

Bromsgrove School

Inspection report for boarding school

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Unique reference number | SC043038 |
| Inspection date | 24 March 2010 |
| Inspector | Carole Moore |
| Type of Inspection | Key |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Address | Bromsgrove School Worcester Road BROMSGROVE Worcestershire B61 7DU |
| Telephone number | 01527 579679 |
| Email | |
| Registered person | Christopher Edwards |
| Head / Principal | Christopher Edwards |
| Nominated person | |
| Date of last inspection | 5 October 2007 |

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 boarding school was established as a Tudor Grammar School in 1548. It was one of the original 14 schools included in the Headmasters' Conference in 1869. During the second world war the school was moved to Wales, returning to the current site in 1947.

The school is situated on a 100 acre, tree-lined site. It provides boarding and day education to boys and girls from age 13 to over 18 years. At present the boarding student body comprises 30% international students.

The buildings range from a 17th century hall through Edwardian and Victorian houses to modern state of the art Library and Art, Design and Technology buildings. The boarding houses reflect the same mix of new and old, with the most recent boarding addition completed in the new century.

Boarding provision in the school is offered in six houses, three for boys and two for girls and one for older mixed gender students. There are currently 385 boarding students, 148 females and 237 males. A further six houses provide for the 432 day pupils. Only one of the boarding houses has an annexe, for which additional staff are provided.

Summary

This was an announced joint inspection with the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The inspection looked at the key boarding school national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

Pastoral care is exceptional and threaded throughout the school, delivered by a dedicated staff team who consider themselves part of the school community. Boarders are cared for in a safe environment in which they have opportunities to develop, try new things and are encouraged to aim high in their achievements. The school values boarding and invests in the development of a unique approach which puts the child's experience both now, and for their future life, at its heart. Leadership and management of the school is strong and effective.

The overall outcome judgement is outstanding with one recommendation set under being healthy.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in October 2007 the school now ensures that all staff receive the necessary training, that there is additional security on site, that there is secure storage in houses for medication and there is additional storage around the site for pupil's school bags.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders gain a superb understanding about the benefits of healthy living. Health education is successfully covered by programmes within the school curriculum, the health centre, boarding

staff and visiting speakers. Skilled staff effectively address sensitive issues. Advice and guidance is provided at age appropriate levels and this subject area is well integrated across the school. Staff are responsive to current issues and can provide support as matters arise in addition to the timetabled sessions. One boarder commented 'it's like being surrounded by your family being a boarder here. Everyone looks out for you and they treat you with respect'.

Qualified nurses provide medical care 24 hours a day and this exceeds the minimum standard. A dedicated medical centre operates at a professional level for the school community and there is designated space for boarders if they are unwell. The confidentiality of boarders' health and medical needs is given the utmost respect and arrangements are in place to promote privacy of appointments and treatment. Clear computerised records are maintained of any treatment and medication. Nurses also visit the houses in the evenings to speak to any boarder who has requested a visit or to catch up with any boarder who presented as ill that day. In addition to medical attention and treatment, the medical centre is a welcoming place to seek guidance and support with any social or emotional worries. Boarders and boarding staff report that they feel confident in approaching the medical centre for support and they value the 24 hour availability.

There are efficient arrangements to ensure that medication is safely administered. This ensures that boarders' health care needs are fully met and their welfare is safeguarded. However, a recent change in a boarder's medication has meant that there is now a controlled drug in school. Although the already excellent systems mean that the outcomes for boarders are not affected, current practice does not fully meet the Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidance.

The catering staff have an excellent understanding of what makes a balanced and nutritious meal and offer an extensive range of food. All main meals are taken in the school dining room where there is always a choice of main dishes with vegetarian options, pasta bar, salad bar and jacket potatoes. Puddings, yoghurts and a selection of fresh fruit are always available to follow. Boarders enjoy the food and appreciate the many choices. Very few negative comments were received about the food offered and these were related to personal preferences. One boarder commented that, 'the food here is excellent with the right balance of healthy and a little bit of the enjoyable not quite so healthy stuff thrown in for good measure'. The boarding houses have small kitchen areas where hot drinks and toast can be made. To promote good hygiene and reduce the spread of any infections, dispensers of hand sanitizer are located at various entrances to the school for everyone to use.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The system in place to promote the safety and welfare of boarders is outstanding. The school provides a safe environment for boarders. The school is committed to boarding, with an emphasis on community values and fostering responsibility and independence. One boarder commented, 'The whole atmosphere of the school is brilliant and I love boarding here.'

Staff are vigilant in their supervision of boarders with several registration calls each day. Boarders commented that 'there is reasonable privacy for them in their room.' Staff are expected to avoid being overtly intrusive by knocking on doors before entering.

The school has in place a clear policy for responding to child protection and safeguarding boarders' welfare. All staff including ancillary receive regular child protection training and there

are established links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. There is a safeguarding leaflet which is given to all staff, volunteers and visitors giving guidance on 'what to do if'.

