

# Brentwood School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	13 January 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Lindsey Blickem
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<b>Head / Principal</b>	Ian Davies
<b>Nominated person</b>	Ian Davies
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	8 November 2006

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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

Brentwood School is an independent school, with places for approximately 1300 pupils in the co-educational senior school. The Preparatory School occupies separate premises and does not have boarding facilities.

Boarding forms a relatively small part of the school's overall provision. At the time of this inspection, 64 pupils (40 boys and 24 girls) were boarding at the school on a full-time or weekly basis. Boarding accommodation is provided in two separate houses. Hough House, a 1960's purpose-built boarding house in the school grounds, provides accommodation for boys in single rooms. Girls are accommodated in Mill Hill House, a large converted Victorian house with shared and single rooms, situated across the road from the main site.

The school occupies a 72-acre site and its facilities include a large, well-equipped sports and leisure centre with an indoor swimming pool, and extensive sports fields.

The school is near Brentwood town centre, with easy access to the town's facilities and transport links.

### Summary

This was an announced key inspection. All key national minimum standards were inspected. The progress made since the previous inspection in November 2006 was also monitored.

The overall rating is outstanding. Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation are all rated outstanding.

Boarders receive excellent support with their health and medical needs and the administration of medication system is efficient and safe. Safeguarding processes and procedures are robust and efficient and relevant staff have received training in child protection and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Relationships between boarders are excellent and there is a harmonious, relaxed and friendly environment throughout boarding. Access to varied and enjoyable activities is excellent and boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views and opinions about boarding. Accommodation is of a very high standard and is extremely well maintained. Boarding is well organised and staff are highly committed and motivated in caring for boarders.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

The headteacher was asked to make improvements to the child protection policy and procedures, the complaints policy, activities, monitoring of records, recruitment procedures and minor elements of accommodation. Improvements have been made in all these areas improving safety and creating a more enjoyable boarding experience.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are given excellent support with their health and medical needs. There are clear procedures for administering and recording medication which are strictly adhered to by both boarding houses. The school nurses are responsible for overseeing this system which is reviewed and audited regularly. The nurses work in the school medical centre throughout the school day which is accessible to boarders as well as day pupils. They are also on call throughout the evenings and at weekends providing advice and assistance for urgent and non urgent medical and health issues. The school doctor is located just off site and there are two in-school drop in surgeries for boarders to attend if they need to. Appointments with the school doctor can be made quickly and easily at all other times. All houseparents have received first aid training ensuring there is cover at all times within the boarding houses.

Boarders receive help and advice from the school nurses in relation to health issues. Healthy living is covered within the school's life skills/personal social and health education programme.

Catering provision is excellent. Boarders have a healthy, well balanced and substantial diet. Menus include a great deal of choice on a day-to-day basis and there is variety throughout each week. The school has made great efforts to include the views of boarders in relation to food and changes have been made to menus as a result. Consultation in relation to food is an on going process and the school demonstrate tremendous commitment to ensuring boarders are happy with the food they are provided with. Boarders also have access to snacks within the boarding houses and the kitchens are well equipped and stocked with food including substantial amounts of fresh fruit.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders enjoy excellent relationships with one another and a notable feature of boarding is the harmonious and positive environment in which boarders are extremely supportive of one another. Older boarders are very protective of younger ones creating a caring environment where bullying behaviour very rarely exists.

There are clear and robust procedures in place in relation to dealing with safeguarding issues. The deputy headteacher is the designated child protection officer and is an effective central point of contact. Statutory authorities are notified where appropriate of any safeguarding issues and the school apply appropriate thresholds. Any pupils or boarders requiring additional support or monitoring receive it. Houseparents have received training in child protection and are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to recognising, reporting and dealing with welfare concerns. Boarders are therefore protected by highly competent staff and appropriately applied policies and procedures.

Boarders are very clear about rules, expectations and the consequences when behaviour falls below expectations. Punishments are proportionate, fair and consistently applied across both boarding houses. Boarders enjoy freedom which is appropriate to their age. They are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their own actions and behaviour, particularly in relation to when they go off site. The system for signing in and out of the boarding houses works very well and ensures houseparents know where boarders are at any time. The strength in the system allows boarders relative freedom which is safely and carefully managed.

Boarders' privacy is appropriately protected which they enjoy within the context of communal living. Boys have their own bedrooms and girls generally are required to share large rooms with

one or two other girls. Both boarding houses have a good amount of space and boarders are able to spend time alone if they wish.

