

# Bramcote School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Simon Morley
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<b>Registered person</b>	Bramcote School Limited
<b>Head/ Principal</b>	Andrew Richard Alan Snow
<b>Nominated person</b>	Andrew Richard Alan Snow
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	03/11/2008

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## 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

Bramcote School is an independent co-educational boarding school founded in 1893. It is situated near to the centre of Scarborough. The school follows a Christian ethos although there are no restrictions on children of other faiths from attending the school.

The school offers both day and boarding provision for children aged eight to 13. Pupils can board on a full basis, weekly or flexibly choosing the nights they wish to board. At the time of inspection the numbers of boarders varied from 10 to approximately 30 depending on the day of the week.

There are two separate boarding areas, one for girls and one for boys, each with a range of dormitories and bathing facilities. There is plenty of open space, playing fields, a sports centre and heated indoor swimming pool.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The inspection was announced with five working days notice given to the headteacher. The inspection looked at how effectively the school meets the boarding school national minimum standards and this is report under the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall outcome judgement is outstanding, as it was at the last inspection. The outcome judgements in being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, and organisation are outstanding and the outcome judgements for positive contribution and economic wellbeing are good.

Pupils benefit from a close-knit, caring and supportive community based on traditional family and Christian values. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Staff are experienced and very effective in ensuring outstanding outcomes in relation to the health, welfare and safety of pupils. There is excellent support for pupils and an equally outstanding range of activities. This is one of the key features pupils rate the school highly for.

The location of boarding accommodation for girls has moved since the last inspection as a result of fewer pupils choosing to board. The reduction of boarding numbers has also impacted on the available resources to improve the quality of the boys' accommodation as recommended at the last inspection.

As a result of this inspection four recommendations are made: to review the fire risk

assessment; improve feedback to pupils about their views of the operation of the school; improve telephone access for pupils to contact parents; and improve the quality and location of the shower facilities for boys. These recommendations arise from national minimum standards that are not fully met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

School records now include parental permission for the administration of first aid and non-prescribed medication to help ensure pupils good health.

The quality and location of the boys shower room has not improved since the last inspection. No issues were raised with regard to the effectiveness of heating in the boarders' dormitories.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from the excellent approach to the way their health and well-being is promoted. This includes: an effective Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme; the high regard staff have for pupils welfare; purposeful support for pupils with health issues and medication; the good quality of the catering; and the wide range of physical activities available and encouraged. All these factors contribute to outstanding healthy outcomes for pupils. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles, know how to be healthy and have healthy lives.

There is a well-resourced and homely surgery easily accessible for boys and girls. There are three matrons who provide effective treatment of illness and injury 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is good communication with other staff in the school helping to provide consistent and holistic care and support. There are separate sick bays for pupils of different genders with space for their friends to visit them. In addition there is good access to services from a local doctor, dentists and opticians. Excellent health promotion is supported by: well-written emergency protocols for staff; safe and secure storage and administration of medication; staff trained in first aid; and good communication with parents. Information about pupils' health needs is provided through the admissions process and regularly monitored. The recommendation from the last inspection has been implemented. There is now clear consent from parents for staff to give pupils first aid and non-prescribed medication if they need it.

Pupils take on board and live out the school's values facilitated by the support, guidance and positive role models of staff and older pupils. As a result pupils benefit from a close-knit supportive community with a strong priority on healthy individual well-being. This is further promoted through the effective PSHE curriculum, which extends to tutorials and pastoral care. Pupils are supported by a network of experienced staff that they trust and feel able to discuss concerns with. There is plenty of information, knowledge and support for pupils to make informed choices and develop healthy lifestyles.

Catering in the school is of a good standard, healthy and nutritious. Pupils say it has improved, though evening meals do not have the same quality and choice as at lunch time. There is always plenty to eat including fresh fruit and vegetables. Special dietary needs relating to the health, cultural and religious needs of pupils are well catered for. Suppers are available in boarders' accommodation and senior boarders have a kitchen in which they can make drinks and snacks. There is a well-planned 'Leavers Programme' of extra-curricula activities for pupils in their last year at the school. The 'Leavers Group' benefit from opportunities to learn and develop their cooking skills and visit factories to see how different foods are produced.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' safety is given priority: pupils feel safe and there is outstanding practice to promote the welfare of pupils.

