

Inspection report

Falkland House School School Care Accommodation Service

Falkland Estate
Falkland
Cupar KY15 7AE

Inspected by: Marion Neil
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 19 March 2009

Service Number

CS2008174055

Service name

Falkland House School

Service addressFalkland Estate
Falkland
Cupar KY15 7AE**Provider Number**

SP2008009724

Provider Name

House of Falkland Ltd

Inspected ByMarion Neil
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

19 March 2009

Period since last inspection

9 months

Local Office AddressLargo House, South Suite, Carnegie Avenue,
Dunfermline, KY11 8PE

Introduction

Falkland House School is situated in Falkland in Fife. It is independently managed and provides care and education for 23 boys aged from 10 to 17 years who have been placed in the school by 12 local authorities. Falkland House School was deemed registered under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 in April 2002.

Care is provided on a 39 week basis. Education, care and support are provided to male pupils who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties often arising from autism spectrum disorders. The property is located in the village of Falkland and Falkland House is situated on the outskirts of the village, within Falkland Estate. It is close to community facilities and easily accessible to residents and visitors. Parking facilities are available.

An excerpt from Falkland House School Mission Statement reads:

"Falkland House School's mission is to help children who have difficulties in their personal and family life, school and community.

The school's approach is comprehensive, designed to benefit the child, his family and the organisation with which they are involved."

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

Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very 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.

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

The purpose of the unannounced inspection visit was to confirm the grades awarded at the previous announced inspection visit. Two service users spoke to the CCO about the care they received from the service. Their views are reflected in the body of the report.

The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of 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. The inspection was based on the associated National Care Standards, and took account of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001, Scottish Statutory Instruments 114.

The inspection was carried out over one visit to the service. The inspection was carried out by Marion Neil, CCO.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the Senior Management Team, staff and two young people.

Supporting evidence from the up to date Self Assessment

A verbal update on progress made on a number of areas since the previous inspection visit.

Minutes of meetings - school council and senior management team

Observation of practice

The school's Improvement Plan

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 Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 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 a 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 since last Inspection

No Requirements were made at the previous inspection.

Comments on Self Assessment

This had been completed and returned prior to the previous inspection visit. A number of areas of improvement had been identified by the Senior Managers at this time. Progress on these areas are detailed in the body of this report.

View of Service Users

Service users were polite and welcoming. Two service users gave their views about the service to the CCOs. These views are detailed in the body of the report.

View of Carers

The CCO did not seek the views of carers for this inspection.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 0 - Not Assessed

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 0 - Not Assessed

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 3.1.

The CCO held discussions with the Senior Management Team, care staff and two young people. Additional information was provided by the school on the progress made since the previous inspection visit. Taking account of these discussions and the information provided, the very good performance found at the previous inspection visit, in relation to this quality statement, was confirmed.

The previous inspection report noted -

"Involvement of the young people in the school's recruitment of new staff was currently limited. However, in the Self assessment form, the Operations Manager had identified this as an area for improvement -

Discussions to take place regarding pupil participation in part of interview eg representative from the Pupil's Council or Peer Supporters."

The Social Work Manager confirmed that the school had started to involve pupils directly in the recruitment of staff. To date, four pupils had been involved. Two pupils spoke to the CCO and stated that they had:

- 1) Developed interview questions with the help of a Key worker
- 2) They had asked the candidates the questions at the interview
- 3) They had given the Senior Management Team their views on the candidates
- 4) Their views had been taken into account as part of the selection process

The Social Work Manager had evaluated the process. The evaluation report stated:

"All pupils were impressive by the manner in which they conducted themselves; they took an active part in the interview and asked their selected questions in a manner very appropriate to the setting. All pupils were commended for their participation and excellent approach to the task."

Pupils were also asked to complete a post interview questionnaire, providing very good evidence about the effectiveness of pupil involvement in the recruitment process. "Good Points" about the process, identified by the pupils included:

"Getting to ask questions which are important to me as a pupil here."
"Getting to know possible staff. Learning."

Supporting pupils to participate in recruitment extended further the wide ranging opportunities that pupils already have to participate in the school's decision making processes.

Another example of the development of pupil participation was the school council reviewing the school's policies and procedures. The Social Work Manager acknowledged that work on this area had begun slowly, but she stated, as the pupils' understanding of these policies was increased, they were now working well on this task. The Pupil Council was responsible for reviewing policies and procedures which directly affected them. This had enabled them to consider the fairness and proportionality of these documents.

Through discussion with staff and with young people there was very good evidence that the different opportunities for participation allowed young people to become involved in areas which were meaningful to them, eg the boys involved in the recruitment process were not on the Pupil Council; other pupils were forming an "Eco Board."

The school's chef had been invited to attend the Pupil Council meetings. Once a month a pupil worked in the kitchen for a day. This promoted a better understanding of the role of the kitchen staff and re-enforced the school's healthy eating policy.

Based on this evidence, the grade awarded at the previous inspection visit, is confirmed.

Areas for Development

The Senior Management Team should continue to develop a wide variety of participation opportunities for pupils to become involved in the decision-making process.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 3.3.

The grade for this Quality Statement, awarded at the previous inspection visit, was confirmed following discussion with staff, the Senior Management Team and young people, along with an examination of appropriate records eg the annual training calendar; the school's improvement plan.

