

Inspection report

Donaldson's School Care Accommodation Service

Preston Road
Linlithgow EH49 6HZ

Inspected by: Marilyn Simpson
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Announced

Inspection completed on: 29 October 2008

Service Number

CS2007159261

Service name

Donaldson's

Service addressPreston Road
Linlithgow EH49 6HZ**Provider Number**

SP2003002649

Provider Name

Donaldson's Trust

Inspected ByMarilyn Simpson
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Announced

Inspection Completed

29 October 2008

Period since last inspection

First inspection since registration

Local Office AddressSouth East Region
Stuart House
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Introduction

Donaldson's was registered with the Care Commission on 20 December 2007 following the move from their previous location in Edinburgh. The new purpose built premises are on a rural site situated on the outskirts of the town of Linlithgow. The school care accommodation service provides care and support for children/young people who are deaf and in some cases have other associated complex difficulties. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children/young people of school age with an additional 5 emergency places. The residence operates 24 hours Monday - Friday during term time only.

The aims of the service are to:

Provide a happy, friendly, caring environment, where children feel safe, secure and valued
Provide our pupils with the best possible access to the whole curriculum
Provide an equal opportunity for all
Provide an atmosphere that promotes learning and praises achievement, allowing children build up their confidence and self esteem
Work for the inclusion of pupils across Scotland and the North of England in all aspects of daily living

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Environment - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - 4 - Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 4 - Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

This report was compiled following an announced inspection on 28 October and 29 October 2008. It took place over one day, extending into the evening and the next day that included face to face feedback with the Principal, Head of Residential Child Care and school's Head Teacher/Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission.

Views of service users

The Care Commission sent out ten Care Standards Questionnaires to the children/young

people. Five were returned prior to the inspection visit taking place. In addition five letters were sent to parents/carers requesting their views on the service and three replies were received.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

LOW

As this service was previously known to the Care Commission this assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

Discussion took place with the following staff:

Principal
Head of Residential Child Care
Head Teacher/Child Protection Co-ordinator
Two Senior Residential Care Workers
Six Residential Care Workers

Evidence

Statement of Aims and Objectives
Residence handbook (for parents and other stakeholders)
Welcome booklet for children/young people
Children's communication diaries
Child protection policy
Health and wellbeing policy
Recruitment and selection policy
Staff development and training policy
Training plan
Quality assurance systems
Training documentation
Children's files
Core Records
Staff recruitment files
Complaints records and audit
Improvement plan
Questionnaires for parents/carers and children/young people

The Care Commission Officers' observations of the interactions between staff and pupils, and the general environment and equipment used in the provision of the service.

The Care Commission Officers took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting specific statements of the following Quality Themes derived from the National Care Standards for School Care Accommodation:

1. Quality of Care and Support - 1:1 & 1:3
2. Quality of Environment - 2:1 & 2:3
3. Quality of Staffing - 3:1 & 3:2
4. Quality of Management and Leadership - 4:1 & 4:4

The inspection also took into account the Regulation of Care Act (Scotland) 2001 and the Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002/114.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09
Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at:
<http://www.carecommission.com/>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

All issues regarding registration had been addressed prior to registration being granted. However as this service had previously been registered with the Care Commission the three requirements, in relation to the recruitment process, from the previous inspection report has been reported on in this report.

Comments on Self Assessment

A fully-completed Self-Assessment document was submitted by the service. This was completed to a very high standard and gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes and Statements. The service identified its strengths and some areas for future development and gave evidence of service user involvement.

View of Service Users

In addition to the five Care Standards Questionnaires received the Care Commission Officers spoke individually with 4 young people throughout the inspection. In the Care Standards Questionnaires 3 young people responded that they were happy and two were very happy with the way staff helped and supported them. In addition in these questionnaires three responses indicated that they were overall very happy with the quality of care they received and two responses were happy.

The young people spoken to on the first day of the inspection visit (through an interpreter) stated that they would go to staff and older young people if they had concerns of felt unsafe. They stated that they liked the new residences much better and one young person stated that they would give the new residences "100/10".

Comments regarding the activities on offer included:

"I like to go bowling and swimming"

"I like drama, golf and youth club"

Other comments were very positive and included:

"I really like it here - it's fair, and they SIGN! Staff and students all sign."

"It's really awesome, the best!"

"I couldn't sleep last night because I was so excited about coming back to school."

"The uniforms are more posh now, everything's much nicer."

"We tell if we don't like the food (I hate peas) and I can get different food or toast."

View of Carers

The three responses from parents/carers indicated that they were very happy with the care their children received at Donaldson's and stated that they received regular communication from staff and their children.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

Donaldson's had established a very effective range of methods to involve parents/carers and children/young people in arrangements for their care and support. There was evidence that children/young people and their families had very good opportunities to influence the planning and delivery of their care and support through a robust admission procedure, regular evaluative questionnaires, home/school diary and regular communication between home and staff.

