

Ardvreck School

School Care Accommodation Service

Gwydyr Road
Crieff
PH7 4EX

Telephone: 01764 653112

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 June 2018

Service provided by:
Ardvreck School Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003003589

Service no:
CS2006115069

About the service

Ardvreck School is an independent preparatory school for pupils aged 8 to 13, with a maximum roll for boarding of 100 pupils. Thirty boarders were resident at the time of this inspection, and the school also offered 'step-up' boarding places for day pupils, many of whom took up this opportunity.

It provides accommodation for pupils from the UK and overseas within three boarding houses. These comprise Junior House in the main building and Erskine House and McClellan House, for senior girls and boys respectively, in chalet-style houses within the school grounds. The school is located on the outskirts of the town of Crieff in Perthshire. Pupils have access to a range of facilities including a gymnasium, swimming pool and outdoor all-weather sports pitches for sport and leisure, as well as woodland and nearby hills.

The school's conditions of registration state:

1. To provide a school care accommodation service to a maximum of 100 pupils.
2. Junior House will provide accommodation to a maximum of 44 pupils.
3. MacLellan House will provide accommodation to a maximum of 29 pupils.
4. Erskine House will provide accommodation to a maximum of 27 pupils.
5. To comply with the current staffing schedule attached, dated 15 September 2006, which must be displayed together with the certificate.
6. The school care accommodation service will be provided during the school terms.

Ardvreck School had adopted ARDVRECK as an acronym to represent its eight aims, based on its shared vision that the school:

- "Allows every child to grow up away from the artificial pressures of modern-day life.
- Realises the unique qualities of each child, treating them as individuals.
- Develops their potential, challenging their strengths and promoting their confidence.
- Values mutual respect, self-discipline and standards that will promote integrity to carry a child through life.
- Relishes every opportunity for fun, fresh-air and sporting challenges, exploiting its unique location and excellent facilities.
- Excels at providing a high-class education which promotes a life-long love of learning and interest in the world at large.
- Cares for its pupils in a warm and friendly environment.
- Keeps the world at bay until at 13+ when pupils are then ready to move on to the challenges of life, wherever that may be."

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by the Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people – and what they can do to improve. GIRFEC is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children. Information on wellbeing indicators can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/young-People/gettingitright>.

Throughout this report the children and young people who board at Ardvreck School are referred to as pupils. Boarding house staff includes house mistresses, house master, assistant house mistresses/house masters,

matrons and gap-year students. At the time of the inspection there were 40 full time boarders, including nine French pupils on exchange. Most pupils at the school also took up opportunities to Flexi-board or Step-Up board at some point.

On the day we arrived for inspection there had been an announcement that the current head teacher was leaving the school, and the current depute head teacher had been appointed to take up the post from the end of July.

What people told us

During the inspection we spoke informally to approximately 35 pupils over mealtimes and when they were out of class on activities, and met more formally with six pupils. We observed their interactions with staff throughout the inspection. They presented as relaxed and confident in these interactions, laughing and joking and seeking reassurance and affection appropriately.

We also conducted a Survey Monkey for all boarders before we arrived for the inspection. We discussed the results of the survey monkey with the new head during feedback. Forty out of 41 pupils indicated they agreed or 'strongly agreed' with the statement "Overall I am happy with the quality of care I get here." The other one indicated they did not know. Comments made were very positive and included:

"It's a good school."

"I enjoy my time here."

"I find the boarding house really fun."

"It's really nice because it is different to most schools."

"I like this school."

"Ardvreck is lovely."

"Ardvreck is cool."

We also contacted parents of boarding pupils by email and received seven responses. We followed up some of the issues raised as part of our inspection, and others which were common themes were discussed during feedback. Issues regarding sweets, packed lunches and the standard of meals were raised by several parents and the new head acknowledged this was an area they had identified for improvement. Comments included:

"If I have concerns or questions I could talk to any of the staff but usually its house staff."

"I feel they are safe at Ardvreck."

"The school keeps me well updated however as the new website isn't live yet there is some confusion as to whether info is posted on calendar on website or app."

"I'm very happy that the school is doing a great job."

"I feel that I am listened to and am able to raise concerns quickly and easily."

"The most positive aspects of my child's boarding experience are the grounds and the camaraderie. Also the most relaxed and wonderful atmosphere at the school."

"Positive aspects? Socialising with other boarders and weekend activities."

"I'm happy with Ardvreck as it is."

