

# Frewen College

Independent school standard inspection report

---

DfE registration number	845/ 6002
Unique Reference Number (URN)	114635
URN for social care	SC049345
Inspection number	393335
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2012
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell
Social care inspector	Keith Riley

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>3, 4</sup>

## Information about the school

Frewen College is a day and residential special school administered through the Frewen Educational Trust Ltd. It is registered for up to 120 pupils aged seven to 16 years who have specific learning difficulties and/or difficulties related to Asperger's syndrome. It is also a registered member of the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils.

Approximately a quarter of the pupils are privately funded, and the rest are funded by their local authority or the Ministry of Defence when the pupils are children of service personnel. At the time of the inspection 12 local authorities had pupils placed at the school. There are 76 pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school, which is situated in a rural location in East Sussex on a 60 acre site, opened in 1947. The junior department is located nearby in a converted listed building. This was registered in 1998 for up to 26 pupils. In September 2004 the school began to admit girls. There are currently 101 pupils and the ratio of boys to girls is approximately three to one; there are 73 boys and 28 girls on roll. The school is registered for up to 89 boarders who may board weekly or full time. There are currently 39 boarders with an approximate ratio of two boys to one girl.

This visit was an integrated inspection whereby the education and residential provision were inspected at the same time. The school's last full inspection was in March 2009, which was followed up by a progress monitoring inspection in September 2010. The residential provision was last inspected in September 2011. Frewen College aims to develop pupils' skills and character to succeed with future challenges, supported by specialist staff and a caring, learning community.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>4</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Evaluation of the school

Frewen College meets its stated aims and offers a good quality of education. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment are good and this enables the pupils to make good academic progress. The school successfully promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is outstanding as is their behaviour. The school's provision for welfare, safeguarding and health and safety is outstanding. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in providing for the increasing number of girls on roll and the pupils' awareness of other cultures. The residential provision is outstanding and encourages the boarders to thrive at school. The educational and the residential provision meet all regulations and national minimum standards.

## Quality of education

The school's curriculum is good overall and it has a highly appropriate focus on the pupils' specific learning difficulties. The curriculum is supported by a relevant policy and schemes of work, influenced by National Curriculum guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3, with additional structure provided by the requirements of examination boards in Key Stage 4. In addition to the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), the pupils study a range of foundation subjects including humanities, physical education (PE), design and food technology, music and art. From Year 9 pupils receive careers education and guidance. All pupils follow a suitable personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE). With the agreement of local authorities and parents and carers, the school does not offer a modern foreign language. There is a high adult-to-pupil ratio which allows for close support in all lessons and, additionally, pupils may also receive one-to-one teaching or work in small groups, for example for speech and language and occupational therapy. Teaching assistants have additional training to support individual pupils in basic skills or specifically to assist them in staying focused in lessons. The taught day is a long day and runs until 5.00pm when it concludes with 'prep' to assist with homework. A good range of evening activities is provided for boarders which includes judo, swimming, team games and visits to the local community. All pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and a group of pupils went climbing in Snowdonia during the Easter holiday.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good which results in the pupils making good progress. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching, including specialist subject knowledge, expertise in meeting special educational needs, strong relationships and high expectations. Most lessons observed were judged to be good or outstanding. For example, in outstanding English and drama lessons where the pupils are studying Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The pupils gain a breadth of experience which includes careful study of the texts, developing empathy for characters and performance skills. The pupils respond well to the lively teaching and show a genuine desire to improve. During PE lessons, all pupils take a full part, wear appropriate kit and show an appreciation of the value of sporting behaviour. Teachers' use of resources is good, especially so when

supporting the pupils' literacy skills. All staff support the whole school approach to develop this key skill although, in some lessons, the key vocabulary is insufficiently emphasised. The use of ICT in other subjects is well established, although opportunities are missed for the pupils to use the interactive whiteboards. Display boards are used effectively to showcase pupils' work and all pupils are rightly proud of their art work and products made in design and technology.

Teachers take into account the advice of the speech and language therapist and the special educational needs coordinator who create relevant targets and programmes for pupils to follow. The English department has developed a 'reading progress team' that monitors the success of intervention programmes. These programmes are already providing evidence that the pupils make very good gains in their reading skills, often from a low starting point. Pupils' work is marked regularly and some teachers use a marking key which shows how the feedback was given, for example VF and PSM indicates 'verbal feedback' and 'please see me' respectively. Such feedback is most useful to pupils who struggle with reading. Information from termly assessments is written into pupils' individual 'provision maps' to inform the teachers' future planning. Pupils are increasingly involved in reviewing how well they are doing. The pupils make good progress from their given starting points. The school has recognised that best progress is made by pupils who join the school at younger ages.

