

Collingham College

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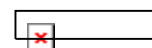
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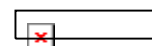
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Introduction and summary

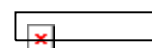


Purpose and scope of the inspection



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



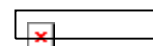
Collingham College is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year as a privately-owned, independent co-educational institution. The college is based on two sites in Kensington, in London, in Collingham Gardens (CG) and Queens Gate Place (QGP), within a relatively short walking distance from each other.

The aims of the college, which are clearly outlined in its prospectus, are to enable individual students to 'discover their strengths, set their goals and develop their potential and confidence'. The college emphasises the importance placed on providing 'expert tuition, a clear structure of work and a supportive, adult environment'. Emphasis is placed on small class sizes and the personal as well as academic support for individual students that this enables.

The college is non-selective and provides education for students aged 13 to 19 years. At present,

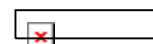
the number on roll is 219, of whom 16 are of compulsory college age; one student has a statement of special educational need and support is also provided for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The majority of students are British, with about one sixth from abroad. Students follow courses leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and advanced subsidiary level (AS) and advanced level (A2) examinations.

Summary of main findings



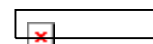
Collingham College has many strengths and meets most of the statutory requirements. A flexible curriculum offers a wide choice of advanced level subjects to students. A friendly and supportive environment, characterised by harmonious relationships between staff and students, pervades the college. Welfare and support for students are careful and professional. Knowledgeable tuition enables students to make steady progress; however, the range of teaching activities is not sufficiently wide to help to involve students more actively in their learning.

What the college does well



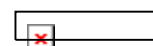
- it offers an extensive range of advanced level subjects;
- its pass rates in advanced level examinations are good and a high percentage of students proceed to university;
- it provides challenging work for students because teachers' deep subject knowledge is used effectively;
- it encourages students to form positive relationships with each other and staff; and as a consequence their behaviour is very good; and
- its supportive atmosphere helps GCSE students to become more confident learners and make progress.

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



- provide appropriate careers guidance for students receiving secondary education;
- maintain an admission register; and
- improve the aspects of the premises recorded in section 5 of this report.

What the college must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002



In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the college should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

☐

1. The quality of education provided by the college

☐

The quality of the curriculum

☐

The quality of the curriculum is good. The college offers a wide range of courses for its students who are aged from 13 to 19 years. Younger students take GCSE courses in one or two years, whilst older students take AS and A Level courses, with the vast majority going onto higher education.

For GCSE, which can be started in Year 10 or Year 11, an interview is undertaken to determine whether a student will fit in with, and benefit from, the college provision. Admission to the college sixth form is based on the normal requirement of five or more higher grades at GCSE. The academic year is 171 days, with a long teaching day for students of 26-30 hours per week. Class sizes are small, and sometimes very small.

There is currently one student with a statement of special educational need, where adequate specialist provision and support are available. A number of students are learning English as a second language and are provided with reasonable support.

Most older students take advanced level courses over two years. There is a very wide range of subjects available and the college makes great efforts to allow students flexibility in their choice of subjects. A general studies component is available but has not proved popular, since it is not always required by universities.

There are 16 students of compulsory college age, and a number of older students enrolled for GCSE courses. Care is taken to ensure that the provision for these students is reasonably broad and balanced. Students take the core subjects of English, mathematics and a science, as well as a modern foreign language and information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, students take further science subjects, history and geography, art, and physical education. All the students undertake either sport or physical recreation.

There is also a course in personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is a taught programme in Year 10, whilst aspects of PSHE are taught through other subjects in Year 11. Although this is adequate, there is insufficient coherence to the course as a whole. Current topics include citizenship and the role of government, bullying, and drug abuse. The course helps students to become more confident and learn about issues relating to their health and well-being. At present, there is no PSHE course for students in the sixth form.

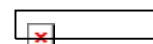
There is no structured programme of careers education in the college, although individual help is offered via tutors and senior members of staff about entry to university, which is valued by older students. Work experience is strongly encouraged for all students, and it is monitored by college tutors.

The provision of extra-curricular activities is very limited. This is an issue about which students

expressed some concerns in interviews and in the pre-inspection questionnaire. During the week of the inspection, there was only a football practice after lessons and chess, attracting few students during the short lunch-time. The take-up for activities is reported to be low. In the summer term there is a compulsory activities week, which provides opportunities for work experience, editing a magazine, or attending an adventure course in Wales. A few other activities are organised on an occasional basis in central London, but current provision is not systematic enough in approach to satisfy students' concerns.

