

# Frewen College

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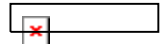
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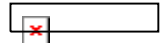
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## Introduction and summary

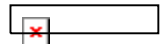


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school



Frewen College is a day and residential specialist school administered through the Frewen Educational Trust Ltd. It is registered with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for up to 144 pupils and students aged seven to seventeen who have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). It is also a registered member of CreSTeD (Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils). The school is situated in a rural location in East Sussex on a 60 acre site. The junior department is located nearby at The Oaks, a purpose-built teaching base. This was approved in 1998 and is registered for up to 26 pupils.

All pupils have associated needs such as dyspraxia, dyscalculia and speech and language difficulties. A number of pupils have communication disorders and the school is seeking registration to admit pupils who have Asperger's Syndrome. The school opened in 1957. In September 2004 the school began to admit girls to the school and there are currently 87 pupils on roll, of whom six are girls. The school is registered for 89 boarders and residential accommodation is on the site. Currently there are 17 pupils and students who board during the week. At present, boarding is only available for boys. Since January 2005 the school has offered full boarding facilities and some

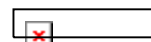
pupils will begin using this facility later in the term. The places of half the pupils are funded by their Local Education Authority (LEA) and half are privately funded by parents. Fifty pupils have statements of special educational need (SEN).

Frewen College aims to improve and develop pupils' literacy, language and communication skills, numeracy and use of information and communication technology (ICT). The school also aims to overcome pupils' low self esteem and improve their self-confidence through developing their individual talents and abilities. It offers speech and language, art and occupational therapy for pupils who need specialist support.

The school aims to offer a nurturing environment where pupils can grow emotionally and study the subjects of the national curriculum. This is tailored to their individual needs with a large creative element and, for most pupils, the opportunity to take six to eight General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. Students in Year 12 are offered a range of options, including some Advanced Supplementary (A/S) level examinations.

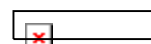
The school was inspected by the Commission for Social Care and Inspection (CSCI) in September 2004.

### Summary of main findings



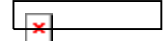
The school makes good provision for its pupils and students and achieves its central aims. These include offering a full and differentiated curriculum based on the National Curriculum (NC). The school is successful in promoting pupils' self-confidence and enhancing their self-esteem. There are good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils. The pupils appreciate and respect the unique historical setting of the school and its grounds. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school and those leaving in Year 11 and Year 12 move on to well chosen college courses or employment. Teaching and learning are good overall and a particularly high standard of education is provided in The Oaks junior department, where there are very high expectations and pupils achieve very well.

### What the school does well



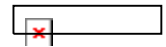
- it provides a caring environment which allows pupils to make gains academically, socially and emotionally;
- it makes good provision to meet the individual needs of pupils including those who have statements of (SEN). Many pupils benefit either individually or in groups from the expertise of art, occupational and speech and language therapists;
- teaching is good overall and enables pupils to make good progress in relation to their individual ability. Teaching at The Oaks is particularly good and delivered by a highly skilled and committed staff group;
- its staff know the pupils well and are sensitive to their individual needs;
- its pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and behave very well in lessons and around the school; and
- there is a positive ethos where staff provide good role models and good moral guidance for pupils to learn to distinguish between right and wrong.

## What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- ensure all the requirements for health and safety are met and all details for maintaining an admission register are in line with the regulations as set out in section 3 of this report;
- improve the aspects of the premises recorded in section 5; and
- complete the information given to parents by including the detail referred to in section 6.

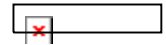
## Next steps



Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

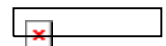
- strengthen the monitoring of teaching across the school to share and extend best practice.

## Compliance with the regulations for registration

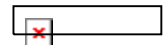


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### 1. The quality of education provided by the school



#### The quality of the curriculum



The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and students. To reflect the specific needs and abilities of pupils it offers all subjects of the National Curriculum except a modern foreign language. However it is investigating providing experience of this in a lunchtime club. In addition the curriculum includes personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education (RE), citizenship and careers education.

More than half the pupils in the school have statements of SEN and the school successfully meets the requirements of their statements as well as the specific needs of other pupils who do not have statements.

The curriculum offered at The Oaks is particularly stimulating. There are very good schemes of work and planning in place for all subjects in the junior department. Topics are organised in a two year cycle to ensure the mixed-age classes receive appropriate coverage. Very good use is made of

focused trips and visits to support learning. For example, when studying Shakespeare's "The Tempest", pupils visited a local theatre to see a children's performance of the play.

