

# Wentworth Tutorial College

Independent school standard inspection report

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DfE registration number	302/6109
Unique Reference Number (URN)	131288
Inspection number	386849
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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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 college

Wentworth Tutorial College is a non-selective college that attracts students from diverse backgrounds and varying academic abilities. A number of students have experienced difficulties in maintained schools. It provides GCSE and A-level courses for students aged between 14 and 19 years of age. Occasionally, students older than this attend the college. There are currently 43 full-time and 22 part-time students, with students coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. No student has a statement of special educational needs. All students of compulsory school age attend full time and those over this age attend as needed for the courses they follow. The college was founded in 1989 and occupies three adjoining private houses on the North Circular Road in Hendon, north west London. The college was subject to its last full inspection in November 2008 but in the interim has had four progress monitoring visits with the latest one taking place in November 2010.

The college's aim is to 'help students develop their potential and confidence supported by able and approachable teachers, in a friendly and positive atmosphere'. The college states that:

'Although, like all educational institutions, our examination results are of the utmost importance, we pride ourselves on giving students opportunities to learn, free from strict rules and regulations, and tailor programmes to meet their individual needs.'

## Evaluation of the college

Wentworth Tutorial College provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. Key to its success is the good quality of teaching and a curriculum that is generally well matched to the individual needs of the students. This winning combination helps to ensure that students make good progress so they are well prepared, both academically and socially, for the next stage of their lives. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students make a significant contribution to the effective learning environment through their outstanding behaviour, motivation and desire to do well. The college's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The college has responded well to regulatory

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

failures identified at the last inspection and progress monitoring visits and all regulations are now met.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum is good and is sufficiently well tailored to meet the individual needs of students. The college offers a wide range of academic courses at both GCSE and A level and provides appropriate careers guidance to help students make the next steps in their lives. The range of subjects includes English, film studies, media studies, history, government and politics, modern foreign languages, mathematics as well as more specialised areas such as photography and modern Hebrew. The college offers the facility for students to complete a two-year course in a single year, although this tends to be offered to the most able students and only after detailed discussion. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on students gaining analytical and evaluative skills in subjects such as English, history and government and politics. Effective strategies are in place to ensure that students gain a deep insight into the similarities and differences between political institutions, periods in history, novelists and poets and different religious beliefs and cultures. This deepens students' understanding and enhances their academic ability to evaluate, justify and put together convincing and persuasive arguments across a range of academic subjects.

The college offers further courses in subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology and over time has achieved some noteworthy successes, although the number of students involved in some subjects is low. Plans are already in hand to ensure that there is a greater emphasis given to the development of students' practical and investigative skills in biology to help students better prepare for examinations. Conversely, the practical and stimulating activities that are on offer in subjects such as film studies, media studies and photography fully engage the students, test out their imagination and contribute much to students' good progress. Over time, the college has arranged trips to theatres, museums, galleries as well as further afield to places such as China, Cuba and the United States of America. The college's recent fall in numbers has resulted in such trips not always now being financially viable. With this in mind, the college is rightly seeking to instigate a programme of visiting speakers across different subjects to provide differing perspectives and viewpoints in key areas of study.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good with some teaching that is outstanding. Relationships within lessons are often excellent and teachers work effectively at building up students' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers know their students very well and the levels of mutual respect are tangible. Most teachers demonstrate outstanding subject knowledge and use this to enthuse and motivate the students they teach. In the best teaching students are 'hanging on the teachers' every word'. Although there is an informal ambience around the college and in lessons, this at times masks the intensity and pace of learning that is taking place. In the outstanding lessons seen in subjects such as English, history and mathematics, the pace of learning never drops and the level of questioning and interaction keeps the students on their toes from the start to the end of the lesson. Such practice is

not yet fully consistent across the college. Some lessons are dominated by 'teacher talk' and students are not given enough opportunities to discuss opinions or viewpoints with each other and then to share them with the rest of the group. On other occasions, teachers do not give students enough time to organise their thoughts and responses before replying to questions and, as a result, opportunities to capitalise on the potential valuable contributions of students are missed. The small number of students in each group means that teachers have a good grasp of how well individual students are achieving. Regular reports to parents and carers, conferencing with students' and teachers' records mean that teachers have a good grasp of how well each student is progressing and what is needed to improve. In subjects such as film studies, students' work is stored and assessed electronically.

Students' written work is marked on a regular basis and there are some excellent examples where the areas for improvement are made crystal clear. Discussions with students indicate that they value these comments and readily take them on board. However, the college does not have a central system for recording the incremental progress of students which clearly demonstrates the 'value-added' that is being provided by the college from the very varied starting points of the students. Inspection evidence clearly demonstrates that students overall make good progress over time. There is no discernible difference between that of boys and girls or students of differing abilities. Examination results are testimony to this outcome with an often high pass rate, particularly at the higher levels which enables many students to continue on to higher education.