The school assesses pupils' progress using a wide range of measures including reading, writing, spelling and National Curriculum levels. Internal moderation of teachers' assessment is the norm below Key Stage 4. However, there is no external moderation by other schools. The school receives favourable reports from examination bodies for its accredited courses. The school is working hard to improve the coordination of the wealth of assessment data held on pupils. In the last academic year the school has improved its capacity to evaluate whole school progress by the appointment of an experienced assessment coordinator and the recent adoption of a computerised assessment package.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a pervading atmosphere of respect and acceptance between pupils and this is also evident in their relationships with adults in the school and residential settings. The school's rules, which encourage pupils to try their best and respect others, are well understood and prominently displayed. Reflection by pupils upon their own performance is increasingly a part of lessons; for example, in an outstanding drama rehearsal, the pupils not only reflected upon their own performance but offered an appropriate critical appreciation of their peers' efforts. These views are accepted in good heart, showing maturity and a willingness to improve performance and, for some, a new-found ability to challenge their own boundaries and extend their self-confidence to perform in front of others.

The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous to their peers and have positive attitudes to learning, further evidenced by good attendance and punctuality to lessons. A striking example of peer support includes a boarder who was new to the school and cited the valued support, not just from staff, but from other boarders who knew from experience just what it was like to live away from home for the first time. 'It's not like a school, it's more like a big family being here. Sometimes, I like being here more than at home.' Pupils, including boarders, recognise that the staff act in their interests and they feel confident in sharing problems with trusted adults. In the dining room, they develop excellent social skills as they eat meals alongside adults who offer suitable role models, queueing with the pupils as they choose from a varied and nutritious menu. All meal times and break times are social occasions where exemplary manners are the norm and upsets are rare.

Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through regular assemblies and thought provoking themes where those less fortunate are considered. In religious education, the pupils reflect upon the values and beliefs of other cultures, including those represented in school community. Pupils' work shows studies on Hindi, apartheid, musical composition inspired by paintings and African poetry in GCSE English. PSHCE activities include looking at British institutions, the highlight of which was a pupils' visit to the House of Lords to advocate specialist provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In PE, the pupils regularly play competitive sports against other schools and recently played in wheelchairs to increase their appreciation of the forthcoming London Paralympic Games. Fundraising for a range of charities is well established.

The expression of the views, thoughts and ideas of pupils is promoted, encouraged and valued. The school council and boarders' forum meet regularly to discuss key issues, such as food and activities that include the after-school programme. Through some of these activities, friends are made in the local community. Voicing opinions in a structured and appropriate manner increases their confidence and self-esteem. Boarders have good access to boarding staff, teachers and senior members of staff who are all readily available.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has appropriate policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment and child protection. All required policies and procedures are implemented effectively and reviewed in a timely manner. All staff, including the school's designated child protection officer, are trained at appropriate levels and intervals in child protection. The school adheres to the latest national guidance to inform the policies and practice in relation to health and safety, behaviour, anti-bullying and discipline. There are comprehensive risk assessments for all activities both on and off site. All fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and regular fire drills are conducted during and after the school day to ensure compliance with regulations. All staff are members of the school's well-being panel and regular daily briefings ensure that day and boarding staff enjoy

effective communications about the pupils' welfare. Links with external agencies are excellent.

The high staffing ratios, including deployment of boarding staff, ensure that the staff know the pupils well. The tutor and keyworker network supports the pupils' needs effectively, especially when nearing external examinations. Where required by statements of special educational needs, pupils receive occupational therapy and speech and language therapy: some staff are also qualified in counselling and psychotherapy. There is an appropriate first aid policy and, under the guidance of the school matron, staff are trained in first aid to the required level. Additionally, boarding staff are trained in dispensing medication when required and are vigilant in observing the boarders' health and well-being. The pupils report that they feel safe and free from bullying and that any instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively by the school.

