

Inspection report

Ochil Tower School School Care Accommodation Service

27 Keptie Road
Arbroath DD11 3ED

Inspected by: Rachel Gillespie
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 4 September 2008

Ochil Tower School

Service name

Ochil Tower School

Service address

140 High Street
Auchterarder
PH3 1AD

Type of care service

School Care Accommodation Service

Provider name

Ochil Tower School

Service number

CS2003009785

Date Inspection Completed

04 September 2008

Type of inspection

Unannounced

Period since last inspection

28 January 2008

Care Commission Office

Central East
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
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Introduction

Ochil Tower School is an independent, non-denominational school for children and young people with additional support needs, aged between 5 and 18 years. It provides education for day pupils and, since 1 April 2002, is also registered with the Care Commission to provide 28 residential places. 35 pupils were on the school roll, including 27 on a residential basis, at the time of the inspection. From time to time, the school is part of the programme of integrated inspections of special residential schools being undertaken jointly by HMIE and the Care Commission.

The 'curative education' approach, combining social care, education and therapy, is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, adapted by Karl Konig, the founder of the world-wide Camphill movement. Day to day management is the responsibility of 4 joint co-ordinators, who, with other experienced and permanent co-workers whose home is the school, form the core group members. Other co-workers, many from overseas, spend a year or more at Ochil Tower assisting with care and education. There is also a small number of paid staff, mostly ancillary workers.

The five houses and three school buildings are set in grounds located unobtrusively off the main street of Auchterarder, 14 miles west of Perth, enabling the school to be part of the local community. The grounds also offer facilities for gardening, rearing animals and play activities, as part of the curriculum.

According to Ochil Tower School, its three aims and objectives are realised in:

- 'a form of community life which recognises the universality of the human spirit as an essential element in its formation and working. Expression is given to this in the celebration of festivals, concern for the environment and mutual care.
- 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 preparation and sharing of meals, caring for the household and surroundings, creating social events and so on.
- operating financially so that there is a flexible relationship between work and payment for work done'.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - Grade 5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 4 - Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

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Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

This report was compiled following an unannounced inspection which took place over one day on 1 September 2008, followed by feedback later in the week

Before the inspection

The Annual Return

The school had submitted its Annual Return, which gave information about the service.

The Self-assessment Form

The service submitted a Self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission. This contained information on what the service thought they did well, and how they thought some things could be improved. It also included information on how service users participated in the process.

Views of service users

The Care Commission did not use questionnaires. The Care Commission Officers met with senior pupils as a class group and some individuals informally and at lunch.

This service was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of the inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Area (IFA) and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity. This will include a sample/grade of a services user quality statement from each Quality Theme and a sample/grade of IFA or an additional Quality Statement (chosen by the CCO) in each Theme. This inspection was based upon requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection on 28 January 2008.

During the inspection process

The inspection was carried out by Rachel Gillespie and Jane Blair, Care Commission Officers (CCOs).

At the end of the inspection, the Rachel Gillespie gave feedback to four

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members of the core group including two joint coordinators

Evidence was gathered from a number of sources including those taken into account at the last inspection, when Ochil Tower School agreed to take part in a trial of the Care Commission's new inspection methodology:

Staff at this inspection:

- Three joint coordinators individually
- Four co-workers as a group
- Speech and Language Therapist

Telephone calls to two parents

A review of a range of policies, procedures, records and other documentation, including the following:

- School Policy Statement, including Aims, Child Protection, Health and Safety and Complaints
- Photographic information - school diaries and Welcome to Ochil Tower School
- Co-worker records including training, supervision meeting minutes and tutor assessments
- Meeting minutes for Board of Directors, core group and houses
- Surveys of pupils (January 2008) and parents (April 2007 - education, and August 2008)
- 3 pupil files (including health records, risk assessments and Review documentation)

The Care Commission Officer's observations of

- the interactions between the co-workers and pupils, and
- the general environment and equipment used in the provision of the service.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09

Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at: <http://www.carecommission.com/>

The Inspection Focus Areas for this inspection were:

- Physical Health and wellbeing
- Child Protection
- Notifications to SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council)

The CCO took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting specific aspects of the following Quality Themes derived from the National Care Standards for School Care Accommodation:

1. Quality of Care and Support
2. Quality of Environment
3. Quality of Staffing
4. Quality of Management and Leadership

The inspection also took into account the Regulation of Care Act (Scotland) 2001 and the Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002/114.

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in

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respect of fire safety, as of 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which the care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw.

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

There were no requirements were made at the last inspection.

Comment on Self-Assessment

The school had reviewed the Self-assessment document submitted earlier in January 2008. This was completed to a satisfactory standard and gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes and Statements. The service identified its strengths and some areas for future development and gave evidence of service user involvement.

Views of Service Users

Pupils were generally very settled into the rhythms of school life, some having spent their first weekend of the new session at Ochil Tower School, when the focus was on activities. During the formal session and at lunch, most pupils were relaxed and happy to volunteer their views on school life and people in the school community. These are referenced within this report.

Views of Carers

The Care Commission did not formally seek the views of parents and carers on this occasion, but spoke to two parents by telephone, who spoke very positively about their child's experiences of the school, and the quality of their own communication with co-workers. Specific comments are included in this report.

