

# Strathallan School

## School Care Accommodation Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
16 November 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Strathallan School

**Service provider number:**  
SP2006008030

**Service no:**  
CS2006114915

## About the service

Strathallan School is a school care accommodation service forming part of an independent, co-educational school for both day and boarding pupils. The service has boarding places for up to 482 children and young people. There are eight boarding houses accommodating between 48 and 68 pupils (three for girls, four for boys and a mixed junior house). Young people in the junior house have shared rooms; other houses offer mainly single bedrooms.

The school is situated on a large campus about seven miles from Perth. It has a range of facilities for pupils, including a dining hall, chapel, health centre, arts café, outdoor sports pitches, sports hall, shooting facility and dance and drama studio.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6, 7, 8 and 9 November 2023. We arrived at the service at approximately 11:30 on the first day and left at approximately 14:00 on the last day. The inspection was carried out by six inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. Different members of the inspection team visited the service at various times over the four days between about 08:00 and 19:45 and were present during the early evening on three occasions.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- reviewed responses to surveys from 91 children and young people, 148 parents and carers and 81 staff;
- spoke with 149 children and young people boarding at the service and one family member;
- spoke with 46 staff, managers and governors;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- A very high proportion of young people were happy with the care they received at Strathallan and felt safe there. They benefited from largely very positive and nurturing relationships with staff.
- Young people had opportunities to participate in and influence different aspects of boarding life.
- The service provided a wide range of supports for promoting young people's physical health and emotional wellbeing.
- Boarding staff felt well-supported in their work.
- Assessment and planning processes for meeting young people's additional needs, along with some aspects of quality assurance, should be strengthened.

## 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 rights and wellbeing? | 4 - Good |
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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 rights and wellbeing?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good. This means there were a number of important strengths which taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Preventing harm to young people was a high priority for the service. Almost all of them felt safe, which created the foundation for healthy development. Parents also had high levels of confidence in safeguarding arrangements. The service should continue to build on approaches to preventing bullying, as well as strengthen key processes such as incident and risk assessment recording and notifications of significant events to the Care Inspectorate **(see area for improvement 1)**.

In practice, staffing arrangements were largely appropriate for meeting young people's needs, and managers had responded to changes by providing increased support at times. We asked them to review availability of staff in one of the houses at weekends. Moving forward, managers should be clearer in the factors taken into account in assessing staffing levels and deployment.

A culture of positive relationships existed at Strathallan and contributed to young people feeling valued. Managers had appropriate plans in place for supporting these when the need arose. Most young people felt able to raise concerns if they were unhappy. They felt listened to, and almost all were happy overall with the quality of care they received. They had a wide range of forums enabling them to engage in and improve school and boarding life. These showed that the service responded to their views about how they wanted to experience their care and support. Most felt rules were fair, though some described inconsistencies and inequalities across the houses. Some of these should be reviewed to ensure they consistently reflect the service's inspiring vision. We also asked managers to consider how they might find a better balance between respecting young people's rights in relation to privacy, confidentiality and consent, and reducing risk, to further strengthen the rights-respecting ethos.

Overall, the houses were pleasant and comfortable environments to relax and socialise with friends. There was a programme of ongoing repair and refurbishment. There were a few specific variations in quality, and we brought these to managers' attention.

Assessment and planning processes for young people with specific health and medical needs were effective. For those with other additional support needs, processes were under-developed, though had potential for improvement **(see area for improvement 2)**.

A range of supports helped the service to maximise young people's health outcomes, using an educational approach to a range of highly relevant and topical issues. Initiatives led by young people had been particularly well received. Staff managed young people's medication well overall, though we gave advice about recording practices and consistency of administration through periods of change. We received a wide variety of comments about food, though most felt this had improved over time. Managers should continue to monitor young people's views and make adjustments accordingly.

Provision for promoting wider mental and emotional wellbeing was impressive. This included access to counselling and trauma-informed therapy, peer mentoring and a wellbeing hub. Chapel services provided opportunities to reflect on a range of topics and supported young people's moral and ethical development.

A programme of training equipped staff to promote high quality outcomes and experiences for young people, though the service should improve records of training for quality assurance purposes. Regular group supervision meant that on the whole, staff felt well supported to successfully meet young people's needs. Access to regular individual supervision would provide further added value when reflecting on their work.

Staff supported young people to achieve their potential by promoting learning and encouraging and enabling them to develop a wide spectrum of interests, ambitions and talents.

### Areas for improvement

1. In order to ensure that young people experience high quality support that is informed by relevant research and good practice, and to support effective scrutiny of the service, the provider should:

- a) ensure that incidents are recorded in accordance with guidance; and
- b) ensure that managers submit notifications of significant events to the Care Inspectorate.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

2. In order to ensure young people have the best possible outcomes and experiences, the provider should implement high-quality, effective assessment, planning and review processes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?        | 4 - Good |
| 7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life | 4 - Good |

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