

Hampstead College Of Fine Arts And Humanities

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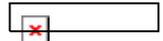
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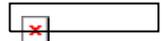
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Introduction and summary

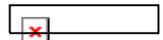


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the college

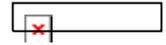


Hampstead College of Arts and Humanities is privately owned. It provides education for male and female students between the ages of 14 and 19 years. Currently there are 96 students attending the college and the number of available places is limited. Entry to the college is by interview and is not based on previous academic achievement. All current students live within relatively easy travelling distance and attend on a full-time daily basis.

The college was founded in 1978 by the current proprietors and joint principals with the aim of 'creating a college where the arts and humanities are given special attention'. Its aims are clearly expressed in the prospectus and other documentation provided for parents, prospective parents and students. They emphasise the importance of providing an opportunity to study in 'a friendly and stimulating atmosphere' and a learning environment that acts as 'an effective bridge between school and university life'. The prospectus emphasises the importance placed by the college on the personal development of the individual and of developing a positive attitude to learning.

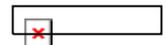
A range of courses is offered for students at various stages of development. These lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2), and as well as Pre-Foundation and short 'Portfolio' courses in art and design. GCSE courses were introduced to the college in 1993. Currently there are 15 students of compulsory school age taking GCSE courses.

Summary of main findings



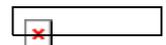
Hampstead College of Fine Arts and Humanities is a good college. It caters well for the particular needs of its students. The creation of a successful learning environment, in which students develop and flourish, owes much to the vision, conviction and leadership provided by the joint principals. The college meets most of the statutory requirements, but needs to address one or two procedural matters.

What the college does well



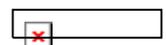
- the quality of the curriculum is good and effectively reflects the aims of the college;
- teaching is good overall and enables the students to make good progress provision for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is good ;
- the college has created a caring environment free from harassment, which successfully promotes mutual respect;
- facilities for the arts are very good; and
- students are successful in gaining places at universities and colleges of art.

What the college must do in order to comply with the regulations



- ensure that parents and parents of prospective students are informed of the availability on request of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and the sanctions adopted in the event of misbehaviour;
- ensure that they are informed that 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 year, are available on request;
- make the complaints procedure available to parents of students and prospective students; and
- ensure that toilets and washrooms are clearly designated for the exclusive use of either staff or students.

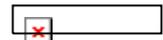
Next steps



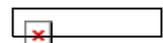
Whilst not required by the regulations, the college might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improved resources to support the teaching of science;
- improved planning and support in the classroom and for individual students' needs;
- improved schemes of work to more effectively meet the needs of all students of compulsory school age; and
- improved subject reports with more sharply focused guidance on what the student needs to do to improve .

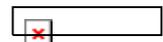
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the college



The quality of the curriculum



The curriculum provided by the college meets the needs of students of all ages and abilities. Provision for students of compulsory school age is broad and suitably balanced. The time provided for instruction is significantly more than the minimum suggested by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). A degree of flexibility in the curriculum structure enables the college to respond well to students' individual needs. Students have access to a wide range of specialist arts courses, including fine art, graphics, photography and drama. The range of specialist courses is designed to enable students at all levels, and from a range of abilities, to develop their particular skills and aptitudes successfully.

All courses are clearly set out in the prospectus and other curriculum-related documents that are available to parents and prospective parents. Information provided about courses clearly reflects the aims of the college. There are suitable outline schemes of work for all subjects. These have a number of strengths and relate clearly to the progressive development of teaching and learning and to the content of the courses. However, generally they contain limited detail, for example with respect to catering for students with different needs and abilities.

The college prepares students for public examinations leading to the General Certificate of Education (GCSE), the General Certificate of Education (GCE), Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2). The largest proportion of older students take courses leading to AS and A2 examinations. A wide choice of subjects is offered to all students taking GCSE, and advanced level courses. The college also offers its own one year Pre-Foundation course, which incorporates a choice of two advanced level subjects, whilst offering students the opportunity of gaining experience of observation drawing, painting and graphics. A short, intensive 'Portfolio' course for students preparing for entry to colleges of art is also available. Students on these courses are advised on art college application.

