

Linn Moor Residential School

School Care Accommodation Service

Linn Moor Residential School
Peterculter
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Telephone: 01224 732 246

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeen Association of Social
Service, a company limited by
guarantee, trading as VSA

Service provider number:
SP2003000011

Service no:
CS2003000163

About the service

Linn Moor is a school care accommodation service, providing care for up to twenty one young people. The service provides care for young people with moderate, severe or complex support needs and specialises in autism.

The campus is set in the countryside, with access to woodland walks, an on site park and play area, sensory rooms and a soft play area. Linn Moor is situated only a few miles from local amenities and public transport routes.

The school is located on site and is part of the main campus building.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 March 2024 from 11:00 until 17:30, 12 March 2024 from 07:30 until 17:30 and on 13 March 2024 from 09:15 until 16:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this 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:

- spoke with 20 young people using the service and four of their family members
- spoke with 16 staff and management
- reviewed survey responses of eight family members and 10 staff.
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

During our inspection year 2024-2025 we are inspecting against a focus area which looks at how regulated services use legislation and guidance to promote children's right to continuing care and how children and young people are being helped to understand what their right to continuing care means for them. Any areas for improvement will be highlighted in this report.

Key messages

- Young people felt safe emotionally and physically
- Young people experienced warm, trusting and nurturing relationships from staff who knew them very well.
- The service were experiencing some staffing difficulties, however were working hard to minimise the impact of this on young people.
- Young people had many opportunities for fun within and out with the school campus
- Young people were supported to enjoy quality time with family
- Education and care staff worked well together to provide an individualised and holistic learning experience for young people.

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?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for young people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people felt safe both physically and emotionally. Core staff members knew young people very well and were confident in their ability to keep them safe. Staff worked collaboratively with partner agencies, this supported a multi-agency approach to risk assessment, further ensuring safety of young people.

Staff and parents were strong advocates for the young people. Many staff were unaware of independent advocacy supports, and we suggested that the service increase staff's awareness of this to provide additional support if required.

Training and support from leaders contributed to the confidence of staff in child and adult protection practice. The organisation's protection policies followed national guidance and best practice.

Young people had very warm, trusting and nurturing relationships with core staff. Staff used various communication methods to increase their understanding of young people's needs and wishes. Staff had a very good understanding of trauma, and their skills and knowledge in this area had been developed through effective training. The culture within the service supported staff to respond proactively, minimising the use of restrictive and restraint practice. This meant that young people experienced therapeutic care from core staff members.

The service had experienced staffing difficulties which had impacted on the stability of care for some young people. Families spoke positively about the service but did highlight the use of unfamiliar staff and how this impacted negatively on consistency of care. The provider was aware of this, and we were assured that they were regularly assessing the impact and reviewing their recruitment strategies as well as improving staff retention.

Young people had many opportunities for fun where they were encouraged to develop their interests and skills. We were impressed with the service's summer camp. This provided structure during the school break and encouraged young people to join others and try new activities. These experiences broadened young people's horizons, boosted their confidence and developed their social skills. Young people also benefited from many family type interactions including bedtime stories, drawing and cooking together. This contributed to young people feeling valued and loved.

Young people's mental and physical health needs were prioritised. Staff had very good links with health professionals. Additional support from an occupational therapist and speech and language therapist allowed for a responsive approach to needs. The service was creative in encouraging young people to share their views and regular communication meetings encouraged exploration of communication approaches. This demonstrated the service's respect of the young people and commitment to ensuring they were involved.

Young people's relationships with family were actively encouraged and supported. Many young people had been able to increase their time spent with family and some had progressed to spending time at home or on holiday with family. This supported young people's sense of belonging and identity.

Education and care staff worked very well together to provide an individualised holistic approach to learning.

Older young people who no longer attended school were supported to develop their life skills. A family member was impressed with how quickly their young person had 'progressed in the care of quality staff.' All young people in Linn Moor were supported to have their aspirations met and reach their potential.

The service was committed to continuing to care for young people as they become adults. The continuing care admission procedure was robust and ensured all relevant people were included. It was evident from discussion that continuing care arrangements were very much person led.

Support plans and risk assessments provided very good quality information about young people with clear strategies on how to support them and minimise risk. Goals and targets were mostly specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound (SMART) and this supported young people to achieve many positive outcomes.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Children and young people should receive high quality care, supported by good recording practices. In order to achieve this the service should:

- a) ensure that descriptions of injuries are accurately recorded
- b) provide written summaries to relevant people following internal investigations

This area for improvement was made on 6 August 2024.

Action taken since then

We have been assured that this has been considered and confident that practice in this area has improved although there have been no further incidents requiring internal investigations.

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 rights and wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life	5 - Very Good

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