individuals met: thus the routines of daily life are an integral part of this therapeutic experience. Although individual adults may have particular responsibilities (such as Joint Co-ordinators, house parents and teachers), for the most part tasks are shared by all community members, including the young people in so far as they are able. With only a

small number of paid employees, the school relies very much on the full participation of its co-workers to cover a range of domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, laundry etc, as well as meeting the care needs of the young people and organising social activities outside school hours. Consequently, the adults are constantly on the go', yet they never appear harassed and their focus is always the welfare of the young people. Their composure is partly the result of good organisation and their commitment to community living, but also due to the day being punctuated by periods of calm at transitional points between activities - for instance, everyone gathers as a group for quiet reflection and recharging of batteries prior to moving to the dining room to share a meal. Also, the rhythmical aspects of the daily, weekly and yearly events arising from Christian practices and festivals creates a framework for the life of the school.

The day starts at 7.30am, when the young people get up for breakfast at 8am The 3 period school day is broken up by a 35 minute mid-morning break, and lunch at 12.50 pm, followed by a 'rest hour' (for sleeping or reading quietly). Activities take place between 3.30 pm and supper at 5.45pm, after which quieter pursuits, individual or communal, help in the winding down process leading to bed between 8pm and 10 pm. It is noted that the individual houses are the base for most aspects of the day other than schooling or specific activities outside the premises.

Parents are responsible for providing clothing; the young people presented as clean, tidy and fashionably dressed. The school provides pocket money, the amount varying between £2 and £7 according to age, to those staying on at the weekend, with the young people being given advice on, and assistance in, how to spend it, as appropriate. House parents have some discretion about the purchase of household items and other essentials and extras, as evidenced by one young person being allocated additional money to purchase materials for a shed he is building with a co-worker as a project, with a number of objectives (mathematical principles, skill in using tools, awareness of safety, planning and co-operation in executing a task and building up a relationship with a trustworthy adult) - all of which raise self-esteem in someone who has been let down by adults in the past. Birthdays are celebrated in different ways according to the individual child; the child resident for 52 weeks received some memorable presents and had quite a large gathering of people at his birthday tea but not all could cope with this amount of attention.

The co-workers indicated their sensitivity in helping the children and young people to manage their personal care independently, with appropriate support. This is evidenced by case files, which refer to the encouragement of more independence in the management of toileting, personal hygiene during menstruation, bathing, dressing and teeth-cleaning, as well as the use of homeopathic remedies and other medicines in the control of P.M.T. All toiletries are provided by the school. Attention to these aspects is especially important for parents, who need tangible assurance that their children are being well cared for as well as making progress in these basic areas which enable them to participate on a more equal footing with other people in society.

A range of leisure activities is available. Walking, both locally and further afield, is popular with both young people and co-workers, and during the seasons of the year the garden gives scope for a variety of horticultural tasks which appeal to some pupils. Swimming is another favourite, the school visiting Perth Leisure Pool regularly as well as arranging for individual young people to have lessons at Crieff Hydro. The latter is also the venue for horse riding - one pupil was proud of his award of a rosette and the school cup; the recent additional use of the facilities at Gleneagles indicates the success of this pursuit.

Other activities include excursions and holidays, some being in the form of field trips relating to the school curriculum, such as New Lanark, the coal mining museum at Edinburgh and Longannet power station, and others being part of a programme of planned activities for the respite week offered to young people to assist them and their families survive the long summer holiday. These activities, which are also available throughout the year, include bicycling, hill-walking, canoeing, rock-climbing, abseiling, archery and camping. Basing the respite week at Ochil Tower itself rather than an unfamiliar setting has been more successful in providing some children with the security of continuity of place, people and routine they need. This initiative, identified as filling a gap in services, is now a regular feature for some children, and reflects the school's willingness to adapt itself to identified need. Other outings referred to in records include an airshow, Deep Sea World, Sensations in Dundee, Halloween, a Valentine's party and the firework display in Perth. During the inspection, a visit by Belvidere to the cinema to see Harry Potter was the highlight of the year for some, especially the older pupil for whom this was his first experience of a cinema trip.

The school has plenty of opportunities within its own grounds for free play as well as a range of outdoor play equipment, play house, swings, 'high wire slide' etc. Football as a team game is discouraged, because of its tendency to be linked with aggression, although the school is not immune from the impact of the latest trends such as playstations. The young people are also encouraged to access local facilities such as shops, library, Scouts, Guides etc either independently or with supervision. There are several domestic pets

within the houses and some young people were involved daily in rearing the school's pigs, which went to the market just before the foot and mouth outbreak. The school regularly replaces its minibus¹ in addition to other transport it owns, none of which are marked.

Within each house newspapers, books and games are available in public areas and bedrooms. Televisions are not in evidence as it is felt that the young people can benefit more from other activities, but a video is hired at the weekend occasionally and even a house parent confessed to a weakness for certain 'soaps', relying on a pupil to keep her up-to-date. For the adults there is no time for such luxuries during the week. Sycamore House has a dedicated play therapy area, where arts and crafts, home corners, puzzles⁷ games and books are plentiful, in good condition and attractively displayed, for use by younger children. Some children in the other houses have expressed an interest in such a facility, as they don't always want to venture out at nights, and this will be a consideration when developing their accommodation in the future. Meanwhile, some children bring toys, books etc from home, and there is a games/jigsaw/book cupboard in most houses; while kept locked for safety, the Inspection Officer was shown the key by one child who was clearly familiar with its contents. The absence of suitable resources for less able pupils, who are not able to motivate themselves, was explained as due to their being frequently destroyed in the past. Also along the landing in Sycamore is a pool table, which is particularly popular with the three older boys, while access to a computer in three of the houses is gradually being offered to young people as well as being utilised by house parents. Certainly, while there are opportunities for young people to spend time on their own or in reflection, the adults are very much on hand to give attention by reading stories, talking on a one to one basis, or meeting for communal activities. The latter comprise a nightly gathering within each house at some point during the evening for prayers, a story and singing (spiritual/folk/popular) which may include mime and actions, a form of entertainment which especially appeals to those less able.

