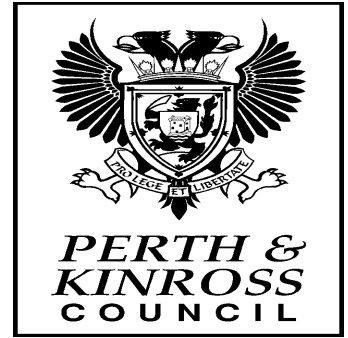


Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

Unannounced Inspection Report 2000

Registration and Inspection Unit
3-5 High Street
Perth
PH1 5JS



Establishment	Ochil Tower School
Owner(s)	The Management of Ochil Tower School
Manager	Annika Cheney, Marcus Cheney, David Riddell, Hilary Ruprecht and Ueli Ruprecht
Registered for	29
Category of Residents	Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 years of age with moderate or severe learning disabilities
Date of Inspection	24 March 1999
Inspection Officer	Andy Sloan

Issued	22/04/1999
Amended	
Accepted	29/04/1999

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FORWARD

Perth and Kinross Council as Registering and Inspecting Authority, is required to undertake two inspections to residential establishments per year. One of these should be unannounced.

This report is based on an unannounced visit made to Ochil Tower School on 24th March 1999. It should be viewed as both a supplement and update to the 1998 Annual Inspection Report and be read in conjunction with it.

INTRODUCTION

The Functions and Objectives of the school remain as they were at the time of the Annual Inspection. Co-worker changes have been minimal and the resident group of young people has also remained stable.

The visit commenced at approximately 5.00pm and the Inspection Officer spoke with Mr Ueli Ruprecht, a Joint Co-ordinator¹ in addition to a number of other co-workers, Core Group members and young people.

IMPRESSIONS OF VISIT

The Inspection Officer was cheerfully greeted on his arrival and as he discussed the Annual Review Report with a joint co-ordinator the young people were either in their respective houses, playing in the main hall or walking in the school grounds with various co-workers.

"Supper time" was set for 5.30pm and so the Officer joined the young people and co-workers at Belvidere House. The main meal of the day at the school is at lunchtime, although the young people enjoyed a choice of cheese, fruit, bread and a hot dessert for their tea.

There were 11 young people resident in Belvidere and as everyone sat round the three dinner tables, the atmosphere was convivial and relaxed. As in other Camphill Communities the food was blessed prior to the meal and everyone also joined together at the end to thank God for providing it. The young people were obviously at ease with those caring for them and the longstanding mealtime rituals facilitated a sense of structure and harmony.

Following supper, the dishes were cleared away and the young people either assisted with this or went to their bedrooms or the sitting room. The Inspection Officer then visited The Priory where the atmosphere, again, was stable and peaceful.

Here, the young people were beginning to have their baths and showers¹ with co-workers assisting where necessary. This process took a significant length of time although the Officer noted that baths appeared to be viewed as an integral "part" of the evening rather than a "chore" which required to be carried out. Following "bathtime" the co-workers then sat with the young people in their bedrooms and either read to them or, in one case, sang them lullabies accompanied by a guitar.

In Elmtree, the young people were just on their way to bed and, following a quick chat with the Inspection Officer, the young people were gently ushered to their rooms. This transition was made all the more smoothly by the cups of cocoa that had previously been on offer.

As most of the young people were now in their beds Co-workers and some of the older residents went to the school hall to rehearse their Easter play. Based on the life of Joan of Arc it appeared to the Inspection Officer an ambitious production but rehearsals reflected the cheery but orderly evening which the Inspection Officer had previously evidenced.

REVIEW OF ISSUES REQUIRING ACTION FROM ANNUAL INSPECTION

At the time of the unannounced visit the Registering Authority had not yet received the school's Implementation Timetable for the 1998 inspection. The Inspection Officer did receive however, a verbal summary of the school's plans to meet the major Issues Requiring Action arising from that report.

- The changes to the school's Statement of Functions and Objectives and other procedures and policies were accepted as valid and are to be progressed
- The telephone system in Belvidere is to be redesigned to allow young people access to private telephone facilities.
- Co-worker training is to be reassessed to reflect the issues raised.
- Recording practice is to be evaluated and strengthened in the areas detailed within the report.
- A Health and Safety Assessment on the school's high wire slide is to be carried out.
- the planned paper on sex education is to be presented to the Core Group.
- Following receipt of the Crown Report recommendations from the Registering Authority these will be actioned.
- The medical cabinet in Belvidere is to be moved.
- Care planning practice is to be reviewed and strengthened.
- The importance of focused communication to parents is to be re-emphasised.
- The supervision for co-workers will be consistently maintained.
- A structure for the supervision of joint co-ordinators is to be developed
- The school's recruitment procedure is to be revised and adhered to.
- The broken en-suite sink has been replaced and a development plan for the redecoration of Belvidere is to be progressed
- The school had not yet formulated a response to the requirement that of the two young people currently sharing a bedroom in Belvidere one should be provided with a single room.

CONCLUSION

This report highlights the school's progress in implementing the required actions arising from the 1998 Annual Inspection Report. At the date of issue of this report, however, the school's formal implementation timetable had still not been supplied to the Registering Authority.

The Officer would wish to thank the young people of Ochil Tower School for the welcome and assistance they gave their unexpected visitor. The full co-operation of co-workers is also acknowledged.

Anyone who would like a copy of this report should apply to the Registration and Inspection Unit, Social Work Services, Rosslyn House, 32 Glasgow Road, Perth. Telephone 01738 476830.

The dynamics of residential childcare establishments are complex and continually evolving and this report must be viewed in this context. The failure to mention any specific aspect of the establishment's functioning should not therefore be taken to imply it was assessed and approved. Owners and Managers are reminded, however, of their obligation to comply with all the standards as detailed in the Standards and Guidance for the Registration and Inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools