

# 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 of inspection**  
17 March 2008

**Type of inspection**  
Unannounced

**Period since last inspection**  
22 January 2008

**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 deemed to be registered with the Care Commission as a school care accommodation service from 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 for girls and Tait and McNabb for boys. In August 2007 McNabb and Tait, adjoining houses, became one large house for both junior and senior boys, run by the same house parents. The maximum roll for boarding was confirmed as 99 in 2006. The school was operating at full capacity for boys at the time of the inspection. A recent reduction in girls' numbers was said to reflect the national trend. Most senior pupils occupy single study bedrooms. Pupils may access a range of facilities including the new 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'.

## **Basis of Report**

### **The Annual Return**

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

### **The Self-Evaluation Form**

The service had previously submitted a self-evaluation form, providing information about its strengths and areas of development for the service, as requested by the Care Commission.

### **Views of service users**

The Care Commission did not use questionnaires on this occasion, but met with three boarders informally within Heyworth.

This service was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of the 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.

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This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result. The inspection was then based upon the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

### **During the inspection process**

The inspection was carried out by Rachel Gillespie, Care Commission Officer. During inspection, evidence was gathered from a number of sources including:

#### **Staff at inspection**

Discussion with a range of staff including:

- Deputy Rector/registered manager responsible for boarding provision.
- House Parent for Heyworth
- One Assistant House Staff for Heyworth

#### **Evidence**

A sample of a range of policies, procedures, records and other documentation, including the following:

- Heyworth house guidelines
- Sample of pupil files
- Information booklets for pupils and parents
- Boarders' Questionnaire (blank)

The Care Commission Officer's observations of

- The interactions between the staff and pupils, and
- The general environment.

#### **National Care Standards for 2007/08**

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above into account and reported under the following National Care Standards (NCS) for School Care Accommodation Services:

#### **Standard 2. Keeping in touch with people who are important to you**

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

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, as of 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 the 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](http://www.infoscotland.com/firelaw).

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### **Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report**

No requirements were made at the last inspection. The school had submitted an action plan detailing how it would meet the recommendations arising from the recent inspection. Progress will be reported on in the next inspection report.

### **Comment on Self-Evaluation**

A fully completed self-evaluation document was submitted by the service. This was completed to a satisfactory standard and gave relevant information for all standards specified. The service had identified its strengths and some areas for future development.

### **Views of Service Users**

The Deputy Rector advised that since the last inspection two months ago, the school had set up a rolling programme of termly questionnaires for individual boarders, who had an option of participating or not. Copies were kept in individual pupil files. It was intended to profile pupils' views of the school throughout their stay and also identify aspects of provision which needed to be addressed. He cited one example of a positive outcome from using the questionnaire, in which an inconsistency in bedtimes, owing to an omission in staff communication, was noted. This might not have come to light so soon but for the questionnaire.

The girls in Heyworth were relaxing in the kitchen/sitting area with the Assistant House Staff after afternoon lessons. For those not doing games or extra prep, this was a good occasion to unwind and speak to staff about their day; this was also an opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns (in private, if necessary). The atmosphere was homely and personal.

Specific comments from the girls interviewed included:  
'The staff are lovely. The House ladies are amazing. You know us so well'.  
'It is like a big family. We all get on so well'.

### **Views of Carers**

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

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## **National Care Standards**

### **National Care Standard Number 2: School Care Accommodation Services - Keeping In Touch with People who are Important to You**

#### **Strengths**

According to the Information booklets, boarders had a number of means of keeping in touch with family and friends. Girls spoken with confirmed that they used mobile phones, the public phones available in each House, for which pupils could purchase phone cards, and House email facilities. The Self-evaluation also referred to Skype connections being available within Houses, though the particular girls spoken with were not users of this option.

There were few siblings who were boarders at the school at the same time, but pupils commented that brothers and sisters were able to visit each other outside the standard curfew times.

The school welcomed and facilitated contact from parents with their children or with staff. There were good opportunities for parents to know about the life of the school, plays, concerts and sporting fixtures, through the website, updated weekly. Additionally, the school provided a Calendar Card and school magazine each term and regular newsletters. Parents had an open invitation to attend events to support pupils. Popular social events for parents included the annual House BBQs, as described during a tour of the large enclosed garden at Heyworth. The Sports Weekend at the end of the summer term, preceded by its 'sherry party', was also well attended by parents. Equally, pupils advised that parents and family were made welcome in the Houses when collecting their children, with the offer of refreshments and an opportunity to speak to House staff informally or otherwise.

The Parents' Information booklet and the Pupils' Information booklet kept parents informed on academic and pastoral matters. They clarified the number of days and weekends out with family or friends house boarders of different ages might have, noting that there existed the flexibility for further leave out by permission. Email and other records confirmed the school's practice of getting written agreement from parents and other parties in advance of other leave, before permission from the house parents was granted. Leave-out on weekdays was not encouraged, but the Rector or his Deputy considered this flexibly for special family occasions.

Pupils, as boarders, stated that their parents received reports each term, as files evidenced. Parents could also phone House Parents or Heads of Year in their guidance role, for further information. The Deputy Rector advised that, when parents could not attend the annual parents' evening, the school offered alternative arrangements. One option might be for the House Parent to accompany the child or, more usually, the school would arrange a specific meeting for the parents, involving a series of interviews with key teachers. Similarly, the school was flexible in its other systems, such as meetings to agree subject choices for Form 3.

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Some pupils came from overseas, most pupils felt homesick at times and others had to deal with other forms of separation and loss, as staff described. The school asked parents to keep them informed of any issues affecting pupils so they could support them by means appropriate to that person.

### **Areas for development:**

The Self-evaluation indicated the school had introduced in January the controlled use of social networking sites as another means of pupils keeping in touch with friends and family.

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### **Enforcement**

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

### **Other Information**

The Care Commission Officer informed the Deputy Rector of the 'Regulating for Improvement' project - a development which will significantly change how the Care Commission will regulate services from April 2008. It will mean better information, more involvement with people who use care services and their carers, and the introduction of clear gradings which will help people make more informed choices about the care services they want to use.

The Deputy Rector had already attended an in-service day organised jointly by the Care Commission and the Scottish Council for Independent Schools in which the new regulatory processes had been explained and discussed. He had passed on this information to boarding staff, and, using the insights gained, he had already begun work on the new style self-assessment toolkit.

Further information for pupils and parents is available at [www.carecommission.com/Care Services/Regulating for Improvement](http://www.carecommission.com/Care%20Services/Regulating%20for%20Improvement).

### **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.

There were no recommendations made at this inspection.

## **Inspection Report for Dollar Academy**

This report was written by

Rachel Gillespie  
Care Commission Officer

Date: 20 March 2008

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](http://www.carecommission.com).