



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba



care
inspectorate



**Falkland House School
Fife
8 September 2015**

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) 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/senior managers 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.educationscotland.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.

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1. The school

Falkland House is an independent, non-denominational school which is located in Falkland, Fife. It provides care and education for children and young people aged ten to 18 with a range of additional support needs including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural needs. The roll was 18 when the inspection was carried out in June 2015. Eight children and young people had coordinated support plans.

2. Key strengths of the school

- Warm, nurturing relationships across care and education
- Children's and young people's attainment and achievement
- Support for children and young people to re-engage successfully with their learning
- Opportunities for children and young people to develop skills for life, learning and work

3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

Across care and education, staff have warm, nurturing relationships with children and young people. This helps children and young people to feel safe and secure, helps them overcome any anxieties with their learning and seek support when they need it. Almost all staff are skilled at supporting children and young people to behave well and be respectful of others. In most classes, children and young people are motivated and keen to learn. They were most enthusiastic about learning opportunities which develop their skills for learning, life and work. For example, the 'Cabin Project' and 'Falkland Contract Services Company' initiatives are helping children and young people to build skills in employability, leadership, enterprise and resilience. Teachers need to consistently engage children and young people by providing high-quality learning experiences across the school. In almost all lessons, teachers share with children and young people what they want them to learn and give feedback on their progress. Children and young people are taking responsibility for their learning but would benefit from more opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and to plan and choose what they are going to learn next.

Falkland House has an impressive record of assisting children and young people to improve their wellbeing. As a result, almost all children and young people are making very good progress with their social and emotional development. In many cases, their conduct and

wellbeing has been transformed. Children, young people, parents and partner agencies report outstanding progress in this area. Children and young people are achieving very well through a significant number of practical, vocational and sporting opportunities which build confidence and develop skills in communication, team work and social engagement. They participate in a very wide range of activities in both care and education including, karate, hillwalking, fish-keeping and volunteering within the local community. All senior pupils benefit from opportunities to broaden their learning through work experience and college placements in areas such as rural skills, housekeeping and photography. Children and young people contribute to aspects of school life through participation in a range of groups including, a peer support group, Rights Respecting committee and the pupil council. The pupil council has a strong influence and their suggestions to improve the school have led to changes in the curriculum, renovation of the fitness suite and re-naming the care facilities from 'Units' to 'Houses'.

Overall, young people attending Falkland House left school with a very good range of National Qualifications and units. Young people consistently achieve well in a wide range of courses including, literacy, science, computing and a number of personal achievement awards. Across the school, children and young people are developing their skills in reading, writing, listening and talking. Almost all children and young people are reading for pleasure and are able to access a variety of authors and subjects that interest them. Most children and young people are making progress in building their mathematical knowledge. They are confidently developing their knowledge and skills with money, shapes, symmetry, angles and scale. Teachers now need to place greater emphasis on using numeracy language and skills across the curriculum to further develop children's and young people's understanding. Almost all children and young people have a very good understanding of the choices they make and how this impacts on their health and wellbeing. They spoke knowledgeably about factors such as substance misuse, healthy eating and keeping themselves safe.

4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

The school supports children and young people to develop and learn very well. Across care and education, staff provide a very welcoming, caring environment for children and young people. The school has very successfully supported a number of children and young people who have well-established patterns of non-attendance to re-engage with their learning. Children, young people and their families speak extremely highly of the pastoral support they receive from staff at Falkland House. Care staff provide very good outreach support to help children, young people and their families within their local communities. Almost all teachers plan tasks and activities well to meet the needs of all learners. In a few classes, the pace of learning is too slow and tasks are not sufficiently challenging for children and young people. Overall, staff are very knowledgeable about children and young people's needs. Staff across care and education work very well together to support children and young people to progress with their learning and make positive behaviour choices. The school works closely with partner agencies to help identify and meet the needs of young people. A few young people would benefit from more specialist input from occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. All children and young people have care plans and individualised learning journeys. Most children and young people are making progress with targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Targets within learning journeys should be reviewed to make it easier for all children and young people to know what they are working towards and how staff will support them.

The school has an appropriate curriculum in place for children and young people. The curriculum has a clear focus on developing skills for life, learning and work to support children and young people to be as independent and resilient as possible when they leave Falkland House. Teachers are becoming more confident in using Curriculum for Excellence guidance to plan suitable learning experiences in, and across curricular areas. More focus now needs to be placed on

ensuring children and young people are receiving opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills across the curriculum and in the care setting. New courses and programmes are offering increasing opportunities for children and young people in real and relevant contexts. These include, working in Falkland Palace gardens, visits to local businesses and cultural venues, a film critic initiative and a range of Eco-based activities such as planting and waste management. The school recognises that systems need to be developed to better track progress and achievement. The school has well-established planning in place to support children and young people at crucial transition points. Almost all young people move on to further learning, training or employment when they leave Falkland House.

5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Senior managers have been successful in developing and communicating a shared vision for the school. A culture of openness and trust has been created and there is strong evidence of mutual support and teamwork amongst staff across care and education. This has led to a number of staff having additional responsibility in taking forward school priorities. The school has clear improvement priorities in place for fully implementing Curriculum for Excellence. Senior managers know they need to further develop important aspects of Curriculum for Excellence including using assessment and moderation more effectively to accurately measure the progress of children and young people. Most teachers welcome feedback on their practice from senior managers and colleagues and access a range of training opportunities which are well linked to improving learning and teaching. This is helping teachers to more effectively meet the needs of all children and young people. The school now needs to develop formal processes to monitor the quality of learning and teaching across the school, and provide sufficient support and challenge to teaching staff.

6. What happens next?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The Director will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the Director's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the school.

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

- Develop effective tracking and monitoring of children's and young people's progress with their learning
- Establish robust systems for self-evaluation

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	very good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	very good

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

Steven McPherson
HM Inspector:
8 September 2015

Shelagh McDougall
Care Inspector:

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

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/FalklandHouseSchoolFife.asp>.

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