

# Beachborough School

Inspection report for boarding school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	24 October 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Michael Williams / Linda Janet Witts
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Nominated person</b>	Michael Sanders
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22 September 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

Beachborough school is located at Westbury, near Brackley in Northamptonshire. The school is coeducational and has nursery, pre-prep and prep departments for children aged from two-and-a-half to 13 years old. The number of pupils on the roll at the prep department at the time of this inspection was 186, of whom 67 are flexi boarders. The present head was appointed in September 2005 upon the retirement of his predecessor. That year marked the end of the school's change from traditional full boarding to the weekly flexi boarding arrangements that exist today. Most pupils live in villages within 15 miles of the school, and four nights is now the maximum length of time that a child can board at the school away from home.

### Summary

This was an announced full inspection of all the key national minimum standards for boarding schools. This inspection found that each of the five outcomes for children, plus the Organisation outcome, are good, and that therefore the overall quality and standards of care is good. In terms of activities and accommodation, boarding is excellent. Sixty-four boarders completed a survey for this inspection, and 15 parents returned a comment form. In response to the question 'Do you feel well cared for where you're living now?' nearly 70% of boarders ticked 'Always'. Parents considered that the school does well in the following areas of boarding: it encourages a good 'boarders' spirit'; boarding staff are caring, approachable and committed; the housemaster and boarding staff 'team' develop a close link with the children; there is a good balance between fun and discipline; and the level of personal care and the range of structured activities offered is good along with the recent refurbishment of the accommodation. A number of boarders and parents thought that the school needs to improve its overall catering provision for boarders, and a number of boarders and one parent wanted improvement to the bathroom facilities. It was notable that both boarders and their parents used the phrase 'a home from home' to describe boarding at the school.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

This was the first Ofsted inspection of boarding at the school. The school's previous inspection of boarding was a follow up visit by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in September 2005. It found that "the school has addressed all of the recommendations and advisory recommendations" reported following the previous full inspection of boarding in July 2003.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarders' health is promoted through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. A Living and Growing itinerary is taught to boys and girls in year groups five to seven. The school has and follows an appropriate policy on responses to alcohol, smoking and substance abuse. Boarders receive first aid and health care as necessary. This is usually given by the school's matron or assistant matron. However, boarding staff have also received first aid training. Boarders commented that they are helped if they are unwell, that they feel well cared for, and that matron is one of the people they would go to for help if they had a problem. A number of boarders' parents commented very positively about the role that matron plays in

looking after pupils who board. Prescribed and 'over the counter' medication is kept securely, but it is not always administered to individuals as privately as it could be. The school does not have a professionally agreed written protocol for the administration of 'over the counter' medicines to boarders, and the school's health consent form does not cover the administration of such medicines. These matters are part of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's latest guidance on The Handling of Medicines in Social Care. Boarders receive good quality catering provision. The quality of the food was identified as a priority for improvement following the parent satisfaction survey that the school commissioned earlier in 2008. As a result, the school is currently proposing to review the provision of catering services. Boarders mainly said that the meals at the school 'Always' or 'Usually' provide them with a balanced diet. However, a number of boarders and their parents identified catering, and tea in particular, as one of the things that the school needs to improve for boarders.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders are protected from bullying. In response to their survey question 'Are you being bullied?' nine out of 64 boarders ticked 'Sometimes' and seven ticked 'Don't Know'. Follow up revealed that the former were isolated instances of children falling out with each other, often during the school day rather than in boarding time, and that the latter response was from boarders who were not sure what other children were saying behind their back. The school's policy on countering bullying is known to parents, boarders and staff and is successfully implemented. Boarders are protected from abuse. The school provided pre-inspection information that in the last year there had been one allegation of abuse of a pupil while looked after by the school. Follow-up revealed that at the time the school had neither made a child protection referral regarding this incident, nor sought professional advice regarding it. However, the local Safeguarding Children Board did not recommend a belated referral. This inspection found that the school's designated senior person for child protection has been trained for this role by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, has contacted them for advice regarding a subsequent child protection concern, and has arranged for them to carry out training with all of the school's staff in January 2009. The school's updated child protection policy comes into effect in November 2008 and is consistent with Local Safeguarding Children procedures. Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate. The school's behaviour policy works in conjunction with its code of conduct and school rules to focus on encouraging positive behaviour, rather than the punishment of negative behaviour. To this end, the school operates a credit/debit system with pupils, with a debit being one of the possible consequences for a pupil's unacceptable behaviour. The school is in the process of reviewing its sanctions, which are listed in the boarding booklet along with rewards. Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. The school has remedied the one deficiency identified following their local fire authority inspection in May 2008. A fire protection firm is contracted to regularly maintain the school's fire precautions. Boarders commented about fire drills regularly being carried out in boarding time. Boarders' personal privacy is respected. Staff appropriately supervise boarders at sensitive times such as dressing/undressing and showering. There is a satisfactory recruitment process for all staff working with boarders that is mostly recorded in writing. Inspection of the recruitment records of recently appointed staff included most of the checks listed in this national minimum standard. The check of identity is part of the Criminal Records Bureau check, and the head confirmed that he contacts referees to follow up references and checks qualifications required, but this was not recorded. However, the school's recruitment and vetting checks for staff, including visiting staff and volunteers, is not fully in line with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment

in Education that came into force in 2007. Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been subject to the school's recruitment checks. When adults, such as visitors and maintenance personnel, visit boarding accommodation they do so either while boarders are not in boarding accommodation or under staff supervision. Boarders have their own accommodation protected from public intrusion. The parent satisfaction survey the school recently commissioned identified the security of the school site as a priority for improvement. As a result, the school is in the process of installing a CCTV system. Boarders are protected from safety hazards. The school has an effective system of recorded risk assessments to reduce risk to boarders from inherent hazards in boarding, the prep department and the whole school, such as the playground. Boarders know and respect which areas are out of bounds. The school's health and safety policy is available to all staff.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders have access to an outstanding range and choice of activities. Boarders' parents commented very positively on the range of structured evening activities, events and trips available to boarders. One wrote that the 'level of activities offered is fantastic'. Boarders receive personal support from staff. Boarders identified their personal tutor, matron and the housemaster as people they would go to for help if they had a problem at the school. The school makes available to boarders the name and telephone numbers of an independent listener they may contact outside of the school staff, but boarders have never been introduced to this person. Boarders do not experience discrimination. There are identifiable minority groups within the school population, in relation to disability, race, religion, cultural and linguistic background, whom the school supports appropriately and helps to integrate. For example, a number of pupils, some of whom are boarders, come from the nearby American community and the school caters very well for their cultural needs.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school. Boarders mainly responded that there are 'Usually' and 'Always' different ways that they can have a say about the school. The school identified that one thing they could do better is including boarders more in decision making, and that they were going to do this through a Boarders' Forum. However, boarders have expressed little interest in such a forum and instead a School Council is now in operation. It is via the sound relationships that boarders have with staff and the head boy and girl in boarding, that boarders' views are secured. Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families. They can do this via one of the four telephones available to them, one of which offers more privacy than the others, or via their school email account. New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in. The inspectors saw how this outcome was achieved with one pupil who had never boarded before. Key information is available in the school's boarding booklet and the school organises a 'buddy' system for new boarders.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Boarders' possessions and money are protected. Instead of boarders carrying pocket money, a pocket money balance sheet is maintained in their school planner. The school provides effective

protection for boarders' personal possessions through the trust and mutual respect developed by the school's rules and code of conduct. For example, boarders have unlocked sweet drawers next to each other in the boarding kitchen. Boarders are provided with excellent boarding and sleeping accommodation. This inspection followed the completion of the refurbishment of boarding and sleeping accommodation, which was very positively commented on by both boarders and their parents. One parent commented on the 'fantastic newly decorated rooms and a wonderful television room as well'. Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities. Resident boarding staff do not share boarders' facilities, and there are separate facilities for boys and girls. Boarders made some negative comments about the school's toilet facilities and one parent commented that the bathroom facilities for the girls are a long way from their boarding rooms. The refurbishment of the boarding and sleeping accommodation has highlighted the need for toilet and washing provision for boarders to be refurbished.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents, boarders and staff through the up to date Beachborough boarding booklet. It states that 'It is our aim at Beachborough that children who board are treated with the same care, attention and concern as they would receive in their own home.' The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare. Boarding is located on the upper floors of the manor house and is organised so that there is separate sleeping accommodation and toilet and washing provision for boys and girls, who are in dorms with others in their year group. Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare. The school keeps records of risk assessments, incidents, complaints and accidents, which are regularly monitored by the senior management team. However, the school has not defined major punishments, used for particularly serious offences, and does not keep a separate record of their administration. Two recent accidents at the school had resulted in a RIDDOR reportable major injury that had not been reported accordingly to the Health and Safety Executive. Boarders are adequately supervised by staff. In the evening, boarders are supervised by five members of staff (the housemaster, matron and two gap students, and a teacher with a boarding duty) and by two members of staff (the housemaster and matron) in the morning. The latter arrangement is still adequate because of the boarders' understanding of and respect for boarding routines. If necessary, more staff are available at any time. Boarders' parents commented very positively on the boarding staff 'team' and how it is led by the housemaster. Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training. The boarding staff team are very experienced, either as a result of the length of time they have been at the school or of their previous professional boarding school experience. The school has job descriptions for the posts of housemaster, matron and gap student, and are in the process of developing the latter. There is not a separate job description for teachers' boarding duties. The current gap students received induction through both the school and the Boarding Schools' Association. Induction arrangements for all staff include guidance on child protection. The school operates an annual staff appraisal system and in service training, and supports attendance at relevant external courses and conferences. Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice. The school's staff handbook dated September 2005 is in the process of being updated. The existing version covers the school's approach to all of the list of matters recommended for inclusion, such as anti-bullying, except for the school's approach to boarding which is covered in its boarding booklet.

## 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 handling of medicines in boarding against the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's latest guidance on this (NMS 15)
- further develop staff recruitment and vetting checks in line with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (NMS 38)
- introduce boarders to the person the school has designated for them to contact outside the school staff (NMS 14)
- schedule work to improve the toilet and washing provision for boarders as soon as practicable, following the completion of the refurbishment of boarding and sleeping accommodation (NMS 44)
- define major punishments that are used and keep a separate written record of their administration, that is regularly monitored by a designated senior member of staff (NMS 23)
- notify the Health and Safety Executive of RIDDOR reportable major injuries (NMS 23)