inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

Bedstone College

Bucknell
Shropshire
SY7 0BG

Lead Inspector
Jackie Callaghan

Announced Inspection
12th June 2006    09:30
The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

### Reader Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Purpose</th>
<th>Inspection Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>CSCI</td>
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<td>Audience</td>
<td>General Public</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for Boarding Schools. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained 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

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government’s vision for children’s services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children’s services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children’s services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under ‘Management’ to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.
SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of school  Bedstone College

Address  Bucknell
          Shropshire
          SY7 0BG

Telephone number  01547 530303
Fax number  01547 530740
Email address  headmaster@bedstone.org

Provider Web address

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school  Bedstone College Educational Trust Ltd

Name of Head  Mr M Symonds

Name of Head of Care

Age range of boarding pupils

Date of last welfare inspection
**Brief Description of the School:**

Bedstone College is a well-established co-educational independent school for pupils aged 3-18. At the time of this inspection 118 pupils were boarding at the school and there were 120-day pupils. The cost for pupils who wish to board is currently £4115 per term for Preparatory boarding and £5998 for Senior boarders per term.

The College site occupies 40 acres and lies in a very rural setting but is easily accessible by road and rail. It is set in beautiful countryside, in the village of Bedstone, some 30 miles south of Shrewsbury, close to the borders with Herefordshire and Powys. The clearly signposted driveway provides a welcoming approach to the well-maintained and attractive grounds and gardens. Boarding accommodation is provided in the five separate areas of the college. Two houses for boys are situated in the main building and three, one for boys and two for girls, are situated in detached houses in the grounds.

Pastoral care and support are provided to boarders by house staff, teaching staff who have boarding responsibilities, and by nursing staff. Other staff, who do not have direct pastoral care responsibilities, contribute to the welfare provision for boarders. The Headmaster is directly responsible for pastoral care, monitoring the boarding provision and child protection. The Second Master and the Head of the Preparatory School assist him. Boarders are provided with ‘out of school’ activities and there are systems in place to monitor the safety of these activities.
SUMMARY
This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

A Lead Regulation Inspector and a Boarding School Professional Inspector carried out this inspection over three days with a combined total of 48 focused inspector hours.

The inspection concentrated upon the quality of Bedstone College boarding provision drawing supportive information from diverse sources including parents of and pupils using the provision. Discussions with staff who have direct boarding responsibilities were undertaken as was direct observations of practice, activities, morning and evening routines.

The Inspectors wish to extend their thanks to The Headmaster, his staff team, pupils and all other parties contributing to the findings presented in this report.

What the school does well:

The Management Team continues to develop boarding practice and facilities and there is clear leadership and management of boarding at Bedstone. The Headmaster and Second Master lead by example and they are supported by a professional, committed and caring team of staff that effectively manages the school’s organisation of boarding.

Bedstone provides a supportive and happy boarding environment where boarders thrive and where they can benefit from opportunities to grow and develop in a range of contexts.

Staff make themselves both available and approachable for the children and young people they look after, whether the children are boarders or day pupils. All school staff play a critical role in caring for the children. They seem to take this responsibility very seriously and effectively communicate any concerns they may have about individual children.

Risk Assessments are comprehensive significant pieces of work that are monitored, reviewed regularly and clearly inform and develop boarding practices as well as other wider aspects of boarding school life.

Behaviour management continues to exceed minimum standards with the children and young people presenting as being happy, relaxed, showing a caring attitude and helpful demeanour towards others, thereby upholding the College’s ethos.

The children have many formal and in-formal opportunities to share their problems. The ‘Headmaster’s lunch’ once a week, where pupils have an
opportunity to discuss problems or air grievances and raise awareness of College life for the young people is clearly a very strong strength.

The College aims to deliver to all its students a full and varied education based on sound academic and moral principles. Whether the young people are gifted or are of average ability, the College aims to produce young people that possess qualities of self-discipline and initiative while encouraging well rounded personalities, high levels of academic achievement, cultural and sporting achievements.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvements have been made to medical records and systems to ensure that all MAR charts are completed at the time of medication administration.

A protocol and guidelines of non-prescribed medication has been developed and introduced.

Staff and recruitment systems are now robust and the College has created a checklist that clearly plus effectively documents and ensures that elements of standard 38 are met.

