

# Bales College

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	213/6384
Unique Reference Number	101181
Inspection number	302205
Inspection dates	9-10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, 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 school

Bales College, formerly the Modern Tutorial College, was founded in 1966 by the present proprietor and first registered as a school in 1989. It is based on one site near Kensal Green in north-west London. There are 77 students on roll, of whom 17 are boarders. Boys outnumber girls by approximately 2:1 and since September 2006, the college has been providing education for students from Year 7. The college describes its ethos as aiming *'to enable all to achieve their potential'*. The college was last inspected by Ofsted in 2001, by the British Accreditation Council in 2003 and by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in February 2006.

## Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is satisfactory and the vast majority of students make satisfactory progress overall. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory and their behaviour is good. The attention given to the students' welfare health and safety is inadequate and the college does not meet all statutory requirements. It has made limited progress since the last inspection.

## Quality of education

The college teaches a broad range of subjects and students are entered for a wide range of GCSE and A level examinations. They make satisfactory progress in these studies. Some students are re-sitting examinations, seeking to improve grades achieved at other schools or colleges and enhance their economic well-being. The curriculum is satisfactory although the policy and schemes of work to support its development have not been sufficiently updated to reflect the new provision for younger students in Years 7 and 8. Curriculum planning for these students is in the early stages of development and schemes of work are not yet complete for the new age-range. The provision for older students who study for GCSE and A levels is more established and adheres to the requirements of various examination boards. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) throughout the college is taught during registration periods. Careers guidance is provided on an individual basis where students may attend a 'surgery' with senior members of staff. The extra-curricular provision after college hours has been reviewed by staff since the last inspection but remains very limited. Most pupils who have English as an additional language have

good levels of fluency. However, there are a small number of such students whose progress is adversely affected by a lack of specialist language support.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have relevant subject specialisms and expertise although a small number of students expressed concern about their imminent 'A' level examination and the absence of specialist subject teaching in recent weeks. Teachers enjoy good relationships with students and encourage them to ask questions in order to check their understanding. Typically, the content is pitched at the right level in the light of students' ages and abilities. Where teaching is particularly effective, there is a high level of challenge, ensuring that students are fully engaged and focused on their work. Good use is made of first hand experience and experimentation, for example, in a Year 7 geography lesson where students carried out a water filtration investigation they had previously designed. There is no formal system to review the quality of teaching. This inhibits the college's ability to make an accurate self-evaluation of its provision.

Teachers use the available resources well and sometimes they bring in resources of their own to supplement the college's materials. The resources are good for science and information and communication technology (ICT) and adequate for most other subjects although they are insufficient in PSHE and careers education.

The marking of students' work is satisfactory. When it contains diagnostic comments to aid understanding of how they can improve, the students find it more helpful. As at the time of the last CSCI inspection, most students report they receive good support from teachers and demonstrate a good knowledge of their academic progress and predicted grades. The assessment of students' progress is satisfactory and is firmly focused on the requirements of examination boards.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The student population is drawn from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. This is a harmonious environment where teachers and students show respect for each other both in and out of lessons. Students behave well and teachers act as very good role models. Opportunities are missed to develop students' understanding of the range of cultures within the community and to learn about the role of the police, fire service and other public institutions. Regular visits to places of interest in London give students an appreciation of art and culture. Students develop their self esteem through their contact with peers and teachers, particularly their personal tutors to whom they may refer problems. Discussions with students indicated that they would welcome regular and formal opportunities to meet and discuss college life with staff.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory due to an absence of several required policies, inadequate training and the staff's uncertainty about some procedures. Insufficient account has been taken of relevant guidance. Some of these weaknesses had been identified during previous inspections including the most recent by CSCI.

The policy for child protection refers to staff no longer employed and relevant training for current staff has not been provided. The college's policy for the promotion of good behaviour is effective, although there are no clear sanctions for misbehaviour. The small numbers in each class and the teachers' regard for individuals means that the students receive appropriate levels of attention and supervision when in lessons. Risk assessments are made for off-site visits although these are not routinely signed off by the principal as required. The policy for first aid contains insufficient detail and there are no staff with current first aid qualifications. The guidance on administering medicines is satisfactory. The quality of meals provided is good and most students indicated they enjoyed the range on offer and had an understanding of a healthy diet.

Registers of attendance and the admission register are not maintained accurately. The college has yet to draw up an appropriate plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. There are also some standards not met in relation to boarding schools.

A number of health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the proprietor. The proprietor was not able to provide evidence of risk assessments in relation to other matters and these are detailed below.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The college has improved its procedures to ensure that appointments are confirmed only after thorough checks of candidates' suitability to work with children. However, the college does not check candidates' medical fitness prior to confirming their appointment.

## School's premises and accommodation

The college's teaching accommodation is adequate. Since the last inspection, the college's accommodation suffered extensive damage from fire. Restoration work has been effective and the college now has full access to its teaching facilities.

The classrooms range in size from extremely spacious to barely adequate for the numbers in them. Teachers make good use of space where it is limited in some classrooms. Specialist accommodation for the sciences and ICT is good. The number

of washrooms is adequate for the number of students. There are no suitable facilities for students who fall ill during the day.

The outdoor play area is adequate for the current numbers on roll and some good use is made of the grounds to support lessons. A local community sports centre is used to provide a broader range of activities in physical education.

The premises are generally well maintained although many classroom walls lack any display such as evidence of students' achievements.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college seeks to provide most information for parents and interested parties through its website. Its printed prospectus is an attractive but out-of-date document. There are many omissions of required information as detailed below. The college provides academic reports on students. These reports do not comment sufficiently on how the students have progressed in their knowledge, skills and understanding. There is no provision for parental feedback or for students' comment about their progress or future targets. The reports are supplemented by open evenings for parents to discuss the progress of their children. Only three pre-inspection questionnaires were received from parents. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to form a judgement of the general parental view of the college.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The college's policy and procedures for handling complaints are inadequate. The procedures have largely been based on informal meetings with parents with no official records being kept. The proprietor has recently received appropriate guidance to support the development of an appropriate policy and suitable procedures as required by the regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The college meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish and implement a written curriculum policy and appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2))
- provide the opportunity for all students to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))

- ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- provide students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for students' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DfES guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the college in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the college which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst students which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of students misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- have greater regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 3(3))
- have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (paragraph 3(4))
- provide evidence of a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5))
- prepare and implement a satisfactory written policy on first aid (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain an admission register and attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff ensure appropriate checks been carried out on their medical fitness and take this information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for students who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the college's policy on and arrangements for exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for students for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of students misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of academic performance during the preceding college year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the college, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding college year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- make the complaints procedure available on request to parents of students and prospective students (paragraph 7(b))
- ensure that the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- ensure that if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the college (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure that the procedure allows for parents to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and that the procedure stipulates that the complainant, proprietors and headteachers, and, where relevant, the person complained



about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))

- ensure that the 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 7(j))
- ensure that the procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the college should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

## School details

Name of school	Bales College		
DfES number	213/6384		
Unique reference number	101181		
Type of school	Secondary day and boarding school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1989		
Age range of pupils	11-18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 53	Girls: 24	Total: 77
Number of boarders	Boys: 10	Girls: 7	Total: 17
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,050 - £7,350		
Annual fees (boarders)	£14,550		
Address of school	742 Harrow Road London W10 4AA		
Telephone number	0208 960 5899		
Fax number	0208 960 8269		
Email address	info@balescollege.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr William Moore		
Proprietor	Mr William Moore		
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell		
Dates of inspection	9-10 May 2007		