



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

CAMBRIDGE TUTORS COLLEGE

MARCH 2017



COLLEGE'S DETAILS

College	Cambridge Tutors College			
DfE number	306/6095			
Registered charity number	312878			
Address	Cambridge Tutors College Water Tower Hill Croydon Surrey CR0 5SX			
Telephone number	020 8688 5284			
Email address	info@ctc.ac.uk			
Principal	Dr Chris Drew			
Chairman of trustees	Mr Chris Dixon			
Age range	15 to 23			
Number of students on roll	170			
	Boys	93	Girls	77
	Day students	48	Boarders	122
	Seniors	41	Sixth form	129
Inspection dates	29 to 30 March 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chairman of trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and a sample of host families, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mrs Kate McCarey	Reporting inspector
Mr Huw Daniel	Team Inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Jean Gray	Team inspector for boarding (former senior teacher HMC school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
About the college	1
What the college seeks to do	1
About the students	1
Recommendations from previous inspections	2
2 KEY FINDINGS	3
Recommendations	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	6

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the college

- 1.1 Cambridge Tutors College is an independent boarding college for male and female students, the majority of whom study for A levels and a small minority of whom take intensive GCSE courses over one or two years. It is owned and governed by a charitable trust whose members, alongside the college's senior staff, form the council of trustees responsible for governance. Established as a tutorial establishment in Warlingham in 1958, it moved to its present site in 1967 and became a charitable trust in 1973.
- 1.2 Students come from the UK and from over 25 countries overseas. The overwhelming majority of students board, most of whom are accommodated in host families. A new boarding house facility opened in September 2016 which can accommodate up to 35 students in single ensuite rooms. Since the previous inspection, the college has also appointed a new principal and invested further in its internet technology.

What the college seeks to do

- 1.3 The college aims to achieve academic excellence and to foster international understanding in an adult-focused environment, so that each student can move on to higher education with self confidence in their learning and the life skills necessary for success.

About the students

- 1.4 Students come to the college to study either GCSE or A levels. They can do so through either one or two-year GCSE courses, and through either eighteen-month or two-year courses for A level. In addition the college offers one- or two-term pre-session English courses and summer courses for English language, which include GCSE taster sessions. Over four fifths of students are from overseas and their level of English on arrival is the benchmark for finalising the most suitable course for them. The remainder come from the local area and attend the college daily. International students are from over twenty-five different countries. These students are primarily from the Far East, and particularly China and Vietnam. Students arriving to take GCSE courses do not sit standardised tests for ability, though the college assessments indicate that they are of above average ability. In the sixth form, standardised tests indicate that the students' ability is above average. A large majority of the students have English as an additional language (EAL), and the college employs many English language teachers who deliver specialist lessons. Most students in the sixth form study four A levels. The college identifies nine students as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and ADHD, all of whom receive an appropriate level of support within their classes. No student in the college has an education, health and care plan or a statement of educational needs. The college identifies fifteen students as more able, and opportunities are provided for them to extend their learning within and beyond the curriculum.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the college by ISI was a standard inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Ensure that an attractive weekend programme of activities is arranged for students living with host families.
 - Provide in-service training that helps teachers to avoid directing students' work too closely.
 - Ensure that a clear record is kept of those who are off the college site at any given time during the college day.
- 1.7 The college has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous full inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in February 2014 was:
- Ensure that records relating to checks on host families are comprehensively maintained.
- 1.9 The college has successfully met the recommendation of the previous intermediate boarding inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the students' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Students are competent learners who acquire knowledge, understanding and skills rapidly. They are effective communicators and have outstanding attitudes to their learning, taking charge of their own progress.
- International students who arrive with limited English make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Strong leadership, small class sizes and dedicated teaching staff are strong contributory factors to students' successful academic outcomes.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons in order to enhance their learning.

2.2 The quality of the students' personal development is excellent.

- Students exhibit high levels of self-esteem and self-awareness, and are supported individually and collectively by dedicated staff.
- The college is a diverse and vibrant international community in which students exhibit very high levels of mutual tolerance and respect.
- Boarding both in the boarding house and in the many host families is a strong contributory factor to the successful personal development of the students.
- Students have well-developed social skills, and opportunities for leadership and collaborative working within the college. Opportunities for contributing to the local community and the wider world are somewhat limited at present.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of excellent outcomes for students, the college might consider the following improvements:

- Ensure that students have sufficient opportunity to use ICT to support learning in their lessons.
- Develop links with the local and international communities in order to provide students more opportunities to engage with and better understand the wider world.

3. THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of student' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Students are competent learners who acquire knowledge, understanding and skills rapidly. In their questionnaire responses, all students said that they are making good progress. They exhibit a strong desire to learn, aided by dedicated teachers who provide them individual attention and know them very well. Language skills which may be limited on arrival are developed successfully in all lessons due to teachers embedding their English language teaching into their own subjects with considerable expertise. Students display interest in learning as they are provided a wide variety of tasks. These include carrying out complex practical tasks in science and holding effective discussions in humanities. Scrutiny of students' work revealed excellent skills of extended writing and advanced knowledge, for instance of the British judiciary. Many excel in mathematics and further mathematics; they use these numeracy skills elsewhere such as in graph work in both GCSE and A-level geography. Creative work from students in the art department is displayed around the college and talented artists are encouraged to enter national competitions. Frequent testing ensures that students are aware of the progress they are making. Remedial help often follows such testing and is provided in a very supportive and positive way, enabling students to maintain progress. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all parents agreed that their children's educational needs are met by the college. Students are competent users of ICT, and they use the facilities provided in the library and elsewhere to enhance their research and communication skills. Opportunities to use digital technology to aid learning in the classroom are limited.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses data from 2012 to 2015. A small number of international students arriving with limited English complete GCSE courses in two years, whilst a similar small number with better starting points complete courses in one year. In 2013 and 2014, results at GCSE were in line with the national average and those at IGCSE were higher than worldwide norms. In A-level examinations results were above the national average in 2013 and 2014 and in line with the national average in 2015, indicating that students including the more able and those with EAL or SEND make appropriate progress. In 2016, excellent results at A level included forty-three per cent of grades at A* or A. Most students have EAL and are supported successfully, both by specialist IELTS teaching and within their subjects. Some of the highest achievers in the college are EAL students. The nine students with SEND receive excellent support, mostly within the context of their curricular lessons. In 2016, such students achieved good results at A level and proceeded to their chosen university courses. More able students progress well. In 2016 such students, including three with at least three A* grades, gained entrance to some of the most competitive universities in the UK. The college identifies fifteen students as more able, who are encouraged to extend their learning, they have achieved success in mathematics and science Olympiads, attend seminars at prestigious universities, and help to run their own societies such as the scientific and history societies. The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is offered to all Year 12 students and the uptake of these is increasing. In lessons, more able students progress appropriately as they are identified in teachers' planning and provided extension work as well as targeted questioning during discussions.
- 3.4 Progress is appropriate for all students as the curriculum is adapted according to their starting points, drawing upon a suitably broad range of options for GCSE and A level. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all of the parents agreed that the range of subjects is suitable for their children.

- 3.5 Students have outstanding attitudes to their learning, which is a hallmark of the lessons at the college. A high degree of focus among students was evident in all the lessons observed and in the library which provides a quiet and calm environment for private study. Those GCSE students with varying English language abilities engage fully in their lessons, as observed in an ICT lesson where those who understood the point then explained to those who were having difficulty, and in a drama lesson where discussion and mime were used effectively. Students' attitudes to their learning is also visible in the context of the boarding house and host families, where they learn life skills with equal enthusiasm. These attitudes are strongly reinforced by a dedicated team of academic and pastoral teachers who work alongside the students in every way, never failing to encourage and support. Lessons are very well planned and delivered. In these small teaching groups which often comprise fewer than ten students, teachers provide everyone in the classroom with a great deal of support in their learning. In many lessons observed students were working independently and developing their own approaches, for instance in a Year 12 chemistry practical lesson, thus meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection that teachers avoid directing students' work too closely. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all of the students agreed that teachers are supportive and helpful should they have problems with their work.
- 3.6 Communication skills are very well developed among the students in the college. From the moment they arrive, students communicate readily with their peers and teachers despite initial language difficulties. As they progress through the college their skills improve and they are willing communicators in lessons, engaging in lively discussion and debate. Students are sufficiently confident to raise concerns if they do not understand a point, and are effective listeners as well as speakers. During lesson observations, their ability to listen to teachers and each other was a significant feature of the classroom environment. Students are encouraged to get involved in debating, and those who take part in the EPQ are confident when asked to present their paper to an audience. Classroom discussions and debates are a regular feature of lessons, as observed in a pre-GCSE IELTS class's discussion of the funding of museums in the UK.
- 3.7 Students demonstrate a clear understanding of their host country, benefiting from a well-devised personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme which covers a wide range of topics relevant to them such as mental health, British values, the British legal system and self-esteem. Students are successful in moving on to higher education, reflecting the career advice and dedicated support with higher education applications from a personal teacher. In interview, students spoke very positively of the help they receive. Students develop wider life skills such as co-operation, personal fitness and leadership through participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities including sport and academic societies largely run by the students themselves. Their success is evident in areas such as displaying art work in prestigious exhibitions or participating in National Poetry Day events. Students appreciate these opportunities and almost all indicated in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses that a good range of such activities is provided.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the students' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Students exhibit high levels of self-esteem and self-awareness due to consistent individual and collective support provided by dedicated staff. In lessons, students interact with teachers who know them very well and clearly care about them. The boundaries between academic teaching and personal development overlap and opportunities are always taken by teachers to support students in the broadest sense. This meets the college's stated aim to create a setting in which students' self-confidence is fostered in an adult environment so that they can achieve the best in all of life's challenges. Self-reliance is developed well; students are expected to make their own arrangements to travel to the college and to take responsibility for aspects of their own housekeeping such as laundry, sometimes for the first time. Students demonstrate a clear awareness of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. In the classroom, they evaluate their own performance in a perceptive manner and also play an active part in assessing that of their peers. The longer-term picture is provided by the college's detailed system for tracking performance; students use the information provided to set themselves suitably challenging improvement targets. Periodic progress monitoring discussions with teachers ensure that students understand the key areas of short to medium-term focus for their academic and personal development. Teachers are sensitive to the expectations that some families can have of students, ensuring that personal targets are realistic and attainable. During their time in the college, students develop confidence in their own decision-making capability in a wide range of contexts. For example, teachers act as sounding boards when students explore which course options they should select, what higher education paths to follow or how to set an appropriate balance between work and wider living.
- 4.3 The college is a diverse and vibrant international community in which students exhibit very high levels of mutual tolerance and respect. Many different religions are represented. Students spoke warmly of the availability of the college prayer room which is available for use both by different faith groups and individual quiet reflection, as well as of opportunities provided to attend local centres of worship. Students' spiritual development is aided by strong values of tolerance and acceptance in the college, where students are encouraged to investigate their own spiritual inclinations in a safe and open environment. Students confirmed in interview that getting on with a wide variety of nationalities is a great preparation for life. Over 25 countries are represented in the college community, which is truly inclusive. Students have great respect for each other and this is noticeable in all college contexts including the classrooms, dining room, library, boarding house and college grounds where students sit together in informal groups and enjoy each other's company. In classes students work together in a relaxed and open way, furthering their mutual respect and encouraged by teachers who are strong role models of tolerance themselves. No single culture dominates and international festivals are celebrated by students from many different countries with much enthusiasm. Friendships are forged across different cultures and these further students' personal development, provide a firm foundation for successfully moving on into adult life and broaden the students' experience. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all the students and their parents agreed that the college encourages them to respect others and to be tolerant of different faiths and beliefs.