There have been many developments to the boarding provision, which have included refurbishment of Rees Court showers, new carpets and furniture in Wilson & Pearson Houses and also new beds in Pearson with the plan to replace beds throughout.

What they could do better:

It is the inspector’s assessment that there are only three standards where there is a minor shortfall; these have been discussed with the Headmaster who has responded appropriately.

Child Protection training is required to ensure that maintenance/domestic staff receive appropriate training/information that is delivered in a way that is understood in an appropriate format and that is in context to them. The College should ensure that all outstanding staff that missed the last external Child Protection course undertakes the next one.

Consultation is currently poor although there is a lot of processes and systems in place, the food committee for example needs to be formalised and information then needs to be consistently given feedback to the young people. Other routes of consultation also needs to ensure that information is filtered back successfully to all the young people.
The payphones in Bedstone House & Wilson House need to be made private. So that young people who choose to use payphones instead of their mobile phone can do so.

**Good Practice Recommendations:**

We observed excellent practice and as the College strives and endeavours to continue to exceed national minimum standards it was felt that consideration should be given to and the College would benefit from:

A review of the menu and type of food served at supper to ensure that the food is nutritious and of equal quality to the food served at lunch times.

Ensure that all young people know that they can contact the independent listener/counsellor and a description of why they may want to contact them for needs to be made more prominent.

Some young people are on medication that is similar to ‘Ritalin’. This medication presently is not classed as a controlled drug within young people’s pharmaceutical guidance, but should be handled with the same respect. Therefore as good practice it is recommended that the College should store this medication in a locked cabinet inside a locked cabinet and use a controlled drugs register to record administration.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.
DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy
Staying Safe
Enjoying and Achieving
Making a Positive Contribution
Achieving Economic Wellbeing
Management
Scoring of Outcomes
Recommended Actions identified during the inspection
Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders’ health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders’ health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders’ receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders’ clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 48 & 49

Boarders health overall was considered to be adequately met and promoted. Relevant health and welfare needs of individual pupils are supported with access to medical, and dental services. Key members of boarding staff maintain their first aid qualification to ensure competent designated staff are available at all times to administer first aid and minor illness treatment. The provision of the evening menus was acknowledged by the College to require further development to ensure that all meals are nutritious in quality.

**EVIDENCE:**

Boarders’ health is promoted through clear and appropriate policies on countering major risks, including substance abuse. Policies on smoking, alcohol and drug abuse and misuse are clear, are published in individual houses and are known by boarders. Relevant posters were seen around the individual houses.

Confidential Health Records are available for each boarder, held securely at the College. Parental contact details are kept in the Medical Room and the Senior Nurse and her staff were seen to be aware and well informed about the health and welfare needs of the boarders. All boarders are registered with the local Medical Practice (Wyclwm Street Surgery). All documentation is stored appropriately within the medical ethics and guidelines. There was evidence of close liaison between all staff, designed to ensure that relevant information is given to those who ‘need to know’.
The college has a school nurse and employs additional nurses on a part time basis to provide cover. There is evidence held within the personnel files that the College have confirmed that they are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

Medication is recorded using a Medication Administration Record (MAR Chart). Each child has an individual medication sheet, this is completed at the time medication is given, then stored in a locked cabinet and archived securely. All medication held at the College at the time of the inspection was stored appropriately and labelled correctly and seen to be in date. However, some young people are on medication that is similar to ‘Ritalin’. This medication presently is not classed as a controlled drug within young people’s pharmaceutical guidance, but should be handled with the same respect. Therefore as good practice it is recommended that the College should lock this medication in a locked cabinet inside a locked cabinet and use a controlled drugs register to record administration.

There are beds in the College Medical Centre for the use of both male and female boarders if there was a need for separation. Boarders who are sick may be looked after separately from boarders in the Medical Centre, which has four adequately furnished bedrooms. When the resident school nurse is not on duty cover is provided to ensure that staff assistance is readily available. If the boarder remains in house a member of staff is on duty at all times. Boarders are able to summon help at night, usually by asking a friend to go to the Houseparents for them. There are Houseparents flats situated within every boarding house. The only complaint the children have is that sickbay can be hot, however this complaint was followed by “but the nurses are amazing”.

The accident sheets were sampled and these were found to be good in content and completed appropriately to meet the Data Protection Act. The Bursar monitors all accident sheets and they are now beginning to be presented to the Health & Safety Committee and used to inform risk assessments.