Celebration of a range of European festivals, both Christian and pagan, adds to the cultural life of the school and provides opportunities for pupils to become involved in a number of meaningful ways. This was demonstrated during last year's inspection when St Martin's Day was celebrated, with a re-enactment of his life by pupils and lantern-lit procession, accompanied by song, around the various houses. Similarly, the children and young people have the opportunity to enjoy other cultural activities which form part of the Camphill way of life, such as the school's own plays and local and visiting performers who stage a variety of concerts, when the audience is swollen by adult members of Camphill's other two local communities.

All meals are served in the individual houses, albeit lunch continues to be prepared in Belvidere, for distribution to the other houses, by the part-time cook. The previous cook is now the house parent at Elmtree, but her replacement has quickly adapted to the expectations of Ochil Tower, with the emphasis on organic ingredients. The menu is varied, reflecting both traditional Scottish and more international tastes, in keeping with that familiar to young people. However, processed and convenience food, together with those including certain additives and stimulants, are avoided, with reliance on natural ingredients, including organically grown fruit and vegetables from the school's own gardens. Some purchases are bought in bulk but the young people also accompany the adults to local shops, where they can help to select their favourite 'spreads' and assist in the preparation of supper. The latter has no fixed menu, but often includes the remains of lunch and a selection of breads, crackers and 'toppings' such as pate, cheese, fruit/chocolate spreads etc catering for individual tastes including those of younger co-workers from different cultures. Allowance is also made for young people's individual dietary requirements, so there is no skimping on double cream in the porridge for one person who needs building up, but those with a tendency to obesity are equally given discreet attention. While 'snacking' at will is discouraged and pupils are generally expected to eat from the menu(which includes a vegetarian option when meat is served), the Inspection Officer observed the school giving a reasonable leeway in this respect; a simple alternative was prepared for a child who is gradually adjusting to these more healthy eating habits in his own time, while another undernourished child is enabled to eat when she is most willing, often after a seizure, this being a priority over other considerations.

Meals, at which a simple blessing is given at the start and finish, are orderly but relaxed occasions in line with the general mood of the school; some young people focus quietly on the task in hand, while the more gregarious chatter to the adults

ASPECT OF CARE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND HEALTH

As a Rudolph Steiner school, Ochil Tower bases its education on the Steiner curriculum, which adopts a holistic approach to education of the whole person and therefore the classroom environment is not separate from other aspects of the young person's [Maths is applied in a baking class in Belvidere kitchen, in setting a table or in mapping out a plan of the High Street in advance of a shopping expedition. The extensive grounds offer opportunities for horticulture and nature studies, etc. while weekly trips to Perth are used for a series of gradual exposures of young people to independent travel, incorporating knowledge of bus timetables, telephone-use and road safety. All subjects contained within the national 5-14 curriculum are covered, with the 3 periods of the day having a different focus: the main lesson has a topic (one term this comprised electricity¹ magnetism, geography, history and drama) presented over several weeks to the class, which is grouped according to chronological age; the second focuses on literacy, numeracy, communication, music and art for groups of 1 to 3, according to ability; and finally, the afternoon lesson, where groups vary in size and composition and the work tends to be more practical and artistic e.g. gardening, baking, weaving, woodwork, painting and gym. In all classes (there are now five with the increase in the school roll, enabling the employment of an additional teacher to keep class sizes small), the teacher is supported by class assistants from the pool of co-workers. The school also uses the services of vetted volunteers, who have expressed an interest in some aspect of the school-life and may move on to paid posts in some instances. Currently, two of the class room assistants have specific teaching input (on literacy), as does the art therapist.

Parents are informed and consulted about the education as well as the care of their children, both informally and through the twice yearly formal reviews when the Education and Care Plan is updated, as well as receiving a comprehensive Annual School Report. Parents are asked to complete a feedback report on the latter, which addresses both school and house matters: the quality of the comments reflects the parents high level of satisfaction with the progress made by the child and with the school, as often evidenced by their observations of improvements in the home setting.

Record of Needs and Future Needs meetings are held for most young people and the school views liaison with parents and a number of outside agencies (e.g. Perth college, Careers Officers, adult resources), as part of their remit in assisting pupils to prepare for the next stage of their lives. The school has noted and welcomed a new trend of educational psychologists visiting the school two weeks before reviews, so they can observe pupils in class and offer helpful suggestions, as appropriate. Some authorities place a sizeable number of pupils at Ochil Tower, this itself indicating a level of satisfaction with the quality of the overall provision. HMI of Education visited recently prior to approving the increase in numbers and the school has requested a formal inspection in the near future, as it values independent scrutiny of its practice and welcomes constructive suggestions to further its development.

