

Brooke House College

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Brooke House College provides education for male and female students aged 14 to 21 years. The college caters predominantly for students from abroad, although a small number of British students attend the college. Virtually all of the current students reside at the college. For the majority of the students, English is not their principal language.

The college aims to prepare students for higher education predominantly in British universities, by enabling them to attain the appropriate academic entry requirements and, where appropriate, through the development of their proficiency in English.

The college is privately owned and is located in the small town of Market Harborough in rural Leicestershire. It opened in 1965 and is registered for 225 students. There are currently 203 full-time students on roll. The educational provision of the college was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2007. The residential provision was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Brooke House College provides a good quality of education for its students and meets its aims successfully. It has made significant improvements since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and to address shortcomings in assessment and careers guidance. However, the college has paid too little attention to some aspects of safeguarding and students' welfare, health and safety. Consequently, a number of important regulations are now not met and the provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The curriculum is good. Its strengths lie in the range and quality of courses that students have access to and in the ways in which each student's personal interests and talents are accommodated. Almost all students enrol in the college with a clear pathway to a career or higher education. Schemes of work are structured to enable students to attain relevant qualifications

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

and develop their English language skills at the same time. Students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 take two- or three-year GCSE courses, having a good range of options available to them, including the football academy. There is a good emphasis on building up key skills in mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT). Post-16 students select from a good range of A level programmes, the football academy or the foundation learning course. A strong personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE) programme has been put into place, taught by the personal tutors in the evenings. Students value the way this programme helps them to plan for their future and to develop their understanding of different cultures. All this prepares them well for the next steps of their education. The introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the good range of sporting activities and visits, during and after the school day, enrich the curriculum further.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Students make good progress because they are fully engaged in purposeful learning in lessons. This is the result of teachers using their very good subject knowledge to plan learning activities which are well-matched to the students' individual needs as well as to their personal interests. Small teaching groups ensure that teachers are able to assess progress accurately during each lesson and provide effective support whenever it is needed. This is particularly the case in developing the students' English language skills which was a strength seen in every lesson observed. Teachers use a good range of strategies, moving quickly between direct teaching and independent work, resulting in a good pace of learning in lessons. Students have very good attitudes; they are keen to learn and readily take on responsibility to develop their own learning. A strength of the most effective lessons observed was the very good use of plenary sessions when the teacher drew the learning together for the whole group, reinforcing specialist language to promote the development of English language skills further. Homework evolves naturally from lessons and is suitably challenging showing the good links which exist between the education and residential provision.

Learning resources are adequate, but opportunities to extend learning through the use of technology are occasionally limited. For example, students do not always make sufficient use of computers to analyse scientific data. Opportunities to use ICT to extend learning in the residences are restricted because internet access away from the main teaching areas is frequently slow.

Marking is clear, detailed, accurate and thorough. Teachers use high levels of praise and encouragement to acknowledge success and motivate the students. Marking gives a very clear indication of how well students have done and excellent guidance for improvement. Developmental points are based on examination criteria and are linked closely to work covered in lessons.

The college has recognised the need to improve assessment systems. Last year it introduced assessments each half term to monitor students' progress. This system was used effectively to inform the termly reports to parents and carers in the first instance. It is now being developed further to improve the guidance students receive to help them improve their work. The college is also developing the way in which it measures its success and compares its performance with other institutions.

Appropriate use is being made of data available from examination boards to achieve this.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spirituality is developed effectively through strong pastoral support and the celebration of students' achievements. Behaviour is good. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect and concern for the individual which is reflected in the way students relate to their peers and adults. High expectations and the different elements studied across the curriculum, particularly in PSHE, support students' very clear understanding of right and wrong and their respect for traditions, cultures and rules. This is a strongly inclusive, harmonious community. There were many examples of students supporting each other both in lessons and as they moved between them. They mostly really enjoy their lessons and, although some naturally miss their homes, almost all say they feel that they are making good progress. Their attendance is good, although occasionally punctuality could be improved. This is a culturally diverse community in which all students say that they feel comfortable and at ease. They develop a good understanding of public institutions in England through the rich curriculum supplemented by educational visits. Students are encouraged to celebrate each other's cultures through international days, their course work and other projects locally such as singing in local churches.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate because the college has not paid sufficient regard to its responsibilities for child protection. The college's policy for safeguarding children is brief and provides too little guidance for staff such as the signs which may indicate abuse. The policy has not been fully implemented as the designated senior member of staff for child protection has not undertaken appropriate training. No member of staff or of the proprietorial body has undertaken training in safer recruitment and this is reflected in a lack of consistency seen when recruitment records were scrutinised during the inspection. The college has prepared a set of rules and a disciplinary procedure, but has not implemented a policy to promote good behaviour as required by the regulations. There is no first aid policy to provide clear guidance for staff. Nevertheless, there is a full-time matron and qualified first aiders work on each of the college's sites. The college does not maintain attendance registers in line with requirements because the college's system does not ensure that all students are registered at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The symbols used in registers do not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence.

The college has taken appropriate action to ensure that the premises are safe. The health and safety policy is suitable and regularly reviewed. Appropriate risk assessments for the premises and for fire safety have been carried out. Records of fire evacuations and equipment tests indicate that these take place routinely. However, the staff have not received any fire safety training.

Students say that they feel safe and well cared for in the college. Newly arrived students commented on the warm welcome they received, praising the tutors for the support they provide. They report no bullying and say that students from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures get on very well together. Most students have good attitudes towards leading a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the opportunities they have to use the town's leisure centre for physical exercise and are generally happy with the diet they receive at mealtimes.

The school has prepared a three-year accessibility plan in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The college carries out appropriate checks prior to the appointment of all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. However, the college's single central record of staff checks does not fully comply with the regulations because it does not include details of the dates when specific checks were made or who carried out the checks.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The college's teaching accommodation is housed in a range of buildings on four different sites in Market Harborough. The sites are all within a short walking distance of each other. They are maintained in good order. There are suitable specialist rooms for science teaching and an appropriately equipped room for ICT. Students also benefit from facilities at the town's leisure centre for physical education as well as extra-curricular activities. Those students who attend the football academy make good use of the town's football club.

Provision of information

The college provides all of the required information to parents and prospective parents through its prospectus and information pack. Parents and carers are kept well informed about the progress and attainment of their children through three reports each year.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a published complaints procedure which meets all of the regulations with one exception. The procedure does not provide for written records to be kept of all complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 9)
- prepare and implement a written policy on first aid (paragraph 14)
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006⁴ (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- ensure that the college's single central record of staff checks includes the date when checks were carried out and the identity of the person who carried out the checks (paragraphs 22 (3), 22 (4), 22 (6) and 22 (7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure the complaints procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 25 (j)).

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061751.htm

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils				✓
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	International boarding school		
Date school opened	5 September 1991		
Age range of pupils	14–21		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 129	Girls: 74	Total: 203
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 119	Girls: 72	Total: 191
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,990		
Annual fees (boarders)	£21,750		
Address of school	Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7AU		
Telephone number	01858 462452		
Email address	dawn.savage@brookehouse.com		
Headteacher	Mr Giles Williams (Principal)		
Proprietor	Mr Donald Williams		