

# Talbot Heath

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Shaw / Veronica Crowley
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	29 November 2004

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Talbot Heath School is an independent school catering for boys aged three to seven years and girls aged three to 18 years. Boarding provision is available for girls aged 11 to 18 years. The school is situated in 22 acres of grounds within Talbot Woods, one mile from the town of Bournemouth in Dorset. At the time of this inspection the senior school had 26 boarders and 337 day pupils. The boarders are accommodated in St Mary's boarding house which is situated on the school campus. Accommodation is in the form of single, double and six bed dormitories. Founded in 1886 Talbot Heath is a Church Of England School, founded on Christian principles, however, a multi-faith chaplaincy team exists to foster understanding between pupils of all faiths and to ensure the spiritual support of all members of the school community. The school aims to provide an active, stimulating educational environment where pupils continue to develop and learn new skills to achieve an appropriate degree of independence. The school offers a specialised curriculum for boarding pupils with a commitment towards excellence in all areas of attainment.

### **Summary**

Talbot Heath School operates its boarding provision to a very high standard with excellent outcomes for its boarders. This inspection was carried out as part of the normal inspection process on an announced basis. The aim of the inspection was to review the 21 key standards for Boarding Schools. As part of the inspection process questionnaires were sent to parents and students who board at the school to gain their views. Responses received were very complimentary and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the pastoral care provided. The school demonstrates excellent attention to health care and boarders feel well looked after if unwell. There are extensive and robust systems in place throughout the school, which aim to protect boarders and ensure that effective responses are made in all safeguarding areas. Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support from both staff and other adults external to the school. The school clearly demonstrates its commitment to anti-discriminatory practice, valuing and embracing diversity. There is an abundance of forums, both formal and informal, for boarders to contribute their views to the boarding practice. Staff are encouraged and well supported to undertake training opportunities and have their performances reviewed on a regular basis. There is excellent leadership and monitoring of all aspects of the care provided.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were 10 recommendations made at the last inspection carried out in November 2004. Areas highlighted for improvement related mainly to, one minor health issue, boarders' safety and issues relating to the accommodation. With regard to health issues, a system is now in place in the boarding house to ensure correct records are maintained of the administration of any prescribed medication to boarders. The child protection policy now includes all elements as required under the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools. A comprehensive policy has been written in respect of dealing with challenging situations, which include the use of physical intervention. All necessary checks on recruitment files are clearly demonstrated and staff do not have any unsupervised contact with the boarders prior to the return of a satisfactory

Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check. Work has been undertaken to update the decoration and facilities within the boarding house and to create a more homely environment.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' health is promoted through an excellent range of health education policies and procedures. The staff actively put into effect a thorough, well structured personal, social and religious education (PSRE) curriculum, which is reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis. External agencies are used where appropriate. There is excellent liaison between teaching and boarding staff enabling consistency and good awareness when covering sensitive issues. Boarders benefit from an extensive range of resources available to assist in the delivery of PSRE. The PSRE co-ordinator is also the head of pastoral care for the school and is fully involved where pupils may require additional help or guidance to ensure they are well supported where necessary. Boarders' health is maintained through a small but well organised health centre, which is staffed by a nurse to care for pupils during the school day. The nurse oversees all matters relating to health and medication and is available on call outside of school hours if necessary. Continuity of care for boarders is ensured by the excellent liaison between the housemistress and the nurse where appropriate. Additionally, in the housemistress's weekly meetings with the headmistress all issues relating to health are discussed. Boarders' health is protected and promoted by the safe storage and administration of medication. Detailed records and comprehensive procedures are in place for this purpose. Medical consents from parents, and staff suitably trained in first aid in the boarding houses, ensure that emergency treatment can be provided. Boarders are all satisfied with the care provided by the nursing staff and housemistress.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are effectively protected through the school's positive approach to dealing with bullying. A comprehensive policy is followed in practice and the boarders and staff are very clear about what they should do if concerned about bullying. Boarders reported very low levels of bullying incidents throughout the school and confirmed that incidents are dealt with effectively and sensitively. Boarders' welfare is protected through clear and robust child protection policies and procedures which are consistent with the local Safeguarding Children Procedures. The headmistress and the child protection designated governor, together with the local Safeguarding team manager, have completed a self review tool on child protection and safeguarding. This confirms that the school is following the correct procedures in regard to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children. All staff have received child protection training and have a clear understanding about their responsibilities in respect of keeping boarders safe. The headmistress, as designated child protection officer for the school, demonstrates an excellent awareness of the key legislation in respect of child protection and ensures all staff have regular refresher training as appropriate. The headmistress and recruitment co-ordinator for the school have completed Safer Recruitment Training. Boarders confirm they feel protected. Boarders develop positively through the culture adopted at the school to genuinely care and have concern for others. Reward incentives include a merit scheme for achievement or good behaviour which can lead to a commendation, honours, presentations and termly awards. The school has clear policies and practice on behaviour, discipline, the use of punishments and the use of physical intervention. Very few punishments are given. Boarders