Boarders are protected from the risk of fire through regular testing of fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment. There are regular fire drills held which ensures boarders know what to do in the event of a fire. The signing in and out system ensures houseparents are aware of who is in residence at any one time. There has been a recent review of the fire safety system which has highlighted remedial work. This is being addressed.

The recruitment and vetting of staff is appropriately robust and ensures that boarders are cared for by individuals who have been subject to all required checks. This includes criminal records bureau checks, written references, employment histories and identification.

Boarding houses are very secure and free from public intrusion. Doors are kept locked and visitors are vetted and required to sign in when entering the premises. The school grounds are kept locked after day school has finished and is only accessible with a key. Boarding houses are staffed at all times ensuring that there is appropriate monitoring of visitors.

Boarding houses are free from identifiable hazards and there are risk assessments in place for the accommodation and for the purposes of fire precautions. Overall, boarders enjoy living in safe and well-maintained accommodation.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders are very happy with the variety of activities available to them. These include access to the school's recreational and sporting facilities in the evenings and weekends. These are extensive and planned trips at the weekends include paint balling, go karting, cinema, shopping and theme parks. Activities are planned with the boarders' input. Within the boarding houses there are pool tables, table football, dvd's, televisions and computer consoles.

The support given to boarders is excellent. Houseparents and tutors are attentive, supportive and accessible and enjoy very positive relationships with boarders. Boarders enjoy equal treatment from both staff and other boarders and expectations are generally fair, consistent and age appropriate. House duties are clearly defined and senior boarders are responsible for both setting an example to others whilst also ensuring chores are completed.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Consultation is excellent. The process for discussing issues with boarders is relaxed and yet very effective. There is time set aside in each term for boarders to have a meal with houseparents to discuss any improvements that can be made to boarding. This then feeds into the boarding committee which the headteacher sits on. In terms of facilities, boarders generally get what they ask for and consequently boarding houses are continually buying new items for boarders to enjoy. The school is highly committed to actively responding to the views of boarders and the dining hall committee is dynamic in ensuring that improvements or changes are made to food when issues are raised by boarders.

Boarders are able to enjoy private contact with their families. The relatively new introduction of wireless internet to both boarding houses has improved contact between boarders and their families, particularly for those who live abroad. There is a telephone within each boarding house which is accessible at all times. There are relatively few restrictions on boarders using their own mobile telephones.

Both boarding houses have their own boarding handbooks which are reasonably consistent with one another and help boarders understand the rules, expectations and facilities when they are first admitted. All new boarders complete an induction when they first arrive which also enables them to settle and that they are well informed.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders enjoy living in accommodation which is well equipped, well-maintained, very comfortable and attractive. The boarding houses are distinctly different in design and the standard of accommodation is consistently high. Whilst the boys' boarding house is a rather unassuming design externally, internally the house is kept very clean and tidy. The décor and furnishings are attractive and comfortable. The school has made excellent use of the boys' house in ensuring that it suits the needs of the boarders using it. Boys clearly enjoy their accommodation and have a real respect for their surroundings. The girls' house is very attractive externally and has its own grounds given that it sits just off the main school site. The house is very homely, comfortable and extremely well-maintained. There are obvious signs that accommodation is continually invested in and boarders reap the benefits. Sleeping accommodation and bedroom furniture is of a consistently high standard and boarders are able to protect their personal possessions. Toilet and bathroom facilities are consistent with the high standard of accommodation and there are plenty available to boarders relative to numbers.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's statement of boarding principles and practice is accessible both on the website and in the boarding handbooks. This document accurately reflects the services and facilities available in the school.

Boarders receive an excellent standard of care and the organisation of boarding directly contributes to the positive outcomes boarders experience. Record keeping is efficient and kept under review. Houseparents are given excellent support from the deputy headteacher and headteacher. They are also given training opportunities. Houseparents are highly committed to their role and the welfare on boarders. Tutors provide consistently high standards of care which is appreciated by boarders. Houseparents and tutors are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

The school has made excellent improvements to boarding since the last inspection and have gone beyond the recommendations made. This clearly demonstrates the capacity for continuous improvement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders are given excellent opportunities to develop as individuals as well as experiencing the advantages of communal living. Boarding

is a harmonious environment where young people from different cultures are provided with care consistent with their backgrounds.

## **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**

There are no recommendations.