

Dollar Academy

Service name
Dollar Academy

Service address
Dollar
Clackmannanshire
FK14 7DU

Type of care service
School Care Accommodation Service

Provider name
Dollar Academy

Service number
CS2006114865

Date Inspection Completed
12 March 2009

Type of inspection
Unannounced

Period since last inspection
Five months

Care Commission Office
Central East
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Inspection Report for Dollar Academy

Introduction

Dollar Academy, an independent boarding school, was registered with the Care Commission as a school care accommodation service on 1 April 2005. It provides accommodation for pupils, aged 9 to 18 years, from the UK and overseas, within three boarding houses located on the periphery of the school grounds. These comprise Argyll and Heyworth houses for girls and Tait and McNabb, one house for boys since 2007. The maximum roll for boarding was confirmed as 99 in 2006. 67 pupils were boarding, including 22 new boarders, at the time of the inspection. Most senior pupils occupy single study bedrooms. Pupils may access a range of facilities including the Maguire building (an arts centre with fitness suite), dining hall, medical centre, library and computer areas, together with numerous sports facilities.

The Rector's introduction to Information for Pupils states: 'In your life and work at Dollar Academy we ask you, at all times to consider the feelings and interests of other people. Good relationships are based on courtesy, on respect and thoughtfulness, these being principles central to the life of Dollar academy...the basis for what is distinctive about our community'.

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 Management and Leadership - 5 - Very 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 unannounced inspection during the late afternoon of 12 March 2009.

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

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Views of service users

The Care Commission Officer met with a group of girls from Argyll House. She explained to staff and pupils that one focus of the inspection was to find out if pupils were safe. This focus on ethos, in relation to child protection, was part of Care Commission training to further develop regulatory practice in residential childcare settings. The aim was to improve identification of potential risk factors in these services.

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.

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

- Deputy Rector/registered manager responsible for boarding provision.
- Three house parents representing two of the three boarding houses

Evidence

School website

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

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Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

The Care Commission received an action plan in relation to the one recommendation made at the last inspection, which is continued to the next inspection.

Comment on Self-Assessment

Not applicable.

Views of Service Users

Most pupils were busy at co-curricular activities, including swimming, hockey and choir, while others were at their evening meal in the school dining-hall. Some girls were enjoying watching an inter-school rugby match from the comfort of Argyll's supper-kitchen. A houseparent in McNabb and Tait exchanged news about the school day with boys returning to the house. This included an update on their Red Nose Day fund-raising activity - staff and pupils had been 'shoe-shining'. The next day the houseparent planned to play netball in a prep-school staff-pupil sponsored event as part of a traditional programme of activities for Red Nose Day. A senior pupil also gave positive feedback on a new hair-cut, courtesy of the house parent, which had received favourable recognition from the Rector

Views of Carers

The Care Commission did not specifically seek the views of parents on this occasion.

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Quality Assessment Framework Themes and Statements

Theme - Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grade - 5 - Very Good

Quality Statement 1.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.**

Strengths:

This statement was looked at in more depth at a previous inspection in November 2008. The house parent at Argyll confirmed that the school continued to issue pupil questionnaires. One development from the autumn term's questionnaire was the house's purchase of the popular Wii, following joint discussion about some minor sacrifices, such as chocolate biscuits. The game contributed to maintaining activity levels and was sociable as well as fun. The senior girls advised it remained popular, albeit without the intensity of its introduction.

The house parent of McNabb and Tait also gave practical examples of their continuing to listen to pupils. Developments included installing a robust hairdryer in the boys' shower-rooms and fitting a light in the back garden to facilitate football during the winter curfew. One Argyll pupil referred to new monitors in the house's computer room. In organising social activities for boarders, house parents continued to be responsive to pupils' suggestions, as each house's calendar of events evidenced. These were easily accessible on the school's website, which had been re-designed in the last year to improve access to parents and others.