Parents/carers attended statutory reviews and contributed equally in decision-making alongside key professionals, with children/young people participating according to ability and wishes. Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) materials, 'Having Your Say' forms, the presence of the child's keyworker, the option of a Children's Rights Officer or other advocate and innovative use of video and "Talking Mat", all enabled the children/young people to express their views and suggestions about their care.

Built on the very strong and supportive relationships with staff, children/young people were empowered to make suggestions and raise issues about the quality of care and support they received. For example, before each meeting of the Education and Care Committee, a small group of pupils were invited to meet two Governors to discuss, in confidence, any issues pertaining to their education and care. Each house held regular resident's forum meetings that discussed ideas and issues at a local level using a variety of communication methods.

The robust implementation of the service's Participation Strategy by the management team ensured that children/young people and parents/carers were routinely consulted in updating the core record. In addition the daily record and children's files evidenced that regular informal communication between staff and parents/carers ensured up to date information was shared with relevant staff and changes effectively implemented.

Children/young people spoken with on the day of the inspection visit confirmed that they were aware of how to share their views or who to go to if they had any issues. Parents/carers contacted also stated that they had opportunities to make suggestions through reviews or personally.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following area for improvement:

In order to further promote the use of questionnaires to gain the views of stakeholders, Donaldson's is currently developing a questionnaire.

The Care Commission Officers support this development and would suggest that the service should consider further developing the process for obtaining the views of parents/carers and children/young people by seeking comments on the environment, staffing and management.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service Strengths

The service demonstrated major strengths in this area. They had made very good provision to meet the needs of children/young people attending the residence.

Robust systems were in place to ensure children/young people's medical needs were maintained. The comprehensive core record and personal medical care plans were regularly reviewed, in consultation with parents/carers. As the children/young people were in attendance during the school week they remained with their own General Practitioner and Dentist, however, in the short time since their move, the school had developed very strong links with the local medical practice to provide interim registration for the children/young people. Further links had been developed with the local hospital and other community medical services that gave a holistic approach to the children/young people's physical and mental health. Due to the complex medical needs of some of the children/young people in residence, management and staff had developed very effective systems for administering and recording medication. Regular communication between school staff and care staff ensured that children's medical requirements were consistently being met. The recently appointed school nurse had made proposals for care staff training, regular contact with senior management team and to carry out physical and mental health assessments.

Through curriculum initiatives in the school and health promoting activities in the residence, children/young people had a very good awareness of how to keep healthy. Children/young people were encouraged to be involved in many sporting activities such as bowling, golf and football and through the resident's forum meetings, they made suggestions for new sporting activities. For example at the inspection visit some of the children/young people were making a visit to the newly refurbished local leisure pool. The extensive grounds provided children with access to fresh air and opportunities for energetic and active play.

Building on innovations made prior to the recent move, the children/young people had been provided with a very much improved menu that included healthy choices. Catering staff took account of national publications in the provision of a large range of food options and included children/young people's dietary requirements and preferences when devising the menus for the residence. Children/young people gave feedback directly to the chef when he attended some of their resident's forum meetings. Meal times in the residence were observed to be a very social occasion with children/young people and staff sitting together whilst eating.

From observation and discussion it was evident that all staff were very knowledgeable about each child in the residence. The Officers observed staff interacting with the children in a very

respectful and caring manner and the children/young people were confident in their response to staff. Staff were very skilled at responding to the children/young people's differing moods and were observed to offer them appropriate praise, encouragement and consistent boundary setting. Staff had been very innovative in the provision of a variety of communication methods which encouraged the children/young people to express their feelings, and in discussion, staff demonstrated sensitivity in relation to issues such as separation and relationship difficulties.

The service had in place robust systems for ensuring the protection of children in their care that contained all the key information required by the National Care Standards and took account of the Edinburgh and Lothian's Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures. This policy and procedure was known to staff, and staff confirmed they had received child protection training. Through curricular programmes, forum meetings and computer software the children/young people were informed of a variety of ways in which to keep safe. Children/young people spoken with at the inspection visit indicated that they would go to staff if they didn't feel safe and were aware of external agencies such "Childline" and "Who Cares" for support. In addition there was evidence that parents/carers were informed of the service's child protection responsibilities, the "Children's Charter and Framework Standards for Child Protection". From examination of children/young people's files and the service's recording system, it was clear that there was a robust system in place for recording physical interventions. Staff were very skilled at identifying behaviour triggers and introducing alternative methods to calm the children/young people. Staff reported that following the recent move there had been a decrease in the number of physical interventions carried out. Staff worked very closely with education staff in promoting consistent management of challenging behaviour in conjunction with detailed care plans.

