

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

# Annual Review and Inspection Report 2000

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



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Establishment	Ochil Tower School
Owner(s)	The Management of Ochil Tower School
Manager	Annika Cheney, Marcus Cheney, Margaret Snellgrove, Neil Snellgrove, 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	17, 18 and 19 January 2000
Inspection Officer	Rachel Gillespie

Issued	10/03/2000
Amended	17/05/2000
Accepted	17/05/2000

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## FORWARD

Perth and Kinross Council has a duty, under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, to inspect residential child care establishments in order to safeguard the well-being and interests of the children and young people living in them. It must carry out such inspections in an even-handed, independent and open manner.

The Council's Standards and Guidance for the Registration and Inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools provides the framework against which this inspection, and all others, is conducted. This guidance sets out the detailed requirements which the Council, as both registering and inspecting authority, expects both independent and Local Authority child care establishments in their area to comply with. Copies of this guidance are available, on request, from the Registration and Inspection Unit.

The inspection which forms the basis of this report took place over three days and provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of Ochil Tower.

The report follows the format of the Council's Standards and Guidance for the Registration and Inspection of Children's Residential Units and Residential Schools, and as such is structured under nine "Aspect of Care":

- A Statement of Functions and Objectives
- B Children and Young People's Rights
- C Children and Young People's Safety
- D Children and Young People's Basic Care
- E Children and Young People's Education and Health
- F Children and Young People's Care Planning and Development
- G Staffing
- H Premises
- I Administration and Health and Safety

Following each Aspect of Care a number of "Issues Requiring Action" or "Recommendations for Good Practice" may be detailed. Issues Requiring Action relate directly to the expected standards of the Council and must be addressed.

Recommendations for Good Practice are proposals which the Council would strongly recommend the establishment undertakes in order to improve practice.

The Manager of the establishment is required to complete a written 'Action Plan with time-scales, detailing their response to the findings of this Report. If the Action Plan is not attached to this copy of the Report, it may be available from the Registration and Inspection Unit of the Council.

## INTRODUCTION

Ochil Tower School is located unobtrusively off the main street of Auchterarder, a small town 14 miles to the west of Perth and thus easily accessible for Central Scotland; residential buildings and school facilities are clustered together in grounds which offer seclusion as well as space for outdoor activities. The school provides day placements as well as weekly and fortnightly boarding facilities.

Ochil Tower is one of five Camphill Schools in Britain and Northern Ireland which provide curative education for children and young people. The school's policy statement describes this as:

"that particular combination of the three areas of house-life, classroom education and therapy inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861 - 1925) and Karl König (1902-1966)

The principles of these men are the basis of the Camphill movements' aims and objectives which the school states, are realised.

a "In a form of community life which recognises Christianity as an essential element in its formation and working. Expression is given to this in the celebration of the Christian Festivals, concern for the environment and mutual care.

b In developing shared living situations which recognise the needs of individuals. The staff/client relationship is replaced by mutual relationships based on sharing daily life in all its manifold aspects, including the preparation and sharing of meals, caring of the household and surroundings, creating social events, and so on.

c In operating financially so there is a separation between work and payment for work done. Wages and salaries are not paid and financial needs are met on an individual and co-operative basis."

The Inspection of the school took place on 17, 18 and 19 January 2000 and the Inspection Officer interviewed five joint co-ordinators, 2 house parents, 2 co-workers and 5 young people, as well as talking informally with a number of adults and children. The school's accommodation was inspected as was a range of documentation, including a pre-inspection questionnaire completed by Ueli Ruprecht, Joint Co-ordinator. The young people's parents/carers were asked to comment via a confidential questionnaire, on the quality of care; contact was also made with a representative of the placing agency.

## ASPECT OF CARE A: STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives was first produced in February 1997 as part of the process towards registration under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. A revised Statement was published just prior to this Inspection, following a review which incorporated those amendments identified in the report of the Annual Inspection of November 1998. The statement describes the school's functions relating to 5 aspects of development - physical, personal, social, intellectual and moral and provides a comprehensive framework for child care practice. Copies of the Statement are readily available to all interested parties and its contents are incorporated in an Information for Parents booklet.

During the course of the Inspection, it was very evident that the principles outlined in the Statement shape the relationships and activities of all members of the community throughout their day.

### **Action Required**

***A number of required amendments to the school's Statement of Functions and Objectives have been identified in the relevant section of this report and require to be incorporated into the Statement by the time of its next review.***

## ASPECT OF CARE B: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

The prevailing ethos of the school is one of mutual respect, awareness of each person's individuality and sensitivity towards a young person's dignity, whatever the level of care required arising from physical, intellectual or social difficulties. New co-workers appear to quickly internalise attitudes of calm, openness and acceptance modelled by more established core-members and the children and young people in turn seem to be affected positively by this relaxed yet structured atmosphere.

With reference to consultation and communication, subsequent to a number of older pupils leaving in the summer, the majority of the children and young people currently resident are limited by age or communication difficulties in expressing their views.

However, those who were able to do so showed no inhibition in volunteering their opinions of life at Ochil Tower, both in the presence of adults and during private interview with the Inspection Officer. They are encouraged to participate in discussion throughout the day, whether on a one to one basis, in a formal classroom setting or during group activities such as meal times, although gentle encouragement is used rather than pressure; articulation of views and feelings is also nurtured by those key workers who assist young people in completing a daily diary.

The young people are routinely invited to make choices, for instance selecting from the choice of food available at each meal or deciding how to spend their leisure time and with whom, while the adults also take their views into account as when the young people express a preference for a particular room mate or request more opportunities for unsupervised trips to local shops. There is a particular recognition of the need for co-workers and parents to act as advocates for those less able to communicate and so safeguard their interests.

In providing information for children and young people, the school's Children's Handbook, which was produced just before the last Inspection, now includes a section on arrangements for, and rights to young people to access files and records. Those young people interviewed recognised the Handbook and were aware of some of its general content relating to the daily life of the school but it did not appear to have any significance to them as a book 'to hand' for referring to on a regular basis (which is not to deny the attractiveness of its lay-out and the usefulness of its content to the more able child)

Two young people made a connection between the Childline logo in the Handbook and the Childline posters at each telephone, suggesting the potency of regular exposure to visual display in conveying information.

While the adults, both core group members and co-workers, presented as being aware of young peoples rights, demonstrating their application daily throughout their interactions, they expressed difficulty in identifying pro-active approaches to providing information on rights for, and stimulating awareness in<sup>1</sup> the young people other than informally as a situation arose. Hence for example, the young people did not fully appreciate their right to access their files and the practical application of this.

All those interviewed, both adults and young people, indicated that there was due attention given to privacy and confidentiality, as evidenced by the following:



Adults knock and wait for permission to enter a young person's bedroom.



The availability of access to private telephone facilities in Belvidere and the Priory as well as the Coach house and Elmtree.



Carers' sensitivity towards issues of gender and sexuality, especially in respect of the young people requiring assistance with more intimate aspects of personal care. The young persons needs are taken into account in allocating workers.



Storage of case files: however it was noted that one of the houses was not keeping a file, which recorded daily logs currently in use, in a locked place.



An assessment of the circumstances of two people sharing a bedroom where one was displaying unhygienic behaviour, as highlighted in the last Annual Report. Although this young person still shares a bedroom, he has been moved to another house and his care regime modified, resulting in a favourable outcome overall for all parties.

The Complaints procedure has been amended in line with action required from the last Inspection. The complaints book, which has no new entries, is located in the main office, as all adults were aware. Young people did not appear to know of its existence but viewed this as of no consequence as they do not consider their concerns as formal complaints as such. Rather, they are comfortable in talking to various adults who listen and take appropriate action to the satisfaction of the young person. One young person referred to his house parent recording the issue.

Likewise, the school endeavours to create a sense of openness receptiveness, ongoing dialogue and partnership with parents so that issues can be raised and addressed without the need to invoke a formal complaints procedure.

#### **Action Required**

***Time should be allocated to explore more proactive means of raising awareness in young people regarding their rights and responsibilities, especially those identified in the Standards and Guidance. For instance, consideration should be given to young people mee4ng as a group on a more formal basis, from time to time, where such issues could be explored by various means appropriate to the abilities of individual young people. Any discussion on young people's rights within the school should be formally recorded***

#### **Action Required**

***Young people should be encouraged to refer to the handbook on a regular basis.***

#### **Action Required**

***However, other methods, such as pictorial forms of communication, should be devised to convey the contents of the handbook in a more accessible and meaningful way to those pupils for whom the written word is not a natural form of communication.***

#### **Action Required**

***While the absence of formal complaints is a positive sign, one objective of the requirement of centralised collection of complaints is so that the incidence and outcomes can be monitored and evaluated by the manager of the establishment The last inspection report also stipulated that "th6 stage at which complaints are recorded and details of the recording format should be explicitly explored in both the children's and co-workers handbook. The section on the Complaints Procedure in the Statement of Functions and Objectives would benefit from some revision as it currently addresses 3 groups (young people, parents and others, and co-workers) in separate sections such that there is considerable repetition but some diversity, this leading to a certain confusion for the reader There requires to be clarity as to***



***what is a concern and what must be given the status of a complaint***



***who should respond and how***



***concerns and complaints should be recorded in order to be monitored and evaluated. Any revised policy and procedure statement should be incorporated into the Children's Handbook.***

## **ASPECT OF CARE C: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY**

In respect of staff relationships with children and young people, it is inherent in the regime of the Camphill movement that community life involves adults and young people sharing each other's space in school, at home and in all social activities. Most co-workers' sleeping accommodation is adjacent to that of the young people so they are at hand on a 24 hour a day basis

This availability, similar to that in a domestic setting, facilitates the development of close relationships, dependency and a high level of supervision, all contributing to a sense of stability, security and continuity for young people whose needs are particularly complex. The practice of co-workers, in their capacity as classroom assistants, being responsible for young people different from those whom they care for in a home setting allows the young people access to alternative adults with whom to share any anxieties, while the ongoing daily dialogue between all adults facilitates an early response to any identified issues. As stated before, adults' interactions with young people are based on sensitivity and respect such that the uniqueness of each individual is taken into account, with encouragement to develop their potential with a view to maximum independence and a strong sense of self, while not allowing the freedom of one young person to invade that of another. This was evidenced by the calm persistence of one house parent in gently but firmly curbing the determination and excitability of a child to dominate the group when others were more passive.

The school has a clear written statement on care and control measures which can be used, as well as those which are forbidden. These are also listed in the Children's Handbook. The young people voiced the views of the adults that the most common practice was to separate the child from the situation, often spending a brief period in his bedroom, with or without staff supervision. In most cases, the young person saw this response not only as justified but as a constructive response. However, staff recognise that all behaviour has meaning so that ongoing experience of the particular young person and analysis of the specific situation leads to a considered rather than a spontaneous response; for instance, a change of activity or planned ignoring might elicit a change to more positive behaviour than a standard sanction which might reinforce the young person's negative expectations and habitual behaviour. Again, the practice of involving the young person in examining his behaviour and suggesting an appropriate sanction himself is seen as fostering maturity, self control and problem solving skills. This proactive approach to behaviour management is viewed as positive and supportive by the young person and contributes to a relaxed and non threatening environment. However, one consequence of this continuous process of nurturing the child's development by utilising all opportunities for personal growth is that there is lack of clarity in respect of recording of care and control measures, resulting in inconsistent recording in daily contact sheets

To some extent<sup>1</sup> there is a similar variability in the recording of violent incidents, some not being given the status of being recorded in each house's log book designed for that purpose, but noted in detail in the young person's contact sheet. However, documentation seen during the Inspection

complied with the format determined by the Registering Authority, as required in the last Inspection report. Violence and physical restraint incidents are kept at a minimum due to the environment which is conducive towards tranquillity and more controlled expression of feelings, yet their prevention is high on the school's agenda. Accordingly, the school acted upon the concerns raised at the last inspection, by arranging for all workers to participate in TCI training provided by an external trainer; this is to be followed up by an in-service training day in March. It has also been recognised that such training requires to be provided for all new short-term co-workers on an annual basis.

Again, whilst there have been no instances of absconding, the School's Statement of Functions and Objectives indicates a comprehensive policy involving both assessment and a missing children's file, including photos personal details and ways to facilitate police and others tracing a child as soon as possible; this is to be commended.

The school's Statement of Functions and Objectives contains a clear policy and written procedures in relation to Child Protection, covering working practice (e.g. safe caring as a protection for young people and workers) awareness-raising and education of young people, screening and awareness training of co-workers, and finally recording. The last inspection report highlighted the limited training given to co-workers in their induction week. Again, external trainers with expertise in this area have been brought in; while more experienced workers indicated their knowledge had not been enhanced, it would appear that this training has benefited the short term co-workers who appeared to have a working knowledge of the subject and to know how to deal with and pass on any concerns.

### **Action Required**

***As stated in the last Annual Inspection Report, the school requires to keep a clear record of all care and control measures used, including the date, names of co-workers and young person involved, and the reasons for, and consequences of, such incidents and those involving violence or physical restraint; this should not only facilitate a consistent approach to dealing with such issues throughout the various houses but will also ensure a uniformity in recording practices.***

## **ASPECT OF CARE D: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BASIC CARE**

The Camphill movement comprises communities of vulnerable children and adults living. Learning and working with others whereby healthy social relationships are formed and the needs of individuals met; thus the routines of daily life are an integral part of this therapeutic experience. Although individual adults may have particular responsibilities (such as Joint Co-ordinators, House parents and teachers), for the most part tasks are shared by all community members, including the young people in so far as they are able.

With only 4 employees, the school relies very much on the full participation of its co-workers to cover a range of domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, laundry etc. as well as meeting the care needs of the young people and organising social activities outside school hours. Consequently the adults are constantly 'on the go', yet they never appear harassed and their focus is always the welfare of the young people. Their composure is partly the result of good organisation and their commitment to community living, but also because the day is punctuated by periods of calm at transitional points between activities - for instance, everyone gathers as a group for quiet reflection and recharging of batteries prior to moving to the dining room to share a meal. Also the rhythmical aspects of the daily, weekly and yearly events arising from Christian practices and festivals creates a framework.

The day starts at 7.30am when the young people get up for breakfast at 8am. The 3 period school day is broken up by a 35 minute mid-morning break, and lunch at 12.50pm, followed by a 'rest hour' (for sleeping or reading quietly). Activities take place between 3.30pm and supper at 5.45pm followed by quieter pursuits, individual or communal, as part of the winding down process leading to bed between 8pm and 10pm. It is noted that the individual houses are the base for most aspects of their day other than schooling or specific activities outside the premise.

Parents are responsible for providing clothing; the young people presented as clean, tidy and fashionably dressed. The school provides pocket money, the amount varying according to age, with the young people being given advice on, and assistance in, how to spend it, as appropriate. Toiletries are provided by the school.

The co-workers indicated their sensitivity in helping the young people to manage their personal care independently, with appropriate support.

A range of leisure activities are also available. Walking was mentioned as being a first choice by both young people and co-workers but swimming is another favourite, the school visiting Perth Leisure Pool regularly as well as arranging for individual young people to have lessons at Crieff Hydro. Other activities include excursions and holidays both here and abroad. The school has plenty of opportunities within its own grounds for free play as well as a range of outdoor play equipment, play house, swings, 'high wire slide'; as required, health and safety assessment has been carried out on the latter and arrangements for its use are included in the Statement of Functions and Objectives. The young people are also encouraged to access local facilities such as shops, library, Scouts, Guides etc either independently or with supervision. There are several domestic pets within the houses and some young people are involved daily in rearing the school's pigs. The school has recently replaced its minibus, in addition to other transport it owns; all appeared to be used frequently during the course of the inspection.

Within each house newspapers, books and games were widely available in public areas and bedrooms. Televisions are not used, as it is felt that the young people can benefit more from other activities; certainly, while there are opportunities for young people to spend time on their own or in reflection<sup>1</sup> on the whole the adults are very much on hand to give attention by reading stories, talking on a one to one basis, or meeting for communal activities such as singing.

All meals are served in the individual houses, although lunch is prepared by the part-time cook in Belvidere. The menu is varied, reflecting both traditional Scottish and more international tastes, in keeping with that familiar to young people. However, processed and convenience food are avoided, with reliance on natural ingredients, including organically grown fruit and vegetables from the school's own gardens.

Some purchases are bought in bulk but the young people also accompany the adults to local shops and assist in the preparation of supper. The latter has no fixed menu so enabling catering for individual tastes, and allowance is also made for young people's individual dietary requirements. While 'snacking' at will is discouraged, the Inspection Officer observed the school giving a reasonable leeway in this respect while promoting good eating habits.

Meals, at which a simple blessing is given at the start and finish, are orderly but relaxed occasions in line with the general mood of the school; some young people focus quietly on the task in hand, while the more gregarious chattering in a lively manner to the adults.

### **Action Required**

***With regard to pocket money transactions, the young person should sign for this as well as the, adult, to ensure accountability of the latter;' as well as enhancing' the young person's sense of status and responsibility.***

## ASPECT OF CARE E: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND HEALTH

As a Rudolph Steiner school Ochil Tower bases its education on the Steiner curriculum which adopts a holistic approach to education of the whole person and therefore the classroom environment is not separate from other aspects of the young person's life; All subjects contained within the national 5-14 curriculum are covered, with the 3 periods of the day having a different focuses the main lesson has a topic presented over several weeks to the class which is grouped according to chronological age: the second focus on literacy, numeracy, communication music and art for groups of 1 to 3 according to ability; and finally, the afternoon lesson, where groups vary in size and composition and the work tends to be more practical and artistic e.g. gardening, baking, weaving, woodwork, painting and gym. In all classes, the teacher is supported by class assistants from the pool of co-workers.

Parents are informed and consulted about the education as well as the care of their children both informally and through the twice yearly formal reviews when the Education and Care Plan is updated, as well as receiving a comprehensive Annual School Report. Record of Needs and Future Needs meetings are held for most young people and the school views liaison with parents and a number of outside agencies egg Perth College, Careers Officers<sup>1</sup> and other adult resources as a part of their remit in assisting their pupils to prepare for the next stage of their lives. As a community residential school, there is no separation between teaching and care staff and therefore care practices are consistent and goals and objectives are shared.

Health is defined in its broadest sense, to include physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions. Consequently, although the children are almost all registered with the local GP, there is an agreement with the latter and parents that each pupil admission is assessed by Camphill's homeopathic medical consultant who visits the school monthly and reviews each young person on a regular basis. These assessments may recommend a homeopathic medicine but may also refer for various therapies provided either by the school's own workers or by various visiting therapists, usually on an individual basis egg a range of Occupational Therapy, art therapy, curative eurhythmia<sup>1</sup> speech therapy, massage etc. Dental screening, and treatment is available through a Perth health centre.

Documentation showed detailed health history and issues and medication is properly recorded with consent forms for emergency and other medical treatments in place, as well as attention having been given to the recommendations of the Crown Report. The administration of medication is recorded through separate proformas for prescribed medication and household remedies, both traditional and homeopathic, by each home parent although a joint co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating and supervising medical and health practices. In line with action required or recommended, the school has replaced medication cabinets with purpose designed versions in appropriate locations. Health education is carried out on an informal one to one basis as well as being covered in the generality of the school curriculum, involving discussion on relationships, bullying! health, self protection etc. The paper on personal and social development, referred to in the last inspection report, reiterates this approach in respect of sex education indicating that individual sex education should be provided after consultation between co-workers parents and authorities. However, it is recognised that by Class II specific attention should be given to this' subject using a variety of methods to facilitate pupil participation and awareness egg role play, discussion, pictorial communication.

## ASPECT OF CARE F: CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Most placements are funded by Education Authorities with a few jointly funded with Social Services and/or Health Boards, although in some cases it is the initiative of the parents which triggers a referral. Ochil Tower School has a clear policy and agreed and comprehensive procedure relating to the process of admission which is recognised as an anxious time. Equally, leaving school and finding a way through the minefield of options available is also seen as a difficult and traumatic time, requiring support to be given to both pupils and parents. To assist these processes the school has a number of parents of young people currently or previously resident at Ochil Tower who are willing to be contacted by parents for advice and support. This initiative is to be commended and has been accessed, although the Inspector has no direct feedback from parents who have used this service to gauge its usefulness. The young people interviewed recalled events surrounding their admission as a positive experience; examples were given of their needs and views being taken into account in such matters such as allocation of bedroom, its decor and choice of key worker.

The school is still in the process of refining its care planning process, this aspect of care being developed as a consequence of Registration. An initial Education and Care Plan is drawn up at the time of the first 3 months 'trial and assessment' period with a view to its being evaluated and modified at the 6 monthly review.

A sample of several files showed up to date care plans in a proforma covering the following: Purpose and aim of placement, summary of needs and overall aims (it was not always obvious how the two were differentiated) and then a diagrammatic 'action plan' under the headings, Area of Work, Pupil Needs, Suggested work programme, Timescales and Monitoring, Persons Responsible and Support and Resources. The Areas of Work included those issues highlighted in the Registering Authorities Standards and Guidance. As the Inspector commented last year, the needs identified were often global needs which are inherently difficult to translate into work programmes of specific tasks, without the added factor that many of the young people at Ochil Tower School can only progress in small, and sometimes scarcely discernible steps, over a long period of time, thus making it difficult for adults to see care planning as a dynamic process.

Nevertheless, it is important that Key workers and colleagues use the Care Plan to guide their daily interactions with young people as conscious, planned and justifiable interventions by being able to relate them to the needs identified in the Care Plan. Hopefully, in this manner, both the young person and the carers will be able to pinpoint more closely areas of success and those where a change of method, direction or focus would be beneficial. This monitoring and evaluation, appropriately recorded, should be ongoing and carried out on a more regular basis than the formal reviews, which are both a check that this process is ongoing but also an opportunity to consider wider and more long term issues in the child's life.

Reviews appear to be taking place every 6 months with a broad spectrum of people attending, including Ochil School, the young person, parents and a wide range of other professionals. The young people interviewed reported that they attended reviews and were asked to contribute, although they were more vague about their purpose, one person indicating people "talked about him getting better school work and things". The short term co-workers indicated they were fully involved on a daily basis in discussion with people about specific aspects of their care plan, as well as similar exchanges with colleagues within each house on a formal and informal basis. It was less clear how much they contributed to the more formal aspects of care planning.

Through care is a concept underlying all the work of the school, which aims to develop the young person to full potential and enable him or her to participate in the wider community as independently as possible. For this reason the school views its links with other professionals and parents as part of a partnership.

The young person's have circumstances (egg single parent status, the presence of other siblings, level of contact required by young person S parent) are factors, in addition to the extent of challenging behaviour, and the educational and social needs of the individual which are taken into account when checking the provision for the young person, whether day, weekly or fortnightly or respite. Many of the workers expressed empathy with the parents about their situation and saw it as the school's role to accommodate the family's needs and wishes as far as possible by tailoring care and contact accordingly. Communication is facilitated not only through formal reviews and termly parents meetings, but also via letters and telephone calls.

Additionally, in many cases contact books have proved useful, whether for a day pupil where the need for regular liaison is more important, or where the child has poor speech and cannot communicate effectively or where transport is via taxi and there is no direct opportunity to exchange information. Even for those parents who do assist in escorting their children to and fro, the contact book is a more reliable method in ensuring information about general progress is conveyed, as opposed to automatic notification of particular incidents.

Feedback from parents through the questionnaire indicated that the staff are considered to be very approachable and totally dedicated to the care of the children, who for the most part are said to have thrived after moving to Ochil Tower.

Four local authority Social Workers contacted the Inspector to report very positively on the care of the children, in terms of the child-centred approach, the calming effect of the environment and the structure of the regime, especially as it affects someone with an aspect of autism. The school always welcomes professionals and is flexible in accommodating itself to the needs of parents and others.

#### **Action Required**

***The school must continue to develop and put into operation the integration of its care, planning and review process This necessitates that core members develop confidence in the knowledge and skills required in this care practice area, and that the school ensure that the short term co-workers participate as fully as possible, despite the inherent limitations of the posts.***

#### **Action Required**

***The use of both personal diaries and contact books, where appropriate, for individual young people<sup>1</sup> should be incorporated into the Statement of Functions and Objectives as well as the Young Person's handbook.***

## **ASPECT OF CARE G: STAFFING**

Ochil Tower is a Centre of Anthroposophical Curative Education and a Camphill Community whose primary task is the care and education of pupils with special educational needs. The property itself<sup>1</sup> along with 2 other local facilities for adults with special needs is owned and managed by Camphill Central Scotland Trust.

Legally it operates as a company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish Charity with its own Management Council, which holds formal minuted meetings every 2 months and comprises 2 joint co-ordinators as Residents' Council Members, as well as non-resident members invited to join because of their professional expertise and knowledge of the work of Camphill. The Management Council is legally responsible for the management of Ochil Tower, being accountable to pupils and their representatives for the operation of the school and act as the final arbiter in disciplinary and

grievance matters and so is required to offer adequate support and supervision of the community. During this last year discussions have been initiated by the Management Council with a view to 3 of its non-resident members providing a basic individual support/supervision structure for Joint Co-ordinators, by means of Annual Assessment Sessions, namely an appraisal of present performance and future professional development.

