

Albyn School - Boarding School Care Accommodation Service

308 Great Western Road
Aberdeen
AB10 6PL

Telephone: 01224 322408

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

30 May 2018

Service provided by:

Albyn School Limited

Service provider number:

SP2003003562

Service no:

CS2016347537

About the service

Albyn School - Boarding provides a school care accommodation service to a maximum of eight young people of secondary school age attending Albyn School in Aberdeen.

The accommodation is provided from a large house close to the centre of Aberdeen, and a short walk away from the school. It is well cited for all amenities.

The service state their aims and objectives to provide:

- A safe and secure atmosphere for young adults.
- Quality and accessible academic and pastoral care for pupils in boarding.
- To contribute and improve the quality of life for pupils and families.
- Create quality experiences out of school that meet the needs of young adults and encourage them to become confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners.
- Encourage young people, to become more responsible for themselves and their actions through active involvement in the organisation of the house.
- The boarding staff will work as a team to support each pupil and their family when providing care and identifying areas of concern.

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 01 September 2016.

What people told us

Five students were boarding at the time of the inspection. The inspector had the opportunity to speak to four of the students (and say hello to the fifth). All five returned questionnaires to the Care Inspectorate prior to the inspection (via an electronic survey monkey).

Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive, both in discussion and via the survey monkey. They enjoyed living at Albyn boarding and felt that they were well looked after by boarding staff. They felt there were good opportunities to develop friendships and reported no bullying. Study and academic achievement was important to the students, and well supported, whilst also enjoying opportunities to attend social events and see more of Scotland.

Self assessment

No self assessment was requested by the Care Inspectorate in the inspection year 2018/19.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Staff support at the boarding house was provided by a housemistress and assistant housemistress, with relief staff from Albyn nursery school covering at the weekends. Students spoke highly of the care and support they received from the housemistress and assistant housemistress, however, were less familiar with the relief staff and therefore generally chose not to engage with them, or to engage with them on a superficial level.

The housemistress and assistant housemistress knew all of the students very well with the small size of the boarding service allowing their care, support and supervision to be very natural within the living environment.

All of the students had a support plan which they were actively involved in completing. Plans identified any areas of support students felt they might need and how this would be offered. Where students had additional support needs these were documented and discussed with those relevant to providing their support. Risk assessments were completed for trips and outings and for any additional concerns or structured support students needed (such as the self administration of medication). Students also completed 'wellbeing wheels' which provided their views in relation to the wellbeing indicators safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. (SHANARRI). These were overwhelmingly positive with the students receiving all the identified support. Support plans could be developed further through the addition of clearly documented review dates, and the author of the document.

Students were involved in their care and the life of the house in numerous ways. Formal opportunities included monthly support plan meetings, weekly boarding meetings and a suggestion box. The Head of House (a senior student) also met with the housemistress/assistant housemistress to share any student views which they did not want to share in the wider group. A 'you said, we did' board in one of the communal areas of the house displayed the results of student requests. The attractively presented board also recognised the achievements of boarding students and displayed photos of trips and outings they had been on.

Catering arrangements had changed with meals provided by an in-house cook (rather than an external catering company). Students were therefore able to speak directly to the cook about their shopping and meal preferences, and to directly influence menu choices.

Within the school curriculum, and at evenings and weekends, students had the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of opportunities to expand their skills, interests and life experiences. They were encouraged to be involved in a wide range of physical activity, including sports, the school gym and walking locally.

Students were actively involved in developing independent living skills. They had the opportunity to cook and could take responsibility for their own laundry and share in some household chores. Most of the students spoken with acknowledged that whether they enjoyed them or not these would be useful skills for life after Albyn School.

Medication storage, administration and recording was examined. Systems had been reviewed and developed to comply with best practice. Where students self-administered medication this had been assessed by the school matron as something they were competent to do safely. Medication recording and auditing could be improved through an additional count at the time of administering medication.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments were in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. All staff working at the service were made aware of these documents and of the students' routines and expectations.

The school had an identified child protection officer and child protection procedures in place. Staff had received appropriate training in relation to child protection and were aware of their responsibilities.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Albyn School - Boarding was provided from a large well maintained house near both the centre of Aberdeen and Albyn School. It was well cited for all the amenities of the city and for public transport.

The house was decorated and furnished to a high standard with en suite bedrooms and good communal spaces where the students could come together to relax or study. All of the students had their own rooms and were free to personalise them as they wished. Communal areas were 'homely' and well used by students to relax and study. The large sun room/dining area was particularly well used and bright and welcoming. An enclosed garden at the rear of the property provided an outdoor space for students to enjoy the sunshine.

The property was very safe and secure with external security via CCTV and keypad door entry systems. Students were able to gain access to the property independently via the keypad system until a set time of night when external doors were internally locked. Students signed themselves in and out of the building, though the size of the service allowed houseparents to have ongoing discussion and awareness of where all the students were at all times.