The 15 students of compulsory school age taking GCSE courses all take an appropriate range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. They have good opportunities to focus on the

arts and to develop their aptitudes. An introductory course held in September focuses on developing students' study skills, such as note taking and essay writing. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and aspects of careers education are provided for all students of compulsory school age. The college needs to consider how these aspects of the curriculum could be further developed into more coherent programmes. Physical education (PE) is appropriately organised for the GCSE students and a number of students from all levels take the additional opportunity of playing team sports.

There are currently no students with statements of special educational need, although a number of the younger students enter the college with particular learning needs. They are generally well supported through the structure of courses provided. Students at all levels, including those of compulsory school age, appreciate the support that the college provides, for example through specialist counselling staff, the tutor system and some support in lessons. The college makes appropriate English as an Additional Language (EAL) support available if required.

Students have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities. A variety of visits are arranged to support the curriculum as well as the general development of the students.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is good overall with some that is particularly good. As a result of the good teaching, students generally make good progress and achieve well in public examinations. At the end of their studies students are successful in gaining places in universities and colleges of art.

Teachers usually plan their lessons well, in most cases taking into account the particular needs of the students. Lesson plans are closely related to the specifications for the various public examinations at GCSE, AS and A2 level. Most lesson plans have clear objectives and information concerning the use of time and resources, as well as extension work for more able students.

At the time of the inspection, some students were preparing for imminent public examinations. The revision lessons planned by the teachers for this purpose are especially helpful in refreshing students' knowledge of previous work, as well as boosting their confidence in relation to examination technique. Thus good subject knowledge, combined with a clear understanding of the examination specification, enabled teachers to direct good revision sessions in history and music. In business studies, there is a particularly well-planned series of revision lessons leading up to the public examinations.

Overall resources are of a good quality, quantity and range and are used effectively, except in the case of GCSE science which limits the range of learning activities undertaken by the students. The provision of textbooks and reference books is very good. Advanced level art students benefit from excellent resources and also from the opportunity to draw and paint using a professional model. This helps to create a professional atmosphere and supports transition between college and higher education in art.

Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their respective subject areas. They have a very good working knowledge of the various subject specifications and many have recent or current experience as examiners. This results in the students placing great trust and confidence in their teachers. Relationships between students and teachers are very good, especially in the advanced level classes, and are based on mutual respect. The students are confident, therefore, to ask for further explanation and assistance if they experience any problems in understanding.

In the best lessons, the students were successfully engaged in a range of appropriate and varied learning activities. In an AS drama lesson, the students participated vigorously in a warm-up

session, robustly in a memory exercise on the life of Brecht, and enthusiastically in reading the text. In a GCSE English lesson, the skilful lead provided by the teacher engaged the students in communicating their thoughts on the theme of parents, children and discipline. The small class sizes enabled teachers to provide close individual support which was well matched to the students' needs, although in some GCSE classes insufficient use was made of this opportunity. Some AS and A2 classes contained only one student and the teachers responded sensitively to the dynamics of one-to-one tutoring by ensuring that the student was fully engaged and made a significant contribution to the lesson. In an A2 German lesson, the student was engaged for a sustained period in the target language and made very good progress in speaking, listening and reading skills.

Some otherwise satisfactory lessons, particularly in GCSE classes, contained weaknesses, such as a lack of suitable resources to support learning or an insufficient variety of learning tasks to sustain the students' interest. On other occasions, inadequate planning led to students' individual learning needs not being met fully and the ineffective deployment of other adults in the classroom.

Teachers assess students' work systematically and regularly. Marking is comprehensive, detailed and accurate; for example spelling and syntax are corrected appropriately and helpful comments are provided which indicate areas for improvement. The small class sizes enable corrections to be discussed in detail with individual students and weekly tutorials provide a further opportunity for students to obtain extra help.

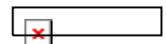
Teachers' assessments are summarised in weekly reports for GCSE students and fortnightly for advanced level students. These reports are monitored carefully by tutors, who follow up any problems promptly. Reports on students' attainment and progress are issued regularly to parents. However, the guidance that they provide on how students could improve is not always stated in sufficient detail. Parents' evenings are held twice a year and more frequent contact with parents is made as and when necessary.

The good teaching is enhanced by visits away from college, mainly to art galleries and theatres. Visits to Rome, Florence and Vienna give particular support to the teaching of art and the history of art. Outside speakers from, for example, the police and the Brooke Advisory Centre further extend and enrich the students' learning experiences.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students



The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. It has a number of important strengths. The provision successfully supports students, in particular those of compulsory school age, to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. These are central themes of the college's approach to younger students, many of whom have previously experienced difficulties with aspects of their learning.