Pupils benefit from a school community that is sensitive, open and caring. The focus of staff is always to educate, support and help pupils develop their social and life skills. This supports pupils to be accepting and tolerant of each other, respecting of people's diversity, to be trustworthy and develop responsibility.

There is continuity in the application of the school's values as more senior pupils contribute to the close-knit community they have benefited from. As a result pupils behaviour is excellent, they are polite, friendly and helpful. This is an outstanding feature of the school. Other benefits are the extremely low use of any form of discipline and pupils come to a school free from bullying as one pupil reflected: 'Look around, it just doesn't happen here'. Policy and guidance in relation to cyber-bullying and e-safety is under review and there are frequent discussions with pupils to promote their individual e-safety. Complaints are rare and pupils feel that staff are approachable and listen to their concerns.

Safeguarding procedures are clear and effective. All staff have regular safeguarding training, some more frequently than others according to their role in the school. Comprehensive policies and guidance are in place which help ensure there is a professional, well-informed staff team. Staff are clear about whom to report concerns to and senior staff with designated responsibilities have well-developed contacts with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Any concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare are followed up thoroughly, monitored and any necessary action is taken to ensure pupils are safe. This is a notable strength of the school.

There is suitable practice in the management of health and safety and reducing potential risks to pupils. For example, there is good awareness amongst staff and pupils of the fire safety precautions. Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis and though the fire risk assessment has not been reviewed recently this has not impacted on the safety of pupils. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and the fire alarm system has been upgraded. The indoor and outdoor areas used by pupils are free

from safety hazards. Security of the school from unwanted intruders is good and pupils are protected from access by the public.

Recruitment procedures are rigorous and well documented ensuring only suitable people are employed to work in the school.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders receive excellent support; their physical, social, moral and spiritual development is valued and promoted through a supportive, caring school community.

There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, after school clubs and social events. Boys and girls of all ages particularly like the focus on sporting activities and take part in the numerous school sports teams. Pupils also frequently enjoy leisure activities on the playing fields organised by staff after classes finish. Equally there are opportunities for pupils with other interests such as music, drama, art and chess. There are various drama productions, concerts and carol singing throughout the year that promote pupils wider education. Pupils also benefit from participation in the local community with the public and organisations that are involved in these events. There are regular weekly trips out, holidays abroad, camps, and competitions that pupils like to be involved in. Parents commented, 'my children would like to board most nights: it says it all!'

Pupils are in one of four school houses and there is a yearly house competition. Pupils are keen to do well, win points and achieve stars for their house. There is a strong focus on praising individual, team and house achievements to boost morale and celebrate success. As a result pupils benefit from very good opportunities to become active and confident members of their house and school community.

Pupils' individual needs are very well supported by a wide network of pastoral and academic staff. Pupils frequently commented 'there is lots to do', 'activities are great', 'it's a small friendly place'. This was reflected in good survey results about the quality of boarding. Parents said 'children are extremely happy when they board and we are totally confident in all aspects of boarding, it is like an extended family and most welcoming'.

Staff work hard to create an environment where equality and diversity is valued and celebrated. There is a strong focus on promoting each individuals strengths and supporting their difficulties. There is well-developed learning support for pupils that helps them progress with their education. Pupils are accepting and respectful of each others difference and diversity. All boarders are helped to integrate into the school community regardless of age, gender, race and religion. Prayers and the weekly chapel service are open to all with pupils often preparing and helping to lead parts of the service. Different religious affiliations are respected and there is support to attend alternative places of worship if individuals wish to.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The facilities and opportunities for pupils to enjoy and contribute to the life of the school are good. This is facilitated by the caring and sensitive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils feel that staff look after them well and treat them fairly.