At Key Stage 3 pupils are taught in year groups with smaller groupings for English and mathematics. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The school is developing links and sharing expertise with three local secondary schools with an emphasis on the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In Year 9 pupils are given guidance on choosing options for Key Stage 4. Pupils follow nationally accredited courses in Key Stage 4 and almost all are entered for GCSE examinations. The curriculum is enhanced by extra curricular activities including lunchtime clubs such as dance and music.

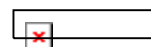
Students in Year 12 receive a curriculum which offers work experience, attendance at college to follow courses in construction trades and metalwork, and preparation for A/S level examinations in art, and photography. Some students complete proficiency certificates in numeracy and literacy. There is an appropriate PSHE and citizenship curriculum which covers healthy living, sex education, drugs education and personal development.

For pupils and students who board the curriculum is extended by supervised homework which is also available to day pupils. Other activities in the boarding house include model making, outside activities such as golf and fishing and activities within the local community such as a theatre group and the local cadet force. There is also the sensible recognition that sometimes pupils just need opportunities to relax. The head of boarding is keen to encourage greater independence and provide opportunities for pupils and students to take responsibility for themselves and their surroundings.

Careers education is thorough and starts in Year 9 where pupils are asked to consider their own strengths and weaknesses. In Year 10 the school has a good structure to organise work experience either through local contacts or closer to pupils' homes. In Year 11 the syllabus provides more intensive work on writing curriculum vitae, applications for jobs and preparation for interviews. Work experience sometimes leads to an offer of employment for students. The school has good links with the careers service and a specialist careers adviser attends pupils' annual reviews.

The work of art, occupational and speech and language therapists with individuals and groups benefits a large number of pupils. These benefits are strengthened by links with teachers and the incorporation of strategies into the wider curriculum.

### **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



Teaching and learning are good overall and are particularly strong in The Oaks junior department. In over half of the lessons seen teaching was good or better and in almost all others it was at least satisfactory. There was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have very good relations with pupils and students and they are successful in establishing a positive climate for learning. Although girls form a small minority at the school, they report feeling happy and they participate fully in lessons.

In the best lessons, there is good planning which takes account of the different levels of ability in the class. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use interesting materials to keep pupils on task. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their own ideas, for example in geography when they construct a spider gram showing the impact of flooding, or in science when they discuss the results of their experiments to make crystals. ICT is used effectively to support learning, for example in junior classes when pupils learn to design pictures based on the work of abstract artists, or in the GCSE art course when pupils scan images and experiment with the use of different colours. In a small number of lessons, planning lacks detail and tasks are not suitably matched to pupils' individual ability, which results in the more able pupils not being sufficiently challenged. There is an

over-reliance on teacher direction and opportunities are missed to use written exercises to consolidate learning. In a very few cases, marking is inconsistent and pupils' work is not well presented.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' and students' behaviour and encourage them to develop independent study skills. As a result, pupils learn to take responsibility for their work and the equipment they use. They develop positive attitudes to learning, work hard and are pleased to talk about their achievements, such as when they describe their GCSE results, or show their paintings in art and models in design and technology (DT). Homework is set regularly which pupils and students complete in the evening 'prep' sessions.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in most areas of the NC and the courses for post-16 students. Additionally, several staff have specialist qualifications in teaching pupils with specific learning difficulties. This specialist knowledge is used to particularly good effect in The Oaks junior department, where staff use strategies systematically to ensure pupils make good progress in spelling, reading and numeracy. Most teaching assistants demonstrate good knowledge of pupils' and students' individual needs and support them well, although in a few lessons they are not sufficiently aware of teachers' planning and their role is unclear. The school would benefit from more systematic monitoring of teaching and learning across the school to extend and share best practice.

Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is appropriate equipment to support the teaching of practical subjects and ICT. A separate library area in the secondary department provides a suitable range of books and magazines for pupils' personal reading. The school is currently adding books to reflect the interests of girls. Materials based on a commercial scheme to support the teaching of pupils with specific learning difficulties are used appropriately by several teachers and particularly by those teaching junior aged pupils. There is a limited range of artefacts to support the teaching of RE, geography and history. Resources used in DT are not sufficiently linked to the requirements of the NC.

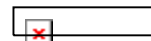
There are good arrangements in place for assessing pupils' and students' progress. Pupils are tested on entry using several standardised tests linked to reading and literacy. Thereafter, pupils take annual tests in the secondary department and six monthly tests in the junior department. All pupils, including those with statements of SEN, have individual education plans (IEPs) which are reviewed termly. Staff assess pupils' standards using NC levels. However, this information does not always inform lesson planning. The detailed information gathered in the junior department is not consistently used by staff following pupils' transfer to the secondary department.

