

Exeter Tutorial College

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	878/6051
Unique Reference Number	113632
Inspection number	301523
Inspection dates	16-17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith 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).

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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

Exeter Tutorial College was founded in 1984 by its current proprietors and moved to its present site in 1995. It was registered by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2002. There are 36 students on roll. The college provides education for students of both genders, aged 14 to 19+, who wish to attain good grades in GCSE and A level in order to gain entry to higher education. There is a small number of the current student roll who are of compulsory school age, but the large majority of students are post-16. The college also admits international students. The aim of the college is to promote high academic standards and in so doing treat its students as responsible adults.

Evaluation of the college

This is an academically successful college, although the curriculum experience of the very small minority of students who are still of compulsory school age is restricted. Effective teaching ensures that students make good progress and a majority achieve high grades in public examinations. These assure entry to a university of their choice. This achievement is in line with the central aim of the college. Students say that they enjoy being at the college and that the academic provision has enabled them to become successful learners. They demonstrate a mature approach to their studies. However, the provision for the wider care and welfare for the small minority of students who are still of compulsory school age, has significant weaknesses. There remain a large number of regulations with which the college does not yet comply.

Quality of education

The curriculum is overall satisfactory. Although it serves the needs of the vast majority of students well, it does not provide some of the key elements required for the small minority of students who are still of compulsory school age. It closely follows the requirements of the relevant examination boards. Most teachers plan these effectively as modules but schemes of work lack sufficient detail of the topics to be covered. Older students follow individually tailored courses that match their aspirations and enable them to proceed to placements in higher education. In 2006 21 students made successful applications to 17 universities. Students choose from a selection of 19 advanced level and GCSE subjects that the college offers. In individual cases students may also opt to undertake accelerated courses; these are

carefully timed to meet the needs of international students. The college specialises in preparing students for entrance to university and most complete their chosen courses within one academic year.

The college has not published a curriculum statement for students and their parents to inform them about how each subject is to be taught, how work is to be planned to meet the needs of students or what the implications of the subject are for each particular student group. There is no statement about the general principles of assessment and the recording and reporting of progress for each subject.

Provision for the small minority of school-age students is too narrow. For example, the college does not provide opportunities for such students to experience aesthetic and physical aspects of learning. There is no formal provision for careers education, but informal advice provided supports older students' university applications effectively. Provision for personal, social and health education is inadequate to meet the needs of the minority of students of school age.

The quality of teaching is good and students make good progress. High standards are the hallmark of the provision. In 2006 30 students aggregated a total of 64 passes in subjects at AS and A2 levels. The majority of results reflect high grades achieved by students. Staff have considerable knowledge and expertise in their subjects that enable them to respond effectively to individual students' needs. Session times are long, frequently up to three hours. Despite this, students maintain their interest and concentration because teachers use a variety of approaches. These approaches are underpinned by very challenging questions which inform the students' knowledge and understanding in the vast majority of lessons, although occasionally they do not experience a sufficiently wide range of teaching methods. In an effective French lesson, the teacher anticipated a drop in concentration by the student and so kept different, supporting activities fairly short. The student was then able to sustain a high level of involvement in the lesson and made good improvement in his understanding of the language construction as well as developing his accent. In part, the provision in some lessons is constrained by the level of resources. This results in didactic learning and responses to tasks are based on the use of worksheets. Nonetheless, staff foster positive working relationships with students and encourage them to adopt questioning attitudes, which further their understanding of the subjects. Students are confident learners.

Assessment of students' progress is satisfactory. It is good in practice, but there are important weaknesses in the quality of recording and reports to parents. Teachers provide end of module tests, which enable them to monitor the progress made by individual students. Frequent reports are also sent to each student's parents, but they do not, in all cases, provide sufficient objective evidence of how well students are doing. There is no college policy for the marking and recording of work nor is there any systematic target setting. Consequently recording of achievement is idiosyncratic. Nevertheless the college achieves outstanding results on behalf of its

students, frequently gaining above average examination results which enable them to gain entry to the university of their choice.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The college makes satisfactory provision for students' spiritual and moral development; provision for their social and cultural development is inadequate. Students' behaviour is good; they are polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors. Their attitudes to learning are also good and this enables them to grow in self-confidence. Students say that they are very pleased with the way in which the staff have developed their confidence and that they feel better prepared to gain the required grades in their examinations. They have good relationships with their teachers and these encourage them to adopt questioning approaches to their learning.

The college organises trips for students that enhance their awareness of the subjects they study but these are only available to those students who study particular subjects. Other opportunities are not widely available. Occasions are few that enable students to follow a healthy lifestyle, for example, by taking part in vigorous exercise. Even though the college provides an accredited course in physical education, this is not open to those who do not wish to study the academic aspects of this course.

Students say that they enjoy attending the college and attendance rates confirm their satisfaction, though a few expressed the view that they would like to be more closely consulted on matters which directly affect them. There is no student representative body.