Pupils views about the school are regularly gathered through the 'brag sheets' they complete about their achievement and what they would like to see change or improve in the school. Senior staff know what pupils' views are and use them to make some improvements. Planned change and outcomes in relation to pupils' opinions are not always made clear to pupils. Pupils are uncertain about responses to their views. Pupils can also influence what happens informally on a day-to-day basis talking to staff about what they would like to do or what they think of that days meals. Pupils feel that staff are approachable and listen to what they say.

The school works proactively in partnership with families to ensure they are part of the school community and that pupils' specific needs are met. There is a wide range of opportunities for parents to participate in fund raising, support matches, watch performances and contribute to the running of the school. Parents are always welcome to visit school and spend time with their children. Pupils can remain in contact with families through email, telephone and letter writing. Pupil's access to the telephone is variable, which can make it harder for them to contact parents. There is regular communication with parents who live overseas, using knowledge of local time differences, and all parents are informed of the progress and welfare of pupils.

The induction of new boarders is well managed and sensitive to their needs. They can come for taster sessions and receive a warm, inclusive welcome by everyone. The additional support of peer mentors helps them quickly feel part of the community. New pupils quickly make friends and learn about boarding life. This caring approach reflects strongly the ethos of the school. Equally pupils leaving for senior school benefit from the 'Leavers Programme'. This is an extra-curricular programme running in June and July. It is full of practical, social, and educational activities, events and trips out to help prepare pupils for life in senior school and beyond.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Bramcote School provides two separate boarding areas, one for girls and one for boys. Both are for pupils aged 8 to 13. The dormitories and common rooms are cleaned and maintained to a good standard by ancillary and maintenance staff.

Pupils benefit from safe and reasonably-comfortable, homely accommodation. There is plenty of space for communal activities and pupils have somewhere safe to keep

their valuables and personal possessions. Pupils share dormitories arranged flexibly by age so friends can share or choose not to depending on the numbers of boarders. Boarders commented, 'we are happy we are in rooms with our friends'. Furniture is of suitable quality to meet pupils' needs and pupils are able to personalise dormitories with photographs, posters and personal possessions.

Improvements to the boys' bathing facilities as recommended in the last inspection have not been carried out. Boys' showers are not readily accessible and are located separately to their accommodation. Pupils of both genders were keen to point out that the quality as well as location of the boys' facilities is worse than the girls'. Some of the girls benefit from en-suite provision in their dormitories and there is a shower room close to their dormitories.

Pupils benefit from a range of other facilities such as the school swimming pool, sports hall, gym, ICT room and large playing fields.

Though the boarding accommodation is of variable quality this has little impact on the overall outcomes for pupils. As a result this area is judged to be good.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

There is excellent management of the school that ensures outstanding outcomes for pupils so they are healthy, safe, enjoy their time at school and achieve well. There has been a decline in the number of pupils coming to the school since the last inspection. This has impacted on the financial resources available for school improvements such as the boys shower room. However the headteacher, staff, parents and governors have all worked well together to ensure there is still a very strong focus on promoting the health, welfare and safety of pupils at the school.

The leaders and managers of the school, including the governors, are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a new marketing and development plan to take the school forward, attract more pupils and improve resources. The school policies and handbook for parents and pupils are under review, to be implemented in September 2011. The headteacher is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the school.

There are various staff on duty after classes providing boarders with plenty of support. Staff are given clear guidelines, policies and procedures in a well-structured staff handbook. Staff are experienced, committed, and able. Through good communication staff are fully able to ensure children's well-being.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Cultural diversity and individual identity is promoted and pupils have opportunities to learn about each others' backgrounds, traditions and beliefs. Friendships between pupils of different ages, gender and race are encouraged. Pupils benefit from a close-knit, supportive community in which they develop well and can achieve their full potential.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Compliance with national minimum standards**

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure the fire risk assessment is reviewed and any outstanding actions to reduce safety risks are implemented (NMS 26)
- ensure that pupils are suitably informed of the response to the views they raise about the operation of the school and boarding provision (NMS 12)
- ensure that boarders have access to a telephone to contact parents in private at reasonable times without having to seek permission from staff (NMS 19)
- ensure there are adequate washing facilities readily accessible to boarders, with appropriate privacy. (NMS 44)