Comments from documentation within the school, including questionnaires, included:

'Ochil Tower School has been excellent for our child and he loves going to school'.

'Thank you so much for doing so much for A. We have seen such a difference in him, in his confidence and independence, and it's lovely to know he is starting to make friends'.

'Thanks for such a detailed report. He's certainly had a very settled weekend

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at home and is quite happy about being at Ochil Tower School'.

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Quality Assessment Framework Themes and Statements

Theme - Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grade – 5 - Very Good

Quality Statement 1.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.**

Strengths:

The school had a very good range of methods to involve parents and young people in planning, delivery and review of arrangements for their care and support and contributing to improvements. In January 2008, most of the 33 pupils (day/residential) participated in an interactive computer questionnaire to survey their views, based on the quality statements. Almost everyone said they were very satisfied with the school. Those less able to communicate verbally indicated their views through selecting photographs of activities. Co-workers assisted pupils, as required. Specific comments from the survey will be included in this report. The Self-assessment also referred to a parent survey (April 2007), which, while focussed on education, reflected general views about the quality of the service overall. One commented that 'the care, personal one to one attention and education are of exceptionally excellent quality'. Nine parents so far had responded to a recent survey (August) asking parents to grade the school in respect of the four quality themes. Eight rated the school as providing an excellent service, one as very good, in this theme. For example, they confirmed the school 'encourage[d] and support[ed] children to develop as individuals' and 'establish[ed] appropriate, supportive relationships with children'.

Pupil files evidenced pupils and their families had very good opportunities to influence the planning and delivery of the service. Parents attended statutory reviews to share equally in decision-making alongside key professionals, with pupils participating according to ability and wishes. One parent spoke of her child making a presentation of his life at school at his review. LAAC (Looked After and Accommodated Children) 'Having Your Say' forms ('It's a good place for me') and the presence of the child's keyworker, experienced in children's individualised communication skills and aids, helped children to express their opinions. This support was also observed in the discussion group. For example, some had difficulty in identifying how Ochil Tower School had helped to make a difference, so a co-worker reminded a pupil of his achievements and personal growth. Records and telephone discussion with a parent indicated the school also welcomed the use of independent advocates to support parents to articulate their views. Similarly, a joint coordinator spoke about the benefits of an extensive pre-admission period, exchanging information with families and building up a trusting partnership. Parents confirmed this provided a positive base for communicating any concerns directly. Inclusive processes also included keyworkers involving pupils in compiling their personal 'journals' each evening, when reflecting on their day, and helping them write their weekly class reports, often accompanied by

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photos, to take home to parents. One parent in the August survey commended co-workers who, 'Always discuss with pupil and parent how things will be implemented and dealt with. Allow children to integrate into "normal" society with help, to be independent individuals'.

Between reviews, the organisational structure of Camphill communities, with co-workers living side by side with pupils and each other, provided natural channels of daily communication and monitoring of pupils' progress. This enabled co-workers to pick up on non-verbal cues from pupils as well as their expressed views. In turn, most parents in the 2007 survey and the two contacted by phone commented positively on phone-calls, letters and school-home diaries as effective forms of communication. A sample of contact books evidenced a very good two-way flow of weekly communication such as 'Thank you for the timetable and the other information. It gave me an idea of the sort of things to talk about at weekends.' All parties suggested this minimised any difficulties in care and support in the transition, weekly and each term, between home and school.

Areas for Improvement:

The school indicated they had fed back a summary of the pupil survey to parents. The latest survey took place immediately before the inspection, so the school had not had an opportunity to report back its findings to parents, including any plans for development. Only one parent had indicated 'communication with home' as a very 'minor' improvement, which the school needed to explore.

The Self-assessment indicated the school intended to further investigate approaches to involve all young people assessing and developing the service. They felt that current systems seemed to favour young people with verbal communication skills.

The school had no systematic means of collecting, collating and analysing information from pupils' and parents' discussions, comments and concerns for use in informing potential improvements.
(See recommendation 1.)

The Self assessment noted a few parents in 2007 expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of communication about their child's educational progress. The school had initially reconsidered the benefits or otherwise of resuming parents' evenings, and concluded they should re-instate feed-back forms for School Reports.

CCO Grading	5 - Very Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	1

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Theme - Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grade - 5 – Very Good

Quality Statement 1.3 **We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.**

Strengths:

This statement related to the Inspection Focus Area Physical Health. Ochil Tower School made excellent provision for promoting pupils' physical health and well-being. Daily logs, photographs and contact books evidenced a wide variety of physical activities within the grounds, through local walks and further afield. Pupils had access to a healthy, balanced diet based on organic foods and home-grown fruit and vegetables where possible. Co-workers modified menus to meet the dietary requirements of individual pupils. Some pupils spoke knowledgeably about what made them fit, healthy and feel good about themselves. A parent spoke of how her child was eating healthier foods and being more adventurous. The school continued to develop its personal and social education programmes across care and education, including the area of healthy living and sex education. Co-workers described, and were observed, attending to diet, exercise and personal hygiene as part of daily routines in community life, especially taking account of pupils' varying dependency needs. Co-worker guidance on writing daily logs highlighted various medical, health and hygiene aspects which might have a bearing on short-term targets and longer term aims in Care and Education Plans. Co-workers spoke of monitoring and supporting pupils to learn how to manage specific health conditions while participating in energetic, fun activities. Risk assessment forms identified relevant risk factors, medical, dietary and intimate care, for instance, and co-workers put in place written strategies for managing them. Through encouragement and practical support, the school promoted the advantages of regular exercise for those less mobile or energetic in terms of weight maintenance, mobility and mood enhancement. Co-workers, mostly non-smokers, generally provided good role models, with Ochil Tower School now a non-smoking campus.

