

inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

Bethany School

Bethany School Ltd Curtisden Green Goudhurst Cranbrook Kent TN17 1LB

Lead Inspector
Sophie Wood

Key Announced Inspection 18th January 2007 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information		
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Boarding Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Bethany School Name of school

Address Bethany School Ltd

Curtisden Green

Goudhurst Cranbrook

Kent

TN17 1LB

Telephone number 01580 211273

Fax number 01580 211151

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of Governing body, Bethany School **Person or Authority** responsible for the school

Name of Head

Mr Nicholas Dorey

Name of Head of Care

Ms Sue Bicheno

Age range of boarding

pupils

11 - 18

Date of last welfare

inspection

17th November 2003

Brief Description of the School:

Bethany School was founded in 1886 and is set in a spacious, parkland campus on the outskirts of Cranbrook in Kent.

The age range of students is 11 – 18 and the school offers places to 'day pupils' and both 'flexi' and 'full time' boarding students, from a variety of nationalities; although mostly English, pupils also come from Hong Kong, China Saudi Arabia, France, Belgium and Germany.

Accommodation for boarders remains in a continual state of development and ongoing maintenance, with six separate boarding houses, five of which are on the main campus accommodating boys and the girls house, which is reached by crossing a country lane. Much of the boarding provision remains in pre-existing buildings, which are subject to regulations because of their age, whereas the sixth form accommodation is a purpose built addition, within the grounds, offering single room accommodation to all boarders.

All pupils, including 'day' and 'boarding', are assigned to a house for registration and break times, in an effort that pupils are encouraged to mix within their own year group and have a 'base' whilst at school. A strong Christian influence remains and the Chapel is a well - preserved feature, kept open at all times for all pupils to access. A separate medical centre is situated within the heart of the campus, ensuring that all health issues can be promptly dealt with.

The school enjoys a positive reputation with regards academic success and attributes much of this to consciously remaining 'small' and by providing intensive support to its high number of students with dyslexia. Outside of the purpose built teaching blocks, further facilities include an outdoor swimming pool, sports hall, climbing wall, gymnasium, fitness room, squash courts, drama studio, music school, art school, D.T. block and newly refurbished library and the extensive grounds provide plenty of sports pitches and 'hard courts'. More recently, the school took the decision to discontinue with 'Saturday school' and the whole weekly timetable has been restructured as a result.

At the time of this inspection, the school was accommodating 129 boarders and 273 day pupils, two thirds overall being boys. Fees for boarding placements ranged from, £6462.00 per term for full boarding and tuition, £6679.00 for part time dyslexic support, tuition and full boarding, and £6900.00 for full time dyslexic support, tuition and full boarding.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection commenced on 18^{th} January 2007 and was conducted by lead inspector, Sophie Wood. It follows the announced inspection of 17/11/03 and the follow up visit of 4/10/05. All of the visits have been conducted by the same lead inspector; thus, providing consistency.

Time was spent interviewing key personnel, reading relevant records, joining boarders and staff for meals and conducting a full tour of the boarding accommodation. A number of boarders spoke with the inspector and provided valuable inspection information.

In addition, other material included 115 boarder questionnaires, pre – inspection paperwork, completed by the head teacher and head of boarding and correspondence from parents, school GP and board of governors.

Overall, this proved to be a very positive visit. Boarders enjoy being at the school and their well - being is clearly protected. The boarding team work within a clear framework of sound procedural guidance and strive to create a safe and happy environment.

Future development plans include ongoing refurbishment to the boarding houses and the completion of this will ensure the current disparities will be overcome.

What the school does well:

Good communication systems exist between all of the staff of the school. This ensures boarders are well – known by the staff and ensures consistent approaches are used.

Boarders receive an excellent 'nursing' service. Their primary and tertiary health needs are effectively looked after.

The school offers a wide range of subjects and activities and celebrates achievements in all areas, not just academic.

The rules of boarding are made explicitly clear to boarders and such guidance is applied in the interests of keeping everyone safe.

The school actively welcomes pupils from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and makes appropriate provision for any pupil with unique or specific needs.

