

# Bradfield College

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC011133
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Lucy Martin
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	21 March 2005

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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

Bradfield College is a co-educational school providing education to 704 pupils aged between 13 and 18 years of age. There are 582 full boarders although a number of the day pupils board some nights. The school was founded in 1850 and is in the heart of Bradfield village and is a major part of this community.

The school has 12 houses, including a mixed sex house for the youngest boarders (Year 9) in Faulkner's. In addition, there are four houses for girls and seven for boys.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection carried out by three inspectors and a boarding school additional inspector over four days, which covered all the key standards. The judgements in this report have been made using new benchmarking guidance which was implemented on 1 April 2008. Information about this guidance can be found on the Ofsted website. The new basis for making judgements is not directly comparable with that used previously. This inspection was carried out in conjunction with the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The ISI report is available on their website.

The care of boarders at the school is outstanding. Boarders feel safe and well looked after and enjoy their experience of boarding. There are high levels of individual support provided by a wide range of staff who know the boarders well. All boarders are made to feel part of the college community and there is a strong emphasis on a team approach within the houses. The medical care provided is outstanding and there is a strong commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the boarders and staff.

Boarders enjoy a wide range and choice of extra curricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their views and the boarding staff feel well supported in their role. The leadership and management of the school and boarding is excellent, and there is an extensive programme of staff training available. There are effective quality assurance systems in place and a willingness to develop and to improve practice.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a clear commitment by the entire staff team to ensure that the welfare of the pupils remains at the very heart of the school.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

The school was last inspected in February 2005 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. There were five recommendations made. They covered a variety of issues such as ensuring that all nursing staff hold current nursing qualifications, written parental permission should be sought in advance for the administration of first aid and non-prescription medication to boarders, the aid call system should be repaired or a review of the means of summoning assistance in the medical centre be undertaken, to review the staff recruitment procedures and that minor maintenance issues are promptly addressed. All of these recommendations made have been fully met.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school gives great importance to health promotion and ensures boarders have access to information from a variety of sources. A programme of personal, social and health education is delivered in the classroom, through boarding house staff and from the medical centre. In addition to healthy eating and personal hygiene, boarders are made aware of the dangers of smoking, sexual health matters, using drugs and consuming alcohol. The school has clear policies on these issues for boarders, parents and staff. Excellent facilities across the college promote an active life style, supported by varied menus offering healthy choices.

Health and medical care for boarders is primarily given by the medical centre, an outstanding facility staffed by qualified nurses 24 hours a day. The medical centre is a stand alone building away from classrooms and boarding houses contributing to a confidential service. The waiting room is welcoming and comfortable to reassure boarders. Dedicated bedrooms provide care for up to 12 sick boarders with suitable bathroom facilities and a call system to summon help. A local surgery provides a visiting General Practitioner daily, giving boarders the choice of a male or female doctor. A designated doctor contributes significantly to the college by being available in the staff common room, attending pastoral care meetings and being available out of hours. Boarders commented in the questionnaire 'we have a brilliant medical centre and matrons' and 'the medical centre staff are extremely helpful in all aspects of life.'

Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that medication is given appropriately in the medical centre or from a boarding house and an electronic central record promotes safe administration across the college. To ensure best practice the college has sought guidance from the local Primary Care Trust. Information from parents identifies any health matters and there is a system in place to alert staff to these on a 'need to know' basis. Matrons hold responsibility in the boarding houses for a minimal amount of medication as issued from the medical centre. A risk assessment process is in place for some boarders to manage their own medication. The senior nurse visits the houses each term to review the medication held and the records made; this monitoring promotes the safe management of medication across the college. House staff are all trained in first aid and receive training from the medical centre on how to respond to a severe allergic reaction. There is good communication between the house staff and the medical centre whilst promoting confidentiality for boarders. Medical centre staff attend the meetings held for matrons and the pastoral care committee.

The boarders receive an excellent range and choice of food. The school has a main dining room and a second smaller one in Faulkner's house, which is primarily for Year 9 use, although it is also used for older pupils. The pupils like the choice of meals available which includes soup, two hot choices including a vegetarian option, a 'healthy choice' option, a salad bar and a pasta and baked potato option. A choice of fresh fruits, yoghurts and a hot pudding are also available. The boarders feel that the food has improved and they have a say through the food committee meetings which take place. The catering staff receive appropriate training in food hygiene and there are monthly monitoring visits from the catering company.

Mealtimes are busy, sociable occasions but there are frequently long queues into the dining room in a noisy, narrow corridor. In addition, there is a lack of organisation in the serving area with few signs and food running out, especially at the end of mealtimes. These aspects detract from the overall quality of the dining experience.

## Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has an effective policy on countering bullying which is available to parents, boarders and staff and which is implemented successfully in practice. Boarders report low levels of bullying and one boarder said 'recently I was involved in an incident of bullying and it was dealt with very diligently and I was kept in the loop the whole way through' and other boarders commented that the school 'has a zero tolerance for bullying.' There are bullying workshops held for the pupils and parents in Year 9 which are informative and an anti-bullying card is given to all pupils outlining how to get help. The school maintains a 'bullying register' which ensures that incidents are followed up and monitored. The pupils have a number of staff they can approach if bullying takes place and includes 'peer supporters' and prefects. Training is provided to these pupils covering bullying and child protection.