Welfare issues seem to be very well managed, particularly if the welfare/medical issue means that there are some behavioural issues. For example the College follow the advice of other professionals when working with young people with Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder and as a result there was evidence held within young peoples personal files that shows that the College have reduced any behavioural outburst and these young people blend into College life. Boarders with medical difficulties appeared to be treated and supported in an excellent manner and there was much evidence received by both inspectors that fellow boarders and staff are fully supportive at times of personal stress and homesickness. The College Nurse prepares and develops individual welfare plans and there was much evidence of how she builds a ‘bigger’ picture and takes into account a holistic approach to health issues and is perceptive to boarders behaviour and upsets. It was considered that this continues to exceed minimum requirements.
The meals were considered overall to be adequate in quality. Lunchtime meals being the best with good healthy options, two choices of hot food and a cold selection always on offer. Special diets are catered for and there is always a vegetarian option. The inspectors had concerns about the supper meals for boarders. There were not as many healthy options or choice and children given the opportunity will only eat ‘fatty foods’. In discussions with the Headmaster and the member of staff that has responsibility for the young people’s food committee it was recognised that this has been an ongoing problem for the College. They are currently looking at ways of improving the evening meal and the Headmaster is keen to make these meals as nutritious as the lunchtime menus.

Boarders have access to drinking water in their individual houses, in the dining room at each mealtime and all tap water on site is reported to be potable. Water fountains are available in Rees Hall Foyer and in the Sports Hall changing rooms. Boarders can prepare snacks in the kitchenettes of their boarding house where there is a fridge, microwave, kettle and toaster. There is a tuck shop that operates on a daily basis serving snacks at 11.00 am everyday. The College should consider introducing a range of healthy snacks to compliment current stocks particularly as the tuck shop time is close to lunch.

An outside contractor launders all items of bedding and towels, but there is also very good provision made for boarders’ clothing to be laundered by the College. The laundry from each house is collected and returned each day. This ensures that any ‘unlabelled’ clothing is returned to the house from which it came, which makes it easier for items to be returned to their owners. There are washing machines in the Boarding Houses, which are used by the Houseparents to wash delicate clothing. All young people spoken to consider that the laundry systems work really well and the older boarders, if they prefer to wash their own clothing, are enabled and assisted to do so by the Houseparents. It was felt that this standard had been exceeded.
Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying. (NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse. (NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate. (NMS 4)
- Boarders’ complaints are appropriately responded to. (NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders’ welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders’ welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school. (NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school’s pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school. (NMS 28)
- Boarders’ safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities. (NMS 29)
- Boarders’ personal privacy is respected. (NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders. (NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school’s complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises. (NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (National Minimum Standard 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards. (NMS 47)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 22, 26, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 41 & 47

The College has made positive advances in their policies, procedures and practice in safeguarding their pupils and overall practice in this area is good. Staff are presently only selected following a tight vetting procedure and robust recruitment systems ensures that all relevant checks are completed before any staff begin employment at the College. Practical child protection is afforded a high priority, however further training needs to be given to domestic and maintenance staff to ensure they know how to respond and who to pass concerns onto. Pupils’ rights are respected and their privacy is recognised and enabled. College policy and practice recognises the requirements for pupils to live and study in safe and conducive surroundings.
EVIDENCE:

There is an excellent College policy on bullying and is supported by good staff training. All young people spoken to have a good working knowledge of systems in place and all felt that any issues regarding possible bullying are dealt with fairly and effectively. The inspectors felt that the ethos of the College was a supportive environment the Prefects and senior children have a specific brief to bring any indications of bullying to the attention of a member of staff. Prefects have dinner with the Headmaster and Second Master weekly; this is a privilege for them but is also a good working process for both young people and the Head to share issues or concerns regarding general behaviour and pupil conduct. It was considered by the inspectors that this standard was exceeded.

