



Office for Standards
in Education

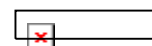
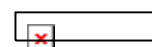
Bosworth Independent College

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COLLEGE DETAILS



INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the college

Established in 1977, Bosworth Independent College is a privately-owned college. It is an accredited member of the Conference for Independent Further Education.

The college provides education for male and female students aged 13-20 years, although occasionally students are a little older when they complete their courses. At present, the number on roll is 286, of whom five are part-time and 44 are of compulsory school age; this compares with just over 100 on roll five years ago.

The college's aims are outlined in its prospectus. A particular emphasis is placed on helping every student to make the right choice about their future career path, the university that they wish to attend and the best combination of subjects in which they may succeed.

The college is based on two sites in the suburbs of Northampton. The main college premises are in Nazareth House, Barrack Road, with the Language Centre located in St George's Avenue, a short walk away. Teaching takes place in these two locations with the St George's site doubling up as the college's social centre and dining facility.

Just over 70 per cent of the students are from overseas; the remainder come from the local area. All overseas students are boarders; there are currently 206, of whom 19 are of compulsory school age. Boarders are housed in three types of accommodation. There are separate halls for males and females; these have resident house staff. All boarders of compulsory school age are accommodated in one of these houses. In addition, the college provides 21 houses in the adjacent neighbourhood, where students live independently, and 12 family homes where students live with host families. Mature students are unsupervised but are subject to regular, unannounced visits by the Head of Boarding. All boarders take their meals together in the dining halls in the St George's Centre.

The college's intake covers a wide range of attainment and English language skills. There are currently three students who are retaking courses. The college assesses all students on entry to determine their ability to cope with the courses offered and, in the case of overseas students, their proficiency in English. There are 219 students for whom English is an additional language.

Summary of main findings

Bosworth College is a good college. It meets most of the statutory requirements. Students and their parents hold it in high regard and value its friendly and supportive atmosphere, its care for the individual, and its focus on academic success. This is borne out by the inspection. However, there are some weaknesses that the college needs to address.

What the college does well:

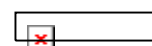
- care is taken to place students on courses that meet their individual needs;
- nearly all the older students secure places at university;
- the quality of teaching is good, and often is very good;

- a positive and purposeful atmosphere characterises relationships inside and outside the classroom;
- there is good provision for the welfare, health and safety of students;
- leadership and management are efficient; and
- the quality of reporting on students' progress is a strength.

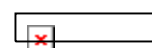
What the college must do in order to comply with the regulations:

- improve careers education for compulsory age students;
- improve all students' preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
- ensure that the college's child protection officer is named in the child protection policy;
- standardise the completion of all attendance registers paying particular attention to the recording of the attendance of students of compulsory school age;
- draft a three year plan for disabled access;
- improve the toilet and washroom provision to meet the needs of the current numbers of staff and students, and ensure that the toilets are correctly labelled;
- review its prospectus to include the full name, residential address and telephone number of the proprietor;
- review its prospectus to include particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements of special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language; and
- establish a complaints procedure and make this known to students and their parents.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION



1. The quality of education provided by the college



The quality of the curriculum

The college offers a suitably wide range of courses. Overall, the courses offered meet the needs of all students well. Care is taken to place students on courses that meet their individual academic requirements. Nevertheless, there is sufficient flexibility in the curriculum structure to enable the college to respond to students' changing needs.

The college focuses on preparing students for public examinations leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), GCE Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2) and its own University Foundation Programme, designed to help overseas students gain access to higher education. The college also offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to facilitate the transfer of overseas students into British education.

The majority of students take AS and A2 courses. There are 34 students taking GCSE courses, of whom 28 are of compulsory school age. Eight compulsory age students take the college's own

introductory English language course. Altogether, 166 students take EFL courses. A further 20 follow the University Foundation Programme.

The curriculum for all students of compulsory school age is broad and suitably balanced. The college is aware that the creative and aesthetic aspects of the curriculum for these students need further development. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided for compulsory age students. However, not all of these students are currently timetabled for the course. The PSHE programme is taught by a well-chosen group of teachers. Whilst the course contains some elements of citizenship, the college needs to consider how this aspect of students' experience could be improved. Opportunities for careers education and guidance also need to be improved to provide the necessary support for students of compulsory school age. Physical education is effectively organised and enjoyed by all these students of compulsory school age.

