

Lansdowne College

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	213/6389
Unique Reference Number	100536
Inspection number	330451
Inspection dates	9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the college

Lansdowne College, which was founded in 1975, is an independent day college, providing education for students between the ages of 14 and 19. The college is located in a quiet residential area, close to Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, although students travel from other parts of London to attend. There are 21 students studying at Key Stage 4, 12 of whom are boys. In the sixth form, there are 111 boys and 100 girls. Eighteen students study at the college part time. No students have statements of special educational needs. Fifty-one students speak English as an additional language; of these 33 are male and 18 are female. Class sizes are small. After the sixth form, the vast majority of students move on to higher education. The college employs 45 teachers, of whom 26 hold formal teaching qualifications; many have extensive experience in working for awarding bodies for public examinations.

The aim of the college is to 'realise each student's academic potential in an environment which is intensive yet informal, motivating yet relaxed, academic yet enjoyable.' It seeks to maintain academic rigour and discipline and to provide pastoral care within a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The college is owned by Lansdowne Tutors Limited. It is a member of the Council for Independent Further Education (CIFE) and is accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC). The college was last inspected in December 2005.

Evaluation of the college

Lansdowne College provides an outstanding quality of education for its students. They make excellent progress through Key Stage 4 and the sixth form because of outstanding teaching and academic guidance. Students are cared for well in a college which meets all of the necessary regulations in its procedures and practices. The college has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of careers guidance for students. It meets its aims.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding throughout Key Stage 4 and post-16 because it offers a very wide and flexible range of courses relevant to students' needs and aspirations. Courses are of differing lengths, depending on the individual needs of students and all of them, including those for students who attend the college for a term in order to increase their grades, are very appropriate. The aims of the curriculum are reflected clearly in the college's policy document. They are supported by well-structured schemes of work which have clear intended outcomes for each lesson or topic. Whilst the basis of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is English, mathematics, combined science and information and communication technology (ICT), a wide choice of other subjects are on offer. The extensive range includes languages, humanities and creative subjects. It is supported by an informative personal, health and social education (PSHE) programme that provides good coverage of important life style issues. Students have a weekly sports period in Years 10 and 11 and sports studies is offered at A level. There are no timetabled physical education (PE) lessons for Year 12 and 13 but sporting activities are available after school, including the thriving football team. Nevertheless, many students expressed a desire for more planned opportunities to take exercise despite the fact that they have full timetables and are very focused on achieving examination success. There is a sound range of after-school activities, complemented by wide-ranging weekly enrichment choices to places such as the Tate Modern, a magistrates' court and the London Dungeons. Larger events, such as the Summer Ball, are an established part of college life and add to the considerable opportunities for students to develop their organisational and team work skills. A strength of the provision throughout the college is the personal tutor network which ensures that academic and pastoral matters can be aired weekly, so that matters may be resolved and goals set with the help of a tutor who has overall responsibility for individual students.

Provision in the sixth form is broad, catering well for the needs and aspirations of the students, the vast majority of whom go on to higher education. Any combination of 44 subjects is available to students, who are equally well supported by a programme of pastoral support that is incorporated into study skills. All students in the college have opportunities during their education for careers guidance on an individual basis and for assistance with university applications. This aspect has improved significantly throughout the college since the last inspection and it now offers systematic information to students as part of a structured and continuous programme that includes vocational advice.

The accommodation enhances the learning environment, with appropriate facilities and resources such as science laboratories, a language laboratory, a computer suite and large hall, matching teaching and learning needs. The large hall facilitates theatre presentations and indoor sports as well as special events. The sixth form study centre is well equipped for learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subjects and plan interesting and challenging lessons which, together with very effective guidance, enables students to make outstanding

progress. The pace of learning is brisk and students enjoy the variety of activities, including problem solving. Questioning is skilful and searching, and is particularly effective in developing students' higher order thinking skills and in encouraging their critical thinking. Because groups are small, students benefit from teaching that is personalised to their needs. Relationships between students and teachers are very positive and students say how valued and comfortable they feel in lessons and in the culture of achievement within the college. Their participation in lessons is a key factor in their progress. Although no students have a statement of special educational needs, a number speak English as an additional language and they receive the teaching and support that they need to make quick progress. Tasks offer a very accurate level of challenge to students, promoting the high standards that they achieve in national examinations. 90% of students achieved 5A* to C grades in 2008 and 71% achieved 5A* to C grades which included English and mathematics. A-level results are also well above the national average and demonstrate a three-year improving trend. Progress is further encouraged by the excellent preparation of students for public examinations. Teachers' marking is thorough and of excellent quality. They assess students' standards very regularly, and on a weekly basis in the sixth form, giving them the information they need in planning individual tasks to maximise their progress. Students find the very regular and rigorous examination practice periods through the year extremely helpful in determining and improving the quality of their work. In the sixth form, this includes a test each week. Study planners help them both to organise their time and record vital information about work and examination schedules. Homework is important in extending students' skills and knowledge, and a study centre provides a base for those who prefer to do homework in the college.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students say that there is a great community feel about college, which welcomes students of all cultural backgrounds. Lessons and daily social contact with students from other cultures encourages mutual respect and a greater understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of others. Students develop into confident and articulate young people who enjoy college and who are well prepared for their future economic well-being and the next stages of their life. They enjoy being at the college and the majority thrive in the inclusive, supportive and happy environment, in which they make excellent progress. Their attendance is above average and behaviour during the inspection was outstanding. Students are trusted by the staff and respond to this, enjoying the chances to organise their study time and to plan for their recreation. They have a genuine voice in the college. Through the council, students work in committees that deal with sports, social and communication issues, taking the lead in organising college activities, such as regular fundraising and social and sporting events. Such roles add to their personal and inter-personal skills. A varied range of visits and visitors, including a local member of Parliament, increases students' knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services as well as extending their subject specific skills.

Safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety

The college makes good provision to help ensure the welfare, health and safety of students. They appreciate being allocated a personal tutor, ensuring that they can access help promptly if they have academic or personal worries. Bullying has no place in the very supportive environment. Clearly understood procedures are in place despite students' insistence that there is no bullying. The college believes that communication is good, including between home and college but it is keen to make sure that this is always the case. The PSHE programme gives students a broad understanding of how to live healthily, which the college supports by offering free lunches to Year 10 and 11 students. The cafeteria, a popular meeting place for students, is open through the day, offering a healthy selection of foods.

All required procedures are in place to keep students safe. These include child protection procedures and regular fire drills. Risk assessments of students' safety, both on site and during educational visits, are reviewed regularly. The college has a three-year plan in place which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

The college has all the necessary procedures in place to meet the requirements for the suitability of staff to work with children, including the maintenance of a single central register.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The college meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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:

- Consider offering more PE lessons and a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	√			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	√			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	√			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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College details

Name of college	Lansdowne College		
DCSF number	213/6389		
Unique reference number	100536		
Type of college	Tutorial college		
Status	Independent		
Date college opened	September 1975		
Age range of students	14-19		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 118	Girls: 96	Total: 214
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 5	Girls: 13	Total: 18
Annual fees (day students)	£14,975		
Address of college	40-44 Bark Place		
	Bayswater		
	London		
	W2 4AT		
Telephone number	020 7616 4400		
Fax number	020 7616 4401		
Email address	education@lansdownecollege.com		
Headteacher	Mr Hugh Templeton		
Proprietor	Lansdowne Tutors Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock		
Dates of inspection	9 December 2008		