There is no single manager responsible for the day to day running of the school. Rather, group management in the form of 'collective decision making' is undertaken by Joint co-ordinators" appointed, not on the basis of age or length of stay, but on a willingness and ability to take on both specific and joint management responsibility, and drawn from the pool of more senior long term co-workers (who form the school's 'Core Group' and are responsible for the spiritual, cultural, social and economic well being of the school). All joint co-ordinators have relevant childcare experience and are social-work qualified or possess a Certificate in Curative Education or a Rudolph Steiner Teaching Certificate

The joint co-ordinators have specific responsibilities for key care practice areas; medical, therapy and house parents: teachers and education; training and professional development; admissions, reviews, child protection, health and safety, co-worker recruitment and employed staff; and finally administration and finance.

Four of the co-ordinators are also house parents in 2 houses (other co-workers being allocated as house parents in the Priory and Elmtree) and some have teaching responsibilities. Similarly, in other care practice areas, the joint Co-ordinator is assisted by core group workers.

There are 3 main 'working groups': house parents, teachers (meeting fortnightly) and training (monthly) which are responsible for the work of their practice area<sup>1</sup> providing supervision and support to individuals through minuted meetings and being accountable to the joint co-ordinates via each group's chairperson (a Joint Co-ordinator). Additionally, the Core Group meets twice a month with an agenda, covering management and cultural and social issues, and minutes, and each house has a weekly meeting, with the whole community also convening as required. All these meetings, as well as most training sessions, take place from 9pm after a long and exacting day's work, but are viewed as an essential aspect of the community's life and so attended with the same commitment to task as for other activities.

Apart from formal meetings and informal discussion and monitoring, the house parents' and teachers' practice is also assessed twice a year through self-assessment/appraisal sessions which are guided by a questionnaire where answers are recorded by the Chairperson.

The Therapy group meets fortnightly for study and discussion to share experiences as well as reflecting on the pupils' individual therapy sessions. A joint co-ordinator chairs these meetings, which are attended by the OT and Art Therapist as well as co-workers requiring training. These therapists also have regular links with and support from Camphill colleagues in Aberdeen.

Apart from a few 'employed' staff - secretary, cook, OT and maintenance man, the other main group of workers are the eleven short term co-workers, young people aged between 18 years and 25 years, from a variety of European countries, who have specifically sought out a years work opportunity in a Camphill community and are appointed as a 'group parent' attached to a particular house, with responsibility for between one and three young people as well as acting as classroom assistants. The school has acted on concerns raised during the last inspection report, namely that a satisfactory police check should be received before any co-worker is in contact with young people and that friends should not be used to provide references.

Prior to the young people's return in August, these co-workers undertake a week's induction programme supplemented by an Information Pack, covering the school's philosophy and policies and procedures in relation to issues such as fire precautions, health and safety, practical living arrangements as well as childcare issues. Each is assigned an individual tutor to draw together an overall awareness of the co-worker and provide ongoing support and supervision, meeting once a

term or as required. At the end of the first term in October the tutor chairs a Probationary Assessment Tutorial which the co-worker, class teacher and house parent also attend, whereby strengths and weaknesses are comprehensively assessed.

This assessment is minuted, as are subsequent termly appraisal tutorials, although it is then the co-worker who presents a self-evaluation of his/her work and life in the community and writes up a summary of the general conclusions of the appraisal group. This formal monitoring of care practice is supplemented by ongoing supervision and support through minuted weekly House meetings and individual supervision sessions; it was noted that in one house, at least, the latter were still not being minuted due to concerns about confidentiality. Both co-workers interviewed spoke of the constant availability of house parents and more experienced Co-workers with whom they could share any anxieties or gaps in knowledge and skills, knowing understanding, guidance and assistance would be given willingly and as of right. The positives of the community's living and learning together as a shared experience for both adults and young people seemed to compensate for the long days and fact that the co-workers are only entitled to three days off every two weeks there was no suggestion that they were being exploited or that they were unhappy with their living and working conditions. Likewise, community social and cultural evening activities, such as performing seasonal and Christmas plays, also contribute to the cohesiveness of the co-worker group.

Training is an ongoing commitment for the school. All short term co-workers take part in a one, year Foundation Course in Curative Education and Social Therapy' run by the Core group and other Camphill speakers, with 4 sessions every 2 weeks throughout each term. This term's programme was varied: Painting, Maladjustment, Autism, Eurythmy<sup>1</sup> Child Development, Play and games, and Anthroposophical, medicine. Individual training includes the weekly attendance of 2nd and 3rd Year co-workers at Aberdeen for the Camphill course in Curative Education, as well as short courses in specialist areas for more experienced co-workers.

All co-workers have taken part in an in-house training day on recording, as well as a 2 day course on the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Again in response to the last inspection Report, all co-workers participated in a 3 day TCI course presented by external trainers and seen as a valuable 'annual event'. The school believes that timetabling this at the end of the first term (October) is more valuable than if it were held during the induction week, as the new workers then have some experience with which to relate the input. The externally provided training in Child Protection was received less warmly.

Overall staffing levels are more than adequate to meet the needs of the young people in terms of numbers, competency and energy and there is an appropriate balance between males and females. Young people generally are well supervised and supported, while the more able have the opportunity to exercise discretion in the choice and quality of their relationships.