Students' spiritual development is encouraged in a number of respects through lessons. For example, in music lesson the teacher led students in a discussion about the nature of 'music speaking to us', and therefore having the quality to endure, using examples from Bach's Passion and twelve bar blues. In history of art students were encouraged to develop sensitivity to the work of Renaissance artists and to wonder at the intricacy of sculpture. Moral aspects of the curriculum encourage students to distinguish right from wrong. For example, in an English class, as a basis for essay writing, GCSE students were effectively led by their teacher in a discussion of issues relating to smacking children. Moral issues have a high profile in the college, exemplified by discussions on

interpersonal relationships during tutorial sessions. College rules are applied consistently and are broadly regarded by students as being fair. Teaching staff reflect the aims of the college by setting good examples to students through their emphasis on mutual respect, reason and dialogue.

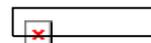
The college provides a positive social environment. Social issues are a recurring theme in lessons and interaction between staff and students, and between students and one another, is generally very positive. Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to show initiative. In a tutorial session older students exhibited a high level of maturity when discussing the nature of behaviour in the classroom. The college might consider how students could be encouraged to contribute more to community life.

Cultural development is a strength of the college. Students have a rich cultural experience through the appreciation of a wide range of arts. Their experience is further supported by a range of visits to cultural venues and events. They learn about other cultures, for example, the impact of African artefacts and imagery on the development of twentieth century European art.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the students



The college makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of its students. A full range of policies which take into account the various DfES guidelines offer sound guidance on matters pertaining to health and safety.

The college has created a caring environment free from harassment, which successfully promotes mutual respect. The students say that they feel well known and supported and enjoy the friendly environment. Staff and students alike have high expectations of good behaviour. A system of sanctions is understood, accepted and applied fairly; the college strikes a successful balance between freedom and constraint, so that there is considerable emphasis on self-discipline. The students by and large respond well to this regime and flourish within it.

The handbook for tutors draws their attention to relevant regulatory policies, for example, that on bullying. Further policies are in place to support students' safety and welfare, for example, those pertaining to visits away from the school and to First Aid.

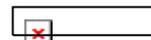
The college is regularly inspected by the fire authorities and the most recent report was satisfactory. The college also undertakes regular checks on appliances and alarms, and termly fire drills are carried out. All such checks and drills are duly recorded in a logbook.

The attendance and admission registers meet regulatory requirements as does the college's performance of its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



College staff is well qualified for the courses that they teach. The college is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau and there are clear procedures established for undertaking checks of all staff. Prior to the confirmation of each new appointment all the required checks are undertaken. Checks have been completed for all existing staff in the college.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The college premises and accommodation are good overall. The buildings are located on three adjacent sites in the Belsize Park area of Hampstead. The main site, accommodating most of the advanced level and foundation work is situated in a quiet courtyard away from the noise of the street. Based in a building which was originally a Victorian dairy, it offers light and airy accommodation with specialist studios for art and drama, and a series of smaller tutorial rooms suitable for the range of other subjects offered by the college. The art department has painting, graphics and computer graphic studios. There are additional good size art rooms around the corner in Lambolle Place currently awaiting refurbishment. Photography courses are temporarily accommodated offsite. The small courtyard provides a suitable external social space during breaks.

The GCSE classroom facility is about five minutes walk away and is suitable for the accommodation of current student numbers. In addition GCSE students have the advantage of access to all the college's good specialist facilities for the arts. Although there is no outside space for students' recreation, a common room is provided which is sufficient in size to enable them to meet and mix socially.

The teaching of GCSE students in biology takes place in a general classroom. Although the students' learning in science is enhanced by field study visits to local parks, the absence of laboratory facilities means that opportunities for practical investigational work are limited. GCSE students are escorted to a sports centre in Islington for PE and games lessons.

The college is well maintained and decorated and the premises are kept in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. Toilets and washrooms are adequate in number, but are not labelled for the exclusive use of either staff or students.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

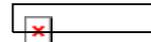
The college meets all the requirements except one.

What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that toilets and washrooms are clearly designated for the exclusive