



Office for Standards
in Education

St. Andrew's College

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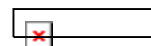
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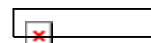
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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

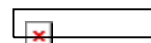


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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

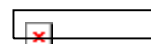


St Andrew's College was founded in 1976 as an independent A-level college in Cambridge. It is privately owned and provides a range of educational courses for male and female students aged from 14 to 22 years. Currently there are 140 students on roll, of whom five are of compulsory school age. All the students are from overseas, including many from China and the Far East; students come from 17 other countries in Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The college tries to keep small numbers in each class in order to provide a friendly and supportive learning environment for its students.

The college's aim is to create an academic environment in which students can achieve the best examination results. At the same time, the college values the qualities of responsibility, co-operation, thoughtfulness and determination. The college sees its major role as preparing overseas students both academically and socially to benefit from higher education in Britain.

The teaching facilities are based on two sites, relatively close to the centre of Cambridge. One is a sixteenth century building in the heart of the city.. The other site, which is about a mile away, is near the station. All the students are resident within Cambridge. The three halls of residence have single and twin bedrooms and are situated close to the station, whilst a number of students also live with host families.

Summary of main findings



St Andrew's College has a number of strengths and meets most of the regulatory requirements. There is good provision to enable students from overseas to gain access to university courses, either via its foundation courses or A level courses. Welfare and support for students are good. However, elements of the course for compulsory aged students are constrained by accommodation.

What the college does well:

-
- Students of all ages make good progress in learning English;
 - their success rates in foundation courses are high and nearly all older students proceed to university;
 - concern for their welfare is central to the college's approach to students;
 - care is taken to respond flexibly to the needs of students and to place them on courses that meet their individual academic requirements;
 - the overall quality of teaching is good; and
 - students form positive relationships with each other and with staff.

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

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- Ensure that the curriculum for students of compulsory school age is suitably broad, especially with regard to physical and scientific elements;
 - maintain an accurate admission register and keep attendance registers in accordance with statutory requirements;
 - develop a policy in relation to disability discrimination ;
 - undertake the appropriate checks on staff prior to their appointment ;
 - ensure that the premises and accommodation comply with the regulations as identified in section 5 of this report;
 - provide parents and prospective parents with the name of the headteacher, the name and address of the proprietor and details of staff employed at the college; and
 - allow for parents to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing for a formal complaint if they wish.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

An appropriately wide range of courses is available at the college for students aged 14 to 22 years. Subsequently, students can take courses which lead to university entrance.

The college takes care to place students on courses that meet their individual academic requirements. There is linked provision, via Select English, a local language school, for students to learn to improve their English initially. Most students follow the college's carefully devised foundation programme; links have been made with many universities whereby successful completion of the course guarantees students a place. Students have been accepted for a range of subjects such as bio-chemistry, history, and architecture. A group of students take GCSE, and GCE AS or second year advanced (A2) level courses, prior to university entrance. Provision is also available for students to take examinations in their mother tongue.

There are eight students, all of whom attend the college full-time, taking a two year GCSE course in either humanities or science. The previous arrangement of completing the international GCSE in four terms was discontinued in 2002, when the new two year course was introduced. The GCSE course does not cover all aspects of the curriculum. All students take English, mathematics, art, and general studies. The science route includes physics, chemistry, and biology, whilst the humanities route includes history, geography, and business studies. There is no physical element to the course at the moment; some elements of science are covered in the general studies course. The college is aware that the scientific and physical aspects of the curriculum need to be improved.

There are foundation courses in business studies, science, and art. These can be taken either as a one year course or in two terms. There are also courses for GCSE AS and A2 level in 13 subjects.

Lessons last between one and three hours; those in theoretical subjects are too long.. Occasionally, students have over three and a half hours of a subject on a single day, and seven hours of lessons in all. This is not ideal, and it would be helpful if courses could be planned to include a more balanced provision.

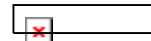
Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught within a general studies programme for GCSE students. The carefully devised programme covers a range of useful topics. As a result, students develop a wider understanding of British culture and also learn about health-related issues such as nutrition and drugs. There would be value in offering a similar course for other students in the college. Careers education is offered via regular support lessons, taken by senior members of staff. All students have a weekly session, with a focus on ensuring that aspirations for study in higher education are met.