The senior management team and board of governors works hard to continue to improve all of the school's facilities in a structured and timely way.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Policies and procedures aimed at promoting and protecting welfare have been reviewed and updated.

An increase in the amount and range of extra curricular activities has been implemented.

The catering provision has improved significantly.

Saturday school is no longer in operation and the revised weekly timetable is being positively received.

What they could do better:

The quality of the boarding accommodation remains variable, however; the rolling programme of refurbishment is continuing to address this.

Attention needs to be paid to ensure the night – time supervision is sufficient in all of the boarding houses.

It would be helpful to again canvass the views of boarders with regards meals and snack provisions.

Creating additional waiting room space within the medical centre would further protect boarders' privacy.

The vetting procedures of ancillary workers need to be improved upon.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

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)

The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

6, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 48, 49. Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Boarders positively benefit from having their primary and tertiary health care and support needs effectively met.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Through case – tracking, reading relevant policies and interviewing the school nurse, sufficient evidence was obtained to rate this outcome group as commendable.

Written records were securely held and in good order; the health centre is adequately staffed by qualified personnel and offers care to ill pupils in a pleasant, welcoming environment. Good systems were in place to protect confidentiality, in terms of the sharing of information and boarders being able to make appointments discreetly. However, this aspect would further improve with a designated waiting area being added to the building; the current

practice of waiting in the kitchen area means others can be heard in the next room having their consultation. Notwithstanding, using this room also presents potential cross – infection issues as it is the nurse's own domestic kitchen.

The school enjoys regular contact with the local GP, who visits weekly. Alternatively, boarders can go into the local Practice if they choose and they can see a male or female doctor, in private.

Clear examples were seen of appropriate external referrals being made and the school also funds the provision of a visiting external qualified counsellor. Sound medication protocols were being followed; all medication was securely held and good records showed a clear audit trail.

Written parental consent is obtained for the use of all medication and consent to treatment; allergies and general health information is updated annually.

The areas used to accommodate boarders who are unwell were clean, well furnished and with washing facilities nearby. It was noted that the upstairs rear bedroom did feel very cold and the old windows currently in place were a contributing factor. Given that many boarders live within travelling distance, it is common practice for them to be collected by parents if they too unwell to attend lessons. In the event of a major health crisis, involving boarders from overseas, clear contingency plans are satisfactorily described within the school's crises plan.

At the follow up inspection of 2005, the newly - built dining hall was seen. This continues to provide an excellent facility and the range and quality of the food being provided was commendable. Although a mixed response was received from boarders when asked about the food provision, the majority stated they were happy with the food. Similarly, a mixed response was received when boarders were asked about snack provisions within the boarding houses. Again, some stated there was not enough being provided and the school is advised to further explore this feedback.

No complaints were received about laundry provision. The upper sixth boarding house is equipped for the students to take care of their own washing and the school is currently reviewing its laundry provision with the aim of establishing a completely 'in house' laundry service.

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 appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational quardians 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 and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41, 47. Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Boarders are well – protected from all forms of potential harm and abuse. The application of clear policies and procedures serves to positively promote their overall well – being.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Since the previous inspection, policies and procedural advice in respect of anti – bullying, child protection and disciplinary measures have all been reviewed and updated. Such guidance is explicitly clear and contained within the staff handbook. Discussions with staff members further confirmed their sound understanding of this guidance.

Boarders indicated through their questionnaires that they feel safe at school. They described positive relationships with the staff and reported that instances of bullying are very rare and effectively managed.

They further stated a clear understanding of the school's complaints procedure, however; they also said their issues are usually satisfactorily dealt with before having to use a formal process.

The prefect system was commended at the previous inspection and this continues to be a strength of the school. Candidates are elected by their peers and staff and receive a clear and thorough induction, which features child protection guidance. This task is taken very seriously by the post - holders and they do not have the ability to abuse this role.

The whole area of 'risk assessment' was again found to be competently completed by all those involved, including boarding staff and estates personnel.

