



# Cambridge Tutors College

Independent School

Inspection report

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DfES Registration Number	306/6095
Unique Reference Number	133528
Inspection number	296789
Inspection dates	13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Ian Richardson HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group 15–26	Published 2 March 2007	Reference no. 296789
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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

The college was founded in 1958 as a tutorial establishment in Warlingham. It moved to the present site in Croydon in 1962. The college was registered with the DfES in February 2002 and is an educational charity which now provides education for students of both genders aged 15 to 26. There is a small number of students of compulsory school age, but the large majority of students are post-16 and English is not their principal language. The college mainly serves international students who wish to attain good grades in advanced level examinations in order to gain entry to higher education. The college's aims are clearly concerned with promoting high academic standards and fostering international understanding. The college welcomes students from a wide range of faiths, nationalities and backgrounds. They seek to treat students as responsible adults in preparation for higher education.

## Evaluation of the college

The college provides good standards of education for the students in its care. The quality of teaching is good and students are making good progress. They are achieving their personal goals of entry to higher education in line with the aims of the college. Students describe the quality of education and care as good or better, and demonstrate very good attitudes to learning and outstanding behaviour. The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. The college meets almost all regulations.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good and matches the aspirations of the students well. Individually tailored courses that provide very helpful pathways into higher education are a real strength. Examination courses are well supported by suitable schemes of work that correspond closely with accreditation requirements. Year 11 students follow one-year GCSE courses that are balanced to include English and mathematics as well as at least three option choices. Post-16 students choose from a good range of advanced courses with mathematics, the sciences and economics clear favourites. Accelerated pathways are open to able students, and are appropriately timed to meet the needs of many from overseas.

Students benefit from a range of additional activities, such as effective provision for those for whom English is an additional language, and study and thinking skills. School-age students follow a personal, social and health education programme. This scheme of work, however, lacks explicit detail of the topics covered. Recently introduced annual pastoral days supplement this provision and are compulsory for all students. Enrichment opportunities are well considered and include European journeys as well as an interesting range of visiting speakers, outings and sport. The college actively encourages students to participate in physical activities. However, there is no time-tabled provision for physical education and students would welcome further opportunities for exercise. Careers education and guidance, carefully focussed on individual needs, lay strong emphasis on entry to higher education and professional qualifications, in line with students' wishes. The time allocated to advanced level courses other than science is not generous. Although students complete examination work successfully, tight scheduling allows little opportunity for enrichment activities within the classroom. Provision for any student with learning difficulties is good and based on detailed external diagnosis of how to support progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall so that students make fast progress. Staff foster very positive working relationships in classrooms and students respond well to the scholarly ethos that pervades lessons. Generally, teaching is knowledgeable, systematic and enthusiastic, and examination requirements are well met. Written work is carefully marked and graded so that students are clear as to how to improve further and how current work matches up to their expected examination grades. Time is well used so that students rapidly cover much ground. This, together with students' very positive attitudes to learning, high-level starting points and well established individual study skills, ensures that students achieve excellent examination outcomes. Despite these positive features, in some lessons, students would benefit from a greater variety of teaching methods, from a more detailed in-class assessment of their understanding through carefully targeted questioning, for example, and from increased opportunities to communicate their work orally. Professional development activities to help develop classroom practice concentrate mainly, albeit effectively, on examination requirements.

Good informal assessments of students' attainment by teachers and departments are underpinned by rigorous weekly testing in all subjects and by regular subject homework. Records are well kept by individual teachers, who alert subject leaders when students appear unsuccessful. However, in the absence of systematic target setting, college records do not indicate clearly how well students make progress in relation to their starting points. Nevertheless, they do confirm clearly students' success in achieving above average examination results and in gaining entry to universities of their choice.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The college makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Social development is good. Students are polite, well mannered and are very welcoming to visitors. They enjoy college and their attitude to learning is very good. Students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. Behaviour in and out of lessons is outstanding. Relationships between students and teachers are very good. The majority of students come from overseas: they show warm respect for each other and celebrate their different cultural backgrounds. More formal events for students to gain a greater understanding of world issues and to develop spiritual awareness take place during the college year. However, students would benefit from further opportunities to explore their own spirituality and other religious faiths.