The subject schemes of work are rather rudimentary, consisting of a list of topics taught each week. Whilst this is effective in some cases where a single teacher takes a course over a number of years, difficulties occur when there is a change of teacher; for example there are no records of work covered in the autumn term in some subjects. Schemes of work lack important detail, particularly in relation to the use of resources and teaching approaches, as specified in the staff handbook.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good overall, with a greater proportion of the strongest teaching in the advanced level classes. Almost all the lessons seen were satisfactory and many had good features. Particularly good teaching was observed in chemistry, economics, English, film studies, French, history and mathematics. These lessons were wide ranging and well paced, often featuring high expectations in terms of students' own knowledge and in the types of technical language being used. A particular strength is the teachers' very good knowledge of their subject material and also of the examination requirements; these characteristics are especially helpful in providing the more able students with appropriate challenge and stimulus. These students respond by asking searching questions and by making incisive links between their present studies and earlier learning, consequently they make good progress. For example, in an English lesson students made elaborate points linking different pieces of literature, supported by evidence. In a history lesson, students were starting to respond to each other's arguments as well as to answer the teacher's questions, and in mathematics collaborative work led to identification of methods and the solution of a difficult question on parametric coordinates.

Teachers plan their work so that lessons follow a clear sequence; the quality of planning varies but is generally sound. The ideas to cover are specified clearly and homework is emphasised in planning. In the two lessons observed where teaching was unsatisfactory, the material was not well matched to the needs of all of the students and the teachers did not respond sufficiently well to these situations. In a few other lessons, the disparate needs of students were not consistently met. On occasion, students' lack of oral contribution was related to their insecure grasp of spoken English.

Classes are small. Teachers generally know their students well, and relationships are open and friendly. This provides an environment in which the students are encouraged to ask questions and discuss their ideas, and thus most learn to speak well and to develop self-confidence. The response of students in classes is often good. The students' behaviour in lessons and their attitudes to learning are very good. In some cases one or two students are passive, but elsewhere, skilled teachers use a range of questioning strategies and vary the learning activities to ensure active participation. In a good lesson on film studies, the teacher encouraged students to participate in discussion and share their own opinions and was rewarded with a good level of animated responses. Another good English lesson encouraged students to evaluate their own progress.

Lessons are generally well resourced in terms of textbooks. Students have access to computers, although limited use was made of such technology as a learning resource in the lessons observed. The CG site has appropriate science facilities and although no practical work was observed, there was some evidence in students' files of experimental work.

The college has a helpful system for assessing students' attainment at regular intervals; this information is passed to the personal tutors to inform discussions about progress and is reported to parents. There is some variation in the practice of individual teachers in marking, so that attainment is reported in terms of examination grades by many teachers but as marks by other teachers. There is an outline marking policy but there is no formal system for monitoring marking. The marking of the GCSE work is not as strong as that of the advanced level courses, where the best practice features detailed commentaries on students' progress and how they can improve further. Links between assessment practice and the planning of lessons are underdeveloped. The college does not have a robust system for assessing students' prior attainment and then evaluating their subsequent progress and achievement.

In advanced level examinations, good results are obtained. In 2004, nearly half of all the results for students taking a subject for the first time were graded at A or B, and over two thirds of retaken examinations reached the same standard. Figures have been broadly similar over the last three years. The attainment of students of compulsory college age in GCSE courses was above average in 2004; nearly three quarters gained five or more higher grade passes and all students gained at least five passes overall. The average points score per student is broadly in line with the national figure.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

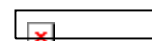
The college meets all but one of the requirements.

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:

- provide appropriate careers guidance for students of secondary college age (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

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



Overall, the college makes satisfactory provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students.

The college provides a few opportunities for students' spiritual development. There are occasional examples of lessons where students are encouraged to reflect on personal responses to modern films such as *Reservoir Dogs* or older literature such as Chaucer. Religious studies is available at advanced level but is taken by only a few students; philosophy is more popular. Spiritual development could be strengthened by including a religious component in the PSHE programme.

Students' moral development is satisfactory. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their study and there are opportunities in the curriculum to discuss the difference between right and wrong. For example, the PSHE programme for students of compulsory college age raises issues of a moral and ethical nature, for example those brought about by peer pressure.

Provision for students' social development is satisfactory. They behave well both in lessons and within the positive social environment provided around the college. Students co-operate well with one another and feel that they are treated as young adults, within an informal yet disciplined ethos.

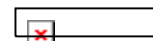
Students' cultural development is satisfactory. Students from different countries and cultural backgrounds mix well together. Occasionally, teachers utilise this diversity to encourage discussion,

as happened in a lesson on families and the effects of population policy in China. Students develop an understanding of public institutions in England via the PSHE course, internal talks, and visits such as to the Houses of Parliament.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The college provides a safe and healthy environment for its students, and the high priority given to their welfare ensures good provision overall. The principal and the senior staff undertake their responsibilities in relation to the students' welfare, health and safety, carefully and professionally.

A series of well-written policy documents and guidelines meet fully the registration requirements, and these are implemented conscientiously by all staff. The college policies on anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety, fire safety and educational visits are all written clearly and grouped together efficiently in the staff handbook. There are sufficient staff qualified in First Aid to ensure that students are well cared for on both sites.

