



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Duff Miller Sixth Form College

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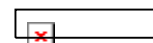
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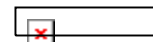
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### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY



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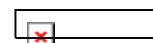
## Purpose and scope of the inspection



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This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the college's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the college



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Established over fifty years ago, the college has been on its present site in South Kensington, London since 1982 and is privately owned. It is housed in a large, terraced mid-Victorian building on Queen's Gate, a short distance from the Natural History and Science Museums. A jointly-owned sister college is situated a relatively short distance away. Duff Miller College is a member of the Conference for Independent Further Education (CIFE) and is accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC).

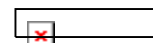
The college provides education for students aged 14 -19, although some students may be a little older. There are currently 181 on roll, all of whom are full-time and seven are below the age of 16. The majority of students come from the greater London area; since 2002 the college has made no provision for boarders.

The college offers several types of course leading to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE),

Advanced Subsidiary (AS), and Advanced Level (A2) and English language proficiency examinations. It provides additional focused support for older students aiming to gain university places in the medical sciences. The college intake includes students with a range of prior attainment. There are 45 students for whom English is an additional language.

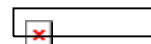
Duff Miller College's philosophy is clearly set out in its prospectus. The college is '*a community that espouses traditional, moral and social values entwined with an interactive learning approach*'. Emphasis is placed upon fostering '*an atmosphere that is welcoming and supportive, studious and stimulating*', with a focus on '*the all round development of the individual*', including helping those with barriers to learning to start afresh. Although the age range of students for which the college caters has changed over the years, the prospectus emphasises that the fundamental premise upon which it was founded remains the same - '*to foster a positive environment that inspires, motivates and above all, cares*'.

## Summary of main findings



Duff Miller College is an effective college with many strengths. Teaching and examination pass rates are good. Most advanced level students obtain places in higher education on the completion of their courses. Working relationships between students and staff are excellent. The college does not comply with some regulations, which now need to be addressed.

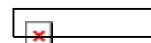
#### What the college does well:



- the quality of teaching is good;
- teachers have a commitment to and a passion for their subject and successfully communicate this to most of their students;
- pass rates are good at GCSE and advanced level. Nearly all advanced level students secure entry to higher education;
- the pastoral care system in the college is good and students are well cared for;
- working relationships between students and teachers are excellent;
- behaviour is very good. Students are cheerful, cooperative and highly motivated;
- tutors value individual students and successfully raise their self-esteem;
- the college is managed effectively on a day-to-day basis.

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#### What the college must do in order to comply with the regulations:



- prepare and implement a policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of students who attend the college which will comply with DfES circular 10/95 'Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Educational Service';
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the college which has regard to DfES guidance (reference HSPV2): 'Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits';
- maintain an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995;
- prepare an action plan to indicate how it will meet the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- provide appropriate facilities for students who are ill in accordance with the Education (Schools Premises) Regulations 1999; and
- ensure that where food is served there are adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption.

The college should provide parents, parents of prospective students and other interested parties with the following:

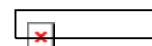
- the full name, usual residential address and telephone number of the company's registered

- principal or principal office;
- a statement of the college's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusion.

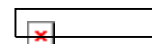
The college should also ensure that parents and prospective parents of students are provided on request with the following:

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of misbehaviour;
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the college, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal complaints procedure during the preceding college year; and
- the number of staff employed at the college, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications.

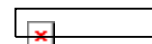
## COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION



### 1. The quality of education provided by the college



#### The quality of the curriculum



The college provides a wide range of courses suitable for its intake of students. The courses available offer students the potential for progression to higher education. This is emphasised by the college prospectus. Care is taken to ensure that students are placed on courses suitable to their abilities and which meet their individual needs.

Students of compulsory school age are provided with a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. They all currently take one year GCSE courses. Only a small minority of these students follow aesthetic and creative courses, although the range of subjects offered includes music and drama. One GCSE student currently travels to the nearby sister college to study photography. All compulsory school-aged students attend the college on a full time basis. The number of these students is small, although it varies from year to year. They take a minimum of five GCSE subjects, plus a discrete personal and social education (PSE) course and supervised games. Currently one student is taking ten academic subjects. The college provides supervised study space for all students.

Provision for PSE is good. The timetabled PSE course is carefully planned and taught by a teacher who is also the personal tutor for GCSE students. Elements of careers education and citizenship are contained in the PSE programme and both are being developed further by the GCSE tutor.

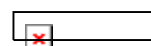
The majority of students take advanced level courses over one or two years, depending on individual need. A number of students enter the college in order to improve grades in examinations

taken previously. The college has additional specialist provision for students whose goal is to gain entry to higher education to study the medical sciences. In addition, there are currently 17 foreign nationals following a foundation course which enables them to study English as well as taking one or two advanced level subjects. This aims to provide them with an appropriate command of English to support university entrance.