There are currently no students with statements of special educational need or learning difficulties. All students are learning in English as a second and sometimes third language. Support for these students is good, with specific notes provided for teachers to ensure an appropriate approach. English is always spoken in classes and great care is taken over explaining specific vocabulary. In addition, all students have specialist teaching to develop their capability in English.

The curriculum is set out in writing and is described in broad terms for parents in the college brochure. Schemes of work are available but mainly consist of a list of topics to be covered or consist only of the examination syllabus. The college should consider further developing the schemes of work to provide greater detail, particularly in relation to teaching methodology.

The college provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Only ten hours a week is offered, but take-up is low. Normally, there are two physical activities and a drama club; unfortunately some sporting activities are held during lesson time and liable to cancellation if there is inclement weather. Extra-curricular provision is made for GCSE students by one of their teachers; this could be extended more widely.

The quality of teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is predominantly good for students of all ages and abilities. Overall 28 parts of lessons were observed, and almost 80% were good or better, with only one lesson which was unsatisfactory. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and maintain very positive relationships with their students. A constructive atmosphere characterises most lessons. Notably good teaching was seen in the general studies, English literature, law, history, chemistry, information technology and business studies. In the best lessons students develop intellectual skills as well as gaining subject-related knowledge. The single unsatisfactory lesson was due to a lack of sufficient specialist subject expertise and limited resources. The college should ensure that teachers are deployed to enable them to make maximum use of their strengths.

Most teachers plan and structure their lessons effectively. In the best lessons teachers know their students well and understand their particular needs. In these lessons the interaction between teacher and students is helped by the effective use of questioning to challenge and to check that students understand the work. Teachers do their best to organise lessons effectively, but are sometimes constrained by the space available for movement in classrooms, for example, group work in general studies. Learning generally takes place at a steady pace.

Teachers respond well to the language needs of the students. Teachers generally take care to ensure clarity through their spoken communication with students. They pay particular attention to spelling and the use of technical language. In most lessons good use is made of the board to support effective learning and communication. Students are encouraged to present their work and general notes clearly. The support for language development helps students of all ages to make good progress in spoken and written English.

Students generally respond well to their teachers in lessons and this supports effective learning. Most students work cooperatively and collaborate well with each other. Occasionally students are allowed to play too passive a role in lessons.

There are adequate resources to support the limited teaching styles seen during the inspection. There are sufficient text books, but students learning would be enhanced by better access to a wider range of reading material in the college. There is limited space to store resources in a number of classrooms. It is difficult for teachers to use available portable video equipment because of trailing leads. Sufficient specialist resources are available for science and those for information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved recently. Art is supported by a good range of reference books, but lacks a printing press, which limits students' understanding of the medium.

The college has satisfactory procedures for assessing students. Records of assessments and test results are maintained centrally in the school office as well as in the students' files. Students are assessed on entry to the college in English and mathematics to support their placement in appropriate courses. All students are tested at least twice each term in their individual subjects to monitor their progress. The college might consider how it could develop its use of data in order to demonstrate value added and to support self-evaluation.

Homework is marked regularly. Marking varies in its usefulness to the students. The best marking indicates to students what is good about their work and tells them clearly what they must do to improve. Sometimes marking provides insufficient support for improvement. All students have regular opportunities to discuss their work with a supervisor. Students are very positive about the support received through this arrangement, as shown by from the questionnaires completed by students prior to the inspection.

Due to recent changes in the GCSE programme from four to six terms, the number of students entered for public examinations was limited in 2003. Results for AS and A2 examinations show

steady improvement over recent years; the mean grade achieved is almost grade B. The majority of students who take the college's foundation courses gain a merit or distinction and achieve entry to university.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

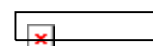
No.

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- *ensure that the curriculum for students of compulsory school age is suitably broad, especially with regard to physical and scientific elements (paragraph 1.2a(ii)).*

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



Overall, the college provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. College documentation relating to boarding expresses a positive view of the need to support all students *'to develop spiritually, culturally, morally and culturally'*. The college needs to audit the various ways in which it supports students and develop a more formal strategy.

