

Bellerbys College, Brighton

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	846/6009
Unique Reference Number (URN)	114664
Inspection number	8129
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Thirkell

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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 COLLEGE

Bellerbys College is located in purpose-built accommodation in the centre of Brighton. Founded in 1959 as Davies College, it moved to its present site in 2007. The teaching accommodation is adjacent to the students' residential building, although some boys and girls are housed with host families in the town. The college is registered for students between 14 and 19 years of age. There are currently 667 enrolled, the vast majority of whom are from overseas. The college offers a wide range of courses aimed at securing places for its students at British universities. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs. The college aim is: *'to provide different pathways for international students to effectively transfer and adapt educationally, linguistically and socially into the UK education system and way of life'*. The college's educational provision was last inspected in November 2007. Boarding facilities and procedures, which were not part of this inspection, were last inspected by Ofsted in January 2010.

EVALUATION OF THE COLLEGE

Bellerbys College successfully meets its core aim. It provides a good quality of education which enables most students to make good progress and to move into the higher education system in the United Kingdom, exemplified by the good results achieved in public examinations and the vast majority of older students securing places at university. Teachers show commitment to their students, who affirm that they appreciate the unstinting support provided by the staff. Systems for monitoring students' academic progress are outstanding. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by strategies deployed by the college and the careful attention provided by pastoral staff. Procedures for safeguarding and ensuring students' welfare are good. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for their welfare, health and safety has improved since the last inspection. Students say they enjoy being at the college, and parents and carers who responded to a questionnaire were unanimous in their support. The school meets all the requirements for registration as an independent school.

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. It provides good opportunities for students of all ages and abilities to make academic and personal progress. The curriculum policy is clearly set out and details are available to parents and carers through the college prospectus, its website and other handbooks. Schemes of work provide detailed guidance for teaching of each subject and level of study. The range of courses ensures an essential flexibility is available to respond to students' developing needs, for example in relation to their competence in English. The curriculum provides a suitably wide choice of subjects for GCSE/IGCSE and A level students. All students of compulsory school age take either an English Language programme which focuses on the development of English or study up to six GCSE subjects, including English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. All students of compulsory school age have a full-time programme of study, which includes weekly physical education (PE) and personal social and health education (PSHE) as required by the independent school regulations. Provision for careers education has improved since the last inspection. However, as yet, only 30 per cent of compulsory school-aged students take part in a recently-introduced voluntary work experience for one week following the completion of examinations. Good structures are in place to provide advice to students on the choice of courses and to support their future educational progress. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities extends students' learning experience through trips visits and other additional activities although these are not centrally monitored by the college. The range of subjects available at A level is extensive and supports students' future ambitions of proceeding into higher education well. In addition to A level, a one-year university foundation course, a business diploma and a Pre-Masters programme are available to older students.

Teaching is good. Lessons are mostly well planned, carefully structured and managed and proceed at a pace appropriate to the topic. As a result of good teaching and the support of their teachers, students make good progress relative to their abilities and fluency in English. Teachers are effective communicators. They are subject specialists and consequently show a depth of understanding and enthusiasm for their subjects. They appreciate the special care needed in the use of spoken English so then can communicate clearly with students from overseas with varying levels of competence in the language. The college has provided guidance in this respect through training for staff. Care is taken to ensure that notes are clearly written on the boards in classrooms and effective use is made of the interactive whiteboards available in every classroom. Resources are sufficient to support effective teaching and learning. Marking and feedback in students' exercise books shows a similar degree of care to the clarity displayed in communicating guidance orally. Questioning is usually used effectively to engage students in learning. Even at this very early stage of the academic year, individual students were rarely left out. The most effective questioning by teachers encourages them to form their own

opinions and to think independently. Generally, the good use of praise encourages students to volunteer answers without fear of making errors.

Assessment continues to be of outstanding quality, supported by frequent opportunities for students to speak one-to-one with their teachers and pastoral tutors. Students identify this as one of the most important strengths of the college. Their progress is carefully monitored and regular reports to parents and carers are provided. Teachers make appropriate use of any information provided about students' previous schools and from the college's own tests. Expectations set by the college with respect to monitoring student progress are very clear and well supported by the staffing structure.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Providing positive support and broadening the students' experience and view of the world contribute to the good preparation for their future education and lives. Students develop self-knowledge and self-esteem through the support of their teachers and opportunities to participate in discussions. They invariably demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. The induction course and ongoing careful monitoring by teachers and tutors ensure that students' understanding of English, of English laws and customs, and of public institutions is consistently extended and deepened. A wide programme of additional activities strengthens their understanding, for example through trips to London.