Records evidenced most pupils were registered with the local GP and took advantage of the local school dental service which visited the school. Files demonstrated appropriate systems were in place for use of home remedies, including those homeopathic remedies recommended by the school's Camphill physician who visited the school periodically. The joint coordinator for health issues had taken advice from the Care Commission's professional adviser when reviewing medication procedures and had excellent links with the local pharmacist. The school's admission form and nutrition report collated a detailed health history of the child from discussion with parents at admission, GP health checks, LAAC nurse assessments and education and specialists' correspondence. The joint coordinator worked very closely with parents and professionals to ensure all medical and health needs were met promptly. All appointments and any times when the child felt unwell were efficiently noted in a sequential medical record. Children's records indicated a range of conditions, such as eating, sleeping and bowel problems, eczema, epilepsy and asthma, as well as those especially associated with autism, such

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as obsessive behaviours, some constituting self-injury. Co-workers said the joint coordinator gave excellent support to them, and records confirmed they had suitable training in First Aid, epilepsy and other conditions, as required. Discussion evidenced the joint coordinator also liaised extremely well with a range of professionals, often attending hospital appointments with parents and coordinating medication and other therapies. Previous discussion indicated the school actively pursued extra resources such as psychiatric consultation, physiotherapy and art therapy, while some co-workers had delegated authority to liaise directly with therapists about exercises and suchlike.

In recent years, the school had recognised the value of recruiting its own speech and language therapist, a former co-worker with the advantage of understanding the specific nature of the pupils' needs and Camphill's ethos. She said all children were assessed initially and those requiring support were seen weekly. Additionally, she advised co-workers how best to support children with exercises through daily routines, like cleaning teeth. She added she was available to teachers, co-workers and parents for consultation, including home visits. For example, one parent wanted to know what the child would eat to expand limited preferences, so they tried using talking mats.

Other than house life and classroom education, the third aspect of curative education was therapy, to promote physical and mental health. In recent years this had been developed more fully by the joint coordinator, qualified in various complementary therapies. She used the provision of a therapeutic base, complete with facilities for oil baths and massage, to assist diagnosis and programmes for individual pupils. These therapies were part of a number of strategies to help de-stress pupils. Sometimes the school used specialist equipment to improve competence and therefore quality of life, as with the use of a toilet-chair to facilitate continence or a theraplay bike to help coordination.

Areas for Improvement:

The school indicated the pupil survey had shown that a small minority of pupils did not like some aspects of the diet and had a number of approaches to address this. The Self-assessment also identified further moves to whole food products and reduction in salt and sugar, using an incremental approach, to reflect the need to take account of some pupils' particular difficulty in managing change, especially in relation to food. Minutes evidenced the school had arranged for additional nationally recognised training in food and health for the Core group in 2008. The school was aware of its responsibility to continue to develop these approaches across all aspects of school life as a health-promoting school in line with new legislative requirements.

As part of ongoing use of workshops and conferences, the joint coordinator indicated she would shortly be attending the SIRCC conference Healthy Care Matters.

CCO Grading	6 – Excellent
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 5 – Very Good

Quality Statement 2.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.**

Strengths:

Information recorded under Quality Statement 1.1 has also been taken into account here.

Ochil Tower School used a very good number of methods to involve young people and parents in assessing and improving the quality of the environment. The school felt their new photographic Welcome to Ochil Tower, featuring facilities and pupils enjoying themselves, had proved a more meaningful introduction than written information. Likewise, the new session's school diaries, with photographs of pupils participating in school life, provided parents with a regular reminder of the range of resources available for pupils. Attendance at regular reviews and the annual Family Day gave opportunities for parents to view the school as a whole. Records referred to a parent joining the school's latest 'long trek' as part of its role to promote family relationships. Another parent said she was welcome to visit any time, especially at birthdays. A co-worker had noted telephone feedback from one parent who had enjoyed the class photo book, seeing how many things her child had taken part in.

Again all parental responses in surveys spoke of the excellent environment, where 'children feel safe, protected and valued'. 'Staff are like family that assist the child to feel safe'. One co-worker explained how, in consulting with parents and a new pupil, the latter had spoken about how at his previous school the staff had knocked and walked into his room to wake him up. The co-worker viewed this comment as a timely reminder to adults slip into such poor practice, which would disrespect young people's right to privacy.

Board of Directors' minutes confirmed the Self-assessment evidence that the school prioritised a high standard of physical environment and ongoing development, comprising 22% of income. Photographs showed children were involved in laying foundation stones and opening ceremonies, which parents could view during major developments on the frequently-updated website. Similarly, senior pupils were consulted about priorities in spending a Scottish Executive grant in 2007, where their views on computers and football were taken into account.

