

Ealing Independent College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	307/6082
Unique Reference Number	133444
Inspection number	301514
Inspection dates	22-23 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan AI

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).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the college

Ealing Independent College was founded in west London in 1993 to specialise exclusively in an A-level programme preparing students for university courses in medicine and dentistry. A demand for more diverse courses and increasing numbers has resulted in the college offering GCSE courses for students of compulsory school age and above. The range of full and part-time A-level courses has widened with subjects tailored to suit the needs of students including those from overseas. Around 10% of students come from abroad. The college aims explicitly to promote high academic standards within a friendly but scholarly environment. There are currently 106 students on roll, aged 13 to 20. The college prides itself on small class sizes to facilitate individual attention and guidance. The college aims to enable every student to achieve of their best whatever their starting points.

Evaluation of the college

Ealing Independent College provides a good quality of education and care that matches its stated aims well. The quality of teaching is good. The majority of students achieve successfully in their chosen courses and personal goals of entry into higher or further education and training. The college is particularly effective in giving students a second chance to improve previous GCSE and A2 examination grades. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is satisfactory and their attitudes to learning are mostly positive. The college complies with the majority of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and is tailor-made to suit the needs of individual students. Small groups, a high level of personal guidance and a wide range of both A-level and GCSE courses enable students to access further and higher education or improve on previous grades. This matches the aspirations of parents and post-16 students well. A real strength of the college is its success with students who have fared less well than expected academically in mainstream education or other institutions. Courses are well supported by schemes of work that correspond very closely with examination specifications.

A small number of students of compulsory school age follow a balanced programme that leads to eight GCSE subjects, including English language and literature as well

as mathematics. In addition, students take part in physical education and personal and social education. However, current students have not yet benefited from the college's plan to place more emphasis on the aesthetic and creative aspects of the curriculum by including art among the courses offered.

There are some additional activities offered by the college. Foremost among these is the effective provision for English as an additional language within the overseas programme. There is a satisfactory tutorial programme that provides careers education targeted at the next stage of education. However, the range of enrichment opportunities offered outside timetabled provision is thin and mostly relates to academic courses rather than cultural events. This concerned around a quarter of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires.

The quality of teaching is good and results in good progress for the majority of students. Most raise previous disappointing grades, for example, by one level or more. Relationships between staff and students are positive so that students respond well to very focused activities. Teaching is knowledgeable and systematic. Close attention is paid to examination specifications. Marking of students' work is thorough and provides helpful advice to students on how to improve further. In the best lessons, lively and skilful questioning and well-considered individual attention demonstrate for students how their current attainment matches their examination targets. Time in lessons is used effectively so that some students make rapid progress. Despite these strong features, there is too little variety in the activities offered to students in some lessons. The lack of information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms restricts how teachers demonstrate and model ideas and concepts.

Assessment is good. Homework is marked rigorously and monitored carefully. Very regular formal assessments reflect the examination requirements towards which students are working. They are particularly successful in informing parents on students' progress and in ensuring that students understand what further steps are required.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The college makes satisfactory overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students' behaviour is good and their social development is satisfactory. Generally, students are respectful of staff, polite to visitors and behave tolerantly towards each other. They mostly have good attitudes and enjoy college although some are concerned that their views are not always listened to despite the well-established college council. Students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. Many gain in self-esteem as their academic grades improve. The fortnightly assemblies provide excellent opportunities to support students' spiritual and moral development. Unfortunately, however, these messages are not always followed up in tutor groups and there are few formal events to enable students to