In discussion and in the questionnaires, virtually all students said that they enjoyed their time at the college. Their behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Students have good opportunities to express their views and make a good and increasing contribution both to the school community and to the wider community, through student councils, through voluntary work, for example in local schools and after-school clubs, and now through work experience as well as through charitable fundraising, for example for the Haiti disaster.

There are currently students from over 40 countries attending the college. An aspect of outstanding success is that students from such a wide variety of countries learn to appreciate their own and others' cultures and to live and work in harmony and tolerance with one another. This is supported by all students living close by one another in the college's own accommodation as well as through activities such as celebrations of culture organised or encouraged by the college in social time.

WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STUDENTS

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and has improved since the last inspection. Students say they feel safe in the college. Arrangements to ensure their security and safety are rigorous, both in college and on trips, visits and journeys to students' home countries. Procedures for recording and monitoring students' attendance are good. All students under 18 have individual care plans. Students are encouraged to be healthy through the good quality of food provided and to take regular exercise. A suitably wide range of sporting activities are organised by college staff. The college nurse has an important role in providing health guidance within the PSHE course for students of compulsory school age.

Procedures for safeguarding young people are good; all staff, including ancillary and visiting staff, are regularly trained in matters relating to child protection. Pastoral staff are alert to child protection issues and good systems are in place for ensuring that students remain safe. The college residential arrangements meet the minimum boarding standards, verified by the last inspection of boarding.

Policies and documentation of all procedures related to safety are meticulously implemented. The first aid plan is of a good quality and first aid boxes are checked regularly. Staff have undergone suitable training and the college has a nurse and good first-aid facilities on site. Documentation relating to health and safety is of outstanding quality. Risk assessments and fire safety provision are meticulously maintained and carefully audited. The college fulfils its responsibilities in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has carried out a thorough evaluation of its provision.

SUITABILITY OF STAFF, SUPPLY STAFF AND PROPRIETORS

The college has clear and established procedures for checking the suitability of all staff. All the required checks have been appropriately completed and are recorded in a single central register as required.

PREMISES OF AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE SCHOOL

The college provides accommodation of high quality. The buildings and its interior ensure a very healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning. Furnishings are of good quality throughout. The buildings, completed in 2007, are designed to include the most up-to-date systems for heating, ventilation and health. The college throughout is clean and well maintained. Appropriate attention is given to matters relating to the security of the building and the students. The building incorporates systems to support safe emergency evacuations, such as in the case of fire, supported by established procedures. Classrooms are generally of an appropriate size for the teaching groups which use them and facilities for students who may become ill are appropriate in number for the size of the college, including a room used by the college nurse. Although there is limited outdoor space, the college provides a very

good range of social areas, including common rooms that meet all students' needs. The teaching accommodation is additionally supported by a library, excellent access to computers and a large examinations hall.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The college provides good information for current and prospective parents, guardians and carers. The prospectus, information pack and the website meet all the statutory requirements. College staff invest much time and effort in building links with parents and carers; they consistently maintain good lines of communication, despite the difficulties involved when so many parents live so far away. There is a good system for reporting students' progress and attainment to parents and carers. Reports are provided for parents on five occasions through the academic year.

MANNER IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE HANDLED

The college has a clear and succinct complaints policy which also meets the requirements relating to the boarding provision. It suitably meets the language needs of parents and carers, most of whom have English as an additional language.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

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

WHAT THE SCHOOL COULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

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

- maintain an overview of the additional activities, including physical activities, engaged in by the compulsory school age students
- consider how the careers provision can be further improved.

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 students		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs		√		
How well students make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of students		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		√		
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SCHOOL DETAILS

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Tutorial College		
Date school opened	1956		
Age range of pupils	14–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 326	Girls: 256	Total: 667
Number of boarders	Boys: 326	Girls: 256	Total: 667
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 17,750		
Annual fees (boarders)	£ 27,750		
Address of school	1 Billington Way, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 4LF		
Telephone number	01273 339200		
Email address	naddison@studygroup.com		
Principal	Nigel Addison		
Proprietor	Michael Cornes		