90% pupils surveyed said they enjoyed living in Ochil Tower and liked their house and room. They were involved in personalising their rooms, which were well-furnished and reflected their own level of tidiness, as demonstrated by one young person. Similarly, photos and observation evidenced more able pupils contributed to the care of their living space, whether helping with dishes, baking, gardening or learning to iron. The school reported it had extended the number of individual 'safe spaces' to reflect their success in

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meeting pupils' needs. This individualised approach to provision of resources was reflected in other aspects of Care and Education Plans (CEPs): food, intimate care, communication and activities. Successive inspections had noted how access to five different houses facilitated some differentiation of service appropriate to the age, stage and personality for each pupil during his/her stay. For instance, Belvidere had a number of experienced co-workers better equipped to work with senior pupils who might be verbally or physically challenging at times. One parent commented on the presence of a more mature female as being important for a child who looked for a 'mother figure'. Sycamore provided a more nurturing, quieter setting while Elmtree was smaller and more compact, which suited some pupils. Over the years, the school had recognised the need for all pupils to have single rooms for very good reasons. However, they listened to requests for specific houses or rooms, responding positively to them where possible.

Pupils were able to list a variety of activities they enjoyed and the school tried to meet their choices and preferences. For example, pupils at lunch spoke enthusiastically about a Sunday trip mountain-biking at Tentsmuir, especially getting covered in muddy water. However, the joint coordinator explained how one pupil chose quieter activities like watching a DVD. All pupils decided how to spend their birthday: some preferred a meal out, others a large party in the school hall. One pupil said they were currently exploring the possibility of paint-balling or Laser Quest. Records indicated the school promoted children's right to voice their aspirations. Again, classroom projects provided pupils with opportunities to plan, effect and evaluate new ideas, on a team or individual basis, building confidence as well as skills. For example, previous inspections noted their direct participation in the design and construction of the adventure playground. Observation of pupils' activities confirmed Ochil Tower School was continuing to make progress as an Eco School, now recycling 70% of its waste. Co-workers explained how this was a very practical way of raising pupil awareness and involving them in more responsibility for the local and wider environment.

Areas for Improvement:

The Self-assessment indicated they needed to review maintenance arrangements.

The service needs to evidence how it involves pupils, and parents especially, more systematically in assessing and identifying areas for improvement in the environment, and how this is translated into its development plan.
(See recommendation 1.)

CCO Grading	5 – Very Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 5 – Very Good

Quality Statement 2.2 We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected

Strengths:

This statement included the Inspection Focus Area of Child Protection.

The service had very good arrangements to ensure children were safe. The school's child protection policy, for co-workers, placing agencies and parents, met the requirements of the Care Commission. The joint coordinator, who was the child protection coordinator, was also responsible for admissions. She advised she used parents' first visit to highlight safeguarding responsibilities in terms of meeting vulnerable pupils' needs. All new co-workers undertook training in child protection during their intensive induction week and as part of the one year Foundation Course in Curative Education and Social Therapy. The coordinator was studying for SIRCC's MSc in Advanced Residential Childcare. This enabled her to network with colleagues elsewhere, to explore challenging dilemmas and to share good practice. When interviewed, the speech and language therapist was fully aware of child protection procedures. She also spoke of pupils sometimes telling her things which they might not tell co-workers and how she had shared these appropriately with the child protection coordinator and /or other house parents. The coordinator indicated how greater use of augmentative communication, such as Makaton, had improved pupils' ability to communicate concerns with each other and adults.

The school believed its high adult:child ratios, ethos and organisational structure provided a protective framework for identifying any concerns and responding in a sensitive, child-centred way, which took account of the context and meaning for that individual. The coordinator described how they dealt with children's allegations, through following guidelines, liaising closely with other professionals and parents and reviewing the child's immediate safety. Co-workers placed great emphasis on risk assessments of individual pupils over and above safeguards such as single bedrooms, adult supervision and judicious use of mechanical devices like night-time alarms. Discussion suggested they took their responsibility for keeping vulnerable pupils safe very seriously, while promoting more able pupils' own personal awareness, responsibility and self-confidence in protecting themselves. Incident records evidenced concerns often centred on how pupils interacted with each other. Discussion evidenced the school monitored children's reactions to the pupil grouping within each house, prior to each session and at critical incidents, to ensure they were placed in the setting which promoted their potential through new challenges, while ensuring a sense of personal safety. A co-worker recorded the response of one parent whose child had recently moved: 'B's mum expressed she is happy with his move. He seems to be very happy and he is now starting to talk about how he is getting on at the school'. A parent confirmed written accounts of how the school had responded promptly and sensitively in dealing with a specific situation. She was especially pleased about their openness and willingness to work together, specifically through

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home visits.

Equally, the school recognised the importance of building up children's resilience and ability to engage on equal terms in the world. They encouraged membership of external youth organisations, the scouts and army cadets being two which several pupils had explored recently. The CCOs observed how co-workers supported these initiatives, through their interest and practical support (sewing on badges). A letter from one organisation confirmed their appreciation for the coordinator's input into their pastoral training following a bullying incident. Only occasionally did a pupil show behaviour requiring some form of physical intervention. In such circumstances, risk assessments were updated accordingly, as records evidenced.

