

Brandeston Hall

Inspection report for Boarding School

Unique reference number	SC024576
Inspection date	18/02/2011
Inspector	Dawn Taylor
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Framlingham College Preparatory School, Brandeston, Nr Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 7AH
Telephone number	01728 685331
Email	
Registered person	Framlingham College Junior School
Head/Principal	
Nominated person	Martin Myers-Allen
Date of last inspection	01/11/2006

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Brandeston Hall, the Preparatory School for Framlingham College is a day and boarding school for boys and girls from 3 to 13 years. The school was moved to the village of Brandeston, Suffolk in 1949 as part of the memorial to former pupils of the College who died in two World Wars. It occupies a quiet rural site in the Deben valley. The extensive buildings are a mixture of old and new with part of the house dating back to Jacobean times. The governing body is the same as that for Framlingham College. The majority of pupils transfer to Framlingham College at the age of 13 years but some go on to other senior independent schools.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced inspection. The inspection looked at the key boarding school national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. Boarders were involved in the inspection process.

The overall outcome judgement is outstanding. The outcome judgements in being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and organisation are outstanding and the outcome judgement in economic well-being is good.

Brandeston Hall School delivers an outstanding service that continues to be developed to ensure the needs of all boarders are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no previous recommendations. The school continues to develop and improves its services.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' health needs are being effectively promoted. A surgery is held once a week by a doctor from a nearby health practice. The surgery work in close partnership with the school's matrons. They ensure boarders medical needs are identified, monitored and met. Boarders stated 'matron is always there for you to comfort you', 'they look after us well when we are ill' and 'they are caring, and make you feel better'.

Boarders are being supported through education and positive role models to lead healthy lifestyles. There is a detailed personal, social, health and education programme (PSHE) that is delivered through tutors, assemblies and academic and boarding staff. This programme is enhanced by the support and commitment of the whole school; for example a smoothie bike introduced by the catering staff and physical activities organised by the boarding staff in the evenings and at weekends.

Catering is of a high standard and provides boarders with a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals. Menus are adapted to meet the individual needs of boarders. They stated 'the food is amazing', 'there is always something I like', 'they always make us a brilliant cake on our birthdays'. The catering staff play an important role in the life of the school and are proactively involved in fund raising events and special occasions, for example boarders were enthusiastic about the hot dogs, burgers and soup served at the school's firework display.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Brandeston Hall is successful in meeting its aim 'to provide every child with a safe and secure environment to grow up in'. Boarders are living in a nurturing family environment where their welfare is a priority.

Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures underpinned all staff induction, training and practice. This results in a professional well-informed staff team who promote the well-being of boarders at all times. Staff and boarders know that unkindness and bullying is not accepted and that staff will act on any information that this behaviour might be taking place. Boarders show great respect and regard towards each other and this is fostered and encouraged by staff. The emphasis placed on caring behaviour, citizenship and positive thinking is reflected throughout the school and boarding houses. Boarders stated 'any problem is sorted out' and 'staff will never leave a problem unsolved'.

Trained designated child protection staff at Brandeston Hall and Framlingham College work in partnership with the local authority. They have clear roles and responsibilities, which include ensuring all staff receive regular safeguarding training and are well informed of the actions they would need to take if a child was at risk. This effective structure is strengthened by a designated college governor with a safeguarding lead.

The education given to all boarders on the safe use of the internet and cyber bullying is a key strength of the school. This work is being further enhanced by additional training that is planned for staff and interested parents.

Boarders' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Staff understand how to encourage considerate behaviour, which is actively rewarded. There are clear guiding principles to ensure the smooth running of the boarding community. Boarders understand that the school has high expectations whereby all boarders are expected

to be honest, respectful, courteous and tolerant. They achieve this well.

The routines and structures of boarding life make certain that the boarders are safe at all times. The school's health and safety systems effectively identify and reduce risks to boarders. The staff and governors are proactive in ensuring assessments of risk, health and safety committees and steering groups maintain a safe environment. These internal processes are enhanced by the use of external consultants who maintain and quality assure.

The school has in place a robust staff vetting and selection policy and procedure. The senior team ensure that staff employed at the school are deemed suitable to work with children. All the necessary checks are completed including an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check. Members of the school team have also completed advanced training on safer recruitment practices. As a result, the school has enhanced its stringent procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' experience of enjoying and achieving is outstanding. Individual support to boarders is given high priority by the school community. There is a wide network of people ready to listen to boarders and help with any problems. All staff make themselves available to help and support boarders at all times. This results in excellent relationships between boarders and staff.