Pupils and students make good progress relative to their individual ability, which is demonstrated by the number of GCSE passes achieved each year. Particularly high standards are achieved in art, ICT and music where a large number of passes are grade A\* - C. In the junior department pupils learn to read with increasing fluency and records show they make good progress in reading and spelling. Pupils and students leaving in Years 11 and 12 move on to suitable range of vocational and college courses or employment.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



The school makes very good provision for pupils' and students' moral and social development and

satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development.

The spiritual development of pupils and students in the secondary school is primarily taught through the PSHE curriculum and twice weekly assemblies. There are also weekly tutorial sessions when pupils can discuss personal issues. In PSHE lessons, pupils learn to value themselves and each other when they study such topics as personal relationships, sex education and healthy living. In assembly, pupils learn to respect different faiths and cultures, although opportunities for reflection and prayer are limited. Some individuals have an opportunity for developing self-awareness by attendance at art therapy sessions.

The Oaks junior department promotes pupils' spiritual development well in assemblies when they say prayers and at the end of the day when they have time for reflection.

Pupils and students are helped in their social and moral development by the positive example set by staff. Staff treat pupils with respect and have very high expectations of their conduct and behaviour. Consequently pupils learn good manners and are courteous and polite in their discussions with visitors. In lessons, pupils discuss social and moral issues with maturity, for example in citizenship lessons when they consider the arguments for and against animal experiments.

A handbook is given to all pupils on entry. This is a very clear booklet which sets out the 'Frewen Code', emphasising the need for pupils to try to do their best and to respect each other and their property. It also contains helpful information for pupils on what to do should they have any concerns or worries. In The Oaks, pupils are encouraged to welcome new peers and "make sure nobody is lonely or sad". Pupils also have the opportunity to develop social skills in fortnightly circle time sessions and when they study topics on emotions.

Social responsibility is promoted through the school council which provides a forum for pupils and students to discuss issues and raise concerns. Representatives on the council have been involved in deciding changes to the school's uniform and improving aspects of the premises. The council is also given an annual budget which has been used to fund a whole school trip to a theme park and the hiring of an on-site laser game.

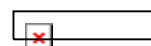
Positive attitudes and effort are recognised through the giving of 'order marks' in the secondary department and 'stars' in The Oaks. Pupils value these systems and feel they are used fairly and consistently by staff to ensure each individual's effort is noticed. The school also holds an annual prize-giving where pupils' and students' achievements are recognised with the awarding of books and trophies. Leavers receive a record of achievement, which summarises their successes during their time at the school.

The developing citizenship curriculum provides pupils with a sound general knowledge of public institutions and services. In RE and assemblies, pupils develop their knowledge of different faiths and cultures. In The Oaks a good link has been established with a local church and there are organised trips to a local woodcrafts centre, gardens, castle and theatre. The secondary department would benefit from a more developed programme of visits to museums and places of cultural interest.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



Staff in both the boarding and school settings take very good care of pupils and students. They

know the pupils well and pupils consequently feel able to talk to staff. The small number of girls recently admitted to the school are confident they can talk to the school's matron or their form tutors if they have any concerns. Staff share information well and there is a thorough procedure for links between the boarding and educational settings. Whilst a few pupils expressed concerns in the questionnaire given to them prior to the inspection, those interviewed in school felt safe and confident that any instances of bullying would be dealt with appropriately. A number of staff have had recent training in First Aid and the school's matron is on site during the school day. There are very good booklets designed for both day and boarding pupils on a range of aspects of school life. These include details of an independent listener who visits the school.

There is a comprehensive range of policies on welfare, health and safety to guide staff. Some of these policies are wisely being updated to fully reflect recent guidelines. The school has devised an accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and has arranged to attend suitable training. The deputy headteacher has attended training which has been disseminated to staff and there is a clear policy which all staff have on child protection.

The school provides good, nourishing food for pupils and encourages them to make healthy choices. Pupils appreciate the quality of the food.

Behaviour is very good and is underpinned by the school's expectations of high standards. The policy on the promotion of good behaviour clearly sets out rewards and sanctions. The school uses bound books to record general incidents and sanctions and any instances of physical intervention. Accidents and other incidents are carefully recorded.

Attendance registers are completed twice a day with an additional registration for boarders and day pupils who stay to do their homework. Some details missing from the admission register are the name and address of parents, the name and address of the school last attended and the sex of the pupil.

The use of power tools in the DT room does not fully meet the requirements as this takes place in a room without adequate ventilation and without a clear exclusion zone around power tools. The school has a fitness room but the certification for this has expired. The school has made arrangements for this to be inspected but the room should not be used until a new certificate has been issued.