The college provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. For example, GCSE students have visited churches in Cambridge as part of their general studies programme and their introduction to the local area. In an English literature lesson, a GCSE student was challenged effectively to express her feelings in response to well chosen texts, including the writing of Elias Canetti in *'The Voices of Marakesh'*.

The moral development of students is satisfactory overall. GCSE students are encouraged to discuss a range of moral issues during their general studies lessons and A-level students similarly during their law classes. A well-structured discussion about food nutrition included asking GCSE students to consider the environmental impact of some forms of food production. Students in general show respect for one another's feelings and sensitivities.

Overall, the college provides a supportive and well integrated social environment. Most students can clearly identify a person with whom they are confident to discuss personal issues. Students generally work well together in a harmonious learning environment and have a very positive attitude to their studies. Students are encouraged to work cooperatively in a number of lessons, but there is limited opportunity for them to contribute to the local community and few opportunities for team sports.

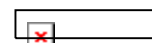
The cultural development of students is sound, but is not promoted systematically by the college. Students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds work and socialise well together. In general studies, GCSE students discuss one another's cultures and visits local cultural sites. The college needs to consider how it might plan systematically to build on the cooperative nature of its students

and to promote their development in these areas to meet its expressed aims.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Concern for their welfare is central to the college's approach to its students, many of whom are living away from home for the first time and are not always able to return home during holidays. The college makes available to them a range of means of communication.. Pastoral arrangements for students are good. Three senior members of staff take responsibility for the GCSE, foundation and AS and A2 students. Staff are seen by students as a valuable source of advice and offer a good standard of care. Students feel comfortable in turning to them and others for help and support. Each student has a nominated member of staff who acts as a counsellor. They form a valued line of support, particularly in the important area of higher education advice.

Appropriate policies are in place, covering child protection, race and gender equality, and behaviour; however, there is no policy with regards to disability. Access to buildings for disabled students is difficult, particularly on the Free School Lane site. The college has not developed plans towards improving access.

Careful attention is paid to matters of health and safety and there are eight people who are trained in First Aid. Fire risk assessments by an independent consultant have been undertaken at both sites and acted upon. There are regular fire drills, and the new system is checked regularly.

The need for movement between the two sites, is kept to a minimum, and linked to the availability of facilities such as science laboratories. For those students who do have to move between sites the college should obtain parental consent, particularly in relation to students of compulsory school age.

There is a clear policy on discipline with a range of sanctions to deal with misdemeanours. Records are kept of any serious disciplinary offences. The college has a code of conduct to encourage sensible behaviour. Almost all students comply and behave well both within lessons and around the site.

The college pays attention to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools; another inspection is imminent. The college responded positively to all but one of the recommendations made in the previous boarding inspection report of 2001. The outstanding recommendation to be addressed is the provision of a suitable social and recreational programme for boarders.

The admission register is not kept systematically, although there are plans to set up a new database to ensure that the necessary details are recorded. Attendance registers are not completed twice a day. However, there are procedures to monitor students' attendance and early action is taken to follow up students' absences.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

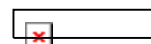
No

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

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

- *maintain an accurate admission register and keep attendance registers in accordance with regulatory requirements (paragraph 3.9); and*
- *develop a policy in relation to disability discrimination.*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The college is privately owned. There are a headteacher and two directors of studies, as well as an officer for accommodation and welfare. As some of these appointments are recent it would be helpful if a clear allocation of responsibilities is set out in writing, with opportunities for regular meetings. The number of teachers who teach each subject is so small that there is only the need for one head of department.

There are procedures for ensuring that all staff are checked with the appropriate authority for their suitability to work with young people, in particular those of compulsory school age. Not all teachers have had an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) prior to their appointment, but this omission is being rectified.

Teachers are well qualified and have a good range of experience; some have written recent textbooks and some have close links with the university. Current staffing is generally well matched to the subjects taught.

There are 30 teachers, most of whom are part-time, so staff meetings are only held annually and not all staff are able to attend. There would be value in occasional meetings relating to the various courses offered, as happens with the GCSE course. Teachers have full teaching loads, with no specified non-contact time. Opportunities for staff development are usually linked to examination courses; the college should consider reviewing its strategies for identifying other training needs of staff.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

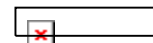
No

What must the college do to comply with the regulations?

