

Collingham College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	207/6362
Unique Reference Number	100539
Inspection number	322728
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher

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).

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 college's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Collingham College is an independent co-educational institution which opened in 1975. The college is based on two sites in Kensington, London, about half a mile from each other.

The aims of the college are to enable individual students to 'discover their strengths, set their goals and develop their potential and confidence'.

The college is non-selective and provides education for students aged 14 to 19 years. At present, the number on roll is 183, of whom 40 are of compulsory school age; two students have a statement of special educational need, and support is also provided for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Students follow courses leading to the GCSE, International GCSE and AS and A2 examinations. The college was previously inspected in 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Collingham College provides a good quality of education and effectively meets its aims. Students of all ages develop a positive attitude to learning and make good progress that is supported by effective teaching. Most achieve well in public examinations. Through effective strategies that support students' academic and personal development, they are well prepared to pursue a range of pathways in their future education. Students appreciate the good care and support that they receive from the college, from individual staff and through the tutorial system. The vast majority say that they are pleased to be at the college and the minority of parents that responded to a pre-inspection questionnaire agree. The premises fail to meet the regulations in three areas some of which were specified in the previous report.

Quality of education

The curriculum provided by the college is good. It is designed to enable students to achieve high grades in both GCSE and A level studies in a wide range of subjects. Timetables to deliver the curriculum are personalised to meet the individual student's needs in terms of subject choice and English language development. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is covered through a weekly session and through personal tutorial time. Supervised personal study is also included and students are well motivated to make good use of this time.

Opportunities for the sciences are available on site and the science laboratories provide the facilities for experiments and investigations to be carried out. Provision for the arts and creative subjects is also available should students wish to take them at GCSE or AS and A level. For those who do not, the provision is fairly limited. Similarly, although some students join in the extra-curricular football games and tennis matches, the provision for physical education lessons (PE) is inadequate. As a result, not all students engage in regular PE activities, particularly some of the girls. There are also few opportunities for students to access a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both educational and social.

Provision for careers guidance for students is provided through orientation week and careers' day. Students feel well supported in their career pathways.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers base their teaching on set textbooks and draw on their excellent subject knowledge to promote discussion and engage students effectively. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject's examination requirements. This is used very well to ensure that students are clearly focussed on preparing for the examinations they will sit. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance teaching and learning during lessons, although students can access facilities for research when required. Students are attentive and make good progress in both their understanding and knowledge. They are assessed regularly and their progress is monitored to ensure that extra tuition is made available to aid their achievement, when required.

Teaching resources are adequate although some classroom environments are not well developed to stimulate and enhance learning. For example, although there is a significant amount of art work in the corridors, not all of the classrooms have stimulating displays appropriate to the current learning topics. Also, the stock of library books is limited.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Students' behaviour is good and they are keen to learn. Both in and out of lessons, students are expected to take responsibility for their learning, recognising when they need to seek extra help and do further study. The students respond well to this approach. As a result, the college promotes a maturity in its students that prepares them well for adult life.

Students say that they enjoy their time at the college and their attendance is good. However, there are few opportunities for them to take on additional responsibilities within the college or to contribute ideas that might improve it.

The college represents a diverse international community represented by the students who attend. Very good relationships are fostered between students and with staff. Working together, they develop an appropriate understanding of one another's faiths and cultures. However, there are limited opportunities for students to become involved in the local community.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, care and safety of pupils is satisfactory. The procedures and systems to support good behaviour and to deal with any concerns are rigorous. Risk assessments have been implemented for fire safety and for visits out of college. There are clear policies for the promotion of good behaviour and anti-bullying. Students and staff say that bullying is not an issue. The behaviour of students in lessons and around the college is good.

Students are well-supervised around the college; the reception area is open all day and staff provide effective help and support as needed. Students commented that they feel safe at college and they are equally aware of their own responsibility to keep themselves safe. However, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is not routinely considered and students say in the questionnaires that this is an issue for them.

The college meets most of the requirements of recent legislation in respect to safeguarding. However, not all staff have received the latest training required for child protection. The college has a policy for disability and has due regard to ensure improved access to the curriculum and learning for students where needed.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The college's procedures for safe recruitment and for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are not yet fully in line with current regulations. CRB checks for all adults who work in the college have been completed, but checks for medical fitness are not yet in place. The college has completed its single central register in all respects.

School's premises and accommodation

Both sites of the college are spread over several floors. They are well maintained and kept in good order. Specialist rooms for most subjects are adequate and students appreciate the photography dark room. However, there is no well stocked central library with up to date computer facilities. Some classrooms at both locations are small but adequate for the group sizes or individual tutorials for which they are used. There is no outdoor space at either premises and there are insufficient opportunities for students of compulsory school age to have regular access to supervised outdoor play offsite. The college does not have a medical room for students who become ill at the A level site. The washroom facilities at the Queen's Gate site are inadequate.

The College's position in central London offers access to valuable additional resources such as visits to theatres, museums and galleries.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The college has a website that provides a wide range of information about its work. This complements the prospectus which all parents and prospective parents of students at the college receive. The college maintains an effective level of communication with parents, carers and guardians through, for example, the regular written reports on students' progress. There are also many informal telephone conversations, even out of hours. The majority of parents are very supportive of the college and its work. As one parent writes, 'The college has a relaxed and happy atmosphere'.

Procedures for handling complaints

The college's policy and procedure for complaints meet requirements.

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 pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all staff attend the required training in child protection issues in compliance with DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))

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 an appropriate check to confirm medical fitness (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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))
- ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5 (t))
- improve the washroom facilities in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- provide a greater contribution to the local community
- enrich the sports curriculum to encourage students to lead healthy lifestyles
- relate provision in the college to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

School details

Name of school	Collingham College		
DCSF number	207/6362		
Unique reference number	100539		
Type of school	GCSE and Sixth Form College		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1975		
Age range of pupils	14-19		
Gender of pupils	MI		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 102	Girls: 47	Total: 149
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 18	Girls: 16	Total: 34
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13095 - £16170		
Address of school	23 Collingham Gardens London SW5 0HL		
Telephone number	0207244 7414		
Fax number	0207370 7312		
Email address	london@collingham.co.uk;		
Headteacher	Mr Gerald Hattee		
Proprietor	Collingham Ltd (N. Browne and R. J. Marsden)		
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher		
Dates of inspection	14–15 May 2008		