Areas for Improvement:

The Child Protection Coordinator was advised of a local Independent Schools Child Protection Group which enables school child protection officers to network and share information on national and local developments and resources.

CCO Grading	5 – Very Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 5 – Very Good

Quality Statement 3.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.**

Strengths:

Information recorded under Quality Statement 1.1 has also been taken into account here.

Ochil Tower School was very responsive to pupils' and parents' comments in relation to assessing and improving the quality of staffing provided by the service. The pupil survey showed almost all were positive or felt alright about their keyworker, houseparent and teacher and felt that they and other children were well looked after. During the group discussion, one pupil explained how he had been upset after his former keyworker left, so his new one arranged for him to phone her. Another explained how he often found it helped to talk to a co-worker about issues in the house. Some pupils were more able than others to say what made a good co-worker: listening, being funny and being 'nice'.

Several parents in the 2007 survey commented very favourably on the attentiveness of house parents and keyworkers in maintaining constant contact, as noted above. Seven parental responses in August rated staffing as excellent in terms of 'co-workers having a good knowledge and understanding of children's needs and being sufficiently skilled, trained and experienced'. Two said staffing was very good. The latter confirmed they had never had any problems with any co-worker and commented, 'The co-workers are very understanding and helpful to the child's needs as well as the parents. They are extremely friendly and approachable'. This was demonstrated by a parent, with daily contact, bringing to the school's attention a child's allegation about a co-worker. This was appropriately investigated and not found to have substance. There had been no complaints from parents or pupils to the school about the service.

The Self-assessment stated that it was the pupils' needs which dictated the staffing arrangements. A joint coordinator spoke of its organisational structure, with overlapping co-worker roles acting as a protective and nurturing circle of concern and care. Co-workers spoke of the careful matching of pupil to keyworker. For example, the pupil's keyworker transferred with him/her to a new house, where this was beneficial, as evidenced recently. Similarly, they responded to behavioural signs from young people, by changing the keyworker of a pupil observed not to be relating to a co-worker, as records illustrated.

Co-workers spoke of communal living contributing to very effective communication, supplemented by efficient recording, with no requirement for formal handovers. Records showed the school's flexibility in providing fortnightly respite care on a regular or crisis basis offered continuity of care,

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with the same provider, to pupils and reassurance to families. Similarly, admission and review documents evidenced a willingness to engage with families to identify issues - sleep, eating and insecurity - and provide solutions. Co-workers said that this required them to communicate very sensitively with parents who may have struggled for years or still be experiencing difficulties at home. House parents spoken with evidenced they were also very good at listening to children and advocating for resources to help families at home.

The school had recognised the key importance of facilitating pupils' communication skills. Part of the speech and language therapist's role was to provide initial induction training to new co-workers in Makaton and regular updates. This enabled co-workers to maintain their skills and so encourage pupils to become more proficient through copying and practice. The therapist herself had noted improvements in pupils' signing and a certain pride in their achievements, such as using their own name. She advised parents too had commented on improvements in children's pronunciation and other aspects.

Areas for Improvement:

The Self-assessment indicated that the needs of pupils would continue to strongly influence training and staffing issues.

In response to the group discussion on 'what makes a good co-worker', the joint coordinator suggested this was something the school could pursue further with pupils, to inform their selection and training of co-workers.

Discussion suggested that the school needed to explore more ways in which it might engage parents in assessing and improving the quality of staffing specifically. The school traditionally had a parent representative on its Board of Directors. It was recognised the service had tried parents' evenings in the past, with limited success. Equally, many families did not live within easy reach of the school and had other commitments. Co-workers from overseas were recruited and selected through indirect means, using modern technology. Recruitment of employed staff locally was very rarely required, further limiting opportunities for involvement of pupils or parents.

One parent referred to giving written permission for her child's involvement in a research observation. However, the school did not use former parents or pupils in its induction or Foundation training to help new workers understand their perspective. Likewise, while co-workers completed a feedback questionnaire when they left, the school did not carry out exit interviews or questionnaires with pupils or parents, where participants might feel more able to comment on this or any other aspect of the service.

The school had no means of collecting, collating and analysing information, relating to co-workers and other staff, from pupils' and parents' discussions, comments and concerns, at Reviews, for example, for use in informing potential improvements.

(See recommendation 1.)

CCO Grading

5 – Very Good

Number of Requirements

1

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Number of Recommendations **1**

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Theme - Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 5 – Very Good

Quality Statement 3.3 We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Strengths:

Ochil Tower School provided excellent opportunities for co-workers to develop as individuals and professionals within a strongly supportive learning environment. Building on an intensive residential induction week, all those new to Camphill took part in a one year in-house Foundation Course. The Foundation programme evidenced four sessions a fortnight, ranging from core input on child protection, First Aid and legislation to therapeutic interventions, communication and reflective practice. One co-worker commented in his probationary assessment: 'I found the training course valuable and useful in applying the theory to practice'.

