

28 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Ochil Tower School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The head of education leads a group of staff who have established a caring, nurturing culture across the school. Young people and staff have built strong relationships. This supports young people to attend regularly and engage purposefully in learning.
- Staff have a detailed knowledge of young people's needs. If a young person becomes anxious or dysregulated, staff adopt a range of personalised strategies to support young people effectively. This helps young people to re-engage quickly with their learning.
- Staff have a very strong understanding of young people's wellbeing needs. They use a wide range of learning activities to help young people improve their wellbeing. Young people are building wellbeing skills successfully, including confidence, resilience and how to keep themselves safe.
- Across the school, young people are making very positive progress in developing their communication skills. Staff and young people use a range of communication aids, including digital technology, effectively. They support young people to be active learning participants in all learning activities.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Executive Director, headteacher and a representative from the Board of Trustees.

- Governance frameworks should be strengthened. There is a need to outline clearly the areas of responsibility of the Executive Director, the Board of Trustees and senior leaders to monitor continuous improvement and the quality of the work of the school.
- Senior leaders and staff need to continue to develop the curriculum at both the broad general education and senior phase. In doing so, senior leaders need to lengthen the school week to ensure that young people are not disadvantaged.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Ochil Tower School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Ochil Tower School | Education Scotland](#)

The Care Inspectorate's evaluations for Ochil Tower School, School Care Accommodation Service:

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the early learning and childcare setting using '[Key question 7 for care homes for children and young people and schoolcare accommodation \(special residential schools\)](#)'. This supports settings, providers and inspectors to assess what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each setting, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well settings are doing.

Detailed evaluations	Evaluation
Key question 7 - How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?	weak
7.1 - Children and young people are safe, experience warm, compassion and getting the most out of life	good
7.2 - Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights	weak

The Care Inspectorate found:

- Staff were fully aware of the needs of the young people and how to keep them safe.
- Children and young people enjoyed fun experiences and their preferences were always prioritised.
- The management team should make improvements to keep skilled staff and ensure relationships are consistent, positive and stable.
- The roles and responsibilities of those in senior leadership positions need to be clarified.
- Robust quality assurance processes need to be implemented at all levels of care including staff supervision and performance management.
- The service needs to develop and implement improved matching procedures.
- Support planning needs to be improved to ensure that documents are SMART, live and leading care practices.

Previous requirements made by the Care Inspectorate.

The following two previous requirements were made by the Care Inspectorate:

1. By 30 November 2023, must ensure that managers have a robust understanding and overview of the quality of care. To do this the provider must at a minimum:

- Ensure that all staff have regular one to one supervision with their line manager including recorded performance management.
- Develop a programme for senior managers to spend time in houses to observe practice and offer support and role modelling.
- Develop a quality assurance process which identifies areas for improvement and action plans with timescales to evidence progress.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19).

This requirement had not been met and we have agreed an extension until 22 April 2025.

2. By 30 November 2023, must ensure that the service has sufficient staff on each shift to meet the needs of each child/ young person. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:
 - Keep individual records of four weekly assessments of physical, social, psychological and recreational needs and choices as to how they will deliver their care. Record this in each care plan as this will inform the direct care hours for the individual.
 - In respect of the delivery of the service, a provider should keep a record of the assessment that identifies the minimum staffing levels and deployment of staff on each shift over a four-week period. This will take into account aggregated information of the physical, social, psychological and recreational needs and choices in relation to the delivery of care for all individuals, also taking into account the physical layout of the building, staff training and staff supervision needs.
 - The overall assessment of staffing level and deployment must be available to any visitors to the service and everyone using it.

This is to comply with Regulation 15(a) (Staffing) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This requirement had not been met and we have agreed an extension until 28 February 2025.

Requirements made by the Care Inspectorate.

As a result of the inspection, the following three requirements were made by the Care Inspectorate:

1. By 22 April 2025, must ensure that managers have a robust understanding and overview of the quality of care. To do this the provider must at a minimum:
 - Ensure that all staff have regular one to one supervision with their line manager including recorded performance management.
 - Develop a programme for senior managers to spend time in houses to observe practice and offer support and role modelling.
 - Develop a quality assurance process which identifies areas for improvement and action plans with timescales to evidence progress.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

2. By 22 April 2025, ensure that the service has sufficient staff on each shift to meet the needs of each child/ young person. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:
 - Keep individual records of four weekly assessments of physical, social, psychological and recreational needs and choices as to how they will deliver their care. Record this in each care plan as this will inform the direct care hours for the individual.
 - In respect of the delivery of the service, a provider should keep a record of the assessment that identifies the minimum staffing levels and deployment of staff on each shift over a four-week period. This will take into account aggregated information of the physical, social, psychological and recreational needs and choices in relation to the delivery of care for all individuals, also taking into account the physical layout of the building, staff training and staff supervision needs.
 - The overall assessment of staffing level and deployment must be available to any visitors to the service and everyone using it.

This is in order to comply with section 8 of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 (as substituted for regulation 15(b) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15)

3. By 28 February 2025, the provider must ensure that they follow 'Matching Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services', published by the care inspectorate'. This should include but is not limited to:
 - Recording Ensuring they consider the potential impact on existing young people within the service, including identifying specifically which house they will reside in.
 - Ensuring they have all the necessary information prior to making a decision regarding the new young person being referred to the service.
 - Ensuring they consider staffing levels, skills, mix and any current staff vacancies.

This is to comply with Regulation 3, Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/ 210). Promoting quality and safety and make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 'I am in the right place to experience the care and support I need and want' (HSCS 1.20)

Areas for improvement made by the Care Inspectorate.

As a result of the inspection, the following area for improvement has been made.

1. To ensure consistent positive outcomes the provider should review the care planning system and adopt a SMART approach to care planning. These care plans must be outcome focused and clearly express goals and strategies to help young people to achieve their potential. These plans should also include assessment of risk and identify strategies to mitigate risk.

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

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The Executive Director will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of their arrangements for reporting on the quality of the school.

David M^cKellar
HM Inspector