

Brooke House College

Independent International School

Inspection report

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| DCSF Registration Number | 855/6005 |
| Unique Reference Number | 120341 |
| Inspection number | 316899 |
| Inspection dates | 5-6 December 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Thirkell |

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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the college

Brooke House College was established in 1965 and is situated in the town of Market Harborough in rural Leicestershire. It provides education mainly for overseas students, from twenty countries, with a very small minority from the United Kingdom. The vast majority of students are boarders. The college is registered for 147 students but there are currently 171 on role. Students range from 12 to 23 years of age. The college aims to prepare students for higher education 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 Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) inspected the boarding provision in November 2006. This is the college's first published inspection report by Ofsted.

Evaluation of the college

The quality of education at Brooke House College is satisfactory and there are a number of significant strengths. The curriculum provides students with a wide range of opportunities and they make good progress. Some aspects of the provision are not yet fully developed, in particular to provide for the recent increase in the number of younger students. Students are well cared for and the college provides a distinctive 'family' atmosphere. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good; the college offers outstanding opportunities for the students' cultural development which they appreciate. Behaviour is outstanding. The college has one regulatory requirement that remains to be met and it needs to complete a plan to improve disabled access.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Although it has a number of strengths, in particular the range of subjects and activities provided for students, there are some weaknesses with respect to its planning. The new college management has made an accurate assessment of these weaknesses and has a clearly defined strategy for making the necessary improvements. A suitable curriculum policy has been prepared. Schemes of work meet the requirements, but in order to be fully effective, they need to provide considerably more detail with regard to the implementation of the curriculum for students below 16 years of age, particularly if the college continues to offer places to students in Key Stage 3. Details of the

general studies course provided by the college meet the minimum requirements for a scheme of work, but do little justice to the high quality of provision.

Students of all ages in the college are able to study a curriculum tailored to meet their individual requirements. The college provides GCSE courses over one or two years depending on an individual student's ability and command of English, advanced level courses leading to AS level and A2 level, foundation university courses and 'Reception' courses for students who need to develop their proficiency in English prior to moving on to an examination-focused course. Provision for English as a foreign language is good and is included in the learning programme of students according to their individual needs. The provision for younger students' personal, social and health education meets the minimum requirements and provides them with guidance on issues such as the danger of drugs and aspects of their health and personal development. The college makes use of outside support through the 'Chill Out Bus' to support this aspect of the curriculum. However, the college recognises that the course requires further development and has produced draft documents relating to its improvement. Careers education is not provided as required, as the focus is on university entrance. Students have good provision for their physical development through a range of sports.

The college organises an outstanding range of activities for students which support their physical and cultural development and enrich the curriculum. These are either linked to courses of study, for example as part of the 'Reception' course to support the use of English and understanding of British culture, or are extra-curricular activities provided for all students. In addition to games, students can study dance which is popular with both male and female students. A college choir has recently been formed. The range of experiences prepares students effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. There is good practice in many lessons. New requirements regarding lesson planning have been introduced this term. These well-focussed developments are becoming increasingly effective, but have yet to be embedded fully. There is good practice, but the quality of lesson planning is as yet too inconsistent. This is because most planning concentrates on what is to be done rather than the key skills or knowledge to be developed. Art and more visual or practical subjects such as dance enable students to express themselves well and communicate effectively, even when their English language skills are less well developed. Both full- and part-time teachers show good subject expertise and communicate this well to students. This enables teachers to have suitably high expectations of their students and working relationships are good. Examination results and developing English language skills demonstrate that students make good progress in their learning. The college has a consistent record of success in enabling its students to achieve the university places of their choice.