There are no students with statements of special educational needs, although the college recognises that some students may previously have experienced difficulties with learning. Where necessary, professional advice is sought to determine students' specific needs. College records show that care is taken to obtain a wide range of useful information about students' prior attainment, in particular for those of compulsory school age.

The college has identified extra-curricular activities as a weakness in its provision. Questionnaires completed by the students before the inspection confirmed the need for greater access to such activities. In developing the extra-curricular provision, the college should consider how the range of activities could contribute more effectively to students' general development and preparation for adult life.

## The quality of teaching and assessment



Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There are, however, variations in the quality of the teaching of the GCSE and advanced level classes. Twice as many advanced level lessons were good than were satisfactory. In GCSE, the converse was true. Inspectors observed particularly good teaching in English, mathematics, biology, physics and French. The teaching of English to students on the foundation programme was consistently very good.

Teachers' secure knowledge and command of their subject is a strength of teaching. Most teachers have a commitment to and a passion for their subject and successfully communicate this to most of their students. They generally have a secure grasp of the requirements of the relevant programmes of study. In lessons, teachers show due regard for the requirements of public examinations, but the development of students' study skills is not sufficiently explicit.

For the most part, teachers are effective communicators. They use whiteboards to good effect, in particular to clarify difficult concepts through the use of diagrams. Teachers' exposition is usually clear, particularly in the advanced level and foundation courses. Most teachers are alert to the needs of students whose first language is other than English, and ensure that they understand the key terms and linguistic conventions used. Typically, teachers' questioning is good, engaging students and promoting learning.

As the college prospectus points out, teachers *'have their own teaching styles and individual subjects require different approaches'*. Teachers favour a judicious balance between 'telling' students and students initiating their own learning, a style and approach that provides an effective bridge to subsequent work in higher education. The small class sizes are highly advantageous to the quality of students' learning, ensuring that they receive the individual attention that many need.

Teachers have a clear view of what they need to teach and plan their lessons accordingly. At the beginning of lessons, some teachers outline helpfully to students what is to be done; even more helpfully, some indicate the rationale for what they intend. In the best lessons, teachers stop periodically to check students' understanding and, at the end, review the learning. In the less successful lessons, particularly in GCSE classes, the learning intended was insufficiently explicit in teachers' planning and how the lesson was taught.

Working relationships between students and teachers are usually very good. Most lessons are conducted in a very good spirit and high good humour. Teachers use praise and encouragement to very good effect to raise students' self-esteem and promote their self-confidence. Most students participate actively in lessons and work collaboratively when given the opportunity.

Pass rates are good at GCSE and advanced level, not least given the wide range of students entered and the previous educational experience, prior attainment and lack of examination success of some students. In 2003, there was a particularly good pass rate in 10 of the 16 GCSE subjects and in 13 of the 23 AS and A2 level subjects for which students were entered. Public examinations are taken at different ages and this makes comparisons with national averages difficult.

In general, students are performing at levels appropriate to their ages and abilities. Overall, the majority make good progress. Those who enter with little English make very good progress. Even so, a significant minority of students, in particular some GCSE students and those for whom English is an additional language, have language and literacy needs that hamper their progress. A notable indicator of the college's success is that it secures entry to the first choice university or medical school of nearly all its students.

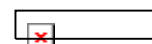
The college has recently instituted a rigorous system for tracking the performance of advanced level students across their courses and for identifying under-performers. The system involves examination practice periods (EPP) during which students sit papers under strict examination conditions. The system parallels the well-established practice of subject teachers assessing students' work. The GCSE tutor monitors effectively the progress of the small number of GCSE students. Marking of work is most effective when it gives clear guidance to students on how to improve. This practice is not consistent across the college. Teachers do not check students' notes on a regular basis. Homework is generally well used to consolidate and extend learning.

The college compares students' results in public examinations with their predicted grades and this information is relayed to the appropriate staff member. Examination results are not analysed in depth. The college records show that care is taken to obtain a wide range of information about students' attainment previous to college admission. Insufficient use is made of this information to draw conclusions about the extent to which the college has added value to students' progress towards public examination. For example to look at trends in performance on a year-on-year basis, to highlight which subjects are consistently more successful than others, or whether performance is linked to gender.

### ***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students**



Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is overall satisfactory. Much of the development of these aspects derives from the college ethos and students' experiences in lessons; this varies according to the courses followed. There is little formal provision by the college, other than the PSE programme for students of compulsory school age.