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

- undertake the appropriate checks on staff prior to their appointment (paragraph 4b).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



As a whole the accommodation is satisfactory, but the nature of the building on the Free School Lane site constrains provision, in particular for compulsory aged students. The premises on both sites are well decorated and carefully maintained. The Free School Lane building, where most lessons for compulsory aged students take place has complex internal characteristics. The Station Road site has recently been extended through the purchase of additional buildings.

The college has specialist facilities for physics, chemistry, biology, art and ICT. Facilities for ICT are currently in the process of being expanded, including improved access to the internet. The facilities for art and design have recently been extended.

The dimensions of a number of the rooms, relative to class sizes, restrict the range of strategies that can be used by teachers and occasionally present a potential hazard. During the inspection three rooms on the Free School Lane site and one on the Station Road site were overcrowded. The limited space in rooms was sometimes made worse by excess furniture and piles of students' bags. The college needs to review the use and organisation of its teaching accommodation. This is particularly important due to the college's popularity and subsequent pressures to take increasing numbers of students.

The college is aware of the need to be vigilant about the danger of fire, in particular on the Free School Lane site. Risk assessments have been completed for both sites and a detailed fire officer's report has been completed for the Free School Lane building. Fire exits are clearly marked, but the college must assure itself that all obstacles, such as low beams and steps, in particular on the top floors, are clearly labelled.

There are no social facilities for students on the Free School Lane site, but there is a common room at Station Road. There are no outside spaces for students of compulsory school age at the Free School Lane site so students often leave the college premises during free lessons. The college needs to ensure that the parents of compulsory aged students are aware of this. The college has no library which could be used for independent work or private study and reading, though there is a public library nearby.

Most furniture is of reasonable quality, although the seating in the ICT room does not meet health and safety requirements for use with computers, as the chairs do not adjust. Toilet facilities need to be labelled for the exclusive use of male and female students or staff.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

No

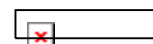
What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations.

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

ensure that:

- *classrooms are of appropriate size to allow effective teaching, and do not compromise health and safety; paragraph (5j);*
- *furniture and fittings are appropriately designed; paragraph(5r);*
- *there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside spaces for students to play safely; paragraph (5t).*

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The college provides a good range of information and is in the process of producing a new prospectus for current and prospective parents. Information is also provided through the college's website, which is a valuable source of news for the parents who live overseas. The prospectus contains information about the courses offered and the content of the curriculum. The main aims of the college are linked to examination results but these could be further developed to reflect the general ethos of the college. There are omissions in the information available to parents, relating to the proprietor, headteacher and staffing, which are being rectified.

All parents are sent the students' handbook, which is updated annually and contains a wide range of information about the development of study skills, supervision, homework, accommodation, discipline and procedures over welfare and complaints.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

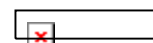
No

What must the college do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the college should provide parents and prospective parents with:

- *the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6.2a);*
- *the name and address of the proprietor (paragraph 6.2b);*
- *details of staff employed at the college (paragraph 6.2k).*

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



The college has produced a comprehensive written procedure for handling complaints, which is available to parents. There are a series of steps which can be followed and clear time-scales for responses from the college. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns with the college either informally or in writing. There is also provision whereby a parent can make a formal complaint to an

independent arbitrator from the British Accreditation Council. At present there is no provision for parents to attend a hearing.

The students' handbook also includes a comprehensive procedure for making complaints. An informal approach is suggested initially, but telephone numbers for external agencies such as Citizens' Advice, Child Line, and an independent listener are also available. There have been no formal complaints over the last few years.

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 fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003, the college should:

- *allow for parents to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing for a formal complaint if they wish (paragraph 7h).*

COLLEGE DETAILS

	
Name of college:	St. Andrew's College
DfES Number:	873/6019
Type of college:	Tutorial
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	14 - 22
Number on roll:	140
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Fees:	Day: £9525 Residential: £18162
Address of college:	2a Free School Lane
	Cambridge
	CB2 3QA
Email address:	standrews@mainoffice.demon.co.uk
Telephone number:	01223 360040
Fax number:	01223 358046
Headteacher:	Mrs Christine Williams
Proprietor:	Mr MJ & Mrs H Martin
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Ramesh Kapadia HMI
Date of inspection:	19 - 22 January 2004

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