Records evidenced annual updating of the Foundation Course's content to reflect specific needs of current pupils and feedback from evaluation forms. Individual contributors also spoke of researching further materials as part of their own knowledge development, evidenced by a joint coordinator's SSSC Post-Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) Record of Achievement. Co-workers referred to the school having a 'learning culture', reflected in their now well-established Brunch Group. These young co-workers voluntarily met on alternate Sundays as a social gathering to explore issues like trust, leadership and touch through role-play, games and discussion. They spoke of sharing reading materials relevant to specific conditions to extend their understanding. The group of co-workers interviewed expressed great enthusiasm and were highly motivated, because they could identify how such self-reflection made a difference to their work with children. The Care Commission Officer was aware from comments over recent years how more experienced co-workers throughout the community set a very good example for personal study, using free time after children went to bed, weekends and holidays.

The Self-assessment, supported by records, stated 94% of co-workers were either in training or had acquired a relevant qualification within the previous two years. Joint coordinators said most co-workers were registered with the SSSC. This represented a huge shift towards qualifications recognised by the SSSC from five years ago, when only a few were suitably qualified. It had influenced retention of younger co-workers who now often stayed beyond one or two years, creating a more experienced team of carers and continuity of care. Records showed all four joint coordinators (and three of the core group) had a social work qualification or BA in Curative Education, with plans to achieve the equivalent of the Registered Manager Award in the near future. Three joint coordinators were undertaking post-graduate qualifications, one linked to his specialist responsibility of training and development, through a focus on research. A further 11 co-workers, who had been at the school or another Camphill community for at least 2 years, were at various stages of

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study for the BA in Curative Education. The school attributed this huge investment in professional training, mainly through Camphill Rudolf Steiner School and Aberdeen University, but also OUP, SIRCC and other institutions of choice, to individual commitment and organisational support. The school felt it was essential to enhance the skills levels in order to manage the challenge of pupils' complex needs and improve their quality of life.

The school had excellent systems for evaluating the impact of its training, evidenced through various co-worker meeting minutes. These included probationary assessments at 8 weeks, appraisal tutorials every term in the first year, regular supervision and support from house parents and class teachers, university tutorials and annual appraisals. The joint coordinators said this established the good learning practice of student self assessment and feedback from others. One particular expression of this was the tradition of students presenting their course work - case studies and dissertations (for example on leadership or transition) - to their colleagues for critical evaluation. Their research and learning provided enlightenment for future interventions, which were shared with parents too. Senior workers, role models themselves, explained how they also evaluated effectiveness of training in influencing outcomes, through constant interaction of community living. This scrutiny and sharing of ideas included house meetings, whose minutes often referred to some practice issue as a discussion point. The school believed these systems also ensured any poor practice was quickly noted and addressed.

The group of co-workers interviewed at inspection were well-informed about legislation, National Care Standards and good practice tools. They recognised the importance of using theoretical knowledge alongside information from parents and their own experience of good practice to inform their work with pupils. In particular, some commented on the professional rewards of meeting with parents and other professionals at Reviews to experience different perspectives of the child and explore what worked and why. Discussion of this ability to engage productively in such meetings suggested they were confident in their professional identity and competence.

Areas for Improvement:

The January 2007 inspection report evidenced examples of good practice in ensuring co-workers had a good understanding of the application of the SSSC's Codes of Practice. The school should consider how it might take the Codes into account during this Self-assessment and internal audit.

CCO Grading	6 - Excellent
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 4 - Good

Quality Statement 4.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.**

Strengths:

Information recorded under Quality Statement 1.1 has also been taken into account here.

There was a good range of opportunities for young people and parents to participate in assessing and improving the quality of management and leadership provided by the service. The School Policy Statement set out sources of information for auditing, as part of the self-evaluation contributing to its development planning. These sources were internal (pupils, co-workers and working groups) and external (parents, professionals and the Care Commission).

About two thirds of pupils surveyed felt co-workers and house parents got on well with each other and co-workers did a good job running the school (some pupils may not fully have understood the question). Likewise, most of those parents who responded to the questionnaire focussed on education were very positive about the service as a whole. Of the nine parents responding to the August questionnaire, six, two and one felt that the quality of management and leadership was excellent, very good or good respectively. One commented that the joint coordinators were 'always aware and dealt with co-workers and pupils appropriately' and that 'communication is done extremely well, through phone calls and letters'. One parent said the admission processes helped to clarify the roles of the joint coordinators, while the website was a good source of information on other co-workers. She had welcomed the recent questionnaires as an opportunity to comment on the service. Pupils spoken with and observed knew who was 'in charge' and that they were the people to go to in certain situations. They had direct access to managers, as house parents, teachers and suchlike, enabling them to communicate views, ideas and concerns more easily. The joint coordinators said the replacement of the pupil council with discussion at the senior class group, class assemblies and house meetings was more effective. These, as observed, provided a safe forum for pupils to become confident in expressing opinions about the running of the school. The Board of Directors minutes evidenced that, on occasion, pupils gave presentations, such as their 'favourite things to do', and the Board also shared a meal in the houses. Some retired members still lived as part of the community, so pupils talked with them regularly, as observed.

A strong children's rights approach, evidenced through discussion, provided a positive framework for respect for children's views. In turn, the learning culture, and ethos of self-reflection and positive regard for families created an environment where co-workers and managers believed they were receptive to

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feedback. Pupils, as observed, enjoyed spending time talking with co-workers and friends in the kitchen. Some were comfortable popping their heads round doors and being invited to join in discussions with visitors when this was appropriate.