### **Action Required**

***It is noted that the school is to set up a structure for the individual supervision and support of Joint Co-ordinators Subsequent inspections will examine the process of this development, which was a required action arising from last years inspection.***

### **Action Required**

***Individual supervision sessions should be minuted in an appropriately objective and professional format in all houses.***

### **Action Required**

***The school's commitment to framing on a wide spectrum of subjects pertaining to the care and 'welfare of young people, is acknowledged. However, they are required to ensure all co-***

**workers are trained on an ongoing basis as required in the 4-key areas of care and control, violence and physical restraint, recording and child protection.**

## ASPECT OF CARE H: PREMISES

Ochil Tower School, being located halfway along Auchterarder's High Street, via a short, tree lined driveway, offers a degree of privacy and seclusion yet offers easy access to contact with the local community and facilities when required. The school monitors closely the exposure of its young people to public gaze! easily identifiable in a small town, so as to offer them ordinary opportunities, yet within their capacity to deal with any discrimination.

Of the 4 houses<sup>1</sup> Belvidere accommodates 10 young people; as an old Victorian mansion it has both attractions and disadvantages in terms of room sizes, day to day functioning and maintenance. The broken sink noted last year has been replaced and the school has started a programme of redecoration.

There are limits to personal living space due to the individual tastes of the current residents, who are currently male and into minimalism'. However, the public rooms downstairs convey a welcoming combination of practical homeliness and reassuring solidity.

The converted coach house, the Priory, and Elmtree (a modern building) presently can accommodate 5, 6 and 4 young people respectively, although overall there are only 22 residential pupils and 6 day pupils (attached to various houses), pending vacancies being filled. The school is conscious that many of its residents require a single room, for a variety of reasons, and have tried to accommodate their needs in allocating bedrooms. Many of these difficulties will be overcome this summer with the completion of another building, Sycamore House, in the grounds, when the requirements of the Registering Authority, in respect of a maximum of 2 children in a bedroom, will be met.

These other houses are furnished along Scandinavian lines and appear to function very much as ordinary homes. They are comfortable, clean and warm, being maintained by the house parents and co-workers, most of whom live in the houses (a few live in Birch Cottage, situated within the grounds and a flat in the High Street).

The Three kings' Hall and the Three Shepherds Building are purpose built school accommodation together comprising classrooms, therapy room, large hall and indoor play area, but are also used extensively outside school hours.

### **Action Required**

**General maintenance of the school is good, but subsequent to Sycamore House being put into use, attention must be given to upgrading the bedroom accommodation in Belvidere.**

## ASPECT OF CARE I: ADMINISTRATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Reference should be made to specific issues in relation to recording processes elsewhere in this report. In general terms, the school appears to have taken on board the points raised by the previous Inspection report; for instance, entries overall were signed and dated although time constraints did not allow a full inspection of the records of all 4 houses. This is an area which

should be kept uppermost in mind on a daily basis and in supervision and training so that standards can be improved and maintained.

Tayside Fire Brigade's Fire Safety inspection report detailed a number of requirements which were passed to the school for action. These measures have been rectified and a follow up inspection is awaited. A new set of fire safety recording procedures were initiated in 1998; the use of a designated person to take responsibility for all fire checks throughout the various school buildings assists consistent application in this respect. Regular fire drills are held as required, and a health and safety assessment of each house in relation to storage of cleaning materials has been carried out but still requires to be written up.

Environmental and Consumer services report that the premises are satisfactory in terms of the Food Safety Act 1990.

New co-workers are provided with basic First Aid training by St John's Ambulance as part of the Induction week, but other workers have a more comprehensive training, including refresher courses. Each house possess a First Aid kit.

### **Action Required**

***The last inspection required an audit of recording procedures to ensure the quality of recording is of an acceptable standard The plan of action indicates this is still under review and therefore this should be done as a matter of urgency.***

### **Action Required**

***A health and safety risk assessment in relation to cleaning materials has been carried out in each house but not formally recorded. This requires to be done as a matter of urgency.***

## **STRENGTHS OF ESTABLISHMENT**

Overall the physical aspects of the school its location, the grounds, the layout of the school and the living accommodation, as well as the ambience of the houses themselves, are conducive to the community family style living and are in no way institutionalised. Consequently, this facilitates the pupils' transition from home to residential school. A parent referred to this as being her child's second home.

The core principles of the Camphill movement, outlined in the Introduction, indicate a strong personal commitment to providing good quality care, interlinking all aspects of the day and enhancing the potential and opportunities of the young people yet not undermining the role of parents and families and being mindful of their role to prepare the young people for adult life elsewhere.

The central role of child development in curative education, together with the cultural rituals and a day of purposeful activity structured round periods of tranquillity, combine to create a calm and calming environment, which provides a sense of safety and security for young people such that tensions and outbursts of aggression are minimised.

The school is receptive to ideas to improve childcare practice and has responded positively to requirements placed upon them in areas such as accommodation, recording and training whilst at the same time adopting their own initiatives such as the young people's personal diaries. Similarly, general administration is organised, efficient and affective to detail. Information technology has been harnessed to assist the daily functioning of the school, for instance by use of the internet to facilitate distribution of information to parents and others.

Although the management structure is complex, it appears to be effective in enabling the community to fulfil its functions and objectives; it also exemplifies egalitarian principles and shows respect for the individual, including the co-workers and young people while recognising their additional needs, as demonstrated by the comprehensive training, support and monitoring of co-workers.