Although the school curriculum and ethos meets the developmental needs of the children for the most part, certain admissions caused the core-group to renew its links with Auchterarder High School, with a view to the latter providing some of the educational impute for these individuals, who nevertheless required the therapeutic aspects of communal living. The High School which co-workers' own children also attend, is equally interested in learning from Ochi Tower how they work with children with special needs, whose numbers are increasing locally, so the benefits are seen as being mutual. This has been a fruitful partnership in that one pupil was able to access course work in home economics but also deal with the social aspects of mainstream education, such that he is now attending the special unit of his local school three days a week as part of his full integration there after Christmas. In return, two pupils from the learning zone, have benefited from Ochil Tower's varied curriculum, including participation in two plays (volunteering to attend in the October holidays), work experience in the garden and various social skills programmes. An easy and supportive dialogue has been established, which it is hoped to develop as part of the school realising its promotion of the principle of social inclusion. This is yet another indicator of its conscious move towards looking outwards rather than inwards, whilst not compromising on its underlying philosophy.

Health is defined in its broadest sense, to include physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions. Consequently, although the children are almost all registered with the local GP, there is an agreement with the latter and parents that each pupil admitted is assessed by Camphill's homeopathic medical consultant, who visits the school monthly and reviews each young person on a regular basis. These assessments may recommend a homeopathic medicine but also referral for various therapies provided either by the school's own workers or by various visiting therapists, usually on an individual basis e.g. Occupational Therapy, art therapy, curative eurythmy, speech therapy, massage/therapeutic bath etc.

Forth Valley Health Care Trust currently provides a speech therapist one day per week. Dental screening and treatment is available through a Perth health centre. The school has its own monitoring system so that it has an overall view of all appointments at clinics or the dentist.

Documentation shows a detailed health history in the form of a medical questionnaire on admission, with consent forms for emergency and other medical treatments in place, as well as attention being given to the recommendations of the Crown Report each time the GP issues a prescription. The administration of medication is recorded through separate proformas for prescribed medication, regular and occasional, and household remedies, both traditional and homeopathic, by each house parent, although a joint co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating and supervising medical and health practices. In response to last year's inspection report, the school has introduced a Medical History proforma to record all medical appointments and outcomes on a sequential basis, rather than this being contained within the child's daily log, for easy and comprehensible access. Parents are automatically informed at the time but a copy of these records could be made available to carers at discharge, if thought to be helpful. The school has also introduced a proforma for a 'Seizure Management Plan' for use in conjunction with families and the medical practitioner, as recommended for good practice in terms of clarity, consistency and accountability; this is an additional safeguard not only for the child but for the co-workers, who continue to be given verbal guidance in this important area.

Health education is carried out on an informal one to one basis as well as being covered in the generality of the school curriculum, involving discussion on relationships, bullying, health, self protection etc. As part of a holistic approach to health care, the school takes into account the individual needs of the children in respect of the basics such as sleep, diet and exercise, but they also have general policies, such as adherence to a smoke free environment.

ASPECT OF CARE: CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Most placements are funded by Education Authorities, with a few jointly funded with Social Services and/or Health Boards. In some cases it is the initiative of the parents which triggers a referral. Ochil Tower School has a clear policy and agreed and comprehensive procedures relating to the process of admission, which is recognised as an anxious time. Equally, leaving school and finding a way through the minefield of options available is also seen as a difficult and traumatic period, requiring support to be given to both pupils and parents. To assist these processes the school has a number of parents of young people currently or previously resident at Ochil Tower who are willing to be contacted by other parents for advice and support. This initiative has been accessed, although the Inspection Officer has no direct feedback from parents who have used this service. The young people interviewed recalled events surrounding their admission as a positive experience and a number of professionals spoke favourably of their own experiences and the impressions of parents and carers, referring to the admission process as thorough, well-prepared, relaxed, homely and inclusive. The Joint-Co-ordinator in charge of admissions and reviews stated that there has been an increase in the number of referrals of children who present quite challenging behaviour. This was highlighted by social workers, who commended the benefits of the structured, consistent, calm and caring environment at the school which enabled such children to control their temper and outbursts to the extent that they were able to make progress in other areas of their lives. Similarly the growth in referrals for day pupils represents the need for a particular kind of provision, such as for one young person who has been out of school for two years due to bullying.

The school is still in the process of refining its care planning process, this aspect of care being developed as a consequence of registration. An initial Education and Care Plan 5 drawn up prior to admission and refined at the review of the first 3 months 'trial and assessment' period, with a view to its being evaluated and modified at the subsequent 6 monthly reviews. A sample of several files showed up to date Education and Care Plans in an established format. The areas of work, other than the strictly educational, were included under three general headings, namely, Personal and Social Development, Family Contact, and Personal Care and Self-help Skills. As previous inspection reports have noted, the needs identified are often global needs, such as 'develop self-confidence', and 'learn appropriate behaviour patterns in given situations', which can appear difficult to translate into work programmes of specific tasks, without the added factor that many of the young people at Ochil Tower School can only progress in small, and sometimes scarcely discernible, steps over a long period of time, thus making it difficult for adults to see care planning as a dynamic process. As observed in other establishments, teachers appear to be more adept at identifying short-term educational targets in concrete achievements, comprehensible to pupils and adults

alike; for example, language and communication is to be developed through looking at books and photos, one to one conversations, and group activities such as ring games. Likewise, on the care side, some files indicated that the authors were able to translate the global needs, such as independence in personal care, into short term targets, learning to eat by provision of a special fork and spoon or use of the toilet by regulating toileting and building in a reward. Targets are often related to the actual practices adopted by the school, such as the nightly diary session being used to practice recall and retelling of events. It is important that Keyworkers and colleagues use the Care Plan to guide their daily interactions with young people as specific, planned and achievable interventions by being able to relate them to the needs identified in the Care Plan. It is suggested that both the child's diary and the daily log are tools for recording evidence of progress or otherwise in these short term targets. Hopefully, in this way, both the young person and the carers will be able to pinpoint more closely areas of success and those where a change of method, direct[or focus would be beneficial. This monitoring and evaluation, appropriately recorded, should be ongoing and carried out on a more regular basis than the formal reviews, which are both a check that this process is ongoing and also an opportunity to consider wider and more long term issues in the child's life.

During the inspection, there was some discussion concerning those pupils who are funded by social work departments and technically 'Looked After' children whose social workers should have a formal overarching careplan in place, which is reviewed every six months, and takes into account all the child's circumstances, including other services such as respite provision. The Inspection Officer was advised that some local authorities do follow guidance in this aspect but not all. A starting point would be for Ochil Tower to formally request that such local authorities provide a copy of such care plans, which should be in the child's file.

Reviews take place every 6 months, with a broad spectrum of people attending, including representatives of Ochil Tower School, the young person, parents and a wide range of other professionals. Record of Needs, Future Needs and Looked After Reviews are combined with those of the school, where possible. The young people interviewed reported that they were advised about the content in advance, attended reviews and were asked to contribute to varying degrees. Some social workers use the pre-Review questionnaire 'Having Your Say', from the Looked After Children pack, and perhaps this could be adapted for use by certain other children for other forms of review to assist their participation. The short term co-workers indicated that they were fully involved on a daily basis in discussion with both young people and colleagues about specific aspects of the care plans on a formal and informal basis. It was less clear how much they contributed to the more formal aspects of care planning (for some, formal written English can be difficult), but several were adept at articulating specific targets of progress made by particular children in the class or at home. One or two social workers/parents expressed some difficulty in understanding some co-workers due to language barriers, especially on the phone, but reviews may be an opportunity for co-workers to establish the necessary links in a face to face setting.

Throughcare is a concept underlying all the work of the school, which aims to develop the young person's full potential and enable him or her to participate in the wider community as independently as possible. For this reason, the school views its links with other professionals and parents as part of a partnership in identifying a suitable resource for the young person to move on to, and helping the latter to move with confidence. Such is the general satisfaction among young people and parents with the regime offered by Ochil Tower School that a good percentage of school leavers move on to another Camphill community. Ochil Tower have some reservations that the move to employed staff in both of their neighbourhood adult centres, while not detracting from the same fundamental ethos, may have resulted in a dilution of expertise, especially in respect of people with challenging behaviour which can only come from many years of experience of this form of community living. The difficulties of the transition are recognised by the school's willingness to provide a co-worker presence throughout the introductory and moving in phase, both as a support to the young person and a means of staff elsewhere getting an understanding of how to work with that person most effectively, this method being more effective than just reading reports and learning by trial and error.

Ochil Tower has long recognised the need for a diversity of options for young people to move on to, and that a more accurate assessment of the individual's abilities and potential can only be achieved through the actual provision of some form of independent living training unit. To this end, during the last year it has acquired a site adjacent to the school, on which it plans to build two three-bedroom units which could operate separately or together, offering short term placements of approximately three months. It intends to issue a consultation paper for distribution to parents, placing agencies and Perth and Kinross Council, which is currently reviewing its residential provision for children and young people; this is part of the school's aim to develop a closer co-operation with local authorities in the areas of funding and new services. Again, the school is to be commended for both its vision and its purposefulness in realising its vision while acknowledging that it cannot work in a vacuum, but must adapt to the world as it is.

The young person's home circumstances, the extent of challenging behaviour, and the educational and social needs of the individual are all factors which are taken into account when assessing the provision for the young person, whether day, weekly, fortnightly or respite. All co-workers expressed empathy with the parents about their situation and saw it as the school's role to accommodate the family's needs and wishes as far as possible by tailoring care and contact accordingly. Communication is facilitated not only through formal reviews and parents' meetings each term, but also via letters and telephone calls. Additionally, in many cases, contact books have proved useful, whether for a day pupil where the need for regular liaison is more important, where the child has poor speech and cannot communicate effectively, or where transport is via taxi and there is no direct opportunity to exchange information. Even for those parents who do assist in escorting their children to and fro, the contact book is a more reliable method of ensuring information about general progress is conveyed, in addition to the automatic notification of particular incidents. There is also an annual Open Day which is organised by the parents themselves.

Feedback from almost all of the 18 parents through the questionnaire rated the overall provision as excellent or good, and indicated that the staff are considered to be very approachable and totally dedicated to the care of the children, who for the most part are said to have thrived after move to Ochil Tower. Parents identify many areas of achievement in their responses to the annual School Report, but also feel empowered to highlight those where they feel they or the school should be concentrating in the future. The school is currently drafting its own questionnaire for circulation to parents to assess the level of satisfaction with the service provided; this initiative is to be commended.