"The most positive aspects are that the children make lifelong friends and have adventures that I couldn't organise or replicate at home."

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate did not request a self assessment for this inspection. We looked at the school's improvement plan as part of our assessment.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We saw examples of very positive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff were kind and caring, and knew the children well. This helped to build children's confidence, and they told us they felt safe at Ardvreck.

Systems were in place for staff to identify where children may need additional or specialist support. We advised that plans should be in place for all those children who have identified needs, along with strategies to meet those needs. These should be readily available and shared by those staff providing care, identifying targets and including timescales so that progress could be tracked systematically. Chronologies of interventions and events should be clearly recorded, including changes to strategies, and this information shared appropriately.

Systems to support pupils' health, including medication, were being used effectively. Pupils were encouraged to develop healthy, active lifestyles and were offered a range of healthy meal choices, taking account of their preferences and any allergies/food intolerances. The school planned to review menus, snacks and packed lunches to make sure that they were in keeping with best practice guidance.

A child protection policy and procedure was in place, which was known to staff. We saw examples of when these had been followed appropriately. We advised that the school should make sure that child protection records were dated and signed, as specified in their policy. They should continue to ensure that all staff have updated training and are confident in the actions they should take if they had any concerns about a child's wellbeing. Staff were aware of the hazards of internet use and there was clear guidance for them to follow to keep children safe in their use of the internet. Accidents were recorded and incidents logged. We advised that the way these were recorded could be streamlined and include more essential information. While these had been notified to the Care Inspectorate, we identified the need for this to be achieved promptly within 24 hours.

Pupils were offered a wide range of activities and experiences, which helped them develop skills and interests, as well as building confidence and self-esteem. We suggested that the school continue to build on these,

particularly for those pupils who were less interested in sports. Pupils were very familiar with the rhythms and routines of the day. They followed simple rules, which they told us they found fair. We saw staff implementing positive behaviour strategies with children and advised that the school continue to develop this. These should be outlined in their Positive Behaviour Strategy, and link to support plans where appropriate. In addition, the school should review their policy on restraint to ensure that it reflected their current practice and best practice guidance "Holding Safely - A Guide for Residential Childcare Practitioners and Managers about Physically Restraining Children and Young People."

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Entry to the buildings was secure, and visitors were asked to sign in and out so that staff knew who was on the premises and could track who had visited if necessary. Staff were vigilant in challenging any strangers, and pupils were given guidance on how to keep safe.

There was an established system to identify any maintenance issues and attend to repairs. Pupils had been consulted about priorities for maintenance and refurbishment in the boarding houses. As some pupils had highlighted the lack of privacy for changing as an issue in the Survey Monkey, we suggested that the school could look at improving opportunities for privacy, as part of their ongoing programme of improvements. Areas of the premises were in need of refurbishment and redecoration, and we discussed the school's plans for these to be addressed. Pupils' artwork and photographs were attractively displayed throughout the school and boarding houses. Pupils were encouraged to individualise their personal spaces and take care of them. Facilities were provided to enable pupils to keep in touch with people who were important to them, such as by Skype and Facetime, as well as by telephone.

Systems were in place to ensure that routine checks for; fire safety, health and safety, play equipment, swimming pool, sports equipment and legionella were carried out appropriately. The school made good use of the extensive grounds and facilities including; tennis courts, cricket pitches and nets, swimming pool, shooting range, athletics track, climbing trees, sports pitches and woodland, to offer a wide range of activities and places for children to play. We saw that risk assessments were drawn up for trips and outdoor activities, and we advised that the school should draw up and record risk assessments for individual boarding houses and the environment around them, taking account of pets on the premises. We discussed the value in drawing up agreements about pets, which could be outlined in guidance for staff.

School vehicles were kept roadworthy and maintained, so that pupils had access to transport to attend appointments, outings and sports fixtures. The school had previously agreed to draw up a policy on drug and

alcohol use, as well as consideration to expectations of staff driving when they may be tired. This had yet to be achieved.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Systems were in place for staff to be recruited safely and appropriate checks were carried out and recorded. We advised that the school should review the frequency of Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks in line with best practice guidance. Most staff were registered with appropriate professional bodies. The school supported staff to gain the qualifications they needed to meet conditions on their registration. In our last inspection report we said "We suggested adding a prompt to record checks on professional registers (Scottish Social Services Council -SSSC and General Teaching Council for Scotland -GTCS), which was addressed during the inspection. They now needed to update their policies to make sure that they reflected current information, and show that improvements made can be sustained and embedded in practice." As a member of staff had failed to maintain their SSSC registration, it was evident that these systems had not been used effectively. While we saw that the school had taken appropriate action as a result of this lapse, they must ensure that no member of staff delivers care unless they are registered with a professional body within six months of starting their role. **(See requirement 1.)**