- 4.4 Students exhibit a strong sense of the importance of good behaviour, which was exemplary throughout the inspection. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all the students and parents agreed that the college encourages students to behave well. Students confirmed in interview that they know and understand the sanctions for poor behaviour and were also clear that it is unusual for sanctions to have to be applied. Bullying is rare and although a very small minority of students' pre-inspection questionnaire responses felt that it is not effectively dealt with, interviews and scrutiny of records revealed that incidents are few and that strong practice to combat bullying is in place. Students discuss and debate with each other with enthusiasm; they listen carefully to different views such as when discussing the current refugee crisis, and have many opportunities to form a balanced view. When students first arrive, they are nurtured both in host families and the boarding house by staff who spend time explaining behavioural expectations and who gradually encourage more independence as the students gain confidence. Students also learn to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being, encouraged by the strong PSHEE programme which includes sessions on mental health, healthy eating and the importance of exercise. Many students participate in sporting activities such as badminton, football and volleyball and take responsibility for their own fitness by, for instance, jogging and using a local gym. In these activities students are very much in charge of their own choices, thus developing their self-confidence and independence. Teaching students to be safe pedestrians and users of public transport is achieved by a gradual process of appropriate support by host families and boarding house staff. International students thus learn about the challenges and opportunities of life in the UK.
- 4.5 Students exhibit strong social skills in many different contexts. In class, they collaborate effectively with each other and with college staff. They feel safe to contribute even when unsure of the point that they are making or their ability to express it clearly; they encourage each other in teasing out ideas, always supported by teachers who have their best interests at heart. Opportunities for leadership are taken up by students on the student committee, which acts as a link between staff and students and organises social events such as the ball and concerts for charity fundraising. Students can use the committee to help promote changes which they desire within the college, and increasingly their views are sought and acted upon on a wide variety of issues such as rooms for leisure use and food. In extra-curricular societies, students collaborate with teachers to choose speakers and activities. Their understanding of the structure and values of British society is also enhanced by the PSHEE programme where issues such as democracy, freedom of speech and the rule of law are explored. Cordial and relaxed relationships were observed between students of different ages, and both male and female students are equally involved in all activities. Living in host families is a significant contributory factor to students' social development as they learn about life in British society first hand. Likewise the boarding house offers opportunities for students to develop their social skills as they live at close quarters with each other and share their daily existence together, always under the care of their vigilant house parents. Students take part in charity initiatives within the college such as a recent concert by talented musicians which raised money for an Africa famine appeal, but opportunities to engage with the local community are limited at present. Some students volunteer in a local hospice and the Young Enterprise competition creates links with other local colleges. Students gain from participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at the Bronze level and a programme of trips is available at weekends for the many students who either board or are living in host families, thus meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 4.6 During their time at the college, students mature into independent and self-motivated young adults who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives and who have developed the skills and attributes which will lead them to contribute successfully to society.