

Inspection of Exeter Tutorial College

44–46 Magdalen Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4TE

Inspection dates: 3–5 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Before starting at Exeter Tutorial College, students have often been disappointed with the grades they have achieved. Some have had significant periods out of education. By the end of their time here, most students are back on track to achieve the qualifications they need. The college helps students to achieve their ambitions. Students value the small group sizes of up to five students and the one-to-one tuition they receive.

The proprietor and his team of tutors have high academic expectations. Their determined approach supports those students who may have lost confidence. Students believe in themselves again. Excellent relationships between students and staff ensure that students settle quickly when they join the college. Student behaviour is good. Lessons are productive. Tutors help students to think deeply. Students apply themselves well to their learning and do not disrupt others. They say that bullying does not exist.

However, students are potentially at risk because leaders are not fulfilling their statutory duties. Weak recruitment procedures, administration of attendance and admissions are some of the aspects which undermine the college's strong academic work.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The college supports its students well academically. The proprietor has established an ethos of high academic expectations. Students work hard and concentrate in lessons. Tutors are highly skilled. As a result, students achieve their academic goals. Two thirds of the students in 2019 improved their A-level results by at least two grades. However, the proprietor has failed to ensure that the college meets all of the independent school standards (ISS), especially those linked to safeguarding.

Leadership capacity is limited. Well-meaning tutors support the proprietor in leadership duties that are not part of their role. Tutors have not had the training or support they need to carry out these management tasks. Nor are they held to account for the jobs that they do. Consequently, administrative systems, other than those relating to teaching and examinations, are ineffective. The proprietor does not check up on the college's work to meet the ISS.

The proprietor does not ensure that all relevant risk assessments are undertaken or followed. This means that leaders do not ensure that the premises are maintained properly or that students are safe on trips and excursions. However, risk assessments directly linked to the curriculum, such as in science laboratories, are fit for purpose.

Records for admissions and attendance and risk assessment procedures are sloppy. There is no admissions register, as is required in the ISS. Risk assessments exist for lessons, such as chemistry practicals. Staff describe risk assessments as

'administrative tasks' and do not recognise the importance of keeping students safe. Risk assessments for trips and excursions are not in place. Documentation linked to health and safety is not well organised or easily accessible. For example, fire drill records were incomplete.

In addition, the proprietor does not ensure that the required information is provided to parents and carers. For example, policy documents and details about the proprietor's contact details are missing from the prospectus and college website. The college's website does not include curriculum information. Documentation is disorganised. It is hard for leaders to find. Tutors who have taken on responsibilities disagree among themselves about what can be found where. The proprietor has also failed to comply with standards related to the college's complaints procedure. The policy does not provide parents with necessary timescales and arrangements, including the formation of a panel with an independent person to hear concerns. Staff say that there are no complaints. However, the inspector found some letters of complaint. Staff denied knowledge of these.

The curriculum is well planned and is suitably broad. Most tutors also work for examination boards, so they know examination specifications in detail. Subject plans are well thought through and build students' knowledge and understanding over time. Tutors' subject knowledge is strong. As a result, students retain information and can apply their understanding well, for example in examinations.

No students who attend the college are identified as students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some have gaps in their learning due to long periods of absence from their previous schools. Tutors adapt their teaching so that students catch up in their academic studies.

Tutors support students' social and emotional development as best they can. However, leaders do not provide tutors with training or support to assist them in this aspect of their work. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is not as strong as the academic areas. Posters in the common room signpost students to how to eat healthily and how to deal with bullying. Some subjects cover aspects of citizenship well, for example in psychology. However, the approach to the teaching of PSHE is not as well thought through as in the other subjects.

Students in the sixth form do well. In 2019, all students got into their first choice of university. Two thirds of the students last year were awarded places at Russell Group universities. Students receive helpful and impartial careers information and guidance so that they can make informed decisions. They value the support staff provide in completing university entrance forms.

Leaders and trustees have ensured that the college meets the requirements of schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There is a poor culture of safeguarding. The safeguarding policy does not comply with statutory guidance. The designated safeguarding lead circulates training to staff electronically. There is little attempt to check staff's understanding of the training. Staff do not demonstrate a strong understanding of safeguarding issues. Nor do they convey an accurate understanding of the college's reporting procedures.

The systems for reporting concerns about students are not robust. There is not enough done to check that staff are vigilant in reporting concerns about safeguarding appropriately. Staff carrying out recruitment checks have not received the training to do their job well. Recruitment processes are poorly organised. The single central record was incomplete. The proprietor has not carried out all of the checks required to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. For example, section 128 checks had not been carried out. Leaders rectified this by the end of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- There is a poor culture of safeguarding. This means that students' safety is compromised. To help keep students as safe as possible, the proprietor should ensure that:
 - all safeguarding policies and procedures, including staff recruitment, are updated and reflect current statutory guidance and the specific circumstances of the college
 - staff who carry out administrative aspects of safeguarding have the necessary training so that documentation, such as admissions registers and the college's single central record, meets statutory requirements
 - all staff understand and apply what is in the updated policy
 - there are clear arrangements for reporting concerns about pupils, including where, how and what staff should record
 - the PSHE curriculum is strengthened so that students are better taught how to keep themselves safe.
- Some ISS relating to welfare, health and safety are not met. Leaders must ensure that they take the required actions to remedy the unmet standards quickly to ensure that students' safety while they are in the college is not compromised. They need to check that the required risk assessments are completed and actions to protect students from harm are followed through.
- The proprietor has failed to provide the required information to parents. The website and documents such as the prospectus and the complaints policy do not meet requirements. The policy does not include information about timescales or a panel with an independent member to oversee complaints. Documentation is not well organised. The proprietor must ensure that all documentation meets requirements and is suitably accessible for parents and students.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the ISS are met consistently. Staff have taken

on leadership responsibilities within the college without the required training or clarity of purpose. The proprietor must ensure that roles and responsibilities are clarified to ensure that those in leadership roles are suitably knowledgeable and can be held to account for their actions.

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	113632
DfE registration number	878/6051
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10090663
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	36
Number of part-time pupils	35
Proprietor	Kenneth Jack
Headteacher	Kenneth Jack
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,650 to £10,875
Telephone number	01392 278101
Website	www.tutorialcollege.com
Email address	info@tutorialcollege.com
Date of previous inspection	29 November – 1 December 2016

Information about this school

- Exeter Tutorial College was founded in 1984 by its current proprietor. The proprietor is also the headteacher. The college is situated in a residential area near the city centre.
- The college is an independent, co-educational establishment for students aged 15 years and over who wish to retake examinations at A level and/or to take up new subjects for A level. Most courses take place over a one-year period.
- AS, A-level and GCSE subjects are offered to meet the individual needs of students, generally over the course of one academic year.
- The college does not use any alternative provision or run any off-site unit.
- No students have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The college has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the proprietor/headteacher, the examinations officer and the designated safeguarding lead.
- We carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, psychology and biology as part of this inspection. We also looked at physics and PSHE during the inspection. We discussed the design of the curriculum with the teaching staff, reviewed schemes of work in these subjects, spoke to teachers and students, and visited lessons.
- We reviewed a range of documentation provided by the college. We looked at the college's website, policies and documents relating to health and safety.
- We reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including the checks that leaders make prior to employment. We checked the college's safeguarding policy and spoke to staff about the college's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person's appointment;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.

- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(2)(b) either-
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
 - 33(a) is in writing;
 - 33(b) is made available to parents of pupils;
 - 33(e) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (d), establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing;
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is–
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and–
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld);
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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