

David Game College

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

David Game College is an independent college that prepares students for higher education, by offering a range of GCSEs, A levels, English as a foreign language and university foundation courses. It is registered to admit students between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Currently, 201 students attend, 12 of whom are of compulsory school age. A small number have specific learning difficulties associated with literacy and communication. The college also admits students who have a statement of special educational needs although there are few currently on roll. Many students come from countries other than Great Britain and many speak English as an additional language. A few post-16 students live in self-catering accommodation owned by the college proprietor, which is inspected separately by Ofsted's Children's Directorate. The college opened in 1974 and occupies two sites in the Notting Hill area of west London. Provision is also located at Westminster Tutors in South Kensington, a college which was previously independent and was acquired by the David Game group in 1993.

The college aims to, *'build students' self-confidence and self-esteem so that all can learn in a supportive environment'*. To achieve these aims, there is a focus on providing individual courses of study tailored to each student's particular needs. It was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2008.

Evaluation of the school

David Game College provides a good quality of education. It is successful in meeting its central aims and offers a very wide range of courses that are effective in preparing students for higher education. The good quality of teaching and strong academic ethos ensure students make good progress. Students display very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding. The college has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in improving aspects of the curriculum and in strengthening its arrangements for safeguarding, which are now good. The college meets all except two of the regulations.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. A clear statement of aims is supported by schemes of work which are largely based on course requirements. The college is particularly successful in providing courses of study which meet the preferences of individual students. Students of compulsory school age follow a suitable GCSE programme and participate in weekly physical education (PE) sessions at a local leisure centre. An appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is provided, which includes elements of citizenship. The post-16 programme is very flexible and offers an extremely wide range of over 20 A level and AS courses. The university foundation course has a strong focus on developing mathematical, information and communication technology (ICT) and communication skills, combined with choice from a wide range of modules. The college also offers a separate art foundation course. The success of the university foundation course is demonstrated by the fact that all students gain a university place each year. Few extra-curricular activities are provided to enrich the curriculum or to extend students' learning and personal development beyond the classroom.

Students with specific learning difficulties, or who have a statement of special educational needs, have their needs identified quickly and are given extra support to help them pass their examinations. Students receive very thorough preparation for their future careers. All benefit from regular discussions with their tutors to review their progress and to help them choose appropriate university courses.

The quality of teaching and assessment ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. Teaching is particularly strong in the individual tuition sessions where lessons are planned to take close account of students' specific needs. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of their subjects and have a detailed understanding of the specific requirements needed to pass examinations. Strong relationships between teachers and students are evident in lessons across the college. Students feel comfortable discussing any difficulties in their learning and appreciate the extra time and help they receive from staff. In the words of one student, 'we have dedicated teachers who care.' Lessons generally move at a brisk pace and teachers use questioning well to check students' understanding. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for students to work collaboratively and to discuss their ideas with each other. Students who speak English as an additional language are supported well, for example when they receive handouts in accessible language.

Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the college has extended the use of ICT through the provision of interactive whiteboards in classrooms and the establishment of designated computer suites. However, in a few lessons, there is an over-reliance on the use of course textbooks as the sole resource to support learning. In the questionnaires returned during the inspection, a small number of students recognised rightly that the provision of books and equipment could be improved further.

The college conducts regular assessments in conjunction with course modules. This information is used effectively to check students' progress and to identify areas for improvement. The college does not have in place a system for evaluating the academic progress of students in relation to their starting points. However, given that some students arrive at the college having underperformed previously, or are new to the English education system, examination results demonstrate that they make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The college boosts students' self-esteem by encouraging them to believe that they can succeed in securing a place in higher education. The rigorous monitoring and individual support gives students a good understanding of their progress and fosters self-confidence in their ability to succeed. Students enjoy coming to the college, as demonstrated by their high attendance. Almost all complete their chosen courses and move on to suitable destinations in higher education, which is good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Weekly assemblies attended by students of compulsory school age provide opportunities for celebrating success and reflecting on moral issues such as international human rights. Students are encouraged to draw on their own backgrounds and community experiences to develop an understanding of right and wrong. For example, this occurs when they consider the legal implications of not having appropriate documentation to study in the United Kingdom, or discuss the effects of censorship on personal liberty. Students are courteous to each other and to staff and visitors. Their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the college.

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and demonstrate very good independent study skills. However, they have few opportunities to participate in external community activities or take leadership roles in the college. The college is currently developing this area, for example by developing the role of a college council. Students come from a very wide range of cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds and bring these to bear in classroom discussions. They demonstrate a good understanding of the different cultures represented and display tolerance towards each other's differences. Planning to ensure systematic coverage of different faiths and cultures is underdeveloped.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. The college provides a caring environment where students feel safe and valued. Detailed health and safety policies and risk assessments are in place, which cover all aspects of the college's work. Staff have received recent training in safeguarding and a clear child protection policy is in place and implemented. Policies to promote positive behaviour

and to deal with any bullying are in place, although any such incidents are extremely rare. Fire drills are held regularly and fire-fighting equipment checked by a specialist company. There are sufficient staff qualified to administer first aid and a high level of staffing ensures students are supervised closely on all college sites. On one of the sites, an electronic register has been introduced recently to record attendance. This system is not used consistently to record students' attendance at the beginning of each session as required.

The PSHE curriculum includes topics on emotional well-being and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The college encourages the consumption of healthy food in its dining halls. Whilst some students visit a local sports and leisure centre each week, other opportunities for PE are limited by the college's lack of facilities and the absence of outdoor space for recreation. This issue was raised by some students.

The college has a plan for increasing access to the site which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. It has recently installed a toilet for disabled users, a new lift and handrails.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The college has thorough procedures in place for the recruitment and appointment of staff. All staff have been subject to clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure they are suitable to work with children. As required, a single central register is held to record checks that have taken place prior to a new appointment, for example on an applicant's identity and qualifications.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The classrooms on all sites are of a suitable size for the numbers of students using them and are well maintained. The main site in Notting Hill Gate contains specialist classrooms to support the teaching of practical subjects such as science, art and ICT. These facilities are available to students who are based at other sites. On all sites there is a lack of outdoor space where students can play and spend their leisure time safely.

Provision of information

The college provides all the required information for parents, prospective parents, carers and others. A handbook setting out the college's policies and procedures is sent to the parents and carers of all new students and additional information is available on the college's website. Parents and carers receive a brief but satisfactory report on their child's progress and attendance twice in the school year. They expressed overwhelmingly positive views about the college in the small number of parental questionnaires returned.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints policy meets all the regulations. The policy sets out how informal and formal complaints may be made to the school and parents and carers are made aware that they can receive a copy on request.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 (the Regulations), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- maintain its attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space where students can play safely (paragraph 23(s)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Extend the range of resources to support teaching and learning.
- Establish a system for evaluating the academic progress of students in relation to their starting points.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Independent		
Date school opened	1974		
Age range of pupils	13–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 100	Girls: 70	Total: 170
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 10	Total: 31
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,400 – £20,000		
Address of school	69 Notting Hill Gate Kensington London W11 3JS		
Telephone number	0207 221 6665		
Email address	eny@davidgame-group.com		
Principal	Mr David Game		
Proprietor	Mr David Game		