The school has an up to date policy on child protection and responding to allegations of abuse. The designated person for dealing with child protection issues is the second master and he has attended the appropriate level of training for this role. There is a regular and effective programme of training provided to all staff at the school covering child protection issues which is delivered by the second master. In addition to the academic and ancillary staff, training has also been given to other groups including the medical centre staff, those working in the sports centre and the catering staff. Some external training courses have also been attended and all staff are given a small wallet sized card reminding them of what action to take if an allegation is made. Training has also been given to prefects. The school responds appropriately to child protection concerns and has links with the local authority. One school governor takes the lead in child protection and has undertaken training in safer recruitment.

The use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate with specific misdemeanours being automatically notified to the second master. The punishment system is well known to boarders, staff and parents. The boarders feel that punishments and decisions are fair and one boarder said 'they deal with people who do wrong things quickly and well.' Detailed records are maintained of serious punishments and well written individual letters are sent to parents confirming the actions taken by the school and the reasons why. The houses maintain their own punishment records which are regularly monitored, although few punishments are handed out. Incidents requiring physical restraint are extremely rare and are recorded in writing. There is a clear emphasis on working through incidents and problems with pupils and parents, involving much time and effort by the school.

Parents and pupils know how to complain and information is provided which includes how to contact Ofsted. A written record is maintained of serious complaints and their outcomes. All complaints are taken seriously and are appropriately investigated. Pupils feel confident about the process and are encouraged to view the college as 'an open school.'

The school takes positive steps to ensure that boarders, staff and visitors are safe from the risk of fire. There are established systems for routine checks, annual servicing and to all fire equipment. Regular practice evacuations take place which ensure that staff and boarders have a high awareness and practical knowledge of the school fire procedures. All activities relating to fire safety are recorded. Staff with boarding responsibilities undertake fire safety training including the practical use of fire fighting equipment. Fire risk assessments are in place for each of the boarding houses and are subject to regular review.

There are robust staff recruitment procedures which ensure that all the appropriate checks are undertaken before new staff start work at the school. A number of key staff have undertaken training in safer recruitment and there is good awareness of the requirements in this area. The same recruitment procedures are carried out for all staff working at the school and include CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks on adults living on the school site but not employed by the school. The school has also ensured that CRB checks have been carried out on the drivers of a local taxi company used by boarders. There are written agreements between the school and adults not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation. These are well written and include guidance on contact with boarders.

The measures that the school takes to ensure that the campus and the boarding houses are protected from access by the public are outstanding. These include 24 hour security guard presence and the use of close circuit and number recognition cameras to record movements in and out of buildings and around the campus. Staff and visitors are identifiable by badge or uniform and there is an expectation that all unknown people will be challenged and or reported to security. Boarders give an overwhelming indication that they feel safe and protected from harm. One of the boarders explained that 'the security is really good at Bradfield College. There are security patrols and traffic wardens at the cross roads.'

The school demonstrates a high commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the boarders and staff. There are a comprehensive range of risk assessments which identify and record the action taken to reduce and manage risks relating to the site, location, accommodation, sports and on and off site activities. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed. The school is fully aware of the actual and potential risks posed by the public roads that cross the campus. Following consultation with the local county council the school has taken positive, practical steps which reduce the risk. These include the funding of traffic calming measures and employment of a road crossing officer. The accommodation and other areas used by the boarders are free from avoidable safety hazards.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have access to an excellent range and choice of activities out of school hours. Many boarders commented that there is always something for them to do and that the facilities are excellent. There are drama, music and dance activities as well as a wide range of sporting activities. Excellence in all areas is celebrated. A number of boarders go home at weekends, but there are activities available for those boarders who stay and a more structured activities programme is on offer to the youngest boarders in Faulkner's. Boarders like the fact that Sundays are more relaxed, they can enjoy a lie-in and the Sunday brunch is popular. One boarder said 'on the weekend you feel like you are at home, not at school'.

The school has good safeguards in place in relation to the Internet. The system is sophisticated to allow access to certain sites if proved necessary and there is some limited access to the social networking sites out of school and prep hours.

Boarders receive outstanding levels of personal support from staff which is a real strength of the school. Pupils are extremely complimentary about the support that they receive 'those who look after me are very caring people,' 'there is always someone to turn to,' 'the pastoral care is fantastic' and 'everyone looks out for everyone.' There is a sense of community within the school and in particular in the houses where there is a team approach in caring for pupils.

