

# Edge Grove School

Inspection report for boarding school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC019331
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Dawn Taylor
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Edge Grove School Trust Ltd Edge Grove School High Cross Aldenham WATFORD WD25 8NL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 855724
<b>Email</b>	mdavies@edgegrove.com
<b>Registered person</b>	Edge Grove School Trust Limited
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Michael Joseph Davies
<b>Nominated person</b>	Michael Joseph Davies
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20 November 2007

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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

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

## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Edge Grove School was founded in 1935. In 1969 it became a non-profit making charitable trust under the guidance of a board of governors. It is set in 29 acres of parkland incorporating ten acres of playing fields. The school has landscaped well kept gardens, a large sports hall, heated swimming pool, tennis courts and croquet lawns.

Edge Grove school offers a boarding provision for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 13. Children are able to flexi-board. The whole school is divided into four sections: Hart House for pre-prep children aged 3-7; Edge Grove has the junior school for ages 7-9, the middle school for ages 9-11 and senior school for 11-13.

### Summary

This was an announced joint inspection with the Independent Schools Inspectorate. It was undertaken by one Ofsted inspector over four days. The inspection looked at the key boarding school national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall outcome judgement is good with some outstanding features in individual outcome areas. The outcome areas for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are judged as outstanding. The outcome areas for being healthy, positive contribution and organisation are judged as good. The outcome area for economic wellbeing is judged as satisfactory. Three recommendations have been set.

Edge Grove school continues to develop boarding practice and facilities to ensure the needs of all boarders are met and their welfare is promoted at all times.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the school was asked to ensure that adequate records were kept in relation to individual boarders' emotional and welfare needs and that all personal information about boarders is protected. These have been met and there are now clear procedures in place that ensure good staff practice. The school was also asked to ensure that the young people's privacy is protected when they use the pay phone and ensure that the cultural diversity of the young people is reflected in the festivals and activities provided in the boarding house. Both these recommendations have been reviewed and met. The school continues to address the development of boarding accommodation.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The promotion of boarders' health and well being is good with outstanding features. There is a coordinated approach which promotes the good health of all boarders through access to excellent quality medical treatment and first aid. The school employs two registered nurses and all key staff are first aid qualified. In addition there is a general practitioner who holds a surgery at the school once a week. Boarders feel that they are sensitively cared for when they are unwell.

The school has a comprehensive medication policy, procedure and practice guidance that specifically addresses the safe storage and administration of medication and the use of non-prescribed medicines. All medical procedures have been agreed by the school's doctor.

The staff actively promote the school's health education policy. There is an established personal, social and health education curriculum that is supported by boarding staff and the school nurses. Boarders are gaining appropriate knowledge to help them make informed choices and to identify sources of support. A healthy lifestyle is promoted by staff and there is a wide range of sporting activities on offer.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting the aims, objectives and underlying principles of the national food agencies and the national healthy schools programme. There has been a significant development in the provision of meals and the school now has a whole school healthy eating approach. All menus have been reviewed and revised, the dining facilities extended and number of mealtime sittings reduced. Catering staff are committed to providing boarders with nutritious, balanced meals that are adequate in quality, quantity and choice, and provision is made for any boarder who has special dietary requirements. Boarders benefit from the commitment to provide freshly prepared food that is locally sourced. The kitchen provides a range of world foods that embraces and represents other cultures and countries. Meals are prepared by a team of local and knowledgeable staff who are integral to the life of the school.

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

The provision is outstanding.

There are effective and well documented policies on child protection and anti-bullying that ensure staff promote a safe and secure community in which boarders feel happy and valued. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. The designated staff leads for child protection have attended advanced training and all staff at Edge Grove receive regular comprehensive child protection and safeguarding training. Boarders know that bullying behaviour is not tolerated and staff are well informed of current practice and concerns, for example cyber-bullying is emphasised in the school's policy.

An outstanding feature of the school for boarders is their relationship with staff and peers. All relationships are based on mutual respect and considerate, thoughtful behaviour towards others. Boarders enjoy their boarding experience stating 'boarding is fun, 'I have lots of friends', 'the staff are brilliant and really care'. Boarders feel that staff respect their privacy and confidentiality and that their concerns are taken seriously. The school has an established complaints procedure and information about this is available to boarders and parents through written material and the school's website.