The updated School Policy Statement and handbooks for families, alongside the website, provided families with information about personnel and main developments. The website also included inspection reports from 1998, which the school valued as an important reflection of the school's strengths and progress, albeit of more interest to professionals.

Members of the core group expressed the view that families judged management and leadership of the school by its success in effecting improvements for their own child. They referred to parents' sense of relief, knowing their children were happy. If the school achieved this, parents said, they too could relax. One parent, who had not got her first choice, in hindsight, was delighted Ochil Tower was proposed, as it best met her child's needs. From their own informal feedback, the school felt they had succeeded in this. The Care Commission Officers observed that pupils were happy, self-confident, and active in pursuing their objectives and had a capacity to communicate effectively with a wide range of people.

Areas for Improvement:

The school had more limited evidence of information from pupils and parents in assessing and improving the quality of its management and leadership. The school felt it needed to identify relevant and effective ways of gathering evidence which were efficient and did not detract from time spent on providing direct care and support to pupils. Other than the parent Board member, it did not involve parents in focus groups, nor did it seek parents' views when revising its policies and procedures, perhaps by greater use of electronic communication. One parent commented that perhaps the school could be more proactive in sharing information of a more general nature with parents, though they were happy to answer questions and provided inspection reports.

The last inspection suggested the school should consider how to share current information about the effectiveness of its management and leadership so pupils and parents might be motivated and informed to make comment on this. An annual report, with opportunity to give feedback, in some user-friendly format is one suggestion. This also provides a means of identifying and celebrating good practice.

(See recommendation 3, continued from the last inspection)

The participation strategy specifically should indicate how the school proposes to involve pupils and parents in the Self-assessment process. The views of pupils and parents, verifying the Self-assessment or otherwise, form a key part of the Care Commission inspection.

(See recommendation 1 and 4. continued from the last inspection)

The school had formerly linked up new parents with others where this was welcomed. Telephone discussion with two parents indicated this was something they would like to explore. One parent had been disappointed to

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miss the parents' fun day, which she viewed as an opportunity to meet parents with common issues and to develop links with other families. She thought this might help to strengthen pupils' friendships and social networks beyond the school environment. The school might revisit this aspect again.

CCO Grading	4 - Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading - 4 - Good

Quality Statement 4.4 **We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.**

Strengths:

This statement related to the Inspection Focus Area of Notifications of staff misconduct to the Scottish Social Service Council (Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 Section 57A.)

The school had good quality assurance systems in place. The Self-assessment set out the school's own quality assurance framework of eight key processes and structures. For example, a joint coordinator, supported by some documentary evidence, explained how a training session with relatively new co-workers evidenced the centrality and effectiveness of the school's ethos in its work. Again, he cited the organisational structure, training, and calibre of co-workers together facilitating an immediate, informed child-centred responsiveness to any situation, which was part of a quality service. He also identified the critical feedback from parents, referring professionals and local authorities, whose continued use of the school, evidenced by its 100% occupancy, validated the success of its processes in meeting the needs of its pupils.

The joint management structure of four joint coordinators enabled clear allocation of specific responsibilities, often as working groups, for different aspects, including health and safety, recruitment, and those referred to earlier. Arrangements for planning, delivery and review of children's care and education plans indicated the school used systematic evaluation, including use of assessment information, and discussion of its work. Parents and pupils also had opportunities for contributing to the evaluation of the service through questionnaires and both formal and informal discussion. The school had welcomed a student, visitors from overseas, and a Lay Assessor to speak to pupils on three occasions, as part of Care Commission inspections. This cooperation evidenced their openness to scrutiny.

Likewise, this inspection evidenced proven methods for identifying co-workers' training needs were in place together with robust training plans whose contribution to improved outcomes for children was routinely evaluated. The school's policy statement indicated core group members had designated responsibilities for liaising with external organisations, such as SIRCC and Association of Heads of Residential Schools. Together with individuals' professional development links through training, conferences and Reviews, co-workers had access to best practice and other perspectives with which to make comparisons and re-evaluate their practice.

The policy statement referred to regular auditing of records in respect of administration of medication, which co-workers confirmed. House parents routinely checked to see recording was consistent with written guidance. The

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organisation of the school ensured that everyone's practice at all levels was open to scrutiny, while there were supportive systems for addressing any shortfalls. An administrator efficiently ensured review and other documentation reached parents and other professionals promptly. Parents commented favourably on the school's professional approach to maintaining communication in general.

Co-workers, selected for their professional potential as well as personal qualities, spoke positively about being valued for their critical appraisal of practice. For example, one recognised that a rigorous but flexible approach was required to communicate effectively with a range of different parents. Co-workers also had opportunities to contribute to the strategic direction of the service, especially by applying to become one of the core group, of whom they now comprised four. One such person explained how he had been part of discussions as to how best to encourage feedback from parents on management and leadership. Minutes demonstrated the Board heard presentations by joint coordinators from time to time. The Self-assessment cited one example, Children's Legislation and Moral Leadership as forming part of the school's review of its aims and objectives.