Although there are currently no students with statements of special educational need, the college has an established and effective system for supporting these students. Overall provision is good for the majority of students for whom English is an additional language. The curriculum for these students is broad and well differentiated to meet the full range of needs.

The curriculum is clearly set out in the college's prospectus. Although they are described in broad terms, the college's published curriculum aims and policy need further review. There are outline schemes of work for most aspects of the curriculum, including PSHE. The college should consider developing further the schemes of work to provide greater detail, particularly in relation to teaching methodology.

The college is aware that its current programme of extra-curricular activities fails to meet fully the needs of all students, in particular boarders. The current extra-curricular provision includes music and debating. A number of students take advantage of trips organised by the college. The college should consider how enhancing the current programme might support better the students' general development and their higher education aspirations. The college might consider further how it can improve opportunities for students to accept responsibility and gain experience of adult life. The recent establishment of a student council provides a potential catalyst for such developments.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good, and often is very good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and an awareness of the requirements of the programmes of study. They place a strong emphasis on the development of students' study skills. Particularly good teaching was observed in biology, economics, English, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physics, and physical education.

Students taking GCSE, A level and the University Foundation Programme appreciate the high level of challenge that characterises most teaching. The best lessons have clear objectives and move at a brisk pace; teachers adopt a variety of strategies. Lessons are well structured to engage and stimulate students. Teachers use praise and encouragement, leavened with humour, to build their students' self-confidence. The use of challenging, open questioning leads students to make significant learning gains. Homework is generally well used to consolidate and extend learning. The college makes particularly good provision for students to undertake supervised private study. Careful attention is paid to the language needs of overseas students. For example, in a good economics lesson, time was taken to explore the meaning of terms such as "bundling" and "collusion". In the relatively small number of weaker lessons, the pace is slow and there is little variety.

The quality of teaching for those students following the various EFL courses is good overall. Those students at the middle and higher levels of attainment are appropriately challenged, make good progress and achieve results that enable them to gain university places. Those whose proficiency is less well developed do not progress as quickly.

A good working relationship exists between students and their teachers. Students are anxious to learn and respond well to the willingness of staff to make themselves available to help with individual problems. The students also work collaboratively with each other.

The college has analysed the students' results in public examinations. These show that the majority of students have made satisfactory or good progress. Pass rates at GCE A2 have improved steadily over the last three years to reach 99 per cent in 2003, and nearly all students who applied were successful in securing places at universities. This is a notable indicator of the college's success. Results at GCE A2 have been particularly good in mathematics, accounts, chemistry, physics, business studies and modern foreign languages. GCSE results at grades A*-C have varied over the last three years but are good overall; the average pass rate is 76 per cent. Results in accounts, business studies, modern foreign languages and mathematics are above the college average. Comparisons with national averages are made difficult by the fact that students take GCSEs at different ages.

The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. Teachers set regular tests in addition to those required by external examinations. Marking is most effective when it gives clear guidance to students on how to improve. This practice is not consistent across the college. There is a central system for recording assessment data and this is generally used in tracking students' progress and planning teaching and learning. However, the use of data to set individual targets for students is under-developed.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

The college meets most of the requirements for registration, but in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations from September 2003, the college should:

- *improve careers education for students of compulsory school age students (paragraph 1.2g); and*
- *improve all students' preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 1.2j).*

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The college's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. A good effort is made to value individual students and to build their self-esteem. Opportunities are exploited effectively in subjects such as art and psychology to consider some fundamental questions. In a GCE A2 English lesson students were invited to reflect when composing a sonnet on the power of love. This enabled them to think deeply and to share a moment of intense wonder.

There are a number of ways in which students' moral development is nurtured and provision is good. The climate of the college is one of openness and trust. College staff act as positive role models. Moral positions are explored appropriately through academic subjects and aspects such as PSHE. Teachers reinforce students' understanding of right and wrong through their informal contacts with them. The local police have been invited into college and some students have benefited from accompanying them on duty.