The CSCI report noted a number of improvements needed to meet the standards fully. The school has recently agreed an amended report with CSCI and is responding to any outstanding areas requiring improvement.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

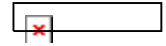
***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure the use of power tools in the design and technology room fully meets requirements and that the fitness room has an updated certificate (paragraph 3(4)); and
- add the details noted in the section above to fully meet the requirements for the admission register (paragraph 3 (9)).



#### 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

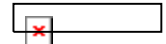


The registered proprietor of the school is The Frewen Educational Trust Ltd and there is a governing committee in place, which has overall responsibility for the work of the school. All staff have been subject to satisfactory clearance at an enhanced level by the Criminal Records Bureau. The school keeps thorough records to show that staff qualifications and identity are checked and that references are taken up with previous employers. Individual files contain a useful record of staff induction and training and information is updated as circumstances change.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### 5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The standard of the premises and accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has a unique situation, having both a building and grounds which are listed and which therefore have restrictions on any changes. For instance, the outdoor swimming pool cannot be heated. The gardens are exceptionally well maintained and offer a large and interesting range of areas for pupils to use. The school makes good use of various outbuildings to provide specialist accommodation for music, art and food technology. The ventilation in the DT room is not adequate. In the main teaching area there are specialist facilities for science and ICT as well as a Library area.

The school intends to enhance facilities for physical education by building a sports hall, once finance has been secured, and this is part of its development plan. The Oaks has no hard play area but has recently added a substantial adventure playground which extends opportunities for play.

There are good displays of art and pottery around the school, although some class rooms would benefit from the use of more interesting and up-to-date material. Display at The Oaks is of a very high standard and offers a good model to the rest of the school.

All areas of the school are clean and well cared for. The school is aware of the need to be vigilant in maintaining steps and paths in the old building and grounds.

Pupils and students who board are accommodated in rooms either singly or with up to three other pupils in the interesting and historic main house. Most rooms have en suite facilities. These premises are clean, furnishings are of a satisfactory quality and there is a programme of refurbishment taking place.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

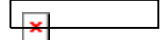
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

##### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure there is adequate ventilation in the D&T room (paragraph 5 (p)).

## 6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school has recently revised the information for both prospective and current parents and this meets almost all the requirements of the current regulations. It does not include a statement about the number of formal complaints the school may have received within the previous school year. New handbooks provide comprehensive information for parents of both day and boarding pupils.

There are good opportunities for contact with parents of both day and boarding pupils. The school operates an open door policy for parents to contact the school. Boarding staff have telephone contact with parents. There are formal opportunities for parents to meet with staff on consultation days and at annual reviews. Therapists employed by the school attend consultation days and also meet with parents at other times on request. Parents receive copies of IEPs at least each once a term and a full report annually. Most parents who completed a questionnaire prior to the inspection felt they were kept well informed about their children's progress and all but one parent felt comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns.

The school has just set up "Friends of Frewen" to provide opportunities for current and past pupils, students and parents and other interested parties to meet. There is an informative and attractive newsletter, The Frewen, which is sent to parents.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

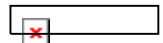
The school meets all the requirements except one.

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- make clear that parents and prospective parents may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the previous school year (paragraph 6 (2) (j)).

## 7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



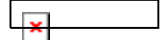
The school has recently amended its complaints procedure to ensure it meets all the regulations. The procedure sets out how parents can make formal and informal complaints to the school. A record of complaints is held with a note of action taken. The parents' handbooks for both boarding and day pupils contains helpful information on how parents can raise concerns and make complaints.

In response to the parental questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, almost all parents report that they understand the school's procedure for handling complaints.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## School details



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Name of school:	Frewen College		
DfES ref number:	845/6002		
Type of school:	Day and residential special school		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	7 - 17 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 81,	Girls 6,	Total 87
Number of boarders:	Boys 17,	Girls 0,	Total 17
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 48,	Girls 2,	Total 50
Annual fees (day pupils):	£11,925 - £15,750		
Annual fees (boarders):	£18,750 - £22,500		
Address of school:	Brickwall Northiam Near Rye, East Sussex TN31 6NL		
E-mail address:	office@frewcoll.freereserve.co.uk		
Telephone number:	01797 252494		
Fax number:	01797 252567		
Headteacher:	Mrs Felicity Youlten		
Proprietor:	Frewen Educational Trust Ltd		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Pauline Allison HMI		
Dates of inspection:	24 - 27 January 2005		

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