Written records showed clear evidence of a methodical approach being undertaken in terms of identifying potential risks associated with the proposed activity, followed with the implementation of suitable control measures in an effort to reduce such risks. Evidence that such assessments continue to be reviewed was seen and regular health and safety meetings ensure they continue to be monitored.

Once again, evidence was seen to demonstrate that written parental permission is sought prior to a pupil being able to partake in such activities and any clubs or organisations used by the school are checked for an appropriate licence, insurance and where necessary, qualified personnel.

Written records pertaining to fire safety and other potential hazardous areas were seen and discussed. These were of excellent quality and the estates manager operates in a way that places safety as being of the utmost importance. Everyone spoken with was explicitly clear about fire evacuation procedures and drills are regularly practised. During this visit, a severe storm caused trees to fall and power to be lost. The crises plan was immediately implemented, with appropriate steps taken to protect and safeguard everyone on the premises.

Clear written guidance is followed in terms of protecting the privacy and confidentiality of pupils and this was reinforced through the boarders' questionnaires. There was some dissatisfaction, in terms of the lack of privacy within specific bathrooms, however; this will be addressed through the refurbishment programme.

A number of staff personnel files were randomly selected and the information contained within demonstrated safe recruitment processes being followed. All of those seen held satisfactory written references, which had been further verified and all had clear Enhanced CRB certificates. It was further noted that each employee had not commenced with their post until all such information had been received.

The information held within the personnel files of ancillary staff was not as detailed and although this is understood, in terms of the posts involved and such individuals not having unsupervised access to pupils, the school is advised to seek to improve upon the records it holds in respect of these employees.

All of the boarding houses offered safe and secure accommodation. Each was fitted with security - coded doors and boarders know they are required to make their whereabouts known throughout the evenings. The girls' house has additional security, given its physical location and plans remain to re – provide for this building within the main school campus.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- 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)

The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14, 18.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Boarders positively benefit from receiving the individual support they need.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Returned questionnaires named a variety of staff members that boarders would go to in the event of having a problem. In particular, the school nurse was very favourably mentioned.

Heads of houses clearly knew their boarders well; this was demonstrated through staff interviews.

Although the school enjoys an excellent national reputation for the support it provides for students with dyslexia, it does not focus upon this as the only potential area of need a pupil may have.

Care is taken to ensure that a holistic approach is taken during the admission process and beyond, with any area of concern being identified and shared appropriately within the whole school staff team, in order that it can be appropriately supported.

Those boarders from overseas gave very positive feedback about their experiences of staying at the school and confirmed that any particular need as defined by their ethnicity or religion was being appropriately provided for and respected.

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 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)

The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12, 19, 21, 36.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Boarders are effectively enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding and can contact their relatives without difficulty.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders spoke positively about the forums in place to enable them to express their own views about boarding provision.

The student council and regular house meetings were frequently referred to and at the time of this visit, each house had been asked to submit proposals for equipment as additional funding had recently been allocated. It was very positive to listen to all of the very different ideas from each house as to how the occupants wished this money to be spent. Some wanted extra games equipment, whilst others were asking for new furnishings, with each example demonstrating just how different and unique each boarding house is.

Sound processes remain in existence with regards the introduction of new boarders and those spoken with said they enjoyed a positive and informative introduction to the school.

Internet access is now available throughout the boarding houses and no negative comments were received with regards making regular, private contact with home.

Relationships between staff and pupils were observed to be polite and respectful and boarders frequently stated they enjoy good relationships with their care – givers. This aspect was further praised by parents who submitted letters for the inspection process.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)

The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT - we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

20, 40, 42.

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The overall quality of the boarding accommodation will improve with the ongoing implementation of the refurbishment plan.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The overall quality of the boarding accommodation remains variable, however; this reflects the sheer size of this provision and it was noted that a number of areas had been refurbished since the last visit. This progress is continuing.

From this particular visit, improvements had been made to a number of bathrooms and other communal areas had been redecorated. Further to clear concerns from boarders from one particular house with regards the security of their bedrooms; these were situated on the ground floor with considerable access to day – pupils, it was pleasing to find these had all been provided with locks.