Provision for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Students who wish to maintain religious observance are not encouraged to do so; for example, there is no area of the college set aside for quiet reflection or prayer. Many courses are for one year, with time limited and teaching

intensive; despite these constraints, opportunities are missed in lessons for students to pause, wonder and reflect, and, so consider life's fundamental questions.

Provision for students' moral development is satisfactory. The college ethos, characterised by openness and trust, underpins students' notions of what is right and wrong. Teachers provide positive role models, reinforcing students' understanding of morality through informal contact. Students explore moral positions, as appropriate, in academic subjects and in PSE. In English, for example, there was very good consideration of right and wrong in JB Priestley's *'An Inspector Calls'*.

Provision for students' social development is satisfactory. In lessons, given the opportunity, students work well together. An annual ski trip and regular theatre visits promote students' social development, but the range of extra-curricular activities is limited. The college recognises this and there is a proposal to establish a debating society to consider social and other issues. All advanced level students are eligible for membership of a student council. Those involved value the opportunity the council provides to organise social events. Many students have a well-developed social conscience but there is little concerted effort to raise funds for charitable causes.

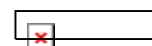
Provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. Students from different countries and cultural backgrounds mix well together, but some students on the foundation programme are less involved in college-based activities than other groups. Opportunities for students to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures occur explicitly and implicitly in lessons. For example, students in an International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) lesson described evocatively festivals special to their countries of origin. In a GCE government and politics lesson, students gained insights into British life through considering pressure groups and the influence they can have.

In its prospectus, the college makes a strong commitment to developing students' self-confidence with a view to improving academic attainment. This is fully realised in practice. Teachers value individual students and successfully raise their self-esteem in what the prospectus, rightly, describes as an atmosphere "genuinely devoid of negative thought". Most students have sufficient confidence to initiate questions and ask tutors for clarification.

### ***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **3. The welfare, health and safety of the students**



The quality of provision for students' health, welfare and safety is good in a number of respects. There are appropriate written policies in place. There is an overall statement on health and safety, and staff trained in First Aid are clearly identified. All points of concern raised in the most recent Fire Officer's letter have been addressed and there is an up-to-date college risk assessment. However, risk assessments are not always completed for all school visits. All staff need guidance on compliance with DfES requirements for the health and safety of students on educational visits.

The pastoral care system in the college is good and students are well cared for. They are allocated a personal tutor who oversees academic progress and maintains contact with parents. Pupils of compulsory school age are monitored by the GCSE tutor who also discharges effectively her responsibility for their overall supervision, although she is currently only in the college for three days a week. Regular assessments and, for GCSE students, weekly progress reports and behaviour

notes, provide a useful system for early identification of problems. Students consider their tutors to be approachable and that they are treated with respect. The PSE programme provides opportunities for students to consider a range of issues which may affect their lives.

There is a very pleasant working ethos in the college. Behaviour is very good. Students are cheerful, cooperative and highly motivated. The college effectively promotes racial harmony and equality of opportunity, but could make a more overt statement in its literature. Students understand the college behaviour policy. Written records of any serious sanctions are kept in students' files, but should also be kept in a separate log.

There are two teachers with designated responsibility for child protection. Neither has received training. There has been no college wide awareness raising on this issue. Parental permission for students to leave the premises at lunchtime has been sought by the college, but written responses have not yet been received for all compulsory school-aged students.

The admission procedures are in order and attendance is regularly checked. However, attendance records do not use appropriate symbols and therefore do not enable effective monitoring. Written confirmation about reasons for absence is not always received. The college does not comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Currently the college has no disabled students and the building is not suitable for their admission.

#### ***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

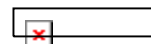
No.

#### ***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the college should:*

- prepare and implement a policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of students who attend the college which will comply with DFES circular 10/95 'Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Educational Service'.(paragraph 3(2)(b));*
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the college which has regard to DfES guidance (reference HSPV2): 'Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits'. (paragraph 3(2)(c));*
- maintain an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph (3(9)) ; and*
- prepare an action plan to indicate how it will meet the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act .*

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**





has been reviewed recently and the joint principals have clearly defined roles respectively for the overall academic management of the college and marketing. The principals are well supported by a hard working and enthusiastic senior management team.

There are clear and effective procedures for ensuring that the appropriate checks are made on all staff. The college has registered with the Criminal Records Bureau for the purpose of undertaking these checks. It is currently awaiting a few checks to be completed.

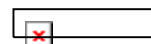
Teaching staff are well qualified and committed to the college and its students. They have a good range of experience and specialist knowledge which generally matches the needs of the students well, including the needs of overseas students. Occasionally teaching styles and the organisation of classrooms could be better matched to the needs of the younger students. There is currently no teacher on the staff with specialist qualifications to provide support for students with particular learning difficulties, for example dyslexia.