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

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes much to helping students leave the college as well-rounded individuals. As one student reported, 'this is a place that helps each student reach their potential, both academically and socially.' Students are extremely polite and courteous and readily engage in conversation with visitors. Most speak with great pride about their college and feel that it is helping them to become mature and responsible young adults. Students provide excellent role models for one another and for new students starting at the college so that they can quickly acclimatise to the 'Wentworth way of doing things'. They show a real desire to achieve well and are very attentive in lessons, being careful not to miss any of the valuable teaching points that are being made. Behaviour in class and around the college is outstanding and contributes much to the relaxed but very focused learning environment that envelops the college.

Through their studies, students are gaining a deep insight into moral and social issues that have an impact on local, national and international communities. They hold their own views and opinions on a range of issues and subjects and are ready to discuss these in a mature and sensitive manner. Occasionally, these opportunities are not fully capitalised on. They have a good understanding of the workings of public institutions and readily offer comments on how these compare with institutions in other countries. Students' work in subjects such as photography and

film studies provides an ideal opportunity for students to examine issues of spiritual, moral, social and cultural significance through visual imagery. Various different faiths and traditions are represented in the college and the norm is for students to demonstrate respect and tolerance towards one another. Students have a genuine voice in college through the student council and have helped to bring about improvements in facilities through, for example, the provision of an appropriate space to play basketball.

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

The welfare, health and safety of students are good. Students are well cared for and levels of supervision are good. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all visits off the college site. Discussions with students indicate that Wentworth is a safe place to learn and they are eager to point out that bullying, of any kind, is not an issue at the college. Students report that the excellent relationships and levels of respect between staff and students mean that they readily approach an adult if they have any worries or concerns, confident in the fact that any issue will be dealt with swiftly and confidentially. Students have a good awareness of what is needed to keep fit, to eat healthily and how to manage risks in their own lives. Procedures for child protection are well established, known and followed by all staff and key personnel have attended the required higher-level training. Policies are in place to promote good behaviour and importantly this is reflected in students' excellent behaviour. There are an appropriate number of trained first aiders. Practices relating to fire safety have improved over the last two years and now meet requirements. The college has an accessibility plan which meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

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

All of the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed appropriately to ensure the safe recruitment of personnel. Details of checks are recorded in a suitable single register.

## **Premises and accommodation at the college**

The college premises are adequate to support effective learning although parts of the building are in need of decoration. The college's new proprietor intends to improve the fabric of the building. The small teaching group sizes often mean that there is ample space within teaching rooms. The college has designated areas for teaching sciences, film and media studies, and photography and good use is generally made of these teaching areas and of the interactive whiteboards that are available in some of the rooms. The outdoor area has recently seen the re-modelling of space to enable students to play basketball at recreational times. Appropriate facilities are available for students who are ill and for food preparation on the college's premises.

## **Provision of information**

The college provides all of the required information for parents and carers in the college prospectus, on its website or through informing them that policies are available on request. Appropriate procedures are in place to keep parents and carers informed of their child's progress. This is done through termly reports and through meetings and formal phone calls which paint an ongoing picture of individuals' progress and what is needed to improve. Parents and carers also know that they can contact the college at any time if they wish to discuss their child's academic or personal needs.

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

The college's arrangements for the management of any complaints meet regulatory requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the college meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1.

## **What the college could do to improve further**

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

- ensure that a central system is established to record and track the interim progress being made by students over time so that the college can more formally assess and demonstrate the amount and rate of progress of students during their time at the college
- reduce the incidence of teacher-dominated talk in some lessons by providing more opportunities for students to discuss questions and issues with one another
- improve student participation in lessons by ensuring that students are given ample time to reflect on questions before giving their response
- provide more regular outside speakers who will give students a greater insight and first-hand accounts of subjects they are studying and in doing so further enhance students' progress and learning experiences.

## 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>	1989		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 24	Girls: 19	Total: 43
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 14	Girls: 8	Total: 22
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,450 – £12,250		
<b>Address of school</b>	6–10 Brentmead Place, London, NW11 9LH		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8458 8524/5		
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@wentworthcollege.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Davies		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ms Jodie Newman		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

27 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Wentworth Tutorial College, Barnet, London NW11 9LH**

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I recently visited your college. You certainly made me feel at home! It was great to have the opportunity to talk to many of you and it was good to hear how committed you are to learning and achieving well. It was evident that you have high aspirations and this is reflected in the very positive attitudes you show to learning and to the college.

The judgement that I came to was that the college provides you with a good quality of education. The good curriculum and the good, and at times outstanding, teaching help to ensure that you make good progress, whatever your starting points when you enter the school. Staff go the extra mile in supporting you and helping you to develop socially and personally as well as academically. It is obvious that there is a strong bond of trust and respect between adults and students at Wentworth that is tangible and evident for anyone visiting the college. A significant strength of the college is you, the students. Your behaviour is outstanding and I thank you for the high levels of courtesy and politeness that were constantly on show.

Even good schools and colleges can improve and so I have asked Mr Davies and the staff to ensure that your progress is more formally tracked as you move through the school; to provide you with more time to think about answers to questions before answering and to discuss possible answers with one another; and to further enhance your learning experiences through more regular outside speakers who provide a range of perspectives and views on the subjects and issues you are studying.

I know that you will want to continue to contribute to the success of Wentworth through your continued learning commitment and exemplary behaviour. I wish you continued success in your future lives and it was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Martin Newell  
Lead inspector