Students had access to two kitchens and laundry facilities and were able to cook and do washing independently if they chose to, though meals and laundry services were provided. Most of the students enjoyed the meals provided but appreciated the opportunity to make snacks and cook at weekends if they wanted to.

All repairs, security and safety checks are carried out by the landlord who made scheduled visits every two weeks. Staff had relevant contact numbers to report repairs or faults which might occur outwith this time and stated that repairs were carried out promptly.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Due to the small size of the service the core 'team' was a housemistress and assistant housemistress who lived at the boarding accommodation. When 'off duty' additional staff were accessed from the Albyn School nursery. Both the housemistress and assistant housemistress were committed and motivated to providing a high quality support to the students, and to the development of Albyn School - Boarding. Both were knowledgeable about the students that they supported and were aware of individual interests, needs and agreed support. They had high expectations of the students, alongside a relaxed sense of fun and care for their wellbeing.

Communication between the housemistress and assistant housemistress was very good, as they lived and worked alongside each other. They were confident that they communicated well and had shared values and goals in relation to student care and welfare. Interaction between houseparents and students was observed to be warm and respectful. Students spoken with, and who returned questionnaires, felt they were well supported and had positive relationships with the housemistress and assistant housemistress.

The housemistress and assistant housemistress were also employees at Albyn School and as such had a good understanding of the expectations of the school and good links with teaching and pastoral staff. They were able to support study and homework and to help students progress visits and applications to further education. School and boarding handbooks formalised the responsibilities and expectations of the staff team and how these should be met.

The arrangement which was in place to provide staff when the housemistress and assistant housemistress had time off, was the use of staff employed at Albyn nursery. Staff worked on a rotational basis, with different staff providing this cover. At this, and the previous inspection, students stated that they did not get to know these staff very well as they saw them only occasionally. The pool of relief staff is smaller than last year, however, it would be beneficial to students to have a consistent houseparent who knew them well.

Staff were able to access training at Albyn School, online, via the Scottish Council for Independent Schools and from external providers. Both the housemistress and assistant housemistress had completed an externally provided child protection courses, in addition to the training which had been delivered at school. Further training included mental health first aid, Child Sexual Exploitation and data protection.

Various policy and best practice documents were readily accessible to support staff. School and boarding handbooks formalised the responsibilities and expectations of the staff team and how these should be met.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager of the service (the housemistress) was enthusiastic and knowledgeable and had developed the service since its opening in late 2016. She listened to the views of the students and was aware of best practice and new legislation through involvement with professional forums such as the Scottish Council for Independent Schools (SCIS).

External governance and quality assurance measures were in place. The manager met regularly with her line manager (the headmaster of Albyn School) to share any relevant information about boarding. A senior management team and board of governors provided both support and scrutiny and were also updated about relevant matters, incorporating shared information into relevant reports. Board members had visited the boarding house and were accessible to students.

The boarding service had developed an improvement plan, in addition to the wider school development plan. This, and a quality assurance calendar, identified target areas for development with clear and SMART objectives, some of which had already been progressed. They had also completed a self assessment measuring progress in relation to care and support, environment, staffing and management and leadership. The self assessment also identified areas for improvement and how these would be met.

All of the boarding staff were required by their registrants Scottish Social Services Council or the General Teaching Council (SSSC or GTCS) to complete and evidence training and professional development. Staff had individual folders which evidenced training and professional development and which the registered manager audited on a six monthly basis. Houseparents received formal supervision where they had the opportunity to discuss training and continuous professional development (CPD) and any other matters relevant to professional or service development.

Audits and checks were in place to ensure that staff were appropriately registered with either the Scottish Social Services Council or the General Teaching Council. The system could be improved by ensuring that all staff provide a copy of their current certificate of registration.

Young people had numerous opportunities to share their views and influence service provision (see 'Quality care and support') and had also returned positive feedback via a questionnaire about the service. Parents were also asked to provide feedback via a questionnaire, however, none chose to do so. There were many well publicised ways parents and students could discuss any comments or concerns with a number of people throughout boarding, school or externally.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

Support plans should be reviewed and developed to use the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included). This would ensure that assessment and recording was more focused and outcome based and reflected current best practice.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services - Standard 8: You as an Individual

This recommendation was made on 30 May 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Support plans had been developed to reflect the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

Recommendation 2

Medication systems (storage, recording and auditing) should be reviewed to ensure they comply with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society best practice guidance - 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care'.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services - Standard 13: Keeping Well - Medication

This recommendation was made on 30 May 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Effective medication procedures were in place which complied with best practice guidance.

Recommendation 3

The boarding service should develop an improvement plan which identifies its plans for the future and how these will be met

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

This recommendation was made on 30 May 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

A comprehensive improvement plan had been developed which identified targets for the future and how they would be met.

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
24 Apr 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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