Staff are well aware of the potential risk of bullying. They clearly communicate to boarders that it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff are committed to providing a welcoming and friendly community and it follows that bullying has no place at the school. Boarders commented, 'staff act immediately if any incidents take place and they promptly address and challenge unacceptable bullying behaviour.' Boarders are also provided with clear information about cyber bullying which addresses how to use all electronic equipment in a responsible manner.

The standard of behaviour from boarders is exemplary. Staff instil discipline and this is achieved through the pastoral support at the school. Boarders are positively rewarded with progressive incentives for good behaviours. Praise is given in both academic and extra curricular situations. Boarders considered that disciplinary matters are appropriately dealt with by staff. Serious matters are dealt with by the boarding staff and they also keep the head of boarding fully informed of all incidents. Staff strive to ensure consistency, fairness and discuss misdemeanours with boarders so that strategies can be clearly developed to prevent reoccurrences.

Health and safety matters are given high regard across the school. Staff and boarders are aware of the fire safety procedures and have experienced evacuating from the boarding areas. Equipment is regularly checked, a fire risk assessment is in place and all boilers and systems are checked appropriately. The school site is well maintained with a prompt response to reports of any maintenance issues. Risk assessments of the boarding environment are regularly reviewed and there are risk assessments for on-site activities and more in-depth assessments for off-site activities and trips away. Boarders are advised of safety issues such as areas out of bounds, the fire procedures, the security of the buildings and testing of their own electrical equipment. Boarders have commented: 'I feel very safe here.'

The school has in place a robust vetting and selection policy and procedure. It has a rigorous checking process for all staff who work unsupervised with boarders. The senior management team ensure that staff employed at the school are deemed suitable to work with children. All the necessary checks are completed including an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check. Senior staff have also attended advanced training on safer recruitment practices. As a result, this further strengthens the school procedures.

Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises. One boarder commented, 'all visitors to the school have to be identified with identification badges.'

Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. The school has taken clear measures to ensure that the boarding accommodation is reserved for their use. Boarders understand the clear rules about who can invite visitors to the boarders' accommodation. There are excellent security measures on site to prevent unauthorised access by the public to all boarding houses.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The pastoral care given to boarders is a strong feature of the school. Parents and staff describe 'a family environment' and this is created through the pastoral structure. Housemothers provide consistent care to boarders, supported by gap students and nurses with overall support and supervision by the housemaster. The good behaviour of boarders and low level of incidents are indicative of happy children who feel secure in their surroundings. Teaching staff build up positive relationships with the pupils and the headteacher is visible around the school. Boarders report that they can approach the headteacher directly with any issues they may have.

Individual support to boarders is given high priority by the school community. Staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner, and consequently the care, social opportunities and activities are outstanding. Boarders are very clear, which members of staff they can go to for personal support and freely initiate interaction and seek help from a variety of staff across site. These include tutors, house-based staff, nurses, counsellor and chaplain who ensure their continual care needs are well met. Boarders are also encouraged to share the responsibility for the well-being and happiness of others around them. Older boarders care for younger ones and new boarders, emulating the care they receive from adult members of the school community. Student listeners are another avenue for boarders to approach and their contact details are published throughout the boarding houses.

Boarders' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence are excellent because they are valued within the school community and their contributions and efforts are noticed and rewarded. Boarders are able to develop interests in a wide range of group and individual sports activities with nurturing staff guidance. The well-established programme of extras, evening and Sunday activities provides boarders with opportunities that encourage them to achieve educationally and socially to their fullest potential. One parent stated 'the school produces well rounded and happy individuals.'

The school works very hard to integrate a large contingent of international boarders into the community. There are currently 280 international students from over 36 countries. Boarders who speak English as an additional language receive extra support. International boarders make a valuable contribution by sharing their different cultures and beliefs with the wider school body.

Boarders also support a number of charities and there is always one overseas charity supported. There are excellent links made with the local community. Boarders also access a vast range of cross-curricular opportunities in sport, music, drama, dance, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, the Combined Cadet Force and numerous other activities and clubs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' contribution to the running of the school and boarding houses is outstanding. There is an excellent range of channels through which boarders can express their views and feelings. These include the school council, food committee, boarding committee and suggestion boxes. Boarders understand the purpose of these meetings and value initiatives introduced as a result of them.

Each boarding house has a boarder who is elected as the head of house who represents the views of the other boarders within that house. These views are then fed back to the boarding house staff. There are house representatives at the school council which is held regularly. This

was seen to be an active forum within the school. Many boarders reported that they are able to give their views directly to the boarding staff. It is a strength that boarders feel able to approach staff directly in addition to the regular formal structure for gathering boarders' views in house meetings. In response to listening to the views of boarders there have been changes to the menus, changes to the furniture and changes to the return time from town on a Saturday.