There is a policy available which is consistent with local Area Child Protection procedures and it was clear from discussions with staff that a copy of this policy is given to all staff members. Records show that there has been one referral made by the College to the Safeguarding Board in the past 2 years and this record demonstrated that appropriate procedures were followed. It was deemed by the Safeguarding board that this referral was not a child protection issue but the College must be commended for their proactive practice in safeguarding this young person. The Commission consulted with the Local Authority Children’s Safeguards Manager prior to this inspection where it was reported that there are no current outstanding Child Protection concerns relating to Bedstone College. A full child protection-training course was undertaken in 2005, which was delivered by the Local Authority. Nearly all staff was present for this course, but a couple of key members of staff missed this training due to personal reasons. The College identified to the inspectors that refresher training is due and they will ensure that any staff that missed the last training and all new staff who joined since the last training will be given priority. The inspectors felt that knowledge on child protection held by some of the domestic and maintenance staff needs to be further developed. These staff go through these policies and procedures with the Bursar at the time of interview. It is felt that additional specific in-house training delivered in context with their roles could further develop their knowledge and understanding. It would also be considered good practice if both designated child protection officers undertook a specific child protection liaison course to help develop their practice.
Bedstone has a fair and appropriate policy on behaviour, discipline and use of punishments, which is well known to boarders, staff and parents. Within the Staff Handbook and in documentation for Boarders, there are full and comprehensive policies on the Use of Force, Discipline, Classroom Management, Form Room Code of Conduct, Offences and Sanctions within the Pastoral Framework and a general Code of Conduct with a boarder’s checklist. Responses to the pupils’ questionnaire indicated that, in general, the use of punishments is seen as fair. At the time of this inspection the boarders stated to both inspectors that they considered the punishments to be very fair and feel that ‘punishments reflect the crime’. Records were sampled and found to be appropriate. The range of sanctions used included the withdrawal of privileges (‘tuck’, TV, video etc) and the imposition of tasks of a community service nature. A record of punishments is kept and Behaviour Referral forms are completed. These were seen to be very good and the Second Master cross references these and review them at regular intervals. Young people were also very positive and complimentary regarding the treatment and respect they have from their house-parents. The relationships between boarders and all staff were considered to be excellent and based on a good personal and professional basis. This standard was considered to continue to be exceeded.

Bedstone has a satisfactory and appropriate policy for responding to complaints and this is given to all parents and boarders. Discussing complaints with the young people demonstrated that pupil’s knowledge was weak in regard to how to make a formal complaint however, all young people spoken to felt that any concerns identified were always dealt with promptly and effectively and it was clear to the inspectors that the College were efficient in addressing any issues of this nature. The Headmaster completes a form if a parent complains which is stored in the young person’s file and is passed to the necessary staff members to address and or to keep them informed of the issues raised. During this inspection it was evident that the staff take the opinions and concerns of the boarders seriously and respond whenever necessary. This form was considered to be a good piece of documentation that detailed date of discussion, issues raised and any action to be taken.

Prefects are selected on the basis of an assessment whilst carrying out the role of monitor in the Lower 6th, this is undertaken by staff and current prefects. Those short-listed for the position are invited for interview with the Headmaster, Second Master and two Senior Prefects. Their duties and responsibilities are clearly set out in a job description and there was clear evidence that all prefects were fully familiar with the guidelines. Selected pupils undertake a two-day induction, are given a handbook with all the relevant policies and procedures. It was considered that this standard was exceeded.
It was considered at the time of this inspection that the prefects were fulfilling their role well and they are regularly supervised and directed in their duties by the Second Master. They attend weekly working lunches with Headmaster and Second Master and meet them each morning together with the day’s Duty Prefect and the Senior Prefects (Head Girl and Head Boy). It was considered that this standard continues to be exceeded.

The school does not currently appoint guardians.

Full emergency evacuation procedures are available and have been tested from sleeping and living areas. Discussion with students and house staff confirmed that this takes place. Fire drills are regularly carried out and always take place each term. Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are regularly tested and records are maintained. Records were seen to indicate that the school has its fire detection and prevention systems maintained and checked by contracted agencies. Fire risk assessments and fire service reports were all held on file and considered to be good.

There are no residential activities for which the College accommodates and looks after children other than its own boarders. During the term time there are occasions when day scholars spend the night at school for a variety of good reasons. Such overnight provision is only available once the College has received and accepted a formal request from the parents.

