

Inspection report

Seamab School School Care Accommodation Service

Rumbling Bridge
Kinross KY13 0PT

Inspected by: Rachel Gillespie
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 29 May 2007

Service Number

CS2003009787

Service name

Seamab School

Service addressRumbling Bridge
Kinross KY13 0PT**Provider Number**

SP2003002135

Provider Name

Seamab Learning and Care Services

Inspected ByRachel Gillespie
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

29 May 2007

Period since last inspection

20 February 2007

Local Office AddressCentral East, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive,
Dundee. DD1 4NY

Introduction

Seamab School is an independent school, administered by the Board of Governors of the Seamab Learning and Care Services, which provides education and residential care for pupils, aged between five and 13 years, experiencing severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are referred from the whole of Scotland and many are placed on a 52 week basis

In 2006 pupils moved from Seamab House to new education premises nearby, a modified bungalow with indoor swimming pool and extensive grounds. This completed the second phase of a major redevelopment programme, aimed at separating and improving the residential and teaching accommodation. Pupils live in three bungalows, each with single bedrooms, two bathrooms, two public rooms and separate staff facilities, set in private woodland five minutes drive away from the school.

Seamab School has been registered with the Care Commission as a school care accommodation service for 15 pupils since 1 April 2002. It is included in the ongoing integrated inspection programme for residential special schools undertaken jointly by both the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) on a generational basis.

Seamab School aims 'to provide an integrated, individualised programme of care, education and therapy which will encourage and enable the children to develop close, positive attachments and to live successfully in the community'.

Basis of Report

This report was compiled following an unannounced inspection which took place over two days with a three week interval.

Before the inspection

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 then based upon the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

In May 2006, Seamab School was inspected by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission as part of a programme of integrated inspections of residential schools for pupils with additional support needs. HMIE and the Care Commission will continue to monitor progress on the school's action plan to address the main findings of that inspection's report published in November 2006. There will be another integrated inspection, resulting in an interim report within a year. This inspection in May/June 2007 was one of the twice yearly inspections undertaken by the Care Commission, one of which must be unannounced. The report outlines progress made in some areas of the action plan since the last unannounced inspection in February 2007. The inspection also took account of some issues raised by a third party arising from observations of Seamab School.

During the inspection process

The inspection was carried out by Rachel Gillespie and Marjory Thomson, Professional Adviser in Nutrition.

During inspection, evidence was gathered from a number of sources including:

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

- Child protection policy
- Child protection log
- Management of Physical Intervention, Aggression and Violence
- Incident records, including records of restraints
- Children's records, including Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) and Individualised Care Plans (ICPs)
- Staff training and development records
- Smoking policy
- Records in relation to nutrition, such as menus and children's records.

Discussion with a range of staff including

- The principal, deputy principal and head of education as senior managers of the school
- Various staff including two team managers of the bungalows, the school cook, two student social workers on placement, staff responsible for one class of pupils
- Informal discussion with pupils at lunch.

The Care Commission Officers' observations of

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

During this inspection, the Care Commission selected from this year's Inspection Focus Areas:

- Child protection (including restraint)

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above into account and reported under the following National Care Standards (NCS) for School Care Accommodation Services:

Standard 3. Care and protection and

Standard 11. Eating well

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 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 made at the last inspection.

Comments on Self-Evaluation

A Self-evaluation was not required for an unannounced inspection.

View of Service Users

Both Care Commission staff shared lunch with pupils and their respective classroom staff. In one class, pupils listened attentively to their daily story-time reading while waiting for lunch to be served in the class-room. They responded positively to the teacher's questions and successful engagement of their emotional involvement in the unfolding of the plot of *The Twits* by a favourite author. All (except one) had good appetites and spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of a wide range of foods, reflecting choices within menus and new tastes, like exotic fruits, introduced by education and care staff.

Initially, pupils participated well in established meal-time routines, though in time one pupil became disengaged and a couple of other pupils also became distracted and disruptive. Some pupils in the other class were similarly unsettled. Staff indicated that the presence of visitors was a contributory or escalating factor.

View of Carers

The Care Commission did not formally seek the views of parents and carers on this occasion.

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 3: School Care Accommodation Services - Care and Protection

Strengths

Not all elements of this standard were inspected on this occasion. The inspection focussed on Child protection, including use of restraint, this being one of the Inspection Focus Areas for school care accommodation services for 2007-8.

Child protection

The school's child protection policy had taken into account relevant national and local guidance, referenced to Protecting Children - A Shared Responsibility - Guidance on Inter-Agency Co-operation (Scottish Office 1998), especially relevant to schools. Perth and Kinross Council's child protection committee inter-agency guidelines were also available. The school kept a child protection log of all concerns reported to children's social workers, and specified those resulting in a joint investigation by local police and social services, as recommended in the last inspection report. Similarly, a bullying log had been introduced. Training records showed all new school staff undertook a comprehensive introduction to child protection training as an annual event. Most other staff had revisited aspects of child protection as part of their studies for qualifications leading to registration with the Scottish Social Services Council. The school's child protection person or her depute attended the Perth and Kinross Independent Schools Child Protection Group, which provided a helpful forum for keeping abreast of new developments. Two staff had attended the launch of the national reform programme Protecting Children and Young People: Children's Charter and Framework for Standards (SE 2004), copies of which were available in the bungalows, alongside booklets for children.

Parents knew about the school's roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection from the Statement of Functions and Objectives and the school brochure, both of which used easy-to-read language. Families often had direct experience of the child protection framework. Childline, whose telephone number many pupils knew, was well-publicised around the school. Children had their own Charter of rights and responsibilities which highlighted their right to be protected from all forms of abuse or neglect. Minutes evidenced staff and children used bungalow meetings to discuss bullying and similar issues. Records showed some children used the complaints procedure to voice their grievances. The head of education explained that class teachers used Health and Wellbeing in the curriculum to complement informal opportunities in the bungalows to help children know how to keep themselves safe. The vice principal indicated a particular benefit of the keyworker system was the ongoing trusting relationship which helped children to express their worries. Additionally, the school had regular visits from many local authority children's rights officers, with additional visits at pupils' request.

Restraint

The school had adopted the Non-violent Crisis Intervention Programme offered by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), registered with BILD (British Institute for Learning Disability), as an appropriate model for this age group. The programme promoted the 'care, welfare, safety and security' of both adults and pupils, with physical restraint recommended only when other methods of intervention had been exhausted and when the individual presented a danger to

him/herself or others.

The school had recently ceased to commission an external trainer following accreditation of a classroom assistant and a team manager as trainers. Staff undertook regular practice sessions and annual re-accreditation. The head of education stated that the number of incidents in the school day over the last year remained at the same level. The school had been developing a framework for promoting positive behaviour based on a number of agreed strategies applied consistently across the classrooms and playground. Using 'happy faces', three times a day, staff supported children to talk about their views of their achievements and issues. This enabled children to develop greater self-awareness and so take more responsibility for managing their own behaviour. Routine written observations by teachers and the 'changeover' book, for reporting back to bungalow staff, recorded such discussions.

Areas for Development

Some additional information, as advised by the Care Commission, was missing from the child protection policy, namely: a reference to the local child protection child protection guidelines, telephone numbers designated by the local child protection team (social services) and family protection unit (police); and access to independent support and advice from organisations such as Childline and Who Cares? Scotland.

(See recommendation 1)

The school recognised they needed to do further work on raising awareness of staff, pupils and parents about the Children's Charter and the Framework for Standards for child protection.

(See recommendations 2 and 3)

The school was in the process of reviewing its Promoting Positive Behaviour Management policy. The aspects of the policy relating to violence and physical restraint are not yet fully referenced to Holding Safely (2005), national practitioner guidance for physical restraint endorsed by the Scottish Executive. The latter includes: definitions; creating the right conditions through promotion of a positive culture with shared values, a child-centred approach and an understanding of behaviour; regular training; risk assessment and care planning; staff, pupils and managers learning from events; and systematic recording.

(See recommendation 4)

Management were reviewing use of rooms within the school to improve the learning environment for pupils. The vice principal had arranged to view the use of the Holding Safely electronic database in operation elsewhere, as recommended in the last inspection. This was in order to consider its use in analysing incident reports, as current systems were inadequate.

(See recommendation 5)

National Care Standard Number 11: School Care Accommodation Services - Eating Well

Strengths

It was a recommendation at the last inspection that the school produce written guidelines for nutrition and establish a food and nutrition training plan for staff, including anyone planning food provision. This inspection followed up progress on the action plan in relation to this and

issues raised by a person who wished to remain anonymous.

The school met with the community dietician in March to advise about food and nutrition. She had indicated the lunch menu offered a balance diet with minimal changes to bring it into line with Hungry for Success. Due to unforeseen factors, the dietician had been unable to review the school lunch or the bungalow menus. The plan for a student dietician to develop written guidelines /policy and procedures and a staff training programme had not taken place

The professional adviser noted from menus and discussion that meals included a high proportion of fresh food. Lunch at the inspection was well cooked and attractively presented.

The cook and care staff let the children, on admission, taste a variety of foods they were not familiar with to help establish the children's food preferences. The school had a system planned to check bungalow menus to avoid duplication of evening meal with school lunch.

On admission and at statutory reviews, children's assessments captured aspects of eating drinking and nutrition. Care plans evidenced the school referred all children's health issues, which included those associated with nutrition, to appropriate practitioners and sought advice on the child's care.

Areas for Development

Due to unforeseen factors, the dietician had been unable to review the school lunch or the bungalow menus. The plan for a student dietitian to develop written guidelines /policy and procedures and a staff training programme had not taken place,

Written school guidelines (policy and procedures) for eating, drinking, food and nutrition had still to be developed.

(See recommendation 6.)

There was no systematic assessment of eating, drinking and nutrition.

(See recommendation 7.)

Without dietetic support, progress had not taken place to show that the school lunch menu met best practice guidelines. Similarly, there was no plan yet to check bungalow menus against best practice guidance.

(See recommendation 8.)

There had been no alternative consideration as to how to develop a staff training programme.

(See requirement 1.)

There was not always a care plan addressing the advice obtained from health practitioners.

(See requirement 2)

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

Strengths

Smoking (in response to an observation)

Concern was expressed about a 'heavy culture of smoking' and its effects on pupils. None of the pupils smoked, in line with their age and the promotion of a healthy life-style. Only a handful of the large staff groups were smokers. One staff member, who was a smoker, described how staff were required to leave the premises completely so they were well out of sight of children. She had never heard children refer to staff smoking. Children learned about the effects of smoking in class through Health and Wellbeing. Similarly, the Care Commission Officer had never observed staff smoking or noted a known smoker to disappearing with any frequency. The intensive time commitment required for supervising children also acted to limit opportunity for staff who smoked. Two student social workers on placement at the school stated that they were asked if they were smokers as part of their induction, so they could be informed on the school's policy on smoking. They confirmed they had never seen staff smoking where children might view this. Both referred to a very open culture within Seamab which facilitated staff to question each other's practice.

One pupil's ICP and IEP was sampled. The head of education explained how, after 6 weekly reviews of IEPs and ICPs, summaries of discussions between care and education staff were incorporated into reports for statutory reviews and children's hearings. The proforma used for IEPs included an evaluation and signposted 'next steps'. The current ICP evidenced very specific and relevant short-term targets which linked with the IEP.

Areas for Development

The ICP documents for the last few years did not provide a coherent audit trail identifying when ICPs were reviewed, evaluating their progress or otherwise and the reasons, and identifying 'next steps'. Comments were sometimes randomly included with no date or change to the ICP. The school agreed to review procedures.

The school did not yet have a coherent plan how to include pupils more directly and overtly in this process of setting and reviewing targets, taking into account their age and stage of development, to enhance their motivation.

(See recommendation 9.)

Enforcement

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

Other Information

None.

Requirements

1. The provider shall ensure that staff who have input to children's food and nutrition wellbeing are appropriately trained and, specifically, persons responsible for planning the menu undertake training and have a demonstrable understanding of menu planning to meet the needs of children.

This is in order to comply with: SSI 2002/114 regulation 4 (1) (a) and 13(c) (i) - a duty to make proper provision for the health and welfare of children and to provide staff with training appropriate to their work.

Timescale for implementation: within 20 weeks from publication of this report.

2. The provider shall ensure children's nutrition-associated health issues are specified in a care plan, the required intervention is specified and updated and the evaluation is comprehensive.

This is in order to comply with: SSI 2002/114 regulation 4 (1) (a) - a duty to make proper provision for the health and welfare of children.

Timescale for implementation: within 2 weeks from publication of this report.

Recommendations

1. Some minor additions should be made to the child protection policy, in turn included in the handbooks for parents and pupils.

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

2. Staff, children and young people should be made aware of the Children's Charter.

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

3. Staff, children and young people should be made aware of the Framework for Standards for child protection

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

4. Relevant parts of the behaviour management policy should be explicitly compatible with Holding Safely.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 3.8: Care and Protection.

5. The school should implement methods of analysing and managing incidents to assist in improved reduction in incidence and degree.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 3.8: Care and Protection.

6. The school should develop a food and nutrition policy using best practice guidelines to inform the content and promote a whole school approach to food and nutrition.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 11 Eating well.

7. To ensure children's food and nutrition needs, risks and preferences are identified a systematic approach to eating, drinking and nutrition assessment should be introduced, as promoted by best practice guidelines.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 11 Eating well.

8. To ensure school lunches and the bungalow menus meet children's needs the school and bungalow menus should be reviewed to demonstrate they meet best practice guidelines.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 11 Eating well.

9. The school should audit its IEPs and ICPs to ensure its progressive impact on children's learning and development is clearly demonstrated. It should also consider how to involve children more directly in the process.

National Care Standards - School care accommodation services: Standard 6.3 Support arrangements.

Rachel Gillespie

Care Commission Officer