Individual pupils are discussed and concerns are noted and acted upon but appropriate confidentiality is maintained. Those pupils with particular medical or social needs have a written welfare plan drawn up which is reviewed and monitored. There are regular meetings with those staff who have pastoral responsibilities including the medical centre and the school counsellors. Boarders say that they can talk to a wide range of school staff in particular their housemasters/mistresses, matrons and house tutors. The chaplain and the cleaning staff are also mentioned. The house tutors are on duty in the house for one evening a week and provide a good source of support for pupils. There is a confidential school counselling service and the counsellors are known to pupils and how to contact them.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to equal opportunities and avoidance of inappropriate discrimination of all forms. Vulnerable pupils are well supported within the houses including those with medical needs as well as physical disabilities. Additional support is provided to pupils by the support and study skills department. They produce a data base produced of each pupil, identifying style of learning, any known factors and how staff can support pupil with learning, it may include strategies on managing challenging behaviour, or assisting with a medical problem. A study skills programme is taught to the whole of year 9. This helps introduce the staff to pupils and identifies learning styles and any weaknesses.

The school has some boarders from overseas. They are integrated well into the houses and feel part of the school community. Different cultures are valued and there are arrangements made for pupils from non-Christian faiths to have private space for prayer.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders have extensive opportunities to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding provision. All pupils have regular contact with the headmaster and the second master who both visit houses separately on a weekly basis. School and house forums meet on a regular basis as well as the catering committee. As a result of listening to boarders changes have been made, for example, to the school uniform and casual clothes regulations and extending pupil times on access to the internet. Boarders have also been actively involved in drawing up the plans for the house extensions and offering their views regarding what the bedrooms should include such as the need for additional electrical sockets, which have been taken up. Boarders are also routinely involved in choosing house colour schemes and furnishings.

There are excellent opportunities for boarders to maintain contact with their parents and families. The school actively welcomes regular contact with parents and there is a flexible approach both to visits from parents and weekends spent at home. Boarders can use their mobile phones freely out of school and prep hours and the houses also all have card phones which are private. Contact via e-mail is made easy as all the houses have wireless internet access and if pupils do not have laptops or they are broken, all the houses have computer rooms. House masters/mistresses, matrons and house tutors have regular contact with parents and significant information is well recorded. The houses also send newsletters to parents.

The college has developed a thorough induction process for all new boarders. In particular, the new pupils and boarders in Year 9 all are placed in Faulkner's house which is a mixed gender house solely for this year group. This provides a 'soft landing' from prep school and an easier introduction into boarding. New boarders feel that they have a good introduction and like the fact that they get to know all their year group before they are separated into the different

follow on single sex houses. The written booklets for new boarders and parents are excellent in content. There are a significant number of new boarders that enter the sixth form. There is also an extensive induction programme for this group that includes team building exercises. New pupils arrive before the term starts to facilitate an easier entry into the school. A buddy/mentor system is in place between the sixth form and younger pupils. It is valued and felt beneficial by both year groups. Peer Support pupils are also available and known to pupils. They are well trained and supported in their roles.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The school has 12 houses where boarders live, including one house used solely for new pupils in Year 9. The newer boarding houses offer some outstanding accommodation for boarders, including a high proportion of single bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. There is a good programme of refurbishment and extensions are underway to provide more mixed age houses for the girls. There is a commitment to the continued improvement of the accommodation although this is more of a challenge in some of the older buildings.

There are sufficient toilet and washing facilities in each house with some baths in addition to showers. There is also a programme of refurbishment in this area.

There is safe storage of possessions. All the bedrooms can be locked and pupils are provided with a key. There are also lockable cupboards in the rooms to keep personal possessions and valuables. Written records are maintained when house staff keep money for pupils which are transparent and are monitored.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

There is strong, clear leadership of boarding from the second master. The senior management team have experience in the management of boarding houses and there is a keen willingness to promote and develop boarding within the school. Boarding is central to the school culture and the welfare needs of all pupils are at the heart of the school. There is an excellent monitoring system in place with the headmaster, second master and the chaplain all separately visiting houses on a weekly basis. The second master provides high levels of support to the housemasters/mistresses and ensures that the house records are monitored. There are regular meetings for housemasters/mistresses which ensure that information is quickly and effectively disseminated.

Boarders are well supervised by staff in the houses. All teachers participate in boarding and work an evening a week in one of the houses as a house tutor. This system works well and ensures that the house teams have a good mix of staff of different genders and ages. During the day the house is staffed by a housemaster/mistress and a house matron. The youngest pupils in Faulkner's have an increased level of supervision. Boarders say that they can always find a member of staff when they need one and are extremely complimentary about the care and support provided by the house teams. The system of registration throughout the day identifies when pupils are absent and there is a signing in and out system within the houses.

All staff have job descriptions and there are sound induction and appraisal systems in place for house staff which includes their boarding duties. There are extensive training opportunities

for the staff teams. All boarding staff receive training in fire safety, first aid and child protection. In addition a large number of staff have undertaken training courses run by the Boarding Schools Association including training specifically aimed at housemasters/mistresses.

The school provides a broad range of written information intended for parents, staff and boarders. All is up to date and well written. Staff receive guidance from regular meetings and from senior staff as well as from written information.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Pupils from overseas are integrated well into the boarding community and throughout the school consideration is given to ensure personal support systems are equally available for all boarders. Consultation processes ensure boarders are fairly and equally represented. The school has an outward looking attitude to the local community projects and pupils are involved with local societies, charities and schools.

## 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):

- review the organisation of meals in the main dining room (NMS 24)