

St. Philip's School, Plains School Care Accommodation Service

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Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

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Service provided by:

St Philip's School, Plains

Service provider number:

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Service no:

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About the service

St. Philips School, Plains is registered as a School Care Accommodation Service providing care and education for a maximum of 30 young people. It was registered in its current form in February 2013.

The service is a company limited by guarantee and is overseen by a board of directors. They state their mission as "we seek to provide a living and learning environment where true relationships can flourish and, within which, children and adults, together, can undertake their respective developmental tasks."

The service is provided in the former secure service campus, whilst retaining some educational resources and the most modern units from the old campus. It has a safe, enclosed courtyard area with all-weather football pitch and running track, a swimming pool, fitness suite and gymnasium, a music studio and spacious grounds.

The service is situated close to the villages of Plains and Caldercruix, and has access to bus and train services.

The service consists of five residential houses: Mallaig House, Morar House, Lochailort House, Bracora House and Locheil.

At the time of the inspection there were 30 young people using the service.

What people told us

We were able to speak with fourteen of the young people during the inspection. Comments made to us by these young people include:

'What's not to like, you get a roof, a nice bedroom and meals and staff are nice. I like it here a lot'.

'Staff are good at saying "let's turn off the telly and have a chat" that is good and we all get on'.

Other comments from young people included:

'Staff are good; they are a good laugh and will talk to you if they think you're sad'.

'It's really good here, the staff are good. When you are upset they always talk to you and you feel better. When I'm angry they help calm me down'.

'They actually try to help and my life is definitely better. I love the staff here'.

These comments reflecting the relationship building and nurturing care, and -

'This place has been amazing for me; I would be dead the way I was going. The staff are unbelievable they are so good'

'There is no bullying but if someone is getting at you staff deal with it straight away' - thus reflecting the staff's effectiveness at keeping young people safe and nurturing responsible and respectful relationships. We found evidence of this also, when we witnessed staff responding very efficiently to an emerging situation.

We were unfortunately unable to speak with parents during the course of the inspection, however, we were able to gather views of some social workers to the young people and with visiting professionals.

Social worker's views were, in the main, very positive.

Comments made, for example, were,

- 'I have worked with several service providers in terms of residential care and I can by far say St Philips is the best'.
- 'St Philips were able to offer (x) the structure and boundaries (x) required whilst offering a nurturing and caring approach. This has had a positive impact on (x's) general emotional wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence.
- (x) has not been able to establish relationships with any other professional the way (x) has with their key worker
- Staff also go out their way to support family contact
- St Philips has been a positive placement for (x), they have helped (x) regulate their emotions and (x) has been able to attend school and achieve. They are responsive to (x's) needs..... grievances.....have been dealt with appropriately and promptly. They keep Social Worker updated regular and this includes weekly reports.

Less positive comments related to the remnants of the service's environment; from its previous use as a secure unit. For example, '...hallways and stairwells to living area is quite clinical'.

Although not subject to full scrutiny during this inspection, there are elements of the environment looked at during every inspection. The service provider had invested substantial funds in improving the environment and aiming to provide a homely feel. Young people commented on these changes positively; particularly in respect of their rooms and the living rooms. One social worker commented; 'The building did used to be a secure unit and therefore, structurally that is how it looks. However, the individual house units are very homely and the staff make the environment feel very warm and welcoming'.

We heard from a board member and from senior managers of the plans to further develop the environment and we look forward to seeing this progress at the next inspection.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	not assessed
How good is our staffing?	not assessed
How good is our setting?	not assessed
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found a very good level of service being provided to young people in respect of this key question.

Through our observations of staff's interactions with young people we found there to be genuine, warm relationships between them. As seen from comments reported earlier, young people told us they could trust staff and talk to them when worried.

We listened to staff – individually and in a group – talk with great empathy about children and young people and their individual needs and situations. Through these conversations the staff demonstrated an awareness of young people's backgrounds and needs; and of those impacted by trauma. We also heard of staff being successful at advocating on behalf of young people.

An example of this was staff advocating for young people to have contact in their home community.

The service sought and provided training for staff where this was required to address young people's specific needs. For example, training was provided in particular communication methods for staff supporting young people on the autistic spectrum. This was enabling staff to communicate effectively with young people thus maintaining their wellbeing.

We found educational outcomes for young people to be very good. Young people were attending education where previously they had disengaged. Support plans included what actions/resources were necessary to support young people sustain their educational achievements. This extended to assistance with careers and aspirations through contact with Skills Development Scotland. Some young people were linking to local colleges and attending their chosen courses or accessing introductory courses in areas they had a broad interest in.

A visiting local authority educational psychologist we spoke with gave very positive feedback of the service, stating,

They do a great job here. Young people seem to have a positive experience and express feeling safe and secure. There is a good partnership approach with the team around the child. For the young person I am visiting today there has been a massive increase in their confidence and (x) is thinking very differently about life now.

The service offered a wealth of resources and activities on site for young people such as a music studio, a large games hall, multi gym, swimming pool, kayaks, bikes and a football park.

Young people spoke of their participation in these activities and we heard of their enjoyment from these. Sports and activities were planned into daily life and the school curriculum. In addition to the resources listed previously young people were also encouraged to engage in local community groups and clubs.

Family and friends contact was fully supported by staff; where appropriate and assessed as safe. This was important to young people who were placed varying distances from their home communities.

Young people's health was well supported with all young people registered with primary health services close to the service. Good practices were found in respect of dental hygiene - limiting sweets and sugar consumption for example - and good outcomes being realised for young people's individual specific health needs. We found extremely good monitoring of health needs and appointments with immunisations updated and very good contact with public health nurse services. Medication was well managed with very good systems for recording, storing and disposing of medication.

The service Applied Psychological services staff - in addition to conducting a thorough initial assessment - provided guidance and support to the staff group on any specific communication methods or approaches required for young people on an individualised basis.

Whilst some young people stated the food was not always good we found a good varied healthy meal selection and young people's individual tastes respected. We observed several young people engaging in food preparation and cooking with staff members.

Staff we spoke with had a good understanding of child protection procedures and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. We identified that the service now needed to further develop adult protection policy and procedures.

In speaking to social workers and through our own intelligence on the service we were aware of a high level of absconding. Staff attributed this to young people being placed some distance from home and consequently being drawn to their home community. We appreciate the efforts staff go to in helping young people settle and seek to resolve the absconding behaviour.

We remain concerned about the level of absconding however. Prior to the inspection we had therefore asked the service to complete an analysis of absconding behaviour and identify strategies to reduce this. We understand this process has begun and the service is taking steps to address the outcome of the assessment. This involves working in partnership with Police liaison officers looking at how to address the matter. We suggested that the involvement of young people in this process may be beneficial in completing this exercise.

Whilst staff training as found to be good we also suggested that staff may benefit from training in bereavement and loss.

How good is our leadership?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our staff team?

This key question was not assessed.

How good is our setting?

This key question was not assessed.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found the service to be providing a very good quality of service in respect of this key question.

Initial assessments completed on the young people were of a very high standard including detailed information gathered in participation with the young people and, where appropriate, their family. Detailed appropriate information was also sought and obtained from the young people's social workers prior to placement.

The information gathered took account of the impact of any ACES (adverse childhood experiences) and trauma experiences. Robust assessments were sought for young people requiring support in respect of disabilities and for any additional needs. Assessments were completed to SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timeous) principles and linked to the well being indicators of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

The service maintained strong communication links between the care service and it's education service. Young people's engagement with education was supported through this effective communication and with the support of care staff being present with them; when required.

The assessments were being regularly reviewed and updated following any change to need or within regular timescales. On the few occasions we found this not to be the case we were provided with reasonable explanations for this; e.g. awaiting information from external agencies.

Young people's views were sought in several ways - such as through 'my world' discussions, young people's meetings, complaints forms and contact the young people had with Who Cares ? Scotland advocacy workers. The 'my world' discussions involved young people in conversations with their key workers regarding issues directly related to their care plan.

We identified some omissions to service records in a few cases that were also highlighted in the service quality assurance checks. We found that some recording templates did not directly cross reference information in other documents. For example, whilst risk assessments were completed and staff were aware of the individual risks for young people, the strategies to address these risks - whilst also known to staff and young people - were recorded elsewhere.

We considered that this information could be recorded and stored in a more efficient, effective manner. In discussing this with the senior management team we were informed that issues such as these had been identified through a quality assurance review and plans were progressing to introduce updated recording systems employing IT resources. We will look at this progress during the next inspection.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience	5 - Very Good

How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes	5 - Very Good

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