are aware of the punishment system and feel it is both fair and appropriate. Boarders benefit from the positive, nurturing relationships that are fostered throughout the school. Boarders' welfare is protected through a rigorous complaints procedure. However, this does not include information on how boarders or their parents can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning boarders' welfare. There is a clear understanding within the school that any concern or complaint will be taken seriously and properly resolved, either formally or informally. Boarders confirm they know how to raise a concern and that they would be listened to and the issue dealt with appropriately. There have been no formal complaints since the last full inspection carried out in November 2004. Boarders are protected from the risk of fire by rigorous fire safety precautions and well trained staff. Regular fire evacuations take place and all fire safety equipment is checked and serviced in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service with detailed records maintained. There are no outstanding recommendations from the Fire and Rescue service. Boarders demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's evacuation procedures. Boarders' privacy is respected by non-intrusive staff who are sensitive when entering bathrooms or bedrooms. All bathrooms, toilets and showers have appropriate locks and are private. All boarders have a lockable place in which they can store treasured possessions. Boarders have their own mobile telephones should they need to make or receive a private call. They also have access to landline telephones in the boarding house. Boarders' welfare is protected by a robust staff recruitment process. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance. A detailed record of the selection process undertaken ensures rigorous checks are in place prior to new staff commencing work. CRB checks at enhanced level are undertaken on all staff employed at the school, who may have unsupervised contact with the boarders, prior to appointment. Tennis coaches are also subject to CRB checks which are undertaken at the tennis club when they are appointed. Boarders are further protected by the school which requires confirmation that all taxi drivers used by the school have been checked through a CRB process. Boarders' welfare is protected and safeguarded through comprehensive security measures. The school has a clear policy process on restricting public access that is reviewed regularly. Boarding accommodation is reserved solely for the use of those boarders designated to it. All boarding areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pads and locks. An assistant caretaker employed by the school undertakes regular patrols. Boarders are also further protected by club members who have access to the school's sports facilities being required to adhere to a code of conduct and to undertake a CRB check. Boarders are safeguarded by an extensive health and safety policy, comprehensive risk assessments and well trained staff. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work effectively to ensure boarders are protected from unavoidable hazards. Boarders are protected by effective checking of electrical appliances and gas installations, water checking and safe storage of all substances hazardous to health. Boarders' welfare is promoted through a variety of assessments relating to activities undertaken, the school grounds and any other known risks.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support provided by pastoral and academic staff. Tutors play an important role in the wellbeing of the boarders, providing the link between the academic and pastoral systems. In addition there are numerous other staff readily available to provide support and encouragement. These include the housemistresses, independent listeners, Gap students, chaplain and the PSRE co-ordinator. Boarders are clear about which members of staff they can go to for personal support. Boarders also enjoy the support they

receive from being part of small boarding house which promotes the strong sense of family that exists within the school, across the age range of the boarders. Boarders' lives are enhanced through the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the reciprocal, caring ethos experienced by them. The school positively welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its boarders. Appropriate arrangements are made for boarders for whom English is not their first language. All staff support and promote the integration of the international students. Arrangements are made for boarders to attend churches of their own choice. Religious festivals are celebrated and boarders are encouraged to observe the requirements of their own faith. Sixth formers have an opportunity of attending a forum of the school chaplaincy which presents differing viewpoints on current ethical and moral issues.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders benefit from having an abundance of opportunities to contribute their views and opinions to the operation of the boarding provision. These include house meetings, food meetings, form leaders' meetings, tutor system and suggestion sheets. Staff respond to boarders in a positive and supportive way and boarders commented on the positive relationships they have with staff. Boarders' welfare is enhanced and maintained through positive contact with their parents, families and friends. They have their own email addresses and can use the boarding house landline in addition to their personal mobile telephones. There is close contact between the housemistress, tutors and senior management to ensure parents are kept up to date with progress or any worries that may arise.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of boarding principles and practice is readily available to parents, boarders and staff and can be found in the prospectus and accompanying literature. This is reviewed regularly and updated if applicable. In addition the boarding house has its own handbook welcoming girls and setting out the expectations of life in the house. A more detailed senior school handbook is also provided to parents which contains a summary of the school's policies. Boarders benefit from a very well run school. The monitoring of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents is exemplary. Reasonable action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments and when trends or patterns may emerge. Communication is a strength of the school, underpinned by an effective intranet/email system. Various weekly meetings take place between personnel on the Senior Management Team to ensure consistency across all disciplines. Boarders' welfare is protected and promoted by adequate staffing levels, day and night, with relevant experience to meet their needs. Boarders confirm they always know who is on duty at any time and how to summon assistance should the need arise. There are good arrangements for managing and supervising staff. Boarders enjoy the care provided by dedicated and well trained staff. Staff meet regularly through various forums to ensure consistency for boarders. Staff receive induction and are encouraged and supported to access further professional development opportunities. Each member of staff receives a regular appraisal. Boarders commented very favourably on the staff at the school and how well they are cared for.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- include in their complaints procedures, information for boarders and their parents, of how they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint concerning their welfare.



## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for boarding school

#### Being healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

**Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

**Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

**Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

**Annex A**

## **Making a positive contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

**Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**