explore cultures and religions other than their own. Nevertheless, relationships between students are harmonious. Students of compulsory school age have sound opportunities to explore traditions and organisations within the United Kingdom, such as public services and institutions. The college organises a very limited number of excursions and activities outside of the formal timetable. Parents and students both agree that a far wider range of cultural, sport and arts activities would helpfully support students' personal development. Students are involved in organising some social events such as Christmas celebrations. The college prepares them effectively for their future economic well-being, particularly through success in formal accreditation.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. They feel safe and secure and are appreciative of the ease with which they can raise matters of concern with their tutors. Arrangements for safeguarding students are observed meticulously and risk assessments for occasional visits are addressed carefully. Policies on health and safety have been updated recently but not all permanent staff have had the most recent training on child protection matters. Fire precautions, fire risk assessments and the marking of registers are in line with the regulations. The school has a well-established sanctions and rewards system that promotes good behaviour and a calm environment in lessons. Access to the college is monitored by administrative staff through a signing in and out system.

The college encourages physical activity for post-16 students. Although students know about healthy living some, particularly girls, show little interest in participating. Students know about the importance of good nutrition and the dangers of smoking. Nonetheless, some choose to ignore the college's advice and indulge in off-site smoking and unhealthy food choices. Students are responsible for their own nutrition within the college day. The personal and social education programme provides good opportunities to address younger students' concern on health and social issues of immediate concern to their age group. The college meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for staff checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are carried out systematically and records are up-to-date, including the single central register. Nevertheless, staff are not always subject to the required medical checks prior to their appointment.

College's premises and accommodation

The quality of the premises and accommodation is good. The building is safe, well maintained and mostly well decorated. Teaching rooms are effectively lit and satisfactorily ventilated. Rooms are adequate for the numbers of students and are generally conducive to learning. There is sufficient provision of washroom facilities

for both staff and students. The college has no medical room but arrangements for students taken ill are managed sensitively in an area set aside in the reception space. There is a small outside recreation area which is also used for car parking in the winter months but for basket ball in the summer. All students, including those of compulsory school age who have parental permission, have access to spaces outside the college premises including an adjacent public park for exercise. There is scope to use these facilities more effectively. Specialist facilities for science and ICT are well equipped and students have access to a supervised study area and a spacious common room.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college has good communication procedures. Parents and carers are kept informed very regularly as to students' academic and personal progress. Detailed information is contained in the college prospectus, on the college website and through occasional letters. Responses to the parental inspection questionnaires were few. Those returned recorded satisfaction with information on students' progress and with contacts with the college. The college's self-evaluation in preparation for the inspection provides an honest and generally accurate overview of all aspects of college life.

Procedures for handling complaints

The college's complaints procedures are clear and generally understood by the college community. However, they have not been adjusted to take into account the requirements for an independent panel of three persons, including one who is independent of the management and running of the college, to hear written complaints that have not been satisfactorily resolved at an earlier stage.

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

- implement up-dated training on child protection issues for all permanent staff (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that medical fitness checks are made when employing staff (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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

- provide facilities for students who are ill in accord with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- make better use of adjacent public spaces for students of compulsory school age at breaks, given the absence of on-site play areas (paragraph 5(t)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that procedures make provision for a panel of three persons not directly involved in the complaint to hear the case (paragraph 7(f))
- provide for an independent panel member at a complaint hearing (paragraph 7(g)).

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:

- extend the provision for the aesthetic and creative aspects of the curriculum for students of compulsory school age

- widen the range of extra-curricular activities and cultural events
- encourage a greater variety of teaching methods and provide further ICT resources in classrooms to enable teachers to demonstrate and model concepts and ideas more effectively

College details

Name of college	Ealing Independent College
DCSF number	307/6082
Unique reference number	133444
Type of college	Sixth form college
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1993
Age range of students	13-20
Gender of students	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time students)	Males: 71 Females: 35 Total: 106
Annual fees (day students)	£4,500-£11,410
Address of college	83 New Broadway Ealing London W5 5AL
Telephone number	0208 579 6668
Fax number	0208 567 8688
Email address	ealingcollege@btconnect.com
Headteacher	Dr I Moores
Proprietor	Mr D Game, Ms L Badenoch
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan AI
Dates of inspection	22-23 November 2007