Provision for students' social development is good. It is promoted through the strong pastoral system and some extra-curricular activities. Students actively participate in raising funds for charitable causes. Some students take responsibility for organising sports events. The college is

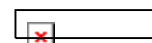
actively seeking to encourage students to participate in a student council. Consideration should be given to further encouraging students to contribute to life in the community.

Provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. The college has a strong commitment to developing inter-cultural understanding between students who come from a wide range of social, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

3. The welfare, health and safety of the students



The college makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of its students. There are appropriate and comprehensive policies covering health and safety, discipline and first aid; that covering health and safety on outside visits is in need of review. The policy on child protection omits the name of the college's designated child protection officer, who is the vice-principal. The college's policies for dealing with bullying and promoting equal opportunities are examples of good practice, and reflect the college's commitment to promoting these effectively.

The college has recently received positive feedback following a fire officer's inspection of its teaching accommodation. Nevertheless, the college should ensure that all escape routes are appropriately indicated.

The college has regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. There is a senior member of staff responsible for all aspects of boarding, and the college has responded positively to the recommendations made in the previous boarding inspection report of March 2002. Another inspection by the National Care Standards Commission is due although a specific date has not yet been set.

The support provided for students is good. It reflects the college's emphasis on high quality pastoral care as the necessary underpinning of academic success. Students and their parents particularly value the levels of encouragement that they receive. Students know that they can approach any member of staff for help when in difficulty, and this explains the purposeful yet relaxed and friendly atmosphere that characterises most lessons.

The system of personal tutors is central to the college's provision for students' welfare. Students meet their personal tutors regularly on a one to one basis. The personal tutors know each of their students well, and provide a high level of pastoral support and academic monitoring, matched to individual needs. The system is well co-ordinated by the vice-principal who provides effective support for tutors and students. The responsibilities of the personal tutors are detailed in their job descriptions. However, there is currently no programme for inducting personal tutors. In view of the importance of this role in the life of the college, it might consider providing training, as well as reviewing the guidance in the staff handbook.

The college recognises the importance of helping new students to settle in quickly. It has an induction programme that aims to integrate them into college life. It needs to consider how this programme might be developed to introduce overseas students to British history and institutions.

The college has clear behavioural guidelines and very good procedures are in place for dealing with inappropriate attitudes. Students understand and have regard for the insistence by the college on high standards of personal conduct. As a result, they act sensibly and harmoniously, respect each other's rights and property and show consideration towards others, including support staff.

The systems for recording admissions and attendance have recently been computerised; they are already proving important assets in terms of streamlining procedures and following up absences. However, the daily registration of students' attendance is inconsistent and does not meet the statutory requirements for those of secondary school age.

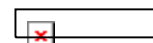
The college lacks any contingency plan for meeting the needs of disabled students should they be admitted.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

The college meets most of the requirements for registration, but in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations from September 2003, the college should:

- *ensure that the college's child protection officer is named in the child protection policy (paragraph 3.2b);*
- *standardise the completion of all attendance registers paying particular attention to the recording of the attendance of students of secondary school age (paragraph 3.9); and*
- *ensure that the college fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (in full) by drafting a three year plan for disabled access (paragraph 3.9).*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The college is well led and efficiently managed. The principal is energetic in his efforts to promote the college's interests while retaining a visible presence. He is well supported by a capable senior management team, the members of which have clear lines of responsibility.

There are effective procedures for ensuring that all staff are checked with the appropriate authority at an enhanced level for their suitability to work with young people, in particular those of compulsory school age. The college has registered with the Criminal Records Bureau for the purpose of undertaking these checks and is awaiting confirmation for the recently appointed staff.

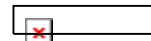
Teachers are well qualified, and have a good range of experience and specialist knowledge. A high proportion of them are part-timers and this can create communication difficulties, which the college works hard to overcome. Current staffing is well matched to meet the age range and needs of the students, especially those with dyslexia for whom the college offers high quality specialist support. Teachers are well supported by dedicated and efficient administrative staff.