The Care Standards Questionnaires that the children/young people submitted to the Care Commission indicated that two children/young people were very happy and three were happy that they were treated respectfully by staff.

Areas for Development

The service identified in the self assessment the following area for improvement:

Further development of links with the LAAC Nursing service, including representation on meeting groups and training events.

The Care Commission Officers support this development and identified the following areas for improvement:

Although incidences of physical intervention were recorded, attention should be given to recording the views of the children/young people when de-briefing has taken place (see Recommendation 1)

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service Strengths

In addition to the strengths identified in 1:1, the service had developed very good systems for obtaining the children/young people's views regarding the environment, through the resident's forum, daily discussion and children's placement reviews. Parents/carers stated, in correspondence to the Care Commission Officers, that they were given opportunities for sharing ideas and suggestions regarding the environment through the review system and personally.

There was evidence that children/young people and parents/carers were involved in the planning and development of the new facility with parent representatives on committees and regular updates regarding the progress of the new building issued to parents/carers. In addition, children/young people were able to contribute to the decoration of the new building through meetings with designers, visits to manufacturers and the development of mood boards.

The minutes of resident's forum meetings and other records evidenced that children/young people's views and suggestions influenced changes to the environment. For example following a recent fire evacuation of the residence children/young people's views were used to amend the procedure to make it more effective. In addition a new shower had been installed to meet the individual needs of a young person.

Areas for Development

The service identified in the self - assessment form the following area for improvement:

The process of requesting formal feedback about our environment is early in development. This will need to be further developed in response to the quantity and content of comments received.

The Care Commission Officers support this development and would suggest that the service should consider further developing the process for obtaining the views of parents/carers and children/young people by seeking comments on the environment.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: The environment allows service users to have as positive a quality of life as possible.

Service Strengths

The accommodation provided for the children/young people was of an extremely high standard and very innovative use had been made of technology to provide an environment that met their needs and contributed to a very positive experience. For example deaf friendly doorbells were installed in each of the bedrooms and two way close circuit television at the residence entrance enabled children/young people and staff to sign both ways.

The very comfortable bedrooms were spacious and included study desks where the children/young people could complete work for school. In addition each room had en-suite facilities and specially adapted bedrooms, with a wet shower room, were available for children with mobility difficulties. Children/young people were encouraged to personalise their rooms, which were all very individual. This included wall decoration and individual bedding, as well as expressing their personality and interests through choice of toys, entertainment systems and hobbies.

The communal areas, as all areas within the residence, were finished to a very high standard with comfortable soft furnishings and very well appointed kitchen areas that enabled children/young people access to fresh fruit and drinks at all times. Children/young people had a wide range of activities on offer that included arts and crafts, board games, electronic games, television, DVD players and computers that were monitored regarding internet access.

The children/young people utilised the very impressive outdoor areas and gardens for outdoor activities and games such as the outdoor all weather football pitch, woodland walks and climbing equipment. In addition regular use was made of the school's fitness room and swimming pool. In the short time since moving to the new facility children/young people have established excellent links with local community groups such as Linlithgow Young People's Project, the Solar Bear Theatre group and Firely (formerly West Lothian Youth Theatre).

It was observed that the staff and children/young people had built up strong relationships and were observed to value each other's views. Staff were exceptionally skilled at communicating with the children/young people and spent time listening to and responding to their ideas and suggestions. At the inspection visit meal times were observed to be a very relaxed time with children/young people signing with each other and staff sharing jokes and news about their day.

Areas for Development

The service identified the following area for improvement in the self - assessment form:

Development of an evaluation of the provision now that the young people have had the opportunity to live here over a period of months.

The Care Commission Officers support this development and the service should continue with the excellent practice of providing the children/young people with an exceptionally high quality care environment that enables them to have a very positive experience whilst living away from home.

CCO Grading

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

In addition to the strengths detailed in 1:1 the service had developed very good methods for including the children/young people and parents/carers in improving the quality of staffing. Through the very robust admission and review systems parents/carers were able to influence staff's training. For example staff had attended training in order to meet the medical needs of some of the young people. The service's participation strategy detailed how parents/carers and children/young people were involved in assessing the quality of provision that included some parents/carers sitting on the board. Parents/carers who responded to the Care Commission correspondence, indicated that they regularly communicated with staff through weekly telephone calls, home/residence diary and e-mail. In a recent parents/carer's questionnaire issued by the service, questions related particularly to staffing. In addition parents/carers were informed through regular newsletters of staff changes and staff photographs were displayed throughout the residence.

Children/young people had an opportunity to participate in the quality of staffing through the resident's forum and minutes of these meetings indicated that they had been involved with staff in developing the ground rules for the residence and informed of the allocation of their keyworkers. In addition children/young people were included in the recruitment process of new staff, within the residence, and their feedback was taken into consideration as part of the selection process.