The school has in place strong systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. Boarders learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill. In addition staff receive regular fire awareness training. There is an established visitors' policy that ensures all staff and children are vigilant in preventing unsupervised access to the school site by visiting adults.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' experience of enjoying and achieving continues to be outstanding. All boarders are valued and supported by effective and sensitive pastoral care, provided by a dedicated team of house staff and an outstanding tutor system. Each boarder receives a high level of support which includes membership of a tutor group lead by two tutors. In addition to the team of house staff all education staff at the school undertake evening and weekend duties. Boarders are very clear that there are a range of staff they can go to for personal support and freely initiate interaction. Boarders' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence is excellent because they are valued within the school community and their contributions and efforts are noticed and rewarded.

Boarders have access to a 'circle of care' that promotes a list of contacts, both internal and external, in the event they need to speak to someone about a problem. The school's current designated independent listener is a school governor and parent, this does not meet the national minimum standard's definition of independent and is potentially a conflict of interest.

Edge Grove school provides a stimulating and supportive environment, which encompasses all aspects of the boarders' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Boarders readily participate in formal worship and assemblies, which are rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Boarders develop an awareness of their own culture and that of others and begin to appreciate cultural diversity through food, assemblies and peers. The school supports boarders to understand the importance of equality and diversity.

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

The provision is good.

Boarders' contribution to the running of the school and boarding house is good. There are positive relationships between staff and boarders, and boarders feel able to contribute to the boarding community. There are a wide range of formal and informal channels through which boarders can express their views and feelings including dormitory meetings and the school council. Boarders understand the purpose of these meetings and value initiatives introduced as a result of them.

Strong links with boarders' parents and families are a key part of the support and development of boarders. From the initial contact with the school, parents remain very well informed and the school works in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for their child. The school values and includes boarders' families and promotes parental contact.

A key strength of this school is the introduction and induction of new boarders to the school, which is sensitively managed by boarding staff and boarders in partnership with parents. New boarders and their parents are sent a comprehensive guide to boarding before they arrive. Each new boarder is befriended by a shadow, as well as being given a booklet describing life in the boarding house. This results in new boarders feeling welcomed and becoming valued members of the boarding house.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Edge Grove school has a satisfactory standard of accommodation for its boarders. The dormitories are housed in a grade II listed house, with a landing for girls and another for boys. The nature and age of the building means creating a homely atmosphere with room to expand is a challenge.

However, the progress made so far has been valued by the boarders, who feel relaxed, comfortable and at home. The accommodation is warm and welcoming. Boarders are proud of their dormitories which they have personalised. Space and facilities are at a premium and with the continuing increase in boarding numbers the school has made a commitment to further develop boarding accommodation and facilities. The school's strategic plan sets out a clear time frame to ensure future facilities are of a high standard. All accommodation is maintained to a good standard by a team of support staff. These are employed by the school, as opposed to external contractors, and are very loyal and knowledgeable in an emergency. The support staff are integral to the school's success.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The management and organisation of the school's welfare and boarding provision is good with outstanding features. The values and ethos of the school are clearly set out for parents and boarders in the statement of boarding principles and a range of other written guidance, together with important policies, procedures and guidelines. This is underpinned by clear staff policies and procedures that enhance their professional practice.

The head of boarding ensures effective monitoring of boarding to ensure continuity and effective policy implementation. Staffing levels and quality of care are excellent, continuous and consistent to ensure the welfare of all boarders. The boarding house has a dedicated team who are made clear of their roles and responsibilities through induction and on going professional development. However, not all staff with boarding duties are receiving a regular review of their performance. They are experienced, skilled and make life fun for boarders. This team is enhanced by evening and weekend support from all education staff. All staff work cohesively and communicate effectively. The commitment shown by all departments of the school to boarding results in holistic, child centred practice that ensures children have a positive experience of boarding and achieve strong outcomes.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school recognises the uniqueness of each boarder and their individual needs. They successfully encourage boarders from different social and cultural backgrounds to work and live together.

There is effective strategic and operational management with clear lines of accountability and communication. The governors and senior management team have a clear overview of boarding's strengths and needs, which ensures boarders are safe and receiving a good quality boarding experience. There is effective monitoring and evaluation of relevant records and events such as the complaints, child protection and discipline logs. Any shortfalls in these areas are identified and addressed very quickly. This quality monitoring contributes to reports to the governing body and the school's overall strategic plan. The school has substantial strengths and is working towards a sustained record of delivering outstanding performance and managing improvement.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the school's strategic plan addresses the development of boarding accommodation to meet the needs of the expanding numbers of boarders (NMS 42)
- ensure there is an appropriate process for the regular review of the performance of each member of staff with boarding duties by a more senior or experienced member of staff (NMS 34.5)
- ensure that there is at least one person (other than a parent) outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school (who may be a counsellor) whom boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. (NMS 14.4)