Areas for Improvement:

In discussion, Argyll girls advised feedback on issues raised in the heads and deputies of house meetings was effective and was shared more widely through minutes posted up on the notice board. However, they did not have any means of receiving feedback on general findings, and proposed action, relating to questionnaires. This issue formed part of the recommendation from the previous inspection report, finalised just prior to this inspection. (See recommendation 1. continued from the last inspection)

The Care Commission Officer briefly reviewed the grade for this statement and confirmed that the current grading remained appropriate.

CCO Grading	6 - Excellent
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	1

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Theme - Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grade - 5 - Very Good

Quality Statement 1.3 We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Strengths:

This statement was looked at in more depth at a previous inspection in November 2008, when child protection was an Inspection Focus Area for all children's services.

Argyll girls said they generally felt very safe. The ethos of boarding was based very much on that of a caring family. The pupil information booklet gave very clear guidance about any restrictions on their movements around the grounds and with the Dollar vicinity, to keep them safe. Likewise, they knew about the rule for the male house parent only visiting the upstairs in the company of a female staff member. He was able to go upstairs during prep time when he was available for monitoring and academic support.

Maintenance men carried out most work during the school day, with additional safeguards for pupils ill in bed. A 'no visitor sign' reminded everyone about the restriction, though parents could assist pupils with luggage at the start and end of term. They confirmed that all staff were respectful in knocking and waiting for permission to enter bedrooms.

As senior pupils, they felt that their main sources of support were other pupils. However, they would also turn to their own parents, the female house parent and other staff if there were a problem which needed some adult guidance and advice. The school nurse was another useful person as she was always on duty during the school day. The girls were confident that staff would always prioritise their time to listen to pupils. Boarders felt that there was no issue about bullying. They tried to be inclusive and were sensitive to anyone who appeared isolated, yet respected when someone preferred not to join in group activities.

Girls valued the emotional warmth and support of hugs from each other. They said physical demonstration of their relationships with pupils of the opposite sex was governed by consideration of its effect on other members of the community. The pupil handbook confirmed this approach in relation to behaviour in general. Visits to boarding houses for day pupils on school days were guided by curfew times, whereas boy boarders could visit until 10 pm at weekends.

There was some discussion on their awareness of 'grooming' as a preliminary process used by abusers. The girls seemed less aware of such matters from formal education or general discussion, though the Deputy Rector advised such considerations formed part of the curriculum.

Areas for Improvement:

The Care Commission Officer briefly reviewed the grade for this statement

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and confirmed that the current grading remained appropriate.

CCO Grading	5 - Very Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Theme - Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grade - 5 - Very Good

Quality Statement 4.1 **We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.**

Strengths:

This statement was looked at in more depth at a previous inspection in November 2008.

The Deputy Rector advised that he had enclosed a copy of the announced inspection report with his annual letter to parents. He had also created a parental questionnaire, based on the four quality themes. He had begun the process of revising the annual review documentation based on National Care Standards and other quality indicators, for action in the next round of boarding house reviews (May 2009).

Areas for Improvement:

The Care Commission Officer briefly reviewed the grade for this statement and confirmed that the current grading remained appropriate.

CCO Grading	5 - Very Good
Number of Requirements	0
Number of Recommendations	0

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Enforcement

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

Other Information

None.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Act and Regulations or Orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Commission.

There were no requirements made at this inspection.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement. Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, codes of practice and recognised good practice.

1. It is recommended that the school should further develop its range of methods to enable parents/guardians to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support, environment, staffing and management and leadership within the school. This should also include systematic ways to:

- share with parents and pupils findings and planned action following surveys, consultations and receipt of any other information relevant to improvements
- ensure its development plan meets SMART criteria
- feedback progress on house plans and relevant aspects of the school development plan to pupils and parents

**National Care Standards - School care accommodation services:
Standard 7.9 Management and staffing.**

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Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as Unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

This report was written by

Rachel Gillespie

Care Commission Officer

Date: 07 April 2009

Further information about the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, can be found on the Care Commission web-site, under the section 'The Law'.
www.carecommission.com