The school enables pupils to understand the importance of exercise and provides regular access to healthy pursuits through its extensive physical education programme. The pupils show a keen awareness of safety and routinely wear appropriate kit in practical subjects. The school maintains attendance records as required and recent attention to its admission register has ensured it meets the regulations. The school's planning and practice to improve access meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school has undertaken all the required checks to ensure safe recruitment procedures. Through these measures, the school ensures that its staff, including boarding staff and the proprietor, are suitable adults to work with children. The school maintains a single central register of checks which meets the regulations.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school's premises and accommodation are suitable to ensure safe and effective learning. The school manages the constraints and benefits of Grade I and II listed buildings and grounds very well. All areas of the school are adequately maintained and classrooms are of suitable size for the numbers of pupils in each class. Most classrooms on the main site support specific subject areas and are suitably equipped, including specialist rooms for science, food technology, drama, ceramics, design and technology, music and art. The large central auditorium is well equipped with reading books, computers and it also serves as the assembly hall. The temporary classrooms, serving as the English department, are adequate. However, the recently-built permanent classrooms are light, airy and of suitable size and allow for whole-class teaching. There are appropriate facilities for pupils who become ill during the school day and there are sufficient washrooms for pupils and staff.

Indoor facilities for physical activity are limited although supplemented well by regular use of a local community sports centre. The lower school site is located over

the road and offers classrooms of suitable size for the numbers and age range. The grounds offer suitable provision for safe outdoor play. The main school's grounds comprise of 60 acres and offer excellent facilities for safe play and outdoor learning. The grounds enable the school to host visiting schools for competitive team games. Effective use is also made of the grounds in horticultural studies.

The boarding accommodation is good and enables boarders to experience community living with adequate privacy when required. Significant improvements have been made to the girls' accommodation. Day pupils and boarders make regular use of the local community for social visits and educational purposes.

### **Provision of information**

The school meets all requirements to provide clear, accurate and up-to-date information to parents, carers and others through its recently updated prospectus, parental handbook and website. The large majority of the parental view was overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. Typical comments included, 'It was worth every minute of the battle to get our child into this school ..... my child settled in really well ..... it is a lovely friendly school .... the staff really know about my child's special needs.' A minority of parents and carers reported that they had experienced difficulties communicating with the school and some had concerns related to their child's food allergies. These aspects were viewed during the inspection and relevant evidence was analysed and discussions held with key staff. The inspection found that the school communicates well with parents and carers through its website, reports, open-door policy and newsletters. However, it is not so successful in its communications when parents and carers have concerns. The reports, including annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs, are detailed although a minority do not say enough about academic progress since the last review. The catering department keeps extensive records of menus and allergies, showing an acute awareness of the pupils' dietary needs including those of boarders. It, too, welcomes parental consultation to ensure all dietary needs are met.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has a complaints policy and set of procedures which meet all of the regulations.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The quality of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is outstanding. The provision is very effectively and efficiently managed by a motivated leadership team who provides an excellent role model to staff and boarders. There is a strong and successful emphasis on inclusion, participation and promotion of positive behaviour. Boarders are guided and supported to take full advantage of the school's teaching provision and they are thriving within the residential provision.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **National minimum standards**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated regulations.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- coordinate the collection of data that teachers hold about pupils' academic progress
- improve the quality of academic reports by consistently giving full details about the gains pupils have made in their knowledge, skills and understanding
- consider ways of improving still further the school's communication with parents and carers.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
--	---	--	--	--

### Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

<b>Overall effectiveness of the residential experience</b>	✓			
Outcomes for residential pupils	✓			
Quality of residential provision and care	✓			
Residential pupils' safety	✓			
Leadership and management of the residential provision	✓			

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special residential and day school for pupils who have specific learning difficulties and/or difficulties related to Asperger's syndrome		
<b>Date school opened</b>	1947		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 73	Girls: 28	Total: 101
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of boarders</b>	Boys: 27	Girls: 12	Total: 39
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 56	Girls: 20	Total: 76
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£16,200 - £21,165		
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£23,376 - £29,382		
<b>Address of school</b>	Northiam Rye East Sussex TN31 6NL		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01797 252494		
<b>Email address</b>	office@frewencollege.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Smith		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Frewen Educational Trust Ltd		

21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Frewen College, Rye TN31 6NL**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. The school provides you with a good education and the boarding provision is outstanding. These are some of the things we liked most.

- The lessons you receive are well matched to your needs, especially helping you to develop your literacy skills. These skills also help you to gain success in exams which will help prepare you for the future.
- You told us that you feel safe and that you enjoy your lessons. We could see that you get good teaching and this also helps you to become more confident in everything that you do.
- I really enjoyed your play rehearsals and your sports skills.
- All the team enjoyed your freshly-baked friendship cake which was very tasty, as are your school meals.

In order to help the school to be even better I have asked the headteacher to:

- bring together all the information that teachers have about your progress
- make sure your reports always say more about the progress you have made
- look at ways to improve communication with your parents and carers.

You can all help by maintaining your outstanding attitudes to learning and school life. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell  
Lead inspector