Eight local authority social workers contacted the Inspection Officer to report very positively on the care of the children, in terms of the child-centred approach the calm but stimulating environment and the structure of the regime, especially as it contributes to trust and stability, critical for the children's progress and the parents' confidence. The school was noted to have had particular success with young people whose behaviour was seen as unmanageable in other settings; at Ochil Tower they have been able to achieve a level of normality which has opened up opportunities for participating in activities which would have been impossible for both the child and the parents to contemplate previously. The school always welcomes professionals, offering hospitality, and is flexible in accommodating itself to the needs of parents, such as when weekend arrangements have to be changed. The school has also shown its flexibility, spirit of co-operation and child-centred approach, in responding to successive break-downs of one child's home bases⁷ by offering fulltime care and eventually identifying an alternative carer who can come into Belvidere for holidays and alternate weekends, thus offering the child the stability and continuity of a familiar setting which he needs. The resident co-workers are still around on the premises during these times, but he knows he has a special relationship similar to that of other children who go home to long term carers at these times.

ASPECT OF CARE: STAFFING

Ochil Tower is a Centre of Anthroposophical Curative Education and a Camphill Community whose primary task is the care and education of pupils with special educational needs. The property itself, along with 2 other local facilities for adults with special needs, is owned and managed by Camphill Central Scotland Trust. Legally, it operates as a company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish charity with its own Management Council, which holds formal minuted meetings every 2 months. The Council comprises two Joint Co-ordinators and a house parent as resident Council members, as well as non-resident members invited to join because of their professional expertise and knowledge of the work of Camphill. The Management Council is legally responsible for the management of Ochil Tower, being accountable to pupils and their representatives for the operation of the school and final arbiter in disciplinary and grievance matters, and is therefore required to offer adequate support and supervision to the community. This primarily entails the provision of an annual appraisal of each Joint Co-ordinator, in respect of present performance and future professional development.

There is no single manager responsible for the day to day running of the school. Rather, group management in the form of 'collective decision making' is undertaken by 6 "Joint Co-ordinators", appointed not on the basis of age or length of stay but on a willingness and ability to take on both specific and joint management responsibility, and drawn from the pool of more senior long term co-workers (who form the school's 'Core Group' and are responsible for the spiritual, cultural, social and economic well-being of the school).

The Joint Co-ordinators have relevant childcare experience and are social-work qualified or possess either a Certificate in Curative Education or a Rudolph Steiner Teaching Certificate. The Joint Co-ordinators have specific responsibilities for key care practice areas: medical and therapy; teachers and education; training, professional development and health and safety ; admissions, reviews, and child protection: house parents, co-worker recruitment and employed staff; and finally, administration, buildings and finance. Six Joint Co-ordinators are also house parents in 3 houses (other co-workers bring allocated as house parents in the Priory and Elmtree) and some have teaching responsibilities. Similarly, in other care practice areas, the Joint Co-ordinator is assisted by core group workers.

There are 3 main 'working groups': house parents, teachers (meeting fortnightly) and training (monthly) which are responsible for the work of their practice area, providing supervision and support to individuals through minuted meetings and being accountable to the Joint Co-ordinators via each group's chairperson (a Joint Co-ordinator). Additionally, the Core Group meets twice a month with an agenda covering management and cultural and social issues, and each house has a weekly meeting, with the whole community also convening as required. All of these meetings, as well as most training sessions, take place from 9pm after a long and exacting day's work, but are viewed as an essential aspect of the community's life and so are attended with the same commitment to task as for other activities. The Inspection Officer was invited to attend a Core Group Meeting during the inspection Its agenda was wide-ranging, covering registration with professional bodies such as GTC Scotland (teachers) and the new SSSC(social service workers), links with Camphill Scotland and sister communities, health and safety issues, partnership with Auchterarder High School etc.

Apart from formal meetings and informal discussion and monitoring, the house parents' and teachers' practice is also assessed twice a year through self-assessment/appraisal sessions, which are guided by a questionnaire where answers are recorded by the Chairperson.

The therapy group meets fortnightly for study and discussion, to share experiences as well as to reflect on the pupils' individual therapy sessions. A Joint Co-ordinator chairs these meetings, which are attended by the OT and Art Therapists as well as co-workers requiring training. These therapists also have regular links with and support from Camphill colleagues in Aberdeen .

There are a few 'employed' staff - cook, secretary, a teacher, classroom assistants and maintenance men; the number is growing slightly each year though most are part-time. Again one aspect of the school's development plan is to develop terms and conditions and a salary structure appropriate to Ochil Tower's ethos; it is also mindful of its statutory duty to implement a stakeholder pension scheme, having only joined the national insurance contributory scheme latterly in recognition of this being a gap in the community's responsibility towards its members, current, former and retired, where people's circumstances are not always such that they can actively contribute towards the running of the school after handing over more formal responsibilities. Currently a number of people over retirement carry out a variety of roles in the school, the laundry, the garden and in the cultural life and the management of the school (a total of 88 children and adults constitute the school population)

The other main group of workers are the short term co-workers, young people aged between 18 years and 25 years, from a variety of countries, mainly European, who have specifically sought out a work opportunity (usually for a year but it could be longer or shorter) in a Camphill community and are appointed as a 'group parent' attached to a particular house, with responsibility for between one and three young people, as well as acting as classroom assistants. The school ensures that a satisfactory police check [received before any co-worker is in contact with young people and that friends are not used to provide references.