Activities are assessed and then those considered to be high risk are identified by the Second Master, who is extremely experienced in such matters, in consultation with the Headmaster and the Bursar. It is then the responsibility of this group to ensure that high risk activities are competently supervised and accompanied by adequate and appropriate safety measures. The risk assessments seen were comprehensive in detail and it was clearly evidenced that the Second Master monitors and advises on all aspects of Risk Assessment and Crisis Management. It was considered that good and appropriate safety measures were in place and parental permission is obtained at all times. Any College visit has to follow tight and stringent guidelines. Paperwork for the group leader consists of; record of trip, company record, indemnity/medical contact, contact and summary of paperwork. Adults who hold a relevant qualification in that activity by an appropriate recognised national body supervise all activities identified as high risk. It was considered that this standard was exceeded.
The school has an established and effective staffing rota in the boarding houses. This includes an appropriate balance of male and female staff. Staff supervision of boarders did not appear to intrude unnecessarily on boarders’ privacy and no reports were received from pupils that there was any perceived intrusion. Observation of both evening and morning routines within boarding houses confirmed that boarders’ privacy is well respected by supervising staff.

An improved Personal File Check List and a Recruitment Procedure has been introduced since the school was last inspected. A selection of staff files was examined and all new staffing files had evidence of CRB checks, references and reference checks, interview notes, copies of qualifications, employment history and Curriculum Vitae. All references were verified and this was also evidenced within each individual’s file. The College does not allow staff to work unsupervised with boarders without there being a satisfactory check with the CRB.

Boarders sleeping and living areas are for the exclusive use of boarders and other scholars must seek permission from the resident boarders and the house-parents to enter. Where feasible, given the nature of the site, suitable and adequate security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access by the public. These include security lighting in key areas, security patrols late at night, key pads on doors, alarmed exits and a set of procedures for staff to lock access to parts of the College at specific times of the day and night. Public use of the College facilities does not involve substantial use of unsupervised access and people, who visit the College report to reception, sign in and are given a badge.

No potential hazards were identified, at the time of this inspection, in sleeping, living or recreational areas. In discussion with the Bursar it was identified that any significant hazards are noted and brought to the attention of the Bursar and maintenance staff to ensure that action would be taken quickly to reduce any associated risks.
Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities. (NMS 11)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. (NMS 18)
- Boarders’ welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands. (NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study. (NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas. (NMS 46)

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

11, 18, 27, 43 & 46

Pupils’ activity and recreational needs at Bedstone are generally well met and the overall area of enjoying and achieving is good. The School’s helping ethos positively assists children with any special needs. Children are practically encouraged to achieve by having access to a choice of quiet spaces and work areas in which to study.

**EVIDENCE:**

The College operates a weekend activity programme where every weekend a trip or event is organised and offered to boarders. Details of the events are made known to scholars via a letter sent home during the holiday preceding the term. These have included rock climbing, mountain biking, quad biking, paintballing, visit to Alton Towers, shopping trips and activities on site. Free time for boarders varies according to age group and is clearly set out. Boarders commented that they had sufficient ‘free time’, which they appreciated. Access to computers appeared satisfactory with clearly laid down rules and inappropriate material and use of chat rooms blocked.
The principles of Christian upbringing and worship are a major influence in the life of the College. Most days begin with a School assembly and on Sunday Pupils worship either at the College or in the village church.

Worship in the church is normally House communion on the first Sunday of the month with other houses worshipping at school. Wherever possible, provision is made for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs. The College is committed to securing equality of opportunity through the criteria of an environment in which individuals are treated on the sole basis of their relative merits and abilities. There are clear procedures for dealing with any incidents of discrimination or harassment. The head ensures that members of teaching, non-teaching staff and governors are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities, harassment and discrimination on grounds of race, sexual orientation, gender or disability. Overseas scholars are invited to take part in western celebrations but are also encouraged to celebrate their own festivals. These pupils are also excused from church on Sundays. One pupil was enabled to celebrate Ramadan by his housemaster, but he found that the evening food was limited and thus blurring the experience. The evening menu as earlier identified in Being Healthy is to be improved and this should then improve the cultural aspect to. One member of staff has completed a BSA module on managing international students and she has responsibility for their induction.

Although the School aspires to high standards and has high expectations of each pupil, inspectors saw no evidence that demands made were excessive or unduly onerous. This was confirmed during discussions with boarders.

There is suitably lit, and reasonably quiet provision for all boarders to undertake organised prep and private study. The inspectors observed suitable study facilities and staff supervision was available to boarders during prep.