Arrangements for staff appraisal are appropriate. College documentation indicates that members of staff are observed teaching on a regular basis. Newly-appointed teachers are given priority by the system. The college has a budget for staff training but the management needs to focus professional development more effectively on the needs of the students.

#### ***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



The premises and accommodation are satisfactory with a number of good features. Classrooms and corridors are well-carpeted; the college is in good decorative order and there is a high standard of cleanliness in all areas. Science laboratories provide good teaching facilities, although one, shortly due for refurbishment, still has an old system of gas piping. Classrooms observed were appropriate in size for teaching. Teaching spaces are well lit and furnished. Facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) have several very positive features, but the main ICT room is overcrowded with classroom furniture and during the inspection was rarely left in a tidy state. Seating for use with computers should have adjustable height and back support. Display is relatively limited in non-specialist rooms.

There is no college library, but advanced level students may use the library at Imperial College close by. Most subject areas have stocks of books, but they are mostly out of date volumes. Facilities for private study are good and sports facilities are available for the use of all students at a leisure centre near to the college. GCSE students have timetabled use of these facilities every week. Art and drama share a single room and this constrains its effective use by both subjects. There is no private room, with easy access to toilet and washing facilities, set aside for students who may be ill.

Students can purchase hot and cold snacks from a small snack bar on the lower ground floor. This leads to a pleasant external recreation area. All the issues raised by the Environmental Health Inspection in February 2003 have not yet been addressed and require urgent attention. In addition, issues observed on this inspection include: a lack of adequate washing facilities; tiles missing above the sink; drainage of crockery taking place directly over the food preparation area and insufficient cold storage space for food. The windows on the first and second floors open fully and pose a

potential danger. Chemicals are still left out in the chemistry laboratory despite, this being drawn to the attention of the college during a previous inspection.

The building has listed status. Several good sized rooms on the top floor remain unused because there is no emergency exit. The college no longer admits boarders, nor does it arrange accommodation for any of its students. This should be made clear in its promotional literature.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

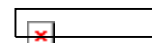
No.

***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the college should:*

- *provide appropriate facilities for students who are ill in accordance with the Education (Schools Premises) Regulations., 1999 (paragraph 5(l)); and*
- *ensure that where food is served there are adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption.(paragraph 5(m)).*

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The college prospectus has many strengths, in particular relating to its aims and ethos. The prospectus contains helpful advice relating to progression to higher education and to issues such as developing students' confidence and self-esteem. Specialist booklets on the medical sciences and economics provide detailed and helpful information to parents and older students. However, there is a lack of clarity about the structure of courses available and there is no information about the foundation course. Additional information is available on the college website. Some of the information on this site, for example relating to examination results, needs to be updated more regularly. There is no indication either in the prospectus or on the website that a range of policy documents are available from the college on request. The college needs to review its procedures for the provision of information to parents and prospective parents and students.

The college provides parents and guardians with half-termly reports about students' progress and effort in each subject. These would be more helpful if they contained precise information about what students can do and what they must do to improve.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

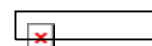
*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the college should provide parents, parents of prospective students and other interested parties with information regarding:*

- the full name, usual residential address and telephone number of the company's registered or principal office. (paragraph 6(2)(b)); and*
- a statement of the college policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)).*

The college should ensure that parents are aware that they are able to request the following:

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of misbehaviour (paragraph 6(2)(h));*
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the college, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal complaints procedure during the preceding college year (paragraph 6(2)(j)); and*
- the number of staff employed at the college, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).*

## **7. The effectiveness of the college's procedures for handling complaints**

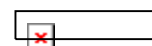


The college has succinct written information on how to make complaints and on the procedures for handling them. The guidance is pertinent, but not always expressed in a way that is easy to understand. In questionnaires returned prior to the inspection, most parents indicated that they felt comfortable about approaching the college with questions, suggestions or a problem. Half of the parents agreed that they understood the college procedures for handling complaints, but half were unsure at best.

### ***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **SCHOOL DETAILS**



Name of college:	Duff Miller Sixth Form College
DfES Number	207/6262
Type of school:	Tutorial
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	14 -19
Number on roll:	181
Gender of students:	Mixed
Annual Fees (day students):	£4665 - £11995
Address of school:	59 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JP

Email address:	enqs@duffmiller.com
Telephone number:	020 722 50577
Fax number:	020 7589 5155
Joint Principals	Mr C R Denning and Mr P Hunt
Proprietor:	Duff Miller and Co (London Tutors)
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Mike Thirkell HMI
Date of inspection:	2 - 6 February 2004

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