

# Dulwich College

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	27 February 2007

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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**

This is an independent day and boarding school for approximately 1400 boys. Of these around 100 boys between the ages of 11 and 17 years are boarders at the school. There are four boarding houses, all close to the main College campus. Each house has a housemaster who is resident with his family. They are supported by a team of house tutors, some of whom also live on the campus. Younger boys (aged up to sixteen) live in Orchard House, sharing study-bedrooms. Boys in the Upper School live in Blew House and Ivyholme where each boy has his own room with en-suite facilities. Four boys live in single bedrooms in Old Blew House. Around 40 boys were spoken with during this inspection.

### **Summary**

This was an announced key inspection. All key National Minimum Standards were inspected.

This is a satisfactory service. There are some shortfalls in the staff recruitment policies and procedures, the procedures for risk assessments and the written agreements between people not employed by, but living in the boarding facilities. There are also minor shortfalls which place some limitations on young people and their parents' rights to complain and the wording of the child protection policy. Overall, these shortfalls have minimal impact on the well-being of young people. This is a school with many strengths. Young people have their health needs well addressed and are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people. Positive steps are taken to discourage bullying and challenge it if it does occur. Young people have very good opportunities for contributing to the running of the school and for having their say about things that impact on their lives. There are excellent opportunities for young people to engage in social activities that promote their well-being and enhance their experiences. Young people benefit from living in a pleasant environment. Staff are well trained and supported by a head of boarding who has a strong commitment to improvement.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

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

The register provider was asked to ensure that there was staff training in child protection and an audit of the staff recruitment documentation. This has now occurred and these steps go some way in promoting the safety and well-being on young people. However, it remains that there are some gaps in staff and host family recruitment files and some information is missing from the child protection policy.

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

The provision is good.

Young people's health and medical needs are well met. They have access to a medical centre within the school that they say is effective. Nursing staff are available to boarders at all times as there is an on-call system for out of hours cover. There is a physical, health and social education programme that helps young people to understand issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, hygiene and healthy eating. There is a general practitioner who holds a surgery in the school on a daily basis. Young people may request to see a general practitioner of either sex

and can attend appointments alone or with a staff member. Young people have access to a number of services through the surgery such as family planning, a stop smoking service, counselling and chlamydia service.

Young people receive good quality catering provision and enjoy a healthy and varied diet. There is always a choice of meals, including a vegetarian option. Special dietary needs can be catered for as there is a large well managed kitchen.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Whilst all pre-recruitment checks occur for staff members, some are not recorded such as interview notes and reference verifications. Checks are carried out on host families that are used to provide short term care for some young people. One member of a host family was not Criminal Records Bureau checked directly by the school, however, the school did ensure that an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check was obtained for this person from other sources. The school has made assurances that new Criminal Records Bureau checks will be obtained for all host family members in the future. Other than this, there is a thorough staff recruitment system that promotes and protects the welfare of young people. Checks occur regarding the spouses of house masters who live in the boarding houses, however, there is no written agreement between the school that specifies the terms of their accommodation and guidance on contact with boarders. These issues relate to administrative oversight. As all checks have been completed and the school has been satisfied that a Criminal Records Bureau check is in place for all adults who have contact with young people. There is limited impact on the well-being young people.

Risk assessments have not been carried out in the boarding houses that would help to eliminate any risks to young people. One such risk was the failure to securely store cleaning products in the boarding houses. This risk, however, was rectified on the day of inspection. The safety of young people in the boarding houses and school grounds is well protected in other areas. The school has a fire safety policy and fire evacuation notices and fire routes are clearly displayed. There is testing of fire extinguishers, fire alarms and emergency lighting systems, and staff are trained in fire safety. Young people say that they are given information about fire safety and that they are required to take part in fire drills. Boarding accommodation is safe and secure. There is a swipe card entry system in boarding houses and windows have restrictors.

Young people say they feel safe at the school and would always have someone to speak to. There are good policies and procedures in place that protect young people from bullying. Young people report that bullying is not an issue in the school and say that they are confident that staff would challenge bullying should it occur. Staff have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding issues and have all received training in child protection. The school's policy on child protection however is not consistent with that of the Local Area Child Protection Committee in that it does not refer to the local safeguarding team or Ofsted. This would appear to be a wording issue as there is designated child protection lead who has demonstrated good practice in child protection.