Boarders seem to have access to a range of activities although due to the none mixing of gender during non-supervised activity time the fifth form girls appeared to be confined more to their boarding houses. In discussion with the Headmaster and Second Master it was identified that some Houseparents are happy to supervise their students from a distance and it was recognized that this is easier to do from the boys boarding house. The Head also pointed out that the girls have a large lawn adjacent to their boarding houses where the girls are allowed to go during the day and the evening; a privilege which the boys do not enjoy. It was acknowledged by the Headmaster however, that the girls perceive this supervision to be unfair.
There is a good range of recreational areas at Bedstone College. These include a common room in each house and a specially adapted cellar area providing a number of rooms with a variety of entertainment for sixth formers. There is an excellent Sports Centre with an outdoor swimming pool and in addition there are hard play areas, ‘the spares’, the girls wood, Bedstone House lawn, the Preparatory School and the sports fields.
Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school. (NMS 12)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff. (NMS 14)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families. (NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school’s procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in. (NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school. (NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders. (NMS 36)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12, 14, 19, 21, 30 & 36

The management and staff team adequately enable both formal and informal opportunities for boarders to express their views with regard to the boarding provision, however they need to improve ensuring that information is passed back to the young people. The children are generally well supported by boarding staff and enabled to retain positive links with their families, whether in England or abroad with good induction and guidance for new boarders ensures that they are able to settle in and feel welcomed.

EVIDENCE:

There are systems in place for boarders to express views on aspects of boarding provision, which include House Meetings, House Roll Call, individual tutorials, ‘Birthday’ lunches with the Headmaster, Prefects meetings and the food committee. It was recognised by the college that the food committee was not working. These meetings have been inconsistent and at times relied on issues or suggestions been passed to the staff member in writing only. There are no minutes of these meetings, but the inspectors did see a list of areas raised by the young people as needing improvement. Discussions with the young people throughout this inspection demonstrated that they felt that the consultation processes were not working. They all recognised that they have plenty of opportunity to express views and raise issues, but felt that the issues were not addressed. Consultation needs to be a two way process and when subjects are raised with staff, staff then have a responsibility to ensure that the answers are passed back down the line to the individuals who raised the
matter. The food committee and house meetings need to be more formalised, with clear timescales in place for distribution of information.

All staff are closely involved in the pastoral care of the children. There are regular tutorials and clear guidance is given to each child to help them in their daily lives at the school. Each child has a Personal Tutor and a houseparent who is responsible for the individual’s wellbeing. It was clear from discussions with the young people that they feel well supported and all were able to list people that they would turn to in need of support. Young people’s knowledge is weak with regard to the Independent Counsellor. There was evidence in the form of a leaflet on the day board that gives information on this individual, but the College need to be more proactive at ensuring that this individual’s role is made known to the scholars.

Boarders are able to contact their parents and families in private by using mail, email, School payphones and personal mobile phones. Telephones used by the children are situated close to the dormitory areas, however they were not deemed to be private in Bedstone House or Rutter House. Young people spoken to who would sometimes like to use these phones instead of their mobiles due to cost expressed that others can overhear their conversations.

The Second Master coordinates the induction and guidance process, for new boarders. Boarding House induction is organised by respective Houseparents at the start of each term and this is a continuous process. Boarders are supplied with copies of relevant house rules and procedures on admission and prefects are encouraged to help in this process. New boarders are allocated a ‘buddy’ to help look after them and take them around the College for the first few weeks. All young people spoken to felt that this system works well and enabled them to settle in quickly. It was considered that this standard was exceeded.

The school affords boarders age-appropriate access to news media and the Internet – on a closely monitored basis. It was noted that current issues of topical magazines were held in the Library. Boarders in Year 10 and above may go to Ludlow on Friday afternoons, accompanied by a member of staff on the coach. Boarders attend numerous off-site facilities and activities and are accompanied by staff.
General observations of interaction between pupils and teaching staff, boarders and boarding staff over the course of this inspection supported the judgement that overall there exists very positive relationships. This was supported by comments from the pupils’ questionnaires and verbal feedback. All spoke highly of the staff involved with boarding. Boarders spoken with generally stated that they felt they were looked after well and treated reasonably. Pupils, who were asked about how they would make a complaint and to whom, were clear that they could talk to a range of staff that would listen. The majority of pupils liked the College and the staff, and indicated that it was a good place to be. The impression of the inspectors was that disagreements were dealt with reasonably between pupils and staff. Discussion with individual children also identified that staff would often give them the benefit of the doubt if they were breaking a College rule on a first occasion. It was our assessment that this standard continues to be exceeded.
Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders’ possessions and money are protected. (NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation. (NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation. (NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities. (NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day. (NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school. (NMS 50)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

20, 40, 42, 44, 45 & 50

The ethos of the College is one where trust is developed to an extent that personal possessions are respected and safely left alone. Pupils do however have secure places for the storage of valuables, money and overall there is adequate promotion of economic wellbeing.

