

# Talbot Heath

Welfare progress monitoring inspection report for a boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Jennifer Reed

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<b>School address</b>	Talbot Heath School, Rothesay Road, BOURNEMOUTH, BH4 9NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 761881
<b>Email</b>	hm@talbotheath.org
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Angharad Holloway

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## **Information about the school**

Talbot Heath School is an independent school catering for boys aged three to seven years and girls aged three to 18 years of age. Talbot Heath is a Church of England school, which was founded on Christian principles in 1886. It is an inclusive school, having a multi-faith chaplaincy team which aims to foster understanding between pupils of all faiths and ensure the spiritual support of all members of the school community.

Boarding provision is available for girls aged from 10 to 19 years of age and at the time of this inspection there were 33 boarders. The school offers full, weekly and flexible boarding arrangements. At the time of this inspection, 30 boarders were accommodated in St Mary's boarding house which is situated on the school campus. Three senior boarders and two gap students were residing in the adjacent building of St Katharine's.

## **Context of the inspection**

Ofsted undertook a joint inspection of the school with the Independent Schools Inspectorate on the 16 March 2011. Ofsted judged the standard of the boarding provision to be satisfactory, and made sixteen recommendations for improvement.

The school submitted an action plan to show the measures they were taking, or had already taken, to address the identified shortfalls in meeting the national minimum standards for boarding schools. Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan on 4 July 2011 and accepted it as satisfactory. Ofsted made a recommendation to the Department for Education that a monitoring inspection should take place, following the completion of the school's planned building and refurbishment work, to evaluate the progress in the improvement of the premises.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

The standard of the boarding provision is much improved. The boarding house's layout has been redesigned and the accommodation has been extensively upgraded and refurbished. The refurbishment, re-arrangement and upgrading of the boarding house has been completed to an excellent standard. The school has fully met the five recommendations made for improvement at the last inspection.

The building has been fitted with new double glazed windows. Electrical installations have been re-wired and the premises benefits from new plumbing. The showers, bathrooms and toilets have been re-furbished. New flooring is laid throughout the house and the stone floors have been clad with wood. The house benefits from new furniture and soft furnishings.

The boarding house now provides an outstanding standard of accommodation. Boarders' views influenced the refurbishment of the building. The accommodation has been repainted and re-carpeted throughout. The corridor and stairs stone flooring have been clad in wood and this really improves the homely feel of the building. The bright and contemporary colour schemes and matching coordinated furnishings provide accommodation that is likely to meet the preferences of young people. The new furniture in boarder's bedrooms and dormitories provide a good amount of storage for each boarder and the matching units are of a good quality. The refurbished and well-designed shower and toilet areas reduce the institutional feel of the facilities. The design of dormitories and bathing facilities provides boarders with adequate privacy.

Boarders now have access to a mobile phone to enable them to easily contact staff for assistance at any time. The redesign of the building includes a dedicated sick bay with en-suite facilities. This limits the potential for the cross-infection of boarders. The sick bay is located adjacent to staff accommodation and this means that staff can closely monitor sick boarders during the day and at night.

The fire safety officer from Dorset Fire and Rescue Service visited the boarding house on 13 July 2012 to assess the fire safety arrangements in place. Following his visit, he wrote to the school to say 'I am pleased to advise you that a satisfactory standard of fire safety was evident.' The fire escape is no longer in use, following consultation with the fire service. An alternative emergency route is in place and it is suitable for the emergency evacuation of the new layout of the building. The internal corridor doors have been fitted with magnetic catches and doors are no longer wedged open to enable easy access.

The new plumbing provides the accommodation with a constant supply of hot water, with good water pressure. There are freestanding and fixed soap dispensers adjacent to washbasins and electric hand driers in each area. All toilets now have adjacent

washbasins. These improvements raise hygiene standards within the accommodation.

Boarders now reside only in St Mary's boarding house. St Katherine House is no longer providing accommodation for some older boarders. This enables staff to adequately supervise boarders and protect them from the risk of possible harm. The new location of the staff office and staff sitting room within the redesigned accommodation will enable staff to provide a more robust oversight of the external doors and communal areas of the boarding house. These arrangements improve the safeguarding of boarders' welfare. The keypad system in place for external doors restricts unauthorised access to the boarding house. The location of staff bedrooms on each upper floor provides boarders with easy access to staff support during the night, if so required.

## **National minimum standards**

The school has made good progress and now meets all the national minimum standards for boarding schools.