



**Troup House School  
Banffshire  
23 August 2016**

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) inspect schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup> and young people know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of care and education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher/senior managers and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of care and education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of care and education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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### **1. The school**

Troup House is a non-denominational, independent special school situated in Banffshire. The school is part of the Priory Group's Education and Children's Services Division. The roll was eight when the inspection was carried out in May 2016. The school provides care and education for children and young people aged from 8-16 years with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people were placed at the school by three local authorities. The service offers a satellite provision at Inverurie for young people post 16 years who are moving on from the service. Two young people had a coordinated support plan.

## **2. Key strengths of the school**

- Confident, enthusiastic young people who are motivated and engaged in learning.
- Supportive and respectful relationships across the service which are improving young people's wellbeing.
- The environment for learning including learning outdoors.
- The commitment and drive of managers, teachers and care staff to improve outcomes in care and education for young people.

## **3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?**

All young people are motivated and eager participants in lessons when engaged in well planned, relevant and active learning experiences. They benefit from the calm, therapeutic learning environment and make use of the helpful wall displays with learning prompts, visual cues and word banks linked to subject areas. Young people make very good use of a wide range of literacy and numeracy resources. All young people focus almost all of the time on their learning. They are consistently respectful and supportive of each other's views and contributions in lessons.

Staff act as positive role models. They encourage young people to maintain cooperative friendships with their peers and to try their best. High levels of participation in various team sports encourage supportive and respectful behaviour. Young people have good opportunities to achieve. The school recognises their achievements through its 'Super Achievers' reward scheme and holds weekly assemblies to celebrate success. Young people are motivated by this scheme and almost all have very good attendance and engagement as a result. Young people have many opportunities to experience outdoor learning including kayaking, skiing, mountain biking, gorge walking and 'coasteering'. They benefit from regular, planned

overnight camping trips. These activities are helping young people to develop self-esteem, confidence and their ability to work with others. The school should provide more opportunities to recognise these achievements through appropriate award schemes.

All young people are making good progress from prior levels of attainment since their arrival at the school. Their literacy skills are developing well. Young people enjoy creating talking books and the motivating opportunities to make written contributions to Troup House Newspaper. The school could further extend opportunities for young people to apply their literacy skills in real contexts. They perform significantly better in numeracy and mathematics than in other subjects. Young people have a good understanding of number. They show an increasing understanding of fractions, percentages and information handling. Young people are learning to apply their numeracy skills through visiting the local shops and managing personal budgets. Young people understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are gaining self-confidence through respectful relationships modelled by staff across the service.

#### **4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?**

The curriculum supports young people to develop and learn through a particular focus on learning outdoors. Young people and staff are valued and encouraged to actively participate in the life of the school including after school activities such as study groups and evening events in the residence. The school has an appropriate focus on developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across all subjects. Staff are further developing the curriculum to offer more personalised learning opportunities, increase choice and improve planning for progression. Young people are supported well into the world of young adulthood. Increasing support from partners including Skills Development Scotland, colleges and employers would further improve opportunities to prepare young people well for life after school.

Staff in care and education provide a caring, safe and nurturing environment for young people. They are sensitive to young people's needs and help them to feel valued, express their feelings and access learning confidently. Individualised educational plans are based on appropriate assessments reviewed regularly with parents and young people. Staff work closely with partner agencies and share information very effectively to meet young people's learning and care needs. In most lessons, young people benefit from well-organised tasks and resources to support their learning. The school should review the level of pace in a few lessons to ensure that all children are challenged appropriately.

## **5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

The school provides effective leadership with a clear vision for change and improvement in education and care. The Priory Group and senior managers are strongly committed to continuous improvement that involves all staff, parents and young people. As planned, they should now continue to develop the role of partners in improving the school. The well respected principal and head of care maintain high levels of contact with young people and staff. Together they have successfully developed a safe, nurturing setting which has significantly reduced the risk of young people's placement at the school breaking down. The school has well-established processes in place for improving the care and education of young people. School improvement planning includes a focus on embedding Curriculum for Excellence and how and when progress will be achieved. The school has recently improved its system for tracking young people's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum. Teachers are gaining confidence in planning and assessing young people's progress in these areas.

The principal teacher plays a strong role in improving the quality of learning and teaching. He provides very effective support which is helping staff to improve young people's learning experiences. Teachers and care staff would benefit from more opportunities to

reflect on their practice including developing their skills as leaders. The school should build on the very positive links across care and education to increase opportunities for young people to learn in the residence.

## **6. What happens next?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The Operational Management Team will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the school.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and its Operational Management Team.

- Increase links with wider partnership groups to support aspects of the curriculum.
- Further develop the curriculum to ensure more opportunities to recognise wider achievement.
- Continue to provide sufficient opportunities and time for staff in care and education to develop professionally.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities/board of governors and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Troup House School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:**  
Dr Kate Hannah



When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/TroupHouseSchool.asp> .

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