

Brighton College

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Bridgette Lowe / Gavin Thomas
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Brighton College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged three to 18 with boarders being aged 14 upwards. Brighton College occupies an extensive site of about six acres in the Kemp Town district to the east of Brighton, close to the seafront and local amenities as well as the main hospital. All three boarding houses are located within the main school quadrant with 24 hour security measures in place. The school aims to provide pupils with academic excellence with a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities with a commitment to develop the individual needs and enthusiasms of each child whilst cheerfully engaging children with every aspect of school life.

Summary

The purpose of the inspection was to ensure that the responsible person safeguards and promotes the welfare of children accommodated there and that the school was continuing to meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools. All recommendations were fully met from the school's previous boarding welfare inspection in 2006. Two Ofsted inspectors and a Boarding School Additional Inspector carried out this announced inspection over two days covering all the boarding school key national minimum standards. The majority of boarding pupils completed a questionnaire prior to the inspection and were interviewed by inspectors in the course of the inspection. A survey was sent to the parents of boarders, although a limited response was received. This inspection was not carried out in conjunction with the Independent Schools' Inspectorate. During the process of inspection the school was found to provide excellent pastoral care for pupils boarding at Brighton College. The school has an excellent provision to meet the health needs of boarding pupils including support from dedicated school nurses. The school promotes and safeguards the welfare of boarding pupils exceptionally well with individualised care and attention being key to the success of boarders' happiness. Recruitment processes undertaken on staff are thorough and robust to ensure pupils are appropriately safeguarded. The school provides a vast range of opportunities for pupils to air their views in relation to boarding issues. An extremely effective system to introduce pupils to boarding ensures they are provided with a very positive boarding experience. The school has a clear policy on behaviour and discipline known by all. Boarders' behaviour was observed to be exemplary throughout the inspection. Boarders reported being very happy at the school and well supported by boarding and school staff.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last boarding welfare inspection in 2006, the school has demonstrated very good development and improvements in many areas including a new health care centre and the appointment of a trained health and safety manager to ensure pupils' health and safety is prioritised to a high degree. At the last inspection the school was asked to review the catering standards, notably the quality, quantity and choice of meals. The school's food committee has been proactive in producing change in this area and boarders now report the food to be of a good standard. The school is vigilant about monitoring aspects of dining and plan to further improve this area. A previous recommendation in relation to addressing a small patch of damp

within a boarding house kitchen area has been met. The school have refurbished the kitchen to make an improved facility for boarders to prepare snacks.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The pupils' health and emotional wellbeing is very well met by staff. A highly valued and trained medical health centre staff team ensure that pupils' health needs are addressed throughout the day, evening and at weekends. Boarders' health information is kept up to date and boarding staff are fully aware of boarders' health and welfare needs. Specific health needs are managed effectively and sensitively with staff consulting with relevant health professionals to ensure pupils' needs are consistently met. The school's nurses are a valuable asset to the boarding and school staff team and boarders highlighted medical staff as a source of support and providing a 'good listening ear'. Pupils reported feeling very well cared for if they were unwell. The newly developed and repositioned Health Care Centre provides greater accessibility for male pupils, to provide increased support, as well as well as continued easy access and support for female pupils. The school operates a well developed medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which specifically addresses the use of prescribed and non prescribed medication. There is a clear audit of pupils' medication and accurate records held. The medication storage and recording systems are safe and full details are held of any accident or injury that boarders may sustain. The catering staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals provide balanced nutritious meals. Boarders confirmed they are consulted about meals and reported that there was always a good variety of food available. The pupils are positively encouraged and educated about healthy living and good attention is paid to providing a range of food to meet individual needs. Fruit is available throughout the day and pupils with specific health and cultural needs are well catered for. Developments are in place to address the timetable to allow more time for pupils eat their lunch time meal. The school provides pupils with an excellent Personal and Social Health Education programme that addresses a range of topics to prepare pupils for adult life. Boarders reported they felt well educated through workshop sessions on issues such as health promotion and reported receiving good advice and guidance on issues such as illegal substances and sexual health matters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarding pupils are supported in a safe environment where their welfare is paramount. Staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of the boarders and how to safeguard them. The staff team have access to regular child protection training and are fully aware of the correct procedures to report any allegations or child protection issues. Boarders confirm that they feel staff give a high priority to keeping them safe and show due respect of boarders' privacy within the boarding environment. Pupils are unanimous in their views that there is no bullying at Brighton College. The school has a strong anti bullying code that is clearly known by boarders and staff. Pupils are involved in awareness and education of internet safety and cyber bullying issues. The school has been creative in developing an e-mail system that allows pupils to anonymously report any concern of bullying behaviour within the school. The management of behaviour is based on pupils' self respect and the development of pupils' personal responsibility and the respect for others in the school community. Observations during inspection were of positive respectful relationships between staff and pupils. The school has an excellent computerised system to monitor and record all behaviour incidents, which appear to be