Prior to the young people's return in August, these co-workers undertake a week's induction programme supplemented by an Information Pack, covering the school's philosophy and policies and procedures in relation to issues such as fire precautions, health and safety, practical living arrangements and childcare issues. Each is assigned an individual tutor to draw together an overall awareness of the co-worker and provide ongoing support and supervision, meeting once a term or as required. At the end of the first term, in October, the tutor chairs a Probationary Assessment Tutorial which the co-worker, class teacher and house parent also attend whereby strengths and weaknesses are comprehensively assessed, as well as the co-worker's suitability for the work or otherwise, in which case the person will be asked to leave. This assessment is minuted, as are subsequent termly appraisal tutorials, although it is then the co-worker who presents a self-evaluation of his/her work and life in the community and writes up a summary of the general conclusions of the appraisal group

This formal monitoring of care practice is supplemented by ongoing supervision and support through minuted weekly House meetings and individual supervision sessions. The school is also reminded that any minute of such meetings should give sufficient detail to be comprehensible to a reader who was not

present, or a participant who needs to recall the gist of the discussion and any action required subsequently, rather than simply be a list of agenda items. The co-workers interviewed spoke of the constant availability of house parents and more experienced co-workers, with whom they could share any anxieties or gaps in knowledge and skills, knowing that guidance and assistance would be given willingly and as of right.

The positives of the community living and learning together as a shared experience for both adults and young people seemed to compensate for the long days and the fact that the co-workers are only entitled to three days off every two weeks; there was no suggestion that they were being exploited or that they were unhappy with their living and working conditions. Likewise, community social and cultural evening activities, such as performing seasonal and Christmas plays, also contribute to the cohesiveness of the co-worker group.

Training has been an ongoing commitment for the school. All short term co-workers take part in a one year 'Foundation Course in Curative Education and Social Therapy' run by the Core group and other Camphill speakers, with 4 sessions every 2 weeks throughout each term. A term's programme can be varied: painting, maladjustment, autism, eurythmy, child development, play and games, anthroposophical medicine. During the inspection the pottery group produced an example of their work in the form of a castle: it is important that they grasp the basics of such crafts before they undertake to assist the pupils themselves. Individual training includes weekly attendance of 2nd and 3rd Year co-workers (five currently) at Aberdeen for the Camphill course in Curative Education, leading to a nationally recognised award, either a Certificate or a Diploma depending on the length, as well as short courses in specialist areas for more experienced co-workers. All co-workers also take part in training organised in-house, such as a course on the Children (Scotland) Act or presented by external trainers, for example by SIRCC. The school believes that timetabling training during the year is more valuable than if held during the induction week, as the new workers then have some experience with which to relate the input.

Several core-group members have been looking to build on their professional qualifications, prompted by legislative and registration requirements that care managers should possess a Diploma in Social Work or equivalent, a personal need for professional development and a recognition that they may wish to move out of the Camphill movement at a later date, when such qualifications may be necessary for continued employment in this field of work. A year ago one Joint Co-ordinator started a Diploma in Nursing (Learning Disability) at Stirling University, and three other house parents have now completed the foundation year of an Open University course leading to the Diploma in Social Work. Additionally, two others embarked on training, one a Mental Health Seminar (3 x days block courses per year over 2 years) reflecting the incidence of a mental health aspect in many children's difficulties, and modules of a post-graduate course in Special Education at Edinburgh University, and the other a Management Development Programme under the auspices of the Association of Residential Care (weekly attendance over 6 months, with course work and assignments). Individual needs of co-workers are also taken into account in accessing appropriate courses, hence modules of Perth College's HND Complementary Therapies have been selected for the school's own therapist, while one of the co-workers has started an SVQ in Social Care, supported by a Joint Co-ordinator who is training to be a work-based assessor. This move towards almost universal involvement in some form of training strengthens the community's established culture of learning and is another example of the school's willingness to engage with other agencies.

Overall, staffing levels are more than adequate to meet the needs of the young people in terms of numbers, competency and experience and there is an appropriate balance between males and females. Young people generally are well supervised and supported, while the more able have the opportunity to exercise discretion in the choice and quality of their relationships.

ASPECT OF CARE: PREMISES

Ochil Tower School, being located halfway along Auchterarder High Street, via a short, tree lined driveway, offers a degree of privacy and seclusion, yet easy access to contact with the local community and facilities when required. The school monitors closely the exposure of its young people to public gaze, easily identifiable in a small town, so as to offer them ordinary opportunities, yet within their capacity to deal with any discrimination.

Of the 5 houses, Belvidere currently accommodates 7 young people, plus 2 day pupils attached to it. As an old Victorian mansion it has both attractions and disadvantages in terms of room sizes, day to day

functioning and maintenance. Most bedrooms are large, with high ceilings, which are more difficult to personalise and make cosy, while some reflect the taste of their occupants, who are currently male and into 'minimalism'. The school's plan to change the bedroom layout by splitting two of the larger rooms to reflect the growing need for single rooms, has been approved by the Registration and Inspection Unit but has been postponed until next summer. The public rooms downstairs, where any external meetings are held and the main office is located, convey a welcoming combination of practical homeliness and reassuring solidity.

The converted Coach House accommodates 3 day and 5 residential pupils, the Priory 3 day and 3 residential pupils, Elmtree 1 day and 4 residential pupils, Sycamore 3 day and 7 residential pupils and Belvidere accommodates 2 day and 7 residential pupils. Most of the school's registration conditions in respect of accommodation have now been met, with some agreement about the flexibility of certain rooms within an overall limit of 28 pupils. The school is conscious that many of its residents require a single room, for a variety of reasons, such as personal hygiene, being a victim of sexual abuse in the past, challenging behaviour or an inability to tolerate others at such close quarters, in addition to those who, by age or preference, request a single room, and has tried to accommodate their needs in allocating bedrooms. Many of these difficulties were overcome in the summer of 2000 with the completion of Sycamore House, when the requirements of the Registering Authority, in respect of a maximum of 2 children in a bedroom, were met, but the school is mindful of the need to provide accommodation of high quality and compatible with modern good practice (hence en suite bedrooms are being considered for the independent living units).