The College strives to provide accommodation that is a warm and homely atmosphere for boarding pupils with some improvements having been made to the living environment. The College needs to continue to work to its long-term development plan and to continue to seek to improve conditions in all boarding houses.

EVIDENCE:

There is a system in place in the College for holding monies and valuables and records are kept. All pupils have lockable lockers and all boarders spoken to felt that the College provided a safe environment and there is a culture of trust at the College.
All five boarding houses were considered to be adequately lit, heated and ventilated. Generally, across all units, the standard of hygiene and cleanliness was sufficient. All necessary redecoration and replacement furniture and carpets are clearly set out in the planned maintenance schedule that the Bursar holds. The majority of rooms were considered to be satisfactory however; it was considered that redecoration of a number of rooms in Bedstone House required urgent attention. When discussing this with the Houseparents it was identified that redecoration had began, but some of the children felt uncomfortable with the maintenance staff being around the house during the day so redecoration has now been put on hold until the summer holiday period. There was evidence that re-decoration had began to take place in this house. The accommodation was considered to be generally well maintained with a good communication system with the maintenance staff that prioritized tasks and completed as soon as they were able. None of the houses are designed in such a way that boarders with physical disabilities could be appropriately provided for without major adaptations being made.

Sleeping accommodation across all boarding houses is suitably furnished with new beds in Pearson House. Beds are to be replaced across all boarding houses and it is acknowledged by the inspectors that this is an expensive task that will take sometime. All areas were found to be of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated. The sleeping areas in all the houses were found to provide adequate storage space for boarders’ possessions. Some rooms were seen to have been personalised by the pupils occupying them. The general impression was that the rooms and dorms were a ‘home from home’ and that pupils were allowed and encouraged to create their own space.

All bathrooms and showers that were inspected were found to be clean and sufficient in number. Bathrooms in Wilson House need updating and at the time of the inspection it was reported that only two showers were working. Again it is acknowledged that work is ongoing and that all the above areas are highlighted within the development plan.

Boarders are able to obtain items of stationary from the shop on Fridays or they can ask their Houseparent who shop regularly for boarders for items and each term there are shopping trips to Telford and Shrewsbury.
Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school’s principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (National Minimum Standard 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school. (NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders’ welfare are effectively managed. (NMS 9)
- The school’s organisation of boarding contributes to boarders’ welfare. (NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders’ welfare. (NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff. (NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site. (NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night. (NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training. (NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice. (NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 51)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 8, 9, 10, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 51 & 52

Bedstone College has drafted a clear statement regarding its aims including the principles for boarding. Boarding practice is sound and is underpinned by staff training. The school have produced appropriate policies and guidance for boarding staff. There is generally competent supervision and care of boarders with excellent defined lines of management of boarding.
EVIDENCE:

The College’s statement regarding its principles and practice gives good clear objectives, which are reflected in practice. The statement is well displayed and elements are included in the Prospectus, Staff Handbook, Quick Reference Guide and Scholar’s Diary. This information is given to parents when making initial enquiries and on the boarder’s admission to the College.

The College’s structure identifies clear lines of management and responsibility for the practice and development of boarding in the college. In house there is a sound process of appraising and developing boarding facilities including a regular reporting system, regular inspections by Houseparents and the Bursar, regular Health and Safety meetings, regular Senior Managers meetings and regular meetings with House Parents and Prefects. All boarding staff are encouraged to register for the BSA/University of Surrey Diploma in Boarding. The Second Master acts as mentor for those staff on the course. Boarding staff are encouraged and enabled to attend relevant INSET courses both those relating to the BSA course and those independent of this. There is a clear staff disciplinary procedure, which includes all the required elements and all staff have been given copies. It was considered that this standard continues to be exceeded.

The College has a crisis management policy that deals comprehensively with a range of possible scenarios. There are planned responses to these eventualities, including guidance on handling enquiries from parents and the media. The policy was fully trialled in 1996 when the College’s main building was devastated by fire. The College used this crisis to aid further development of the policy. At the time the College was commended on the fact that in September of that year it re-opened to pupils, staff and services in temporary buildings with no loss of education or care arrangements. There is a full comprehensive Disaster Plan Procedure, which is used as a working document that includes all required elements and a full range of foreseeable major incidents or crises. This includes a chain of command, disaster support resources, initial reporting and procedure. It is considered that this standard continues to be exceeded.

