



**Falkland House School
Fife
9 August 2011**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) inspect schools in order to let parents¹ and young people know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of care and education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of care and education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of care and education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do young people learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?
5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The school

Falkland House School is a non-denominational, special school. It provides residential and day care and education for boys of primary and secondary age placed there by 14 local authorities. Young people have a range of additional support needs including those arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. When the inspection was carried out in June 2011, there were 22 young people on the school roll, aged from eight to 17 years. Three attended on a daily basis. Two young people had a coordinated support plan.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Young people who feel valued and respected.
- Promotion of healthy eating.
- Positive relationships between staff and young people.
- The nurturing and supportive environment for care and learning.
- Support for young people leaving school.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Staff work hard to ensure that young people are involved actively in learning. Almost all young people are highly motivated to learn. They benefit from the activities available in the classrooms and the local community. Young people respond very positively to the structured learning which care staff organise in their home communities as part of the school's outreach service. In most classes, young people have a good understanding of their own progress in learning. However, in a few classes, teachers need to provide young people with more advice on how they can improve their learning. Young people are proud of their school. They feel safe and valued by the staff. The school has a strong commitment to healthy eating which the young people enjoy.

Young people are developing confidence through being involved in a number of school committees. They are able to express their views well and contribute effectively to the improvement of the school. They are developing their skills for learning, life and work through specific projects such as designing, costing and producing gates for a national

carriage-driving competition. Young people work with the school chef and science teacher to increase their understanding and knowledge of athletes' food requirements. They develop recipes for meals which, if selected, will be served in the Olympic village. Young people are developing their confidence through a range of activities organised by care staff. Their individual achievements are recognised by attractive displays throughout the school.

All young people are making steady progress in achieving targets in their personal learning plans which take account of their additional support needs. Young people are successfully gaining a good variety of qualifications through the Award Scheme and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the National Qualifications (NQ) framework. In the primary class, they are making good progress with reading, writing, listening and talking. They are developing confidence with mental mathematics. Young people at the secondary stages are making good progress across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, social and vocational studies and woodwork. The school's effective throughcare programme for supporting young people leaving school builds on the assessment of individual needs. It includes activities which promote healthy living and independence. The programme enables all young people to move on to positive destinations beyond school. The school should consider how young people's achievements in activities outwith the school day can be recognised through certification.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of individual learners. The school is good at seeking out appropriate courses to build on the interests of individual young people, such as, for example, green-keeping at a local college. Staff are creative when considering the appropriate introduction of new courses, such as interactive games development, to interest and motivate learners. The school is at the early stages of implementing Curriculum for Excellence. It has made good progress in enabling young people to work with staff on projects which cover several areas of the curriculum. However, it needs to

develop a plan which sets out how Curriculum for Excellence will be taken forward. Timetables are changed too frequently which makes it difficult for teachers to plan effectively for teaching and learning. The school is not providing two hours of good quality physical education each week.

The school is highly successful at meeting the needs of individual young people. The learning support teacher assesses all young people following admission to the school. She identifies what support they require and ensures that they receive it. She provides all staff involved with each young person with advice about what support is needed. Young people have personal learning plans for each subject. These enable progress to be monitored. Care staff identify effectively young people's care needs and the care plans they prepare for young people are of a high standard. Young people are well supported by effective joint working across care and education. The school has registered for accreditation with the National Autistic Society.

4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

Staff have very good links with parents through regular telephone contact, child care reviews and through the outreach service provided. Parents report very positively on life-changing improvements in their family circumstances resulting from their children's placement in the school. Local authorities responsible for placing young people in the school expressed considerable satisfaction with the provision. The school has effective links with external agencies. It is accredited as a health promoting school by Fife Council and a National Health Service nurse visits the school regularly. The school provides high quality reports for reviews. It has appropriate procedures for dealing with complaints. However, there have not been any complaints in past three years. There are very good links with colleges and with local businesses.

5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

All young people are involved in school improvement. The school is committed to ensuring that young people's voices are heard and acted upon. Young people's views are expressed through the pupil council. The school has formed a committee of staff and young people with the aim of achieving the Rights Respecting School Award from UNICEF. All staff in the school are committed to self-evaluation which is well embedded in some aspects of the work of the school. Young people discuss care standards regularly and understand what these mean for them. They are actively involved in considering how the school performs against the standards. The school has a self-evaluation calendar but this needs to be simplified. The school should prepare a school improvement plan setting out the key priorities for development. Senior care managers monitor care plans and risk assessments. They make suggestions for improvement. Similar activities should be carried out in education with a view to improving further the quality of learning and teaching.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

The school provides high quality care and support for young people. Relationships between staff and young people are very positive and young people are valued and respected. Young people cover a range of issues relating to equality and discrimination through their personal, social and health education course. Staff have high expectations of young people's learning and behaviour. Young people are polite and well behaved. When unsettled behaviour occurs, staff deal with it consistently and appropriately. The accommodation is of a high standard and is respected by the young people. The meals provided are nutritious and of an exceptionally high standard.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

In his three years in post, the director has made a significant impact in taking the school forward. He has led the school very well through important changes including admitting younger learners and providing 52-week placements. He has improved teamwork across the school and shared his vision for the school with staff. He is well supported by heads of care and education. All staff across the school are committed to the school's aims and values. The school would benefit from having an advisory board to help shape the future development of the school.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school.

- Improve curriculum planning to meet the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Prepare a school improvement plan.

Quality indicators help schools and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*.

Here are the evaluations for Falkland House School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector:
Mike Gibson

SCSWIS Officer:
Marion Neil

9 August 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

If you would like to find out more about our inspections or get an electronic copy of this report, please go to www.hmie.gov.uk.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Crown Copyright 2011
HM Inspectorate of Education