Notifications

In relation to notifications of staff misconduct to SSSC, the joint coordinators had a clear understanding of the need to follow correct procedures when dealing with co-worker disciplinary or grievance issues.

Areas for Improvement:

Other than for medication, the school did not have a defined calendar of quality assurance tasks in place. Such a calendar would ensure regular, more independent auditing of daily records, health and safety and key areas (complaints, accidents and incidents, for example) took place within appropriate timescales, with findings recorded and any required actions leading promptly to improvements.

When asked, co-workers and coordinators evidenced their self-evaluation anecdotally, with no substantive evidence provided at inspection to support their conclusions. The school did not have a system of collecting, collating and analysing evidence as part of its quality assurance processes. It had not considered delegation of quality assurance tasks to qualified and experienced co-workers to utilise their motivation and commitment to ongoing professional development.

(See recommendation 1.)

Again, the school was not making best use of Self-evaluation tools such as the Care Commission/HMIE document Improving Practice in Residential Schools or How Well are Children and Young People Protected and their Needs Met (HMIE 2005). It should also consider greater use of nationally recognised quality indicators, such as National Care Standards and HMIE Quality Indicators in How Good is our School?, as suggested in the last inspection report.

(See recommendation 2.)

The school relied upon feedback from educational psychologists and other

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professionals at reviews and ongoing requests for funded placements to evidence the views of its key stakeholders. It might consider more in-depth means of accessing their views to contribute to its self-evaluation.

The school had not always considered how best to involve young people, parents and other stakeholders in the quality assurance process, by formally and systematically reporting back on its findings and sharing progress on its improvement plan.

(See recommendation 1.)

The school's development plan, provided at inspection feedback, focussed on generally maintaining its eight key processes and structures, while recognising the need to be responsive to changing need. It did not identify specific improvement points for action, with clear responsibilities, timescales and evidence of success criteria.

(See recommendation 1.)

CCO Grading	4 - Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	3

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National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 99: Other Issues Related to National Care Standards and Regulations

Strengths

Progress on Recommendations from the last inspection.

1. The school should ensure children and young people's health needs are assessed in line with legal requirements

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 12: Keeping well - lifestyle.

Progress to date: Following the school's discussion with mental health professionals, and further exploration at this inspection, it was clarified it was not the school's role to undertake mental health screening of families.

However, as part of their gathering of relevant information from families and others during the admission process, they would be mindful of relevant issues. To assist in this process, they had applied for Mental Health First Aid Training and continued to access Young Minds resources.

Therefore, this recommendation has been met.

2. Procedures relating to children and young people affected by parental substance misuse should also link to the service's child protection procedure.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 3.3: Care and protection

Progress to date: The school had added a reference to parental substance misuse within its policy statement on child protection.

Therefore, this recommendation has been met.

3. The school should be aware and able to meet the needs of children and young people.

National Care Standards - Care homes for children and young people; Standard 11.2 Keeping well - lifestyle.

Progress to date: The school had obtained the three publications referenced in the inspection report. They had noted that the school's own training programmed already reflected the areas noted in one publication.

Therefore, this recommendation has been met.

4. The training and development policy should be reviewed and updated.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 7.8 Management and staffing.

Progress to date: The school had revised its training and development policy statement accordingly.

Therefore, this recommendation has been met.

Areas for development:

5. The school should produce an annual report in a format which meets the needs of pupils and parents so they can better engage in the Self-assessment process.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.

Progress to date: Following further clarification at the inspection, the school

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advised the first one will be produced at the end of the school year.
(See recommendation 3. continued from the last inspection).

6. The school should develop a participation strategy in line with comments in this report and guidance for community engagement accessible via the Care Commission website above.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.

Progress to date: While the school continued to engage constructively with parents, with positive feedback, it did not have a written participation strategy to share with parents the range of opportunities available and how the school would use this process to the benefit of pupils.

(See recommendation 1 and 4. continued from the last inspection).

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Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

None.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Act and Regulations or Orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Commission.

There were no requirements made at this inspection.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement. Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, codes of practice and recognised good practice.

1. The school's participation strategy should set out how it plans to:

- continue to develop methods of engaging pupils and parents in assessing and improving the quality of service across the four quality themes
- collect, collate and analyse information to inform service developments
- provide clear evidence of how the school feeds back its action in relation to any individual suggestions, comments or observations
- share with parents and pupils findings and planned action following surveys, consultations and receipt of any other information
- produce a development plan which meets SMART criteria
- feedback progress on the school's development plan to pupils and parents
- involve pupils and parents in commenting on the school's Self-assessment prior to submitting it to the Care Commission

**National Care Standards - School care accommodation services:
Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.**

2. The service should consider how best to make use of national advice as part of its quality assurance processes.

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National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 9. Management and staffing 7.9

The following recommendations were continued from the last inspection:

3. The school should produce an annual report on the school's achievements and progress on plans in a format which meets the needs of pupils and parents so they can better engage in the Self-assessment process.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.

4. The school should develop a participation strategy in line with comments in this report and guidance for community engagement accessible via the Care Commission website above.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as Unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

This report was written by

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Care Commission Officer

Date: 17 October 2008

Further information about the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, can be found on the Care Commission web-site, under the section 'The Law'.
www.carecommission.com