It was considered that the boarding houses operate generally satisfactorily and no major discrepancies were found between the quality of boarding provision for girls and boys. There are five boarding houses, Bedstone House for younger girls, Wilson House for elder girls, Rutter House for younger boys, Pearson House for elder boys and Rees Court also for elder boys. No major or inappropriate discrepancies in principles or practice of boarding were found between the five and appropriate separation of the boarding areas and facilities for children of different ages is in place.
Both the Second Master and the Bursar monitor risk assessments. The Heads of departments monitors those for Science and Design. Major punishments and complaints are undertaken and monitored by the Headmaster whilst lesser punishments are undertaken by the Second Master, prefects or House Parents and are monitored by the Second Master. Accident records are maintained and monitored by the Bursar, which then informs the risk assessment process. The action plan and maintenance schedule indicated that reasonable action is taken to reduce risks identified by risk assessments and all assessments sampled were of high quality. It was considered that this standard was exceeded.

Observation of the evening arrangements, on one day of the inspection, demonstrated that all the pupils were offered a range of activities, supervised by a range of different staff. Several staff live on the premises and make themselves available to the pupils throughout the day and, when dictated by circumstances, at night. The afternoon and evenings are usually taken up with a range of sporting and recreational activities. The Houseparents are always on hand to settle the children and young people last thing before lights-out and afterwards if necessary. Young people were observed talking to a range of staff at various points during the day. In discussion with the pupils it became apparent that a large majority had a trusted member of staff whom they could talk to and confide in. This view was supported by the questionnaires completed by pupils.

A tour of the college during the evening demonstrated that staff were widely deployed around the whole College site. In the latter part of the evening, there were organised activities. The pupils were observed being involved in activities with staff, but other staff were also circulating around the College grounds to ensure that pupils were safe.

The young people have limited opportunity to go off site without staff supervision. Visits off site, all College trips and trips abroad are covered by separate full and concise policies that have been given to all relevant staff and boarders. Policies and procedures at the College appear to fully comply with DFES guidance. The college is a Licensed Transport Operator and a fully qualified person manages the 6 mini buses and 54-seater coach used from the College. There were no GAP students at the College at the time of this inspection.

There are resident Houseparents in each house who are on call at night. When they have an evening/night off there is a duty rota indicating the member of staff who is to cover. There is at least one adult member of staff sleeping in each house each night. There are additional members of staff sleeping on site every night to help if necessary and all houses have mobile phones. All young people that were spoken to felt very safe, secure and knew who was on duty when. It was considered that this inspection was exceeded.
Job descriptions are in place for all staff these were considered to actively reflect their roles. The roles of spouses and partners of staff within boarding houses are also made clear. Supervision of ancillary and cleaning staff takes place and the College is aware of its responsibilities in this area. There is a formalised induction policy, which includes guidance on child protection. Ongoing training is provided to staff and training is being evidenced in each staff file. There is also an excellent programme of recorded staff supervision and appraisal. It was considered that this standard was exceeded.

No educational lodgings are arranged by the college to accommodate pupils. This standard does not apply to this inspection.

The only off-site short-stay accommodation that is arranged by the College for boarders is when the school undertakes trips and excursions. These provisions are subject to Risk Assessments and the schools Educational Trip policy.
This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable)  
3 Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)  
1 Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

### BEING HEALTHY

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## SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

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<th>Standard</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>BS3</td>
<td>Child Protection training is required to ensure that maintenance/domestic staff receives appropriate training/information that is delivered in a way that is understood in an appropriate format and that is in context to them. Ensure that all outstanding staff that missed the last external Child Protection course undertakes the next one.</td>
<td>31/01/07</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BS12</td>
<td>The food committee needs to be formalised and information then needs to be consistently given feedback to the young people. Other routes of consultation also needs to ensure that information is filtered back successfully to all the young people.</td>
<td>30/12/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BS19</td>
<td>The payphones in Bedstone House &amp; Wilson House need to be made private. So that young people who choose to use payphones instead of their mobile phone can do so.</td>
<td>30/12/06</td>
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