These other houses are furnished along Scandinavian lines, each reflecting their own individuality, and appear to function very much as ordinary homes. They are comfortable, clean and warm, being maintained by the house parents and co-workers, with some assistance from the children and young people, in line with their age, ability and developmental needs for increased responsibility and independent-living skills. Although the school has an ongoing programme of redecoration, repairs (employing a retired tradesman on a part-time basis to improve efficiency in this area) and replacement of furniture, the standard of furniture and fittings the school aspires to for both children and adults is reflected in Sycamore House, which is purpose-built and designed by a Camphill architect to provide facilities in keeping with the school's Functions and Objectives. Not only has attention been given to safety and privacy but also to using space to maximise the potential for a wide range of therapeutic and leisure activities, while limiting the time spent by adults on cleaning and maintenance, so that most energy is expended on the direct care of the children.

Throughout the houses, the inspection Officer observed a diversity in the extent to which children and young people personalised their bedroom space, some being content to bring a favourite soft toy and book from home, while others appeared to have made a 'home from home', with music systems, camcorders, laptops, shelves of books, rugs etc.. Again, Sycamore House exemplifies the school's encouragement of a 'nesting instinct' with the provision for each person of a bookcase, shelf, pinboard, chair and (shared) table, bedside table and lamp in addition to the basic bed and wardrobe. Tidiness is promoted but is not compulsory; care for a new building does not prohibit young people from sticking up their posters on freshly painted walls.

Nor does the school expect children to fit into the same pigeon-hole, but is willing to adapt to the particular child's needs. Accordingly, in consultation with the occupational therapist, it has created a specially constructed wooden 'open' framework, adult height, to partition off part of one of the double rooms in Sycamore for a child who needs the sense of security of a small enclosed area; the child has a clear vision of the rest of the room and the entrance gate has been constructed so as to encourage her to venture outside this area at her own pace, in the hope that this will not be a permanent feature. The parents of her room-mate, who has similar difficulties in settling down for the night, expressed interest in this feature and therefore, in addition to following bed-time rituals adopted by the parents, a similar construction has been added, without detriment to the overall appearance and use of the room. The young co-workers have also been busy in Sycamore and elsewhere in creative painting, a welcome change from conventional stencilling, of parts of bedroom walls to personalise them, especially important for those children who would find posters and pictures too tempting.

ASPECT OF CARE: ADMINISTRATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

In general terms, the school has used information technology to improve the efficiency and presentation of its administration, without any diminution in the quality of care; although only one of the joint co-ordinators is proficient in this area, one or two others have been keen to learn, as evidenced by the acquisition of

computers in some houses. The internet is an invaluable source of information and co-workers enjoy the convenience of e-mail in maintaining regular contact with their families and friends. A number of recommendations in last year's report for the more widespread use of proformas have been followed. Comments additional to those made elsewhere in this report are as follows:

- all co-workers are reminded to sign each daily log recording; for the sake of confidentiality the names of other young people should not be used, though initials may be adopted when clarity is required
- the new accident proforma should have room for the signature of the scribe as agreed previously
- consideration should be given to the appropriate use of charts/proformas when recording routine monitoring e.g. bowel movements, where this would ensure greater efficiency, facilitate evaluation or enable other daily records to be less stigmatising.

Tayside Fire Brigade's fire safety inspection report, based on a visit made on 15 October 2001, was satisfactory apart from a few points which were passed to the school for action. The use of a designated person to take responsibility for all fire checks throughout the various school buildings assists consistent application in this aspect. Apart from outside contracts to check on fire prevention and fire fighting equipment, regular fire drills are held, as required, and a random inspection of one house's records evidenced that new co-workers were properly inducted into procedures through training and drills. House parents use house meetings to remind co-workers of the importance of safety precautions, especially in a community where the use of open fires, candles and table lamps is commonplace. Environmental and Consumer services report that the premises are satisfactory in terms of the Food Safety Act 1990.

New co-workers are provided with basic first aid training under the auspices of Scottish Power as part of the induction week but other workers have a more comprehensive training, including refresher courses. Each house possesses a first aid kit.

The school is mindful of the need to ensure health and safety is considered in all aspects of school life; for instance, moving and handling training was a consideration in respect of those who may have to lift young people from time to time. The Inspection Officer was also informed of extra advice on security of the buildings sought from the police following two recent incidents of an intruder on the premises (no pupils were present and the person was apprehended).