A system of staff appraisal is in place and there are comprehensive procedures for mentoring and assessing the capability of new staff, and for supporting those encountering difficulties.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



Overall, the quality of the college's premises and teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Most areas of the college are maintained in satisfactory order. There is a rolling refurbishment programme. The sports facilities hired by the college to provide physical education and games for compulsory age students are very good.

Specialist facilities for science and art are good. Overall, teaching classrooms are satisfactory. However, several small classrooms in the basement of Nazareth House have poor ventilation. This basement area has been refurbished at minimal expense. Classrooms vary considerably in size, although during the inspection no rooms were less than adequate for the number of students being taught. The quality of the learning environment is more variable. Although generally well-decorated, a number of classroom walls are stark, with only limited examples of students' work in evidence. Resources to support teaching are satisfactory, but could be improved. The college might consider adopting a more strategic approach to the provision of resources to support learning.

There are currently insufficient washrooms for staff and students using the Nazareth House site. Male and female staff share toilet and washing facilities in both Nazareth House and the St George's Centre. Students' toilets and washrooms are not always clearly labelled by gender. The college is aware of these deficiencies, but as yet has no plans to rectify them.

The college provides good facilities for private study; these are much improved since the last inspection by HMI. However, the college has no library. Although there are computers to support the use of ICT, the college recognises the importance of developing this provision to meet the needs of the curriculum in full.

There is a main road between the college's two sites and consideration has been given to ensuring the safety of students travelling between them. The college should continue to monitor the effectiveness of its strategies to ensure the safety of students.

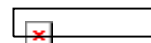
Currently the college has no students with disabilities.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

The college meets most of the requirements for registration, but in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations from September 2003, the college should:

- *improve the toilet and washroom provision to meet the current numbers of staff and students, and ensure that the toilets are correctly labelled (paragraph 5k).*

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The college makes satisfactory provision for communicating with parents and other partners. The college prospectus is in need of revision and currently does not include information about the proprietor and provision for students with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. The college is aware of this and has the matter in hand.

A wide range of other information is available either directly from the college or through its website. This includes details about public examinations results, staffing, behaviour and bullying, health and safety, and child protection.

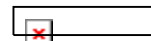
The quality of reporting on students' progress is a strength. Parents, carers and agents receive termly reports, supported by detailed letters written by the student's personal tutor. These reports contain helpful information about current levels of effort and attainment, and include advice on improvement. The college might wish to consider other ways in which it can keep parents and the wider community informed about its students' activities and achievements.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

The college meets most of the requirements for registration, but in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations from September 2003, the college should:

- *review its prospectus to include the full name, residential address and telephone number of the proprietor (paragraph 6.26); and*
- *review its prospectus to include particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements and those for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6.2f).*

7. The effectiveness of the college's procedures for handling complaints



The college's written complaints procedures do not meet fully the requirements of the regulations. The college has brief written procedures for handling complaints and maintains appropriate records. In practice the college deals with complaints in a sensitive manner, and parents are generally satisfied with the way it handles complaints. However, in the parent questionnaires, a number said that they had no knowledge of how they might proceed if a complaint arose.

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Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

The college meets most of the requirements for registration.

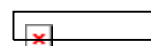
What must the college do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, (paragraphs 7f - 7k) the college should:

establish and publish full procedures to meet the requirement; which

- where parents are not satisfied with the response to a complaint, provision is made for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;*
- ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person will be independent of the management and running of the college;*
- allows for parents to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;*
- provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and principal, and where the relevant the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations;*
- provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing;*
- provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them; and*
- where the school provides boarding accommodation, complies with Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.*

COLLEGE DETAILS



Name of college:	Bosworth Independent College
Type of college:	Independent
DfES ref. no:	928/6062
Age range of students:	13-20+
Number on roll:	286
Gender of students:	Mixed
Fees:	Day: £7000 per year;
	Residential: £15500 per year.
Address of college:	Nazareth House, Barrack Road, Northampton NN2 6AF
Email address:	mm@bosworthcollege.com
Telephone number:	01604-239995
Fax number:	01604-239996
Principal:	Mr M McQuin

Proprietors:
Reporting Inspector:
Dates of Inspection:

Messrs M Broadway & D Game
Mr C D Barnett HMI
17-21 November 2003

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