

# Exeter Tutorial College

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Exeter Tutorial College was founded in 1984 by its current proprietors and in 1995 moved to its present site situated near the heart of the city in a residential area. The College is a co-educational establishment for students aged 14 years old and above. It aims to 'ensure that every student can achieve his or her potential, maintaining excellence by aiming high'. It offers any combination of AS and A-level subjects over one or two years, and GCSEs in one year, with A-level and AS retake courses for examinations in January or June. Entrance to the college is non-selective, and there is a broad mix every year from those with maintained and independent school as well as home taught backgrounds. Usually there are a few students from abroad, some of whom may be new to the country. All students have their places privately funded. Some students have special educational needs and these generally involve dyslexia. Currently there are 59 students on roll, including one student who has a statement of special educational needs and two students who are of compulsory school age. Around a quarter of students attend part time. The college was last inspected in 2007.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Exeter Tutorial College provides an outstanding quality of education for its students. The good curriculum and outstanding teaching and use of assessment ensure that students gain high results in A-level, AS and GCSE examinations or significantly improve from previous attempts. The progress that students make is outstanding, often in exceedingly short time spans. All aspects of the college have improved since the last inspection. The college meets its own aims and all of the requirements for registration, including those not met at the previous inspection. Safeguarding requirements are met and the welfare, health and safety of the students are outstanding, as is their behaviour.

## **Quality of education**

The good curriculum continues to closely follow the requirements of the relevant examination boards. Teachers are exceptional in the way that they manage lessons

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

with students of different ages following different levels of examinations and different examination boards all at the same time. The curriculum has considerably improved since the last inspection for those students of compulsory school age and it now fully meets the needs of each individual student regardless of their age, starting point or special educational needs.

At A level the college offers a choice of 27 different subjects. The most commonly followed are mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry. Some older students only attend the college in order to take one subject as a re-sit examination; often this is taken in January, and then they leave. The curriculum consequently changes termly and consists of those subjects that the students on roll at that time desire.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding and students make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics. Home taught and school phobic GCSE students do particularly well, as do those who have a very clear university course or specific target for which to aim. All students, part time or full time, make outstanding progress regardless of their background, heritage, age, gender or special educational needs. As one student astutely noted, 'Coming here has made me realise I can achieve more than I thought I could.'

Students are taught on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups with individual support. Teachers' knowledge of their subject specialisms and the examination board requirements are excellent. Teachers rapidly find out the previous barriers to an individual student's learning and correct any misconceptions that the student may have. They then adeptly use this knowledge to ensure that their lessons meet the specific needs of each individual student. This personalised learning is one reason why progress is outstanding and how students improve upon their previous examination grades or attain high grades in external examinations. Another is that the teachers are passionate about their subject specialisms and they inspire the students through their enthusiasm. Teachers characteristically have highly attuned skills of knowing just how much time to give students in order for them to think and struggle with a problem before providing the next learning step or resolution to the problem. Typically, lessons are taught at a swift pace with an emphasis on developing deeper levels of understanding and subject knowledge rather than just examination technique. Teachers use a good range of materials and resources, and include activities that are carefully planned to stimulate and enhance students' learning. They also use diagrams, schematic representations and colour coding when explaining and helping students to create their written notes in lessons. Consequently, students have exceptionally good notes to aid their revision, which they have generally written for themselves, that extend and enhance those in their textbooks or other learning aids that they use.

Regular testing and formal assessments help staff, parents and students to know how well the student is progressing. This, combined with high quality feedback to students, lets them know clearly where and how improvements in their work need to be made.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. Students' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite, considerate and caring young people demonstrating high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. All students get on well together. The informal atmosphere of the student common room encourages harmony, inclusion, social responsibility and peer support. Students say that the relaxed atmosphere makes them feel comfortable to ask questions in lessons and helps to motivate them to work hard because they feel treated like adults. Good humoured, positive relationships exist throughout the college. Along with the high quality of teaching and learning, the strength of these relationships is another reason for the successful outcomes for students. Most A-level students progress to university and get into their first choice course, including medical, veterinary and dental courses. GCSE students generally continue with their education and undertake A-level courses.

Some of the students join the college with feelings of being labelled as failures and have low levels of self-esteem. Staff at the college quickly help them to gain confidence through praise, consistent encouragement and highly effective emotional support and guidance. This, along with the required support from home, helps to re-motivate the students to commit to levels of hard work in order to reach their chosen goals. Although the college and students celebrate their successes there are missed opportunities by the college to demonstrate the emotional and social difference that it makes to students' lives. Because students really enjoy their lessons their attendance is good. Ethical, moral and social issues arise and are discussed in most subjects. The improved curriculum provides younger students with a good knowledge of citizenship along with personal, social, health and economic issues. They now have a better understanding of different cultures. Older students learn more informally about each other's cultures and backgrounds, relating well to each other in racial harmony.

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

The welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding. There are clear policies and procedures for safeguarding, health and safety, which are reviewed and updated regularly. The application of the college procedures safeguards and promotes the welfare of all its students highly effectively. Risk assessments and monitoring by staff ensure that accidents and levels of danger to students and staff are minimised. Fire drills are held regularly with fire-fighting equipment checked by a specialist company. The small number of students and excellent relationships throughout the college mean that the rules of the college are known and followed. Staff are consistent in their application of rules and policies. Adults understand students' needs extremely well and give them exceptional care, guidance and support. Students receive excellent counselling about careers and university choices. Staff are seen by students

to be firm but fair. Students said that they felt safe in the college and that if they had any concerns they could share them with the designated college counsellor. However, they also said that all their teachers were so kind and supportive that they would be happy to share any concerns with them too. Students are well aware of how to keep safe and live healthy lifestyles.

The college is rigorous in its recruitment of staff and in ensuring that staff training requirements, for example in first aid and child protection, are all up to date. There is now an appropriate three-year accessibility plan in place, in keeping with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

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

The college has thorough procedures in place for the recruitment and appointment of staff. It complies fully with the regulations in respect of the checks made on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children and young people. As required, all recruitment and vetting checks are recorded in the college's single central register.

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

The accommodation is suitable for safe and effective learning and includes specialist science laboratories, study and tutorial rooms, a student common room, a library and administrative offices. The rooms are of a suitable size for the number of students using them and they are clean and maintained well. There is an attractive outdoor garden area for students to stroll and sit in. The college also makes appropriate arrangements for students to use local recreation and sports facilities.

### **Provision of information**

The college has established good links with parents. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress through regular written reports and informal meetings. Parents expressed overwhelmingly positive views about the college in the very small number of parental questionnaires returned. The prospectus and other information provided for parents and students fully meet requirements.

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

The college has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure. The complaints policy meets all the regulations.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

- Consider further ways to demonstrate the emotional and social development of students from when they join the college, so that the successes in students' progress in these areas can be fully tracked and celebrated.

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Tutorial College		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 1984		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 27	Girls: 12	Total: 39
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 12	Girls: 8	Total: 20
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,485		
<b>Address of school</b>	Exeter Tutorial College 44–46 Magdalen Road Exeter Devon EX2 4TE		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 278101		
<b>Email address</b>	info@tutorialcollege.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	KD Jack		
<b>Proprietor</b>	KD Jack and EM Jack		