As previously stated, the school is continuing with its boarding development plan and it would be particularly positive to find the girls' house being targeted for either upgrade or re – provision, as this house is particularly full and lacking in sufficient communal space.

Management

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 effectively managed.(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 adequately supervised 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 with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 9, 31, 32, 34, 35

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Boarders are looked after by a professional, motivated team, which strives to continually improve upon its practice.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The written literature available to parents, boarders and staff remains in a constant state of review and amendment. Such information is informative and clear.

The crises plan, seen in operation on the day of this inspection, is comprehensive and covers a multitude of eventualities. As with all other policy and procedural guidance, this document is also frequently added to and revised.

Since the previous inspection, the number of staff members providing supervision for boarders within the houses has increased and this has had a positive impact upon greater provision of after – school activities. Boarder questionnaires from this inspection compared to those received three years ago contained many more examples of activity provision. There is also clear guidance with regards students leaving the school campus; younger boarders must be supervised and opportunities to go out alone increase appropriately with age. A number of older boarders did complain that they are not allowed enough freedom, however; the findings of this inspection demonstrated a school that takes its pastoral / parental role very seriously and

such restrictions are imposed in the best interests of the boarders.

All of the houses operate very clear duty rosters, in that the boarders know who is available to them during the night if they need assistance. Whilst these systems work well, one boarding house is not 'physically connected' to the House Master's home, next door. There has been discussion about providing a corridor to connect the two properties and there is an Assistant House Master physically present in his flat within the boarding house. However, when the House Master is 'on duty' overnight, the boys would need to go outside of their building to make contact with him. It is therefore strongly recommended that the plans regarding the corridor should be explored as a matter of priority, with satisfactory interim measures put into place.

The boarding team remain acutely aware of their roles and responsibilities and continue to be provided with appropriate training and supervision. They meet regularly and implement policies and procedures effectively. The head of boarding has worked to improve upon induction and appraisal systems for boarding staff and these are now ready to be implemented.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded(Commendable)3 Standard Met(No Shortfalls)2 Standard Almost Met(Minor Shortfalls)1 Standard Not Met(Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY		
Standard No	Score	
6	4	
7	X	
15	3	
16	3	
17	4	
24		
25	3	
48	4	
49	3	

STAYING SAFE		
Standard No	Score	
2	3	
3	3 4	
4		
5	3	
13	4	
22	N/A 3	
26		
28	N/A	
29	4	
37	3	
38	3	
39	3	
41	3	
47	4	

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING			
Standard No Score			
11	X		
14	4		
18	4		
27	X		
43 X			
46 X			
	•		

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION			
Standard No Score			
12	3		
19	4		
21	3		
30	X		
36	4		

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC		
WELLBEING		
Standard No	Score	
20	3	
40	3	
42	3	
44	X	
45	X	
50 X		
51	N/A	

SCORING OF OUTCOMES Continued

MANAGEMENT		
Standard No	Score	
1	3	
8	X	
9	4	
10	X	
23	X	
31	4	
32	4	
33	2	
34	3	
35	3	
52	X	

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last No inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale
			for action
		Note: The dates in the table opposite	(Serious
		indicate a timescale for a response to the	welfare
		report being received from the school.	concerns
		There are no 'serious welfare concerns'	only)
		raised from this inspection.	
1.	BS17	It is recommended that consideration be given to	22/03/07
		providing a separate waiting area within the	
		medical centre to improve upon privacy for	
		visiting students.	
2.	BS24	It is recommended that the school again attempt	22/03/07
		to canvass the views of pupils with regards food	
		and snack provisions.	
3.	BS33	It is strongly recommended that plans go ahead	22/03/07
		to provide a 'physical link' between a particular	
		House Master's home and his boarding house	
		and further, that satisfactory interim measures	
	2000	be implemented from now.	22/22/27
4.	BS39	It is strongly recommended that greater evidence	22/03/07
		be demonstrated with regards the vetting of	
_	DC 40	ancillary workers employed by the school.	22/02/07
5.	BS40	It is recommended that the school's development	22/03/07
		plans for the boarding houses continue, with	
		particular emphasis placed upon the girls'	
		provision.	

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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