At the inspection the Care Commission Officers observed that there was a very effective system in place for ensuring continuity of care and support through a very efficient key worker system with staff on duty when the children/young people went to bed and the same staff available when they woke up. Staff were also available to meet the needs of some children whose care plan indicated specific staffing levels.

Areas for Development

The Care Commission Officers would suggest that the service should continue to obtain the views of parents/carers and children/young people in assessing and improving the quality of staffing and in the recruitment and selection process of staff. In addition they should consider including in the participation strategy the inclusion of parents/carers on the board.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

Statement 2: We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff.

Service Strengths

The service had adopted robust systems for the safe recruitment and selection of staff through a recently amended system following requirements made in the last report. Through discussions with staff and staff files there was evidence that recently appointed staff's fitness had been effectively checked. In addition staff stated that there was a thorough induction programme that included access to the Residential Procedures Manual (RPM), regular supervision by the management team and "online" supervision with senior care staff. Staff were aware of the service's child protection policies and had received regular training to enhance their knowledge of these issues. In response to the previous recommendation, staff were aware of the service's Public Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

There was evidence that eligible staff had been registered with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and other staff were aware of their responsibility of meeting the qualifications criteria for registration with SSSC.

Staffing rotas ensured an effective mix of skilled and qualified staff on all shift patterns with a senior residential worker on duty at all times. Daily house staff meetings ensured that the day to day running of each house was discussed and regular whole staff meetings provided staff with opportunities to discuss practice and organisational issues. Staff in the two houses were very flexible in their approach to working together in order to provide a good quality provision through covering for staff absences and in co-ordinating outings and visits for the all the children/young people.

Areas for Development

The service identified in the self - assessment form the following area for development:

Further development of the RPM to include consideration of other processes.

The Care Commission Officers identified the following areas for improvement:

The service should continue to implement the new application form and recruitment process.

Although there was some evidence that prospective candidate's qualifications were checked at interview, there was no record of this in staff files. (see Recommendation 2)

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

In addition to the strengths in 1:1, children/young people and parents/carers had good opportunities to influence and improve the quality of management and leadership through evaluative questionnaires, resident's forum, regular reviews and newsletters.

There was evidence that parents/carers were made aware of the service's improvement plan through a letter from the Head of Residential Care and the senior residential management team were available at the school's parents' evenings.

On the school's website parents/carers had an opportunity to view the aims and objectives and the service's policies and procedures.

Areas for Development

The Care Commission Officers identified the following area for improvement:

Although parents/carers and children/young people had been regularly involved in the service evaluation, the service should now incorporate this information, in conjunction with the views of stakeholders, to further influence the strategic direction of the residence.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

There was evidence that Donaldson's had comprehensive quality assurance systems in place that would ensure quality outcomes for the children/young people who attended the residence. These processes were supported by a robust self assessment that included input from staff, children/young people, parents/carers and stakeholders through regular care reviews. In addition further sources of evidence such as monitoring processes and procedures, observation of practice, staff supervision and review, and records also influenced the assessment process and subsequently the service's improvement plan.

The service received further scrutiny from the Quality Assurance Committee of Donaldson's Board of Governors and the school had been accredited Investors in People status. In addition the residence had recently gained accreditation from CALM training services and the British Institute for Learning Disabilities.

The very robust complaints policy and procedure enabled children/young and parents/carers to raise issues through a variety of mediums i.e. pictorial posters and forms, video, British Sign Language (BSL), written communication and verbally. The service had recently introduced an audit of the complaint records that would further inform the evaluation process.

The service was aware of the need to notify the Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Commission of any disciplinary action taken against any member of staff and had a very good record of notifying the Care Commission of any issues in relation to the protection of children.

Areas for Development

The service identified in the self - assessment form the following areas for improvement:

The development of a stakeholder's questionnaire to be distributed annually to seek formal feedback and commentary.

Review of the residence complaints procedure to be established as taking place annually.

The Care Commission Officers supports these developments and identified the following areas of improvement:

Consideration should be given to recording the actions taken in response to feedback from children/young people, parents/carers and stakeholders and how this information impacts on the service's improvement plan. (see Recommendation 3)

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

There was no other information.

Requirements

There were no requirements made in this report.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that more rigorous attention is given, following physical intervention, to recording the views of the children/young people when they have been de-briefed. National Care Standards - School Care Accommodation Services, Standard 3:8: Care and Protection.
2. It is recommended that the service develops a more robust system for recording that a prospective candidate's qualifications have been checked. National Care Standards - School Care Accommodation Services: Standard 7:7: Management and Staffing.
3. It is recommended that the service records how the views of children/young people, parents/carers and stakeholders impacts on the self assessment process and influences the service's improvement plan. National Care Standards - School Care Accommodation Services, Standard 7:9: Management and Staffing.

Marilyn Simpson
Care Commission Officer