Most boarders have mobile phones by which they can communicate with their family. Different rules of usage are in place for the various ages of boarders and these rules appear appropriate. There are also private telephone booths which boarders may use in each of the houses. There are information posters, within or around each booth, which give the contact details of helping agencies and of the counsellor.

Parents report that contact from the school is prompt and informative. Parents of new boarders have welcomed the contact from house staff to reassure them that their child has settled well. Boarders and parents report that they have received an excellent welcome on joining the school. Information about the school is presented in a comprehensive handbook for parents and boarders. The website provides additional information and is regularly updated. New boarders are welcomed into their boarding house by having an allocated older boarder to look after them along with a boarder in their dormitory of the same year group. One boarder commented, 'I have been here since the beginning of term and I have been helped to settle in by everyone.'

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Entrances to each of the boarding houses is key code protected and there is closed circuit television security in many key areas around the school. Boarders have a lockable facility within their rooms for the safe keeping of personal items. They may also leave monies or valuables with the house staff who will keep this under secure conditions and there is a recording system in place for this.

The school promotes independence and prepares boarders for life by encouraging the skills they will need for moving on to adult life. There are expectations that pupils will participate and take responsibility for themselves and the decisions they make so that they are accountable to the school community. There is an atmosphere of healthy respect between adults and pupils. They say they trust their friends and adults in the school and feel that their possessions are safe.

There are five boarding houses which comprise a separate building for sixth formers off site and four main boarding houses within the school site. The boarding houses are generally in good decorative order with suitable furniture and fittings. Boarders report that they like their rooms and can personalise their space with choice of duvet cover, posters and photographs. The sleeping accommodation includes a combination of segmented dormitories, shared double rooms and single rooms. All of the boarding houses have a suitable number of toilets, sinks, showers and baths to meet the needs of the boarders. There is some lockable storage provided and boarders report that they feel their belongings are respected by others. Common rooms provide comfortable seating with televisions and the ability to watch films. The toilet and washing facilities are satisfactory, with some more modern than others. Boarders are comfortable in their boarding accommodation; it is warm and welcoming with photographs displaying activities and events the boarders have been involved in. Repairs and maintenance issues are dealt with promptly by the estates manager and are integral to the school's success in managing

the boarding accommodation. All accommodation is of a good standard and is clean, well presented and homely.

The school has in place a continual refurbishment plan with a boarding house being completely refurbished annually. Because of this, the programme for the boarding houses is at various stages of completion. The Governors have a keen eye on the development and improvement of boarding provision.

The school employs a large property and ground maintenance team who maintain the buildings and grounds to a high standard. In addition, there is a large cleaning and domestic team who regularly clean the boarding houses and maintain good standards.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The organisation and management of the school is outstanding. Boarders' enriched care and educational experience is underpinned by the school's coherent philosophy, values and strong management team. Responsibilities are delegated across the school, empowering staff, which in turn provides a committed and dedicated staff team. The boarding staff are led well by the head of boarding and, with the team working really well together, excellent pastoral care is delivered to the boarders. Policies and procedures are of a very high standard, providing staff with clear guidance. There are effective systems in place to monitor the safety and welfare of boarders with clear record keeping and effective meetings promoting good lines of communication across the school.

Senior staff and Governors are clearly accessible to children, parents and the whole staff team. The school development plan sets out the direction for the school and a range of regular recorded meetings at all levels within the school demonstrate effective coordination across disciplines. The headteacher monitors the school's records of risk assessment, major punishments, complaints and accidents and takes action where needed, thus contributing to boarders' welfare. Consistently good responses from parents in Ofsted surveys indicate they are very happy with a school that exceeds their expectations and they describe communication from the school as excellent. Boarders are wholehearted in their love of the school. Consultation and regular communication with staff and parents ensures proper scrutiny and advancement of all aspects of boarders' care. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed quickly. This quality monitoring and other similar initiatives contribute to reports to the governing body and the school's overall strategic plan and implementation.

Boarders are cared for by sufficient experienced and committed staff with a clear understanding of their responsibilities, who commonly undertake a broad range of training to keep up to date. They are well supported, professional and sensitive in their approach. There is a team approach to boarding school life, which supports innovation, accountability and positive development. Pupils thrive in this environment.

The school has a clear statement of boarding practice and principles and comprehensive policies and procedures that reflect the philosophy of care and the expectations of boarding and these can be accessed through the internet.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The environment represents the individual identities of young people and uniqueness is celebrated in a way that promotes

awareness and understanding. The school has a Christian foundation that welcomes pupils from other faiths. The school has equal opportunity policies and the celebration of difference is promoted through the curriculum, assemblies and general discussion. Pupils can receive support with their learning where required and the school ensures that all pupils have the chance to develop their individual strengths and abilities.

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 |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|

Recommendations

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

- develop policy and practice of controlled drugs to fully meet the Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidance(NMS 15.12).