Provision for students to gain an appreciation of their own culture, as well as that of others, is inadequate. Even though the college makes provision for international students and students meet informally, there is no planning for all students to be made aware of cultural differences or share experiences of their backgrounds.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Students apply themselves maturely to their studies. The college expects students to behave well and they respond accordingly. A majority of students indicate that they enjoy coming to the college because they feel that it has contributed significantly to their successes in learning. Students say they feel safe in the college. Despite these strengths, the provision for the welfare, health and safety of school aged students has significant weaknesses. There are a number of important gaps in the arrangements the college makes to ensure that the requirements relating to their well-being, such as safeguarding measures, anti-bullying and safety on visits away from the college are met. Other weaknesses include the absence of a written first aid policy, admission register and there is no planned supervision of those students of

school age. Although behaviour is good, there is no guidance relating to the college's expectations of students' conduct. The college has not prepared a written disabled access plan, which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All staff have been subject to checks by the Criminal Records Bureau. Other procedures, which need to be carried out prior to confirmation of staff appointments, are inadequate. Records are not maintained in an appropriate manner and the required checks on identity, medical fitness and the validity of qualifications have not been undertaken. The college does not have in place a single central register of all staff, whether or not they are permanent or temporary appointments.

College's premises and accommodation

The quality of the college's premises is satisfactory. The building is maintained well and the 12 classrooms are adequate in size for the number of students expected to use them. There are specialist rooms, such as those for science and information and communication technology (ICT). There is a library, although the stock of books is limited in relation to the range of courses the college provides. However, this is supplemented by other texts retained within each subject classroom. Students have access to the internet, within the ICT suite, which they can use for research. The college also has a wireless broadband system which students are able to use, should they bring their own laptop. There is a homely student common room and a pleasant garden, which can be used in the warmer months. There are sufficient washrooms for the use of staff and students but there is no facility for students who may become ill during the course of the day.

Health and safety concerns within the chemistry laboratory were brought to the attention of the college principal.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college provides an informative prospectus and supplements this further with information on its website. Despite this, there are requirements that are still not met. These include information about its complaints procedure and particulars on student admission, discipline and exclusions. The college does not make parents aware that they can request information about the college's curriculum as well as policies relating to anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety and the promotion of good behaviour as well as sanctions that might be adopted if students misbehave. The college has no arrangements to provide information to parents, if requested, about the number of formal complaints it may have received within the preceding school year.

Procedures for handling complaints

The college does not have a written complaints procedure.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- write a curriculum policy that is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement it effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- provide opportunities for students of compulsory school age to experience physical and aesthetic and creative aspects of learning (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- provide a programme of personal, social and health education that reflects the college's aims and ethos (paragraph 1(2)(f))
- provide appropriate careers guidance for students of compulsory school age (paragraph 1(2)(g))
- provide resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and ensure that these are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The college does not meet all requirements in respect of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- encourage students to show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life (paragraph 2(c))?
- assist students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e)).

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

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(a))

- write policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the college in compliance with DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the college and base this on current DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- write and implement a policy to promote good behaviour amongst students which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of students misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- put in place and implement written procedures within a first aid policy that deals with medical emergencies (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain a record of sanctions imposed on students for serious disciplinary offences (paragraph 3(8))
- put in place an admission register of students in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(c)).

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

- ensure that all areas of the college do not compromise health and safety requirements (paragraph 5(j))
- provide appropriate facilities for students 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 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 the following information;
 - particulars of the curriculum offered by the college (paragraph 6(2)(g))

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of students misbehaving (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 procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

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

- provide a written complaints procedure (paragraph 7(a))
- ensure that the procedure is available on request to parents of students and of prospective students (paragraph 7(b))
- set out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- allow for complaints to be made and considered initially on an informal basis (paragraph 7(d))
- provide for a formal complaint to be made in writing if parents are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint (paragraph 7(e))
- if the parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, provide for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- ensure that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the college (paragraph 7(g))
- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulate that the complainant, proprietors and headteachers, and, where relevant, the person complained about, should be given a copy of any findings and recommendations (paragraph 7(i))
- provide for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))

- ensure that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

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

College details

Name of college	Exeter Tutorial College		
DfES number	878/6051		
Unique reference number	113632		
Type of college	Tutorial College		
Status	Independent		
Date college opened	1984		
Age range of students	14-19		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 12	Girls: 12	Total: 24
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 8	Girls: 4	Total: 12
Annual fees (day students)	£4,185-£5,600		
Address of college	44-46 Magdalen Road		
	Exeter		
	Devon		
	EX2 4TE		
Telephone number	01392 278101		
Fax number	01392 494853		
Email address	info@tutorialcollege.com		
Principal	K Jack		
Proprietor	Mr K D Jack & Mrs E M Jack		
Reporting inspector	Thomas Smith AI		
Dates of inspection	16-17 May 2007		