STRENGTHS

Ochil Tower School continues to provide a good standard of physical care in respect of the following:

- its location within a relatively small but busy town community, enabling opportunities for integration at a measured pace
- Its grounds. are extensive but secluded and safe, offering a diversity of use - walking, gardening, and play
- its houses - again a diversity of size, lay-out and individual characteristics, with a clear intention in the development plan to expand or upgrade in line with national standards and local needs
- the emphasis on healthy eating, with use of organic foods where possible
- the family-style setting is based on the reality that most co-workers have their home-base within the houses and the ethos of 'shared living situations'
- the variety and quality of social activities, both within the houses and the school community itself, and externally, accessing the physical and educational/leisure resources of the area
- commitment to improving access to any therapeutic services, such as speech and language therapy

The school is ever mindful of the need to improve and develop service provision. This is evidenced in its Development Plan and in a number of strategies over the last year as follows:

- the increase in the number of day pupils
- its responsiveness in providing a package of care which meets the needs of a young person with no home base

- the acquisition of property for development as an independent living unit
- the approach to HMI of Education with a view to a formal inspection
- education and training of co-workers, with the move to nationally recognised qualifications
- recognition of employee/co-worker needs for recognised terms and conditions to ensure commitment and high morale - pensions, qualification and professional recognition through affiliation to national bodies.

The school works to foster and develop positive and mutually beneficial exchanges within a framework of partnership and social inclusion with other agencies as evidenced by the openness and warm welcome shown towards all visitors, the dialogue with Auchterarder High School, liaison with the local Education and Children's Services Department, and the participation in a variety of reviews in respect of individual pupils

The feedback from parents, as illustrated by the relatively high percentage of questionnaires returned, suggests that overall satisfaction with the quality of care and education is actually increasing. Both school and parents have a clear view of their respective roles in the lives of the children, share common aims and are appreciative of the need for regular, open and supportive communication. The progress of the children themselves, together with their expressed enjoyment of their time at Ochil Tower are the parents' main criteria for evidencing its success.

ISSUES REQUIRING ACTION

The Inspection Officer has agreed that 'consequences' is a term more reflective of the school's philosophy on care and control than the term 'sanction'. The standards and Guidance requires a 'well-maintained clear record of all care and control measures used which includes the date, names of staff and children and young people involved, and the reasons or consequences of the disciplinary measures'. It has been agreed that a 'C' in the margin of the child's log will be added to indicate such a measure, providing the above information is included. As there are five houses and sets of house parents, it is also important that the school keeps an overview of such recordings, noting consistency, patterns etc.

The school must ensure that old proformas, such as those for violent incidents and accidents, are destroyed, when updated, and that all co-workers are aware of the reasons for particular information being required.

The school should ensure that ALL pupils who are funded by social services departments and are therefore considered 'looked after' children, have their care plans reviewed according to the particular requirements of such reviews. The school is advised to request a copy of the social worker's own Care Plan for such pupils, and to discuss ways of linking up with any other agencies providing services, especially residential provision, so that the child experiences a consistency of practice across the care settings, wherever possible.

More detail of issues discussed and decisions or action required should be recorded on house and supervision minutes to make them intelligible and accountable.

The school is reminded of the need to sign each daily log recording and avoid use of the names of other children/young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

it is suggested that the school develop its care planning further, along the lines detailed in this report, to ensure the greater participation of co-workers, pupils and parents, increased focus on short term specific and achievable targets, and closer documentation of those objectives attained, albeit sometimes intuitively.

CONCLUSION

The report highlights a number of Required Actions 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.

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. Rachel Gillespie would like to thank the young people of Ochil Tower School for their welcome, openness and contributions during this inspection. The full co-operation of staff and management is also acknowledged.

Anyone who would like a copy of this report should apply to the Registration and Inspection Unit, Social Work Services, 3-5 High Street, Perth. Telephone 01738 476727.

Plan of Action and Implementation Timetable

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

**FURTHER TO THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND INSPECTION OF
OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL ON 20, 21 & 22 NOEMBER 2001**

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Establishment Plan of Action, including Timescale
Issues Requiring Action	
<p>1. The Inspection Officer has agreed that 'consequences' is a term more reflective of the school's philosophy on care and control than the term 'sanction'. The standards and Guidance requires a 'well-maintained clear record of all care and control measures used which includes the date, names of staff and children and young people involved, and the reasons or consequences of the disciplinary measures'. It has been agreed that a 'C' in the margin of the child's log will be added to indicate such a measure, providing the above information is included. As there are five houses and sets of house parents, it is also important that the school keeps an overview of such recordings, noting consistency, patterns etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy Statement has been up-dated to include the proposals made in the report.. • In place
<p>2. The school must ensure that old proformas, such as those for violent incidents and accidents, are destroyed, when updated, and that all co-workers are aware of the reasons for particular information being required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In place

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

**FURTHER TO THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND INSPECTION OF
OCHIL TOWER SCHOOL ON 20, 21 & 22 NOEMBER 2001**

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Establishment Plan of Action, including Timescale
<p>3. The school should ensure that ALL pupils who are funded by social services departments and are therefore considered 'looked after' children, have their care plans reviewed according to the particular requirements of such reviews. The school is advised to request a copy of the social worker's own Care Plan for such pupils, and to discuss ways of linking up with any other agencies providing services, especially residential provision, so that the child experiences a consistency of practice across the care settings, wherever possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In place
<p>4. More detail of issues discussed and decisions or action required should be recorded on house and supervision minutes to make them intelligible and accountable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree • On going
<p>5. The school is reminded of the need to sign each daily log recording and avoid use of the names of other children/young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree • On going
Recommendations for Good Practice	
<p>1. It is suggested that the school develop its care planning further, along the lines detailed in this report, to ensure the greater participation of co-workers, pupils and parents, increased focus on short term specific and achievable targets, and closer documentation of those objectives attained, albeit sometimes intuitively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new-format Care and Education Plans will be submitted at each pupil's 6-monthly review. The implication is that by June 2002 all plans will have been up-dated and some will already have been review. • June 2002