The following area for improvement was identified in the school's Self assessment form, and detailed in the last report -

"Continue to improve the staff development strategy and audit the existing training plan to ensure time scales for formal training, qualifications and registration in accordance with the

SSSC."

The Senior Management Team confirmed that the school's designated training year was from January to December. Work was well underway to ensure that teaching staff were up to date with the Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities for staff to up date their knowledge in this area were promoted through regular meetings, including an on-line meeting.

Staff training needs had been identified and registration with the Scottish Social Services Council, (SSSC), had been identified as an ongoing development. A rota was in place to allow staff to access the necessary qualifications for registration. Training was, where appropriate, delivered to all staff, providing care and education staff with opportunities to share good practice.

Pupils who spoke to the CCO confirmed that:

- 1) There were lots of staff to help with problems
- 2) Staff had supported them and provided reassurances
- 3) There was "lots of support" in class

Observation of staff practice during the lunch hour, confirmed that pupils had an excellent rapport with staff. Staff and pupils spoke to one another in a respectful way. Appropriate banter was observed and pupils, if they had queries eg about afternoon activities, were listened to by staff.

Based on this evidence, the grade awarded at the previous inspection visit is confirmed.

Areas for Development

The school should continue to develop their good practice in this area.

CCO Grading

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 4.1.

Discussion with the Senior Management Team, care staff and pupils provided very good evidence of progress under this Quality Statement. Additional evidence was examined from questionnaires issued to parents/carers by the school. All this evidence confirmed the grade awarded at the previous inspection visit.

At the time of the last inspection, the school had already started working towards the areas of development identified in their Self assessment form -

- 1) Participation strategy to be developed
- 2) Pupils, parents and professionals to be given a wider role in the self-evaluation process
- 3) Two Senior managers were booked to attend a Scottish Council for Independent Schools' workshop on Self evaluation

The Senior Management Team confirmed that they had attended the Scottish Council for Independent School's workshop on Self Evaluation, as planned. Parents/carers had been consulted about their preferred method of communication from the school. Some had indicated that telephone calls and e-mails were preferable to letters. A review of the questionnaire results by the CCO confirmed this. There was comprehensive evidence that the school had taken action on suggestions made by parents/carers. The autumn term holidays dates had been changed following parental requests.

Eighty percent of parents/carers had attended the school's Christmas lunch, with many sending Thank You cards. Cards reviewed showed that parents/carers had written expressing their appreciation of the school's hard work.

Another area of improvement identified by the Senior Management Team had been the introduction of Behavioural Personal Learning Plans. This allowed pupils, staff and parents to identify targets to improve self esteem and confidence. The targets were reviewed at review meetings by all stakeholders who were involved.

Staff involvement in self assessment and the quality assurance process had been extended further since the previous inspection. The Senior Management Team had continued to build on the joint working between care and education staff. Both were actively involved in assessing the quality of the care and the environment for the school's Self Assessment form. Teams looking at education and care could include a care worker and a teacher or a care worker and an auxiliary worker. Staff who spoke to the CCO confirmed this had been beneficial, providing them with a better understanding of self assessment and quality assurance and motivating them to work as a whole school team.

Based on this evidence, the grade awarded at the previous inspection visit is confirmed.

Areas for Development

The school should continue to develop a variety of ways to engage with parents/carers, seeking their views and where appropriate involving them in the school's decision making processes.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 4.4.

The grade awarded at the previous inspection visit is confirmed, following discussion with the Senior Management Team, staff and pupils, along with an examination of relevant documents eg minutes of meetings - Pupil Council and management team; task calendar and questionnaires issued to parents/carers.

In discussion at the previous inspection, the Senior Management Team identified ongoing work to ensure that the school has an effective quality assurance system embedded in its management of the service.

The minutes of meetings along with discussions with staff confirmed that the middle management roles were being developed. Staff spoke confidently to the CCO about their delegated responsibilities, their roles in the interview process and offering support to other staff in personal and professional development. They confirmed that they now approached these roles with an increased awareness and that it had encouraged and enabled their own personal development.

The Senior Management Team stated that the development of the middle management role had encouraged all staff to take a holistic view of the business. The increased opportunities provided to them to take part in the Self Assessment and quality assurance of the school, had improved their understanding of the importance of working as a whole school team.

The Pupil Council minutes confirmed that the Pupil Council was continuing to contribute to school improvements. Areas they had recently been involved in were:

- 1) Designing the new school uniforms
- 2) Inviting chef to the Pupil Council to discuss and review menus
- 3) Exploring changes to the lunch sitting system - Unit votes confirmed the status quo

4) Auditing the Charter of Pupil Rights and Responsibilities (see Quality Statement 3.1)

Other aspects of quality assurance included staff reviewing Care Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education reports for schools similar to Falkland House School. The school had a comprehensive Task Calendar, linked to the school's Improvement Plan, in place. The ongoing quality assurance carried out by the Senior Management Team and staff informed the school's annual report.

Based on this evidence, the school's grade, awarded at the previous inspection visit, is confirmed.

Areas for Development

The school should continue to further develop the very good practice already established in this area.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

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

Other Information**Requirements**

No Requirements were made following this inspection visit.

Recommendations

No Recommendations were made following this inspection visit.

Marion Neil

Care Commission Officer