Boarders stated 'boarding is fun', 'I am always busy', 'I am surrounded by my friends'. The ethos of the houses is very positive and relaxed; boarders refer to an environment that promotes mutual trust, respect and friendship. Boarders stated 'once you have made a friend in boarding they will be for friend for life', 'my friends are like my second brothers and sisters', 'this is my second home'.

Boarders are encouraged to share the responsibility for the well-being and happiness of others around them. Brandeston buddies and prefects care for younger members of the boarding community, emulating the sensitive care they receive from adult members of the school community.

Boarders' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence is excellent. They are valued within the school community and their contributions and efforts are noticed and rewarded. Boarders are able to develop interests in a wide range of group and individual sports and activities with nurturing staff guidance.

Boarders readily participate in formal worship and assemblies, which are rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Boarders develop an awareness of their own culture and that of others and begin to appreciate cultural diversity through food, assemblies and a small number of overseas boarders. They also go on trips and were enthused about a recent trip to London for Chinese New Year.

The school creates an environment where equality and diversity is valued and celebrated. There are established support mechanisms for learning support and English as an additional language (EAL). Boarders' progress is continually monitored and reassessed to suit their learning differences

The school also has established links with and are actively involved in the local community. For example involving the community in school events and co-ordinating a Brownies pack for boarders and local children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The facilities and opportunities for boarders to contribute to the life of the school are outstanding.

Boarders are encouraged to have open discussions with all staff and can influence change in the houses and across the school site. This results in boarders feeling listened to and a valued part of the school community. The school have a strong focus on promoting effective consultation networks, for example, boarders are positive about house meetings and discussions that provide support and guidance as well as an opportunity to express views.

The school works proactively in partnership with families and guardians to ensure boarders' specific needs are met. There are a wide range of opportunities for parents to participate in events, support matches and watch performances. Parents and guardians are always welcome to visit school and spend time with their children. Boarders can remain in contact with the families through e mail, phone and letter writing. Overseas pupils also use computer software programs to help them remain in touch.

The induction of new boarder is a key strength of the school. They receive a warm and inclusive welcome by everyone and they quickly feel part of the community. This sensitive and caring approach is indicative of the ethos of the school. One parent stated 'my child is a full boarder. This is her first year. I feel very happy with her transition. She is very well looked after. I could not ask for more. The boarding staff have been excellent'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school's overall standard of accommodation for its boarders is good. There are two houses, one for girls and one for boys. Boarders are cared for in a warm, friendly atmosphere. The accommodation is comfortable, well heated and lit. The furnishing and décor create a child friendly family atmosphere. Boarders do not just use the boarding houses but have access to all school facilities across the school site. Boarders describe how the environment and facilities are put to good use with

organised activities and supervised free time.

The school has a development plan to ensure both boarding houses continue to be improved to a high standard. This demonstrates the commitment by the school to raising standards and promoting boarding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The organisation and management of this school ensures outstanding outcomes for boarders. Strong family values and an exciting boarding experience results in boarders who are happy. A parent stated 'the boarding care is exceptionally well run and my child thoroughly enjoys the experience. The staff involve all the children in well-organised activities. The overall care is faultless in every respect.

The philosophy of care and the expectations of boarding are clearly set out in a range of information available to staff, parents and boarders. Children can be full boarders or can flexi board. Lots of the children at the school were able to talk about their 'fantastic, fun' experience of boarding whether it be one weekend or full boarding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school recognises the uniqueness of each boarder and meets their individual needs and is continually reviewing and developing its practice to ensure outstanding outcomes for all boarders.

Staffing levels and quality of care is excellent and consistent in ensuring the welfare of all boarders. The boarding houses have dedicated staff who are clear of their roles and responsibilities and work cohesively and communicate effectively. They are energetic and enthusiastic and highly valued by the boarders. This care is enhanced by the additional input of the school's non residential teaching staff. They all participate in duties to support evening and weekend activities. The involvement of all staff ensures boarding is at the heart of the school and a positive experience for all boarders.

The headmaster and senior team provide strong dynamic leadership. They are actively involved in the day to day operation of the school. There is effective strategic and operational management with well defined lines of accountability. The governors and senior team have a well informed overview of boarding. This ensures boarders are safe and receiving a quality boarding experience. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed promptly.