Students' behaviour is very good on both sites and there is no evidence of bullying. There is an appropriate system of sanctions to deal effectively with isolated misdemeanours and careful records are kept. Pastoral support for students is a strength of the college and the system of personal tutors is well regarded by many of the students, as was evident from interviews with them. A number spoke warmly of their enhanced confidence in social situations and in learning. Younger students are not always supervised at break times; though there is no formal system of supervising movement across the half mile between the sites, which involves crossing some major traffic arteries, supervision overall is adequate.

Systems for fire safety at both sites are in generally good order. Signs are clearly displayed and access routes kept clear. The CG fire book keeps clear details of regular fire practices, records the time taken and any problems identified; however, there is not the same standard of good practice at the other site. The CG rooftop exit has not been used for a fire practice for over two years and some staff on the higher floors are not familiar with it. The college has no regular access to the neighbouring property to ensure that the route is clear. Nevertheless, fire safety is satisfactory overall.

The attendance registers are marked assiduously at both sites. In addition, checks are made every lesson so that the college has a very good understanding of patterns of absence. The admission register does not meet requirements in all respects as it is not laid out accurately but the college has plans for the improvement of these records.

Neither building has access for the disabled; although a survey has been made, the college still has not drawn up a plan for increasing disabled access.

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:

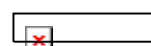
- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the college should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



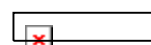
The college has implemented systematic procedures for ensuring that all teachers are checked with the appropriate authority for their suitability to work with young people. All teachers have had an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or against List 99; the few who were checked against List 99 and teach students of compulsory college age have had an additional enhanced CRB check to provide further safeguards.

There are 60 teachers, about a quarter of whom are full-time. Virtually all teachers are graduates, and about a quarter have a teaching qualification. The current staffing is well matched to the subjects taught. A collegiate structure, effectively promoted by the principal, ensures smooth and effective running.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The college provides a good standard of accommodation at its two sites. The CG site is used for all of the advanced level courses and also by some younger GCSE students, including those of compulsory college age, for science and art. This building extends over seven floors, including a basement. The QGP site is the main base for students taking GCSE courses.

In the CG building, which is attractive and elegant, space is used well to enhance the college ethos of academic progress in small group settings. There is a small café in the basement and a library overlooking the square, providing a quiet place for study. The QGP building is clean and appropriately maintained. The classrooms provide a good environment for learning, especially at the CG site; this also has specialist facilities for the arts, photography and the sciences. An adequate suite of computers is provided in the QGP building and there is a cluster in the library at CG, which also has a dedicated computer room.

The number of toilets at both sites is sufficient for the number of students usually in each building, but does not meet the regulations in relation to the numbers presently on roll. Provision for staff toilets is very limited. Neither site has an appropriate medical facility with a wash basin for students who are ill. CG's social space is particularly restricted. There are no facilities for outside play at

QGP but there is a social area for use during break times.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

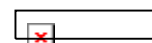
No.

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 there are sufficient washrooms for staff and students, including facilities for students with special needs, taking account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k));
- provide appropriate facilities for students who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



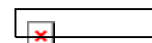
The college produces an attractive prospectus which conveys accurately its nature and ethos. The prospectus contains useful information about the range of courses offered and the content of the curriculum. There is also clear information about the academic organisation of the college.

Insertions within the brochure ensure that parents and prospective parents have information which is up-to-date, including a full list of staff and recent examination results with national comparators. A recent letter from the principal to all parents provided information about the range of policy documents which are available, including the policy on complaints; there are plans to include this letter in the college prospectus.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

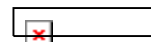


The college has a clear and well-presented policy for handling complaints which meets fully the requirements of the regulations. It allows for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis initially, but further levels of the procedures allow for unresolved complaints to be considered fairly and objectively in more formal settings. The policy is available to parents on request. According to the pre-inspection questionnaire, although a minority was unaware of the complaints procedure, virtually all parents feel comfortable about approaching the college with any questions, suggestions or problems.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

College details



Name of college:	Collingham College		
DfES ref number:	207/6362		
Type of college:	Independent College		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of students:	13-19 years		
Gender of students:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students):	Boys 122,	Girls 89,	Total 211
Number on roll (part-time students):	Boys 7,	Girls 1,	Total 8
Number of students with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 1,	Total 1
Annual fees (day students):	£8,010 - £13,500		
Address of college:	23 Collingham Gardens		
	London		
	SW5 0HL		
E-mail address:	london@collingham.co.uk		
Telephone number:	0207 244 7414		
Fax number:	0207 370 7312		
Principal:	Mr G Hattee		
Proprietor:	Collingham Ltd		
Lead Inspector:	Mr R Kapadia HMI		
Dates of inspection:	31 January - 3 February 2005		

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