

Inspection visit to Valgejõe Training Centre of Maarjamaa Education Council

Summary

Between 31 January 2017 and 1 February 2017, the advisers inspected the Valgejõe Training Centre of the Maarjamaa Education Council. The last time the Chancellor of Justice inspected the training centre (formerly known as Tapa Special School) on 8 November 2013. During the visit, the advisers of the Chancellor of Justice and an expert took a tour on the premises of the centre, examined the documentation of the institution and talked to the staff members and had a more detailed interview with 14 students.

At the time of the visit, 34 children were enlisted in the centre. All the students were in the centre on the basis of a court order: four children were subjected to the special social welfare service 24 hours a day under the Social Welfare Act and 30 children had been referred to a school for students who need special treatment due to behavioural problems under the Juvenile Sanctions Act. At the moment of the visit, the centre had 107 employees.

The new facilities of the Tapa training centre were completed in the summer of 2015. Owing to the new facilities, the living and study conditions of the students and the working conditions of the staff have vastly improved. The centre has a gym and a good selection of sports equipment. Each student has their own room with a shower and a toilet in the student home. The dedication and individual approach of the staff of the centre towards the children's problems and seeking working solutions in cooperation with the children deserve recognition. It is positive that the study centre has a medical nurse on working days. The children staying at the centre complimented on the food provided at school.

During the inspection visit it became evident that the centre has difficulties in ensuring the safety of the children. More attention must be paid to resolving conflicts between students and to establishing trust-based relations with the children. Students must be given unambiguous explanations regarding the possibilities of use of the alarm button located in the room. The isolation room does not provide sufficient privacy to the student placed in there. The rules of making a phone call need harmonisation and better explanation to both the students and the staff. Students' bedrooms should not be closed in a way that the child cannot open the door from inside. More ways of meaningfully spending the leisure time and career advice should be offered to students. Covering young people's bedroom windows and common room windows fully with film must be avoided. Students are subjected to security checks at the study centre without a legal ground.