Whilst the college has a satisfactory assessment system, it has identified this as an area for further improvement. The school maintains plenty of useful data on

students' performance, but has yet to utilise this fully to aid and focus planning or to set targets to help students know exactly how to improve. Questioning is not yet used consistently well to ensure that all students are engaged fully with the lesson, or to check their understanding of the work being undertaken. A whole-college approach to marking and guidance has yet to be established.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are encouraged to consider the circumstances of others through their curriculum experiences and by supporting charities, for example to aid cancer research. The vast majority of students say that they enjoy being at the college and that they appreciate the opportunities provided for their development. The wide range of opportunities and the support given by staff develop students' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Students' behaviour in classes and around the college is outstanding. They respond well in lessons, in particular when the teaching engages their attention and the lesson content is suitably challenging. Their outstanding behaviour is acknowledged in the school brochure through a welcome message from a representative of the local council. They show initiative through accepting responsibility for their studies as well as for their involvement in college activities. Involvement with the local community is encouraged and students have taken part in local drama and music performances. They responded warmly to a group of students who sang carols during the college Christmas lunch.

Although the college does not provide a programme of citizenship, students have good opportunities to develop a broad understanding of public institutions and services in England through the curriculum and the rich range of visits and activities arranged by the college. Students have outstanding opportunities to develop their respect and tolerance for people of different cultural traditions and value being educated in a multi-cultural environment. They mix well together and older students in particular acknowledge the advantages and friendships which the college environment brings.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The quality of support for the welfare and health and safety of students is good. The college is very aware of its responsibilities. A relatively new tutor system is ensuring the good pastoral and sound academic monitoring of small groups of students in mixed age groups. Students confirm that they are happy with the college procedures for ensuring their care and safety. The college enables students to develop healthy lifestyles. Meals provided are well balanced. Appropriate policies ensure the prevention of bullying and clarify expectations of behaviour. There is thorough preparation and good support for trips and visits, both for academic and recreation purposes. Proper risk assessments are undertaken. Supervision of students is good

and due diligence is paid to this aspect of their welfare, whether day students or boarders. Care is taken to ensure their safety while moving from one college building to another. The registers relating to admissions and attendance are maintained appropriately.

The college is currently in the process of finalising its policy regarding the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. There is limited disabled access to some buildings. In the case of the main building this is as a result of its listing and protection by English Heritage. In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should finalise an accessibility plan.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The college fulfills its responsibilities in ensuring that all staff are appropriately checked prior to taking up their appointments. Records of the checks are maintained in the prescribed manner in a single central record.

College's premises and accommodation

The college premises and accommodation are good. They are maintained in good order and are carefully cleaned by the college's own dedicated team of maintenance staff. Classrooms are bright and generally provide positive learning environments. There are specialist rooms for information and communication technology, chemistry, biology, physics, music, art and photography. Additional buildings provided on the main college site in recent years are of suitable quality. The college provides good facilities for students who may be ill during the school day. The most recent report by the CSCI confirms that accommodation for boarders at the college is suitable.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college provides all the required information to parents and prospective parents by means of its website and the helpful prospectus. There are reports to parents three times a year. The main prospectus is supplemented by an 'information pack' and contains all the required information. A helpful list of staff on the college website provides updates on new staff and a list of existing staff and their qualifications. The college maintains regular contact with parents through email, telephone, by post, personal visits and through agents in their own countries.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints policy fully meets the requirements.

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:

- provide careers education for students of compulsory school age (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

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

What the college could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the college might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop the college's systems for reviewing students' work and progress to provide regular, on-going assessment
- further develop schemes of work and lesson planning, in particular to support the provision for younger students.

College details

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| Name of college | Brooke House College | | |
| DCSF number | 855/6005 | | |
| Unique reference number | 120341 | | |
| Type of college | International/tutorial | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date college opened | 1965 | | |
| Age range of students | 12-23 years | | |
| Gender of students | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll | Boys: 102 | Girls: 69 | Total: 171 |
| Number of boarders | Boys: 98 | Girls: 68 | Total: 166 |
| Annual fees (day students) | £10,950 | | |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £18,300 | | |
| Address of school | Leicester Road | | |
| | Market Harborough | | |
| | Leicestershire | | |
| | LE16 7AU | | |
| Telephone number | 01858 462452 | | |
| Fax number | 01858 462487 | | |
| Email address | g.hansford@brookehouse.com | | |
| Director of Studies | Mr John Fuller | | |
| Proprietor | Mr Donald Williams | | |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Thirkell | | |
| Dates of inspection | 5-6 December 2007 | | |