infrequent occurrences within the boarding houses. Pupils' behaviour was observed to be exemplary on inspection and boarders reported feeling proud to act as ambassadors for the school when out in the local community. The boarding house prefects are valued members of the school community and support staff to ensure younger boarders adhere to the pupil code of conduct. Prefects are aware of their roles and responsibilities, however, their disciplinary powers are not clearly defined. The school has a complaints procedure in place which is readily available. Posters are displayed in boarding areas informing boarders of who to go to if they are not happy. The school's complaints policy and procedure highlights Ofsted's details if boarders or parents have a boarding welfare concern. There is a high awareness among staff and boarders of the fire safety precautions. All boarders and staff are given fire safety instructions with regular fire safety evacuations undertaken. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and detailed records kept; however, consistent weekly checks of the fire alarm system and break glass points have not been carried out. At the time of inspection this practice had been reviewed and was to be re-instated. Boarders report a very good knowledge of the school's fire evacuation procedure. Staff recruitment checks are thorough and robust. The school has a very clear policy on recruitment following safer recruitment guidance. Recent changes to the recruitment process ensure that all staff undergo the same level of stringent checks prior to appointment. The school has a well-established health and safety policy and comprehensive risk assessments in place for all areas. Health and safety issues are prioritised and addressed immediately with regular monitoring of all areas in and around the school. The appointment of a Health and Safety manager has ensured that continued developments are made in this area taking particular effort to ensure boarders are free from avoidable hazards. There are excellent systems to ensure all pupils are protected from unwanted visitors to the school site including vigilant security staff and CCTV cameras.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school has an excellent approach to providing boarders with a wide range of support and opportunities that encourage them to achieve educationally and socially to their fullest potential. The school welcomes and celebrates the diversity of all its boarders and treats every child as an individual. Boarders are very clear which members of staff they can go to for personal support with clear guidance for staff and boarders on how such support is provided; each boarder is given information about this. Boarders reported that staff 'are caring and supportive' and 'boarding feels like home'. The school provides a counsellor whom is readily accessible to all pupils. The school has an approach that values the diverse needs of its boarders and vigorously addresses any discrimination based on gender, disability, race, religion, or cultural or linguistic background. The school engenders a vibrant and supportive atmosphere where each individual is encouraged to enjoy and learn.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school fosters a whole school community approach which boarders have embraced. There are good systems for listening and obtaining the views of boarders which are integrated into the running of the school. Boarders are able to have a say about developments at the school or enable change to take place in relation to boarding practice. The school demonstrates a positive attitude to boarders' families and parental contact. Contact with family and friends is encouraged and pupils confirmed this. The school has focused on enabling overseas pupils'

greater access to suitable internet sites to enable better communication with family and friends. Parents are able to contribute to the development of the school through the parent forum. The school has an excellent support system to ensure new boarders are welcomed to the school. Boarders reported the transition to boarding at Brighton College being a very positive experience especially with support from peer mentors and staff. Parents reported the 'pastoral care' as being 'excellent' with 'the friendly and caring environment being enabling for newcomers'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Brighton College provides a good standard of accommodation for its boarders with developments to many areas of accommodation being very good. The accommodation provided is comfortable, well lit, and heated, with a welcoming feel. There is a good standard of maintenance and cleanliness throughout. Boarders spoke favourably about their boarding houses with comments, such as, 'It is like a home' and 'I love my room, especially sharing with friends'. The school has invested in the boarding environment to ensure it is brought up to a good standard across all three boarding houses. Refurbishment to Abraham house was still ongoing at the time of inspection with boarders within School house enjoying their newly refurbished common room area. The girls' boarding house, Fenwick, accommodates a larger number of boarders, however, dormitories seen were spacious with boarders taking pride in personalising their rooms. Developments are in place to provide more communal areas for boarders and allow an increase in mixed gender activities during boarding times.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Brighton College has very strong leadership and management with an effective and coordinated management system. The staff team responsible for pastoral care are highly valued and unquestionably committed to boarders' welfare. The style of management ensures that staff are clear about their tasks and responsibilities with continued developments in boarding practice. The appointment of an experienced member of staff to the position of Director of Boarding has enabled boarding to successfully become integrated into the whole school community. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school is proficient at providing boarding pupils with individualised care and support to ensure they reach their full potential and they are appropriately safeguarded. The school provides a very clear detailed statement of boarding principles and practice that is available to parents, boarders and staff. Brighton College provides a wealth of information for parents and pupils via their website including up to date policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding pupils. There are clear lines of communication and accountability within the management of the boarding provision. The organisation of the boarding house gives full consideration to safeguarding the welfare of boarders and ensures staff receive ongoing training to equip them with the skills to provide a high standard of care to boarders. The school ensures that boarding staff have access to comprehensive written guidance on boarding policies and practices. The school has prepared contingency plans to address any crises that relate to the welfare of the boarders. The school has a system of risk assessment of which staff are aware and which is based on concern for the welfare of boarders. Boarders are well aware of areas that are out of bounds and respect the safety advice given by staff. The number of staff available for the supervision of boarders is good for the number of boarders with additional support provided from prefects. However, the school is aware of the pressures on staff within the female boarding house due to larger numbers of boarders, and

are monitoring this area. Boarders report that they have no difficulty finding a member of staff when they need to and it was clear on inspection that they value the staff support and commitment to boarding pupils. Evidence obtained during the inspection indicated that the boarding provision is being managed in an exceptional manner to ensure that the physical, social, health and emotional needs of the pupils were being met. Boarders truly benefit from a community boarding experience which enables them to flourish as individuals with support from a dedicated and caring team.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the weekly testing of fire alarm systems is re-instated and clearly documented (NMS 26.4)
- clearly define the disciplinary powers of prefects to ensure no discrepancies across boarding houses (NMS 4.5)
- improve the lunch time arrangements to allow sufficient time at lunch time, taking into account queuing time, for pupils to attend and finish their meal (NMS 24.6)