

Ardvreck School School Care Accommodation Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 February 2025

Service provided by:
Ardvreck School Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003003589

Service no:
CS2006115069

About the service

Ardvreck School is an independent preparatory school for pupils aged three to 13, with a maximum roll for boarding of 100 pupils from seven years and over. At the time of inspection there were less boarders, however flexi boarding arrangements were also used frequently by some pupils.

Ardvreck is set on spacious grounds in the town of Crieff, Perthshire. Boarders have access to the schools extensive facilities, and are supported with a warm welcoming boarding environment.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 to 28 February 2025. The inspection was carried out by three 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 forty five people using the service
- spoke with twenty two staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- All children and young people felt safe, and staff were aware of their role in the protection of young people.
- Mental and physical health was prioritised, with the school increasing its offering of supports for young people.
- Care plans and risk assessments required some improvement, including a focus on goals relating to the care of young people and what support that they need from staff.
- Leaders ensured there was an inspiring, supportive, and empowering culture within the school.
- Staff took a restorative approach to support young people's relationships with one another. This was supported by the school's innovative relationship policy. This prevented or minimised instances of bullying.
- Quality assurance procedures required further improvement especially in relation to medication processes.
- Young people benefitted from warm, trusting relationships with the adults that supported them.
- The service agreed to address some gaps in incident notifications to key stakeholders.

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 children and young people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life

Young people were kept safe both physically and emotionally by staff who knew them very well. All the young people we spoke to told us that they felt safe. We were confident that the positive school culture that promoted a relational approach to care and created an extra familial feel added to young people's sense of safety and security.

We were impressed by the school's approach to risk enablement. Young people were encouraged to participate in activities that challenged them. This promoted self-belief and confidence in positive risk taking.

The service's comprehensive child protection policy was informed by national guidance and best practice. Staff were knowledgeable and confident in this area of practice.

We highlighted the need to ensure that the service inform relevant parties of all notifiable incidents and were confident that the school will address this.

Young people experienced therapeutic and stable care, and all young people told us that they had at least one trusted adult that they could turn to. Some young people had care plans in place. We felt that the service could further develop guidance to ensure that all young people who required a care plan had one, and that risks, and support needs were clear and formalised. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

Staff took a restorative approach to support young people's relationships with one another. This was supported by the school's innovative relationship policy. This prevented or minimised instances of bullying. All children and young people we spoke to were confident that the school would support them quickly and appropriately with any instances of bullying.

The school had introduced an 'all under one roof' ethos to boarding, bringing all year groups into the one boarding house. We found that this created a warm, supportive and respectful environment with separate break out spaces, that allowed younger and older children space to relax. There were plans in place to improve the facilities, which was a welcome commitment, and one the young people were supportive of.

Children and young people's physical and mental health was given priority. The school had very good internal supports in relation to pastoral care, and good community supports should external assistance be needed. We identified some small medication errors and advised that the school's medication systems would benefit from improved quality assurance. **(See Area for Improvement 2)**

All young people we spoke with enjoyed the high quality, locally sourced, varied and tasty food offered within the school. They were encouraged to try new foods, and their views and opinions influenced the menu. Mealtimes were important for everyone to come together and added to the family feel.

The school had plans to seek advice from a dietitian to ensure their meals were nutritionally balanced and were considering growing their own produce on the school grounds.

Leaders ensured there was an inspiring, supportive, and empowering culture within the school. Staff told us that this was experienced from Head Mistress level down. We felt that the ethos of the school and direction of boarding was clear. This approach supported effective and nurturing relationships that young people benefitted from.

There was a holistic approach to growth and development involving healthy competition. Young people were encouraged to participate in many activities where their individual interest and skills were developed. Educational attainment was promoted and young people's individual talent and skills were supported. Celebrations of young people's individual successes was very much a part of life at Ardvreck. This ensured young people felt a sense of achievement.

Areas for improvement

1. To support the young people's wellbeing, outcomes and choice the service should review their care planning and risk assessment processes. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Ensuring that the service develops guidance for staff on the use of plans, and what is expected to be in place for each young person.
- b) Ensuring that goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely). These should be reflective of young people's words, and should clearly describe the supports required to achieve these. Goals should be actively tracked and subject to regular review.
- c) Ensuring that individual risk assessments are up to date, include all pertinent detail, and that all staff are fully aware of these.

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 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).

2. To support the young people's wellbeing, and outcomes the service should review their medication procedures. This should include but is not limited to:

Ensuring that formal quality assurance processes are in place, and can identify and address any errors swiftly.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow the professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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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