The use of discipline in the school is fair and appropriate. There is a clear written policy available regarding rules, discipline and punishments and this is understood by staff and young people. The school takes complaints seriously and informs young people about the process of making a complaint during their induction to the school. The school is aware of the need to provide

young people with updated information about how complaints may be made to Ofsted. Young people say they would be happy to talk to the staff about any issues and that staff always treat them fairly. Staff supervision does not invade on young people's privacy.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are very well supported to enjoy and achieve in a number of ways. They benefit from a wide range of outstanding leisure facilities and show a good deal of enthusiasm in the activities available to them. There are numerous sporting facilities on the school campus and young people have access to music tuition. Young people also benefit from having time to enjoy these facilities.

Excellent personal support is offered to young people. Comments from parents about support in the school include 'excellent all round care and good pastoral support' and 'there is a warm atmosphere, my son is very happy here'. Young people say 'it's a wonderful school, the staff are very helpful' and 'this school is doing a great job, all staff are very supportive'. A school counsellor is available to young people and all have a personal tutor. Information about contacting help lines out with the school is also made available. The school has also made an independent listener available to young people but currently information about how to make contact with this person is vague. The school, however, has made assurances that action will be taken to rectify this issue. The school has demonstrated a commitment to equal opportunities through its policy in this area.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding provision. This is done through regular house meetings, a catering committee, anonymous surveys and informal discussions. Young people say that the catering committee works well and that their suggestions are taken seriously. Extremely positive relationships are enjoyed between staff members and young people.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their family members in private. Young people mostly have a mobile telephone to do this but there are also private telephone booths within the boarding provision. Young people are able to write letters home and receive and send emails. Staff contact parents with significant welfare issues regarding young people. Young people are supported to settle into boarding and are given information about boarding routines and rules. One new boarder said that he had settled into the school very quickly.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place for providing protection of young people's personal possessions. All young people have a key for their own bedroom or a lockable facility in their dormitory. Young people may keep their money in a safe at school but staff encourage them to open a bank account and use the local bank. Young people are happy with this system.

Young people benefit from living in pleasant, homely boarding houses. Comments received from young people about their accommodation include 'good environment', 'nice facilities and the rooms are clean'. Boarding houses are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably

furnished and decorated. Sleeping accommodation is generally very good and many young people have their own bedrooms with en-suite facilities. There are pleasant dormitories that young people enjoy. The school is aware of an issue of some young people needing to walk through another dormitory to get to their own and has demonstrated a positive attitude to remedying the problem. There is suitable provision of space to study and for storage. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms. Washing and toilet facilities are generally good. There are no hand drying facilities near some toilets and one shower screen does not provide full privacy. The impact of these issues is minimal as young people say that there is no staff intrusion on their privacy and there are currently measures in place to install hand drying facilities.

**Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Organisation at the school is satisfactory. While there are many strengths in this area, this outcome judgement has been made as a result of the oversights highlighted under the outcome area 'Staying Safe'. Ofsted benchmarking does not allow the outcome judgement for 'Organisation' to be higher than that of 'Staying Safe'. Staff, young people and their parents are provided with the information they need about the school in the form of handbooks, a prospectus, a staff handbook, written policies and a school website. Management and leadership of the boarding provision is good with clear lines of accountability. The school's governing body has a system to monitor welfare provision in the school and there is no significantly poorer provision or standards in different boarding houses. There are arrangements for carrying out risk assessments of the school grounds and of activities and to keep these under review. The head of the boarding provision is responsible for monitoring records within the school and this occurs regularly.

Staff are employed in sufficient numbers in order to promote the well-being of young people. Staff are well supported and encouraged to develop their knowledge through attendance at appropriate course such as safeguarding. A regular programme of team and management meetings is in place which includes staff appraisals. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice.

**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):

- ensure that the school's policy on child protection details that any suspicion or allegation of abuse would be reported to the local area child protection team and any practice that is likely to place young people at risk in the school is reported to Ofsted. (NMS 3)

- ensure that the school's system for recruiting staff and host families who will work with young people can be verified from recruitment records including interview notes, verification of written references and Criminal Records Bureau checks obtained by the school. (NMS 38)
- ensure that there is a written agreement between the school and any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation. (NMS 39)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out regarding each boarding house including any risks related to the storage of cleaning products. (NMS 47)
- ensure that young people and their parents are informed of how they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaint regarding their welfare. (NMS 5)
- ensure that boarders are aware of the contact details of the schools additional independent listener. (NMS 14)
- ensure that young people have adequate washing facilities which include hand drying facilities being adjacent to all WCs and urinals and all showers affording adequate privacy. (NMS 44)