The college organises many trips and other activities so that students can experience local and European culture. For example, students value highly the annual residential visit to Disneyland in Paris and the opportunities they have to represent the college in musical and sporting events. However, arrangements for students to take part in decisions which affect them are limited to the organisation of social and similar events. Currently, the students' voice is not heard sufficiently in other aspects of college life.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for welfare, health and safety of students is good. Students describe the high standards of care they experience and how the welfare system in the college covers all their needs. Students feel safe in the college and clearly enjoy the rich mix of cultures and nationalities they encounter. They show care and consideration for each other and enjoy the student organised activities as well as the good quality of teaching. Most speak positively of their accommodation with host families but a small number feel that less positive views of their accommodation are not listened to quickly enough.

The college encourages the physical activity of students by providing access to sports centres and the buses to get them there. However, while clearly appreciated by those attending, participation rates are low and significant numbers of students rated the encouragement they receive to take exercise as insufficient. Students also expressed the view that there were too few healthy choices of food on offer in the college. Food was described by them as too greasy or oily, and many asked for more fresh salads. The majority of snacks and drinks available in vending machines are high in sugar, and information about healthy eating is not seen around the college or in students' personal development programmes.

There are good procedures for health and safety related to accidents, and emergencies such as fires. There are good records of frequent fire and evaluation drills, and appropriate documents describing the positive outcomes of fire authority checks. There are clear policies on health and safety which have been updated recently, and have clear responsibilities for named staff. While students report feeling safe around the college, there is no planned supervision of students in non-contact periods. Students of compulsory school age can go anywhere they wish when not being taught, and their location is not known. During breaks and lunchtime there are no staff deployed to supervise students.

The college is on a steep sloping site with many steps and stairs to be negotiated to access teaching areas and other facilities. It does not have a three-year plan for making improvements to access for those with disabilities and so does not comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. However, in its new building, the college has ensured that access and facilities are suitable for those with disabilities.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff appointed have checks with the Criminal Records Bureau carried out systematically and records are well kept. Procedures for the appointment of staff comply fully with regulations. The college also carries out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau for all the families that host students during their time at the college, and records of these are kept appropriately.

### College's premises and accommodation

The quality of the premises and accommodation is good, and almost all regulations are met. The buildings are well maintained and are decorated to a satisfactory standard. Teaching areas, although small in some cases, are adequate for the size of groups taught. There are some specialist areas that are particularly well equipped, such as science. Teaching areas are well lit and ventilated and provide generally positive environments for learning. Classroom communication is not hindered by poor sound insulation. The college has a well equipped ICT suite, and there are ample computers available around other parts of the college that gives students ready access to network and internet resources. All furniture is fit for purpose and floorings are in good condition. There are sufficient washrooms for the use of staff and students, but the arrangements for students who are ill do not meet regulations. While a bed is provided for ill students, it is in the corner of an office which has no hand washing facilities. Areas for food preparation are kept clean and fully meet requirements.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Detailed information is contained in the prospectus for parents and students, and supplemented by the college's website. Generally this complies with current regulations, except those relating to the complaints procedure and particulars on discipline and exclusions. Termly reports identify clearly students' likely subject grades and indicate their recent effort and application. Responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaires were few because of their international locations. However, most appeared content with information on students' progress and with contacts with the college.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The college's complaints procedures meet all the requirements for registration. The procedures are clear, fair and understood by the college community.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The college meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- give pupils of compulsory school age experience in the physical areas of learning (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for students' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that college staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (paragraph 3(7))

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils particulars of the college's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6 (2)(e)).
- ensure that parents are aware they can request details of the complaints procedure adopted by the college, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the college should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

## What the college could do to improve further

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

- Develop the scheme of work for personal, social and health education to include explicit detail of topics covered.
- Evaluate teaching through lesson observation, and encourage a greater variety of teaching methods and a more detailed in-class assessment of students' understanding through carefully targeted questioning.
- Evaluate the progress made by students through such mechanisms as value added measures, to supplement the test data currently collected.
- Consider ways in which the views of students can be gathered and considered more effectively, such that students recognise that the college considers their views and suggestions to be important on a range of matters concerning them.



## College details

Name of college	Cambridge Tutors College
DfES number	306/6095
Unique reference number	133528
Type of college	Sixth Form College
Status	Independent
Date college opened	1958
Age range of students	15–26
Gender of students	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time students)	Males: 159    Females:111    Total: 270
Annual fees (day students)	£12,950 – 17,575
Annual fees (boarders)	£16,950 – 21,575
Address of college	Cambridge Tutors College Water Tower Hill Croydon Surrey CR0 5SX
Telephone number	0208688 5284
Fax number	0208686 9220
Email address	admin@ctc.ac.uk
Headteacher	Mr David Lowe
Proprietor	Trust Council of Cambridge Tutors College
Reporting inspector	Mr Ian Richardson HMI
Dates of inspection	13–14 February 2007