Parents are all very positive about their child's experiences at the school, feedback generally summarising this as 'excellent'; it is significant that several young people move on to other Steiner establishments so as to continue to benefit from the special regime they have to offer.

## CONCLUSION

The report highlights a number of Required Actions and Recommendations for Good Practice. There is a requirement that an Action Plan be produced, detailing what will be done in relation to these findings.

Both the Action Plan and this report are publicly available and further copies may be supplied on request. Young people and parents/guardians will be made particularly welcome when approaching the Registration and Inspection Unit to either obtain a copy or to have any aspect of the report discussed with them.

The Officer would finally like to thank the young people of for both their welcome, openness and contributions during this Inspection. The full co-operation of staff and management 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 Road1 Perth. Telephone 01738 476 830.

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

## ACTION PLAN

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Plan of Action	Timescale
<b>A Aspect of Care: Statement of Functions and Objectives</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
1. A number of required amendments to the school's Statement of Functions and Objectives have been identified in the relevant section of this report and require to be incorporated into the Statement by the time of its next review.	Up-date each section at time of review	Ongoing
<b>B Aspect of Care: Children And Young People's Rights</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
1. Young people should be encouraged to refer to the handbook on a regular basis.	Use occasion of 6-monthly reviews to draw attention to Handbook	Ongoing
2. However, other methods, such as pictorial forms of communication, should be devised to convey the contents of the handbook in a more accessible and meaningful way to those pupils for whom the written word is not a natural form of communication.	Use new Inclusive Writer computer programme to translate relevant sections of Children's Handbook into sign language and assess effectiveness.	July 2000
3. While the absence of formal complaints is a positive sign, one objective of the requirement of centralised collection of complaints is so that the incidence and outcomes can be monitored and evaluated by the manager of the establishment The last inspection report also stipulated that "the stage at which complaints are recorded and details of the recording format should be explicitly explored in both the children's and co-workers handbooks. The section on the Complaints Procedure in the Statement of Functions and Objectives would benefit from some revision as it currently addresses 3 groups (young people, parents and others, and co-workers) in separate sections such that there is considerable repetition but some diversity, this leading to a certain confusion for the reader There requires to be clarity as to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is a concern and what must be given the status of a complaint</li> <li>• who should respond and how</li> <li>• how concerns and complaints should be recorded in order to be monitored and evaluated. Any revised policy and procedure statement should be</li> </ul>	Clarify and up-date complaint's procedure, with particular emphasis on transition point from informal concern to formal complaint which requires recording.	August 2000

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Plan of Action	Timescale
incorporated into the Children's Handbook.		
<b>C Aspect of Care: Children and Young People's Safety</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
<p>1. With regard to pocket money transactions, the young person should sign for this as well as the adult, to ensure accountability of the latter;' as well as enhancing' the young person's sense of status and responsibility.</p>	Up-date procedure in Policy Statement for the handling of pocket money. This will include a procedure for the signing for weekly pocket money for young people for whom this is considered appropriate	August 2000
<b>F Aspect of Care: Children and Young People's Care Planning and Development</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
<p>1. The school must continue to develop and put into operation the integration of its care planning and review process This necessitates that core members develop confidence in the knowledge and skills required in this care practice area, and that the school ensure that the short-term co-workers participate as fully as possible, despite the inherent limitations of the posts.</p>	Weekly Training and In-service Courses	Ongoing
<p>2. The use of both personal diaries and contact books, where appropriate, for individual young people should be incorporated into the Statement of Functions and Objectives as well as the Young Person's handbook.</p>	Up-date Policy Statement	August 2000
<b>G Aspect of Care: Staffing</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
<p>1. It is noted that the school is to set up a structure for the individual supervision and support of Joint Co-ordinator Subsequent inspections will examine the process of this development, which-was a required action arising from last years inspection.</p>		On-going
<p>2. Individual supervision sessions should be recorded in an appropriately objective and professional format in all houses.</p>	Establishing of Recording Procedure	August 2000
<p>3. The school's commitment to training on a wide spectrum of subjects pertaining to the care and 'welfare of young people, is acknowledged. However, they are required to ensure all co-workers are trained on an ongoing basis as required in the 4-key areas of care and control, violence and physical restraint, recording and child protection.</p>	Ongoing monitoring.	Ongoing

Issue Requiring Action / Recommendation for Good Practice	Plan of Action	Timescale
<b>G Aspect of Care: Premises</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
4. General maintenance of the school is good, but subsequent to Sycamore House being put into use, attention must be given to upgrading the bedroom accommodation in Belvidere.	Up-graded flooring in bedrooms in Belvidere. On-going development Plan.	July 2000
<b>I Aspect of Care: Administration and Health and Safety</b>		
<b>Issues Requiring Action</b>		
1. The last inspection required an audit of recording procedures to ensure the quality of recording is of an acceptable standard. The plan of action indicates this is still under review and therefore this should be done as a matter of urgency.	Developing separate section on recording to School Policy Statement, including quality control.	July 2000
2. A health and safety risk assessment in relation to cleaning materials has been carried out in each house but not formally recorded. This requires to be done as a matter of urgency.	Carry out risk assessment	June 2000