A suitable induction programme was in place which helped staff to become familiar with expectations of their role. In addition, in service training was provided for staff, and the school nurse provided training for staff in the administration of medicines. Some staff had taken up additional training to support their career development. Staff were respectful, kind and considerate in the way they interacted with colleagues and pupils, taking account of children's age and stage of development. They gave pupils a positive example of behaviour for them to follow. Staff had a wide range of skills and interests, which they shared with pupils to develop their interests.

In our previous inspection report we said "The school were in the early stages of implementing a formal system of one-to-one support and supervision for boarding staff. They now need to evidence better records of the meetings held and show how they are monitoring practice and making improvements through supervision, as well as providing support and guidance." It was evident that no progress had been made on providing time protected, one-to-one support and supervision for boarding house staff, as required by the SSSC in their Codes of Practice for Employers which state the responsibilities of employers in regulating social service workers. Code 2.2 states " Effectively managing and supervising staff to support effective practice and good conduct, and supporting staff to address deficiencies in their performance." We advised that supervision and annual appraisal also provided opportunities for the employer to revisit recruitment checks to ensure staff continued to meet the criteria for satisfactory PVG; and confirm continued health, so that the school could then provide any support needed to maintain good health if necessary. We discussed resources available on the SSSC website and the Care

Inspectorate Hub, which could support improvements in this area. We advised that the failure to address staffing issues identified at the previous inspection will have an impact on the grade awarded for management and leadership.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils in the school, the provider must ensure that no member of staff delivers care unless they are registered with a professional body within six months of starting in their role. Further, they must ensure that there is an effective system to check continued registration by 1 September 2018.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes."

It is also necessary to comply with Regulation 9 of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) regulations 2011.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 – good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We acknowledged that the school were in a state of transition following the resignation of the current head and the appointment of the new head. While the new head had yet to take up their position, they demonstrated commitment to a programme of improvements and an understanding of how this could be achieved.

Since our last inspection members of the board of governors had been involved in pastoral learning walks in the boarding houses, as part of their oversight of the care provided. These were now carried out routinely, and actions then identified to the board of governors to take forward. We suggested that they continue to build on this progress, and review the questions asked regarding wellbeing indicators to include enquiries about bullying. We saw that the board of governors had appointed subcommittees with a clear remit in terms of scrutiny, guidance and strategy which helped them focus on areas of development. They had identified areas where improvements were needed, and had an overview of practice.

When we spoke with staff, it was evident that they had confidence in the new head teacher, who demonstrated strong leadership, as well as joining the staff team to provide support.

We found that policies and procedures were not updated within review dates, and some referred to other services so that they were not specific to Ardvreck. We agreed that this was an ideal opportunity to review policies and procedures, and establish a shared ethos of continued improvements. As we discussed in Quality of Staffing; crucial to the success of this would be ensuring that protected time was set aside to provide formal,

recorded one-to-one supervision for boarding staff, to ensure they had support as well as identifying where they may benefit from additional training and practice issues addressed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 3 - adequate

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the service provides formal, recorded one-to-one support and supervision for boarding house staff. From doing this any training needs could be identified; support given and quality of practice monitored.

National Care Standards for School Care Accommodation - Standard 7: Management and Staffing.

This recommendation was made on 28 April 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This had yet to be implemented and is discussed in the Quality of Staffing and Quality Management and Leadership section of this report.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended the school devises and implements an effective system to record and analyse incidents, including consideration of notification to the Care Inspectorate.

National Care Standards for School Care Accommodation – Standard 3: Care and Protection.

This recommendation was made on 22 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

At the last inspection, the school were implementing a computer based data base which would provide the means for this analysis once fully operational. They now needed to make use of the resources within the database to provide effective analysis.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
21 Jun 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 5 – Very good Environment 4 – Good Staffing 4 – Good Management and leadership 4 – Good
24 Nov 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 3 – Adequate Environment 4 – Good Staffing 3 – Adequate Management and leadership 2 – Weak
4 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 – Very good Environment 5 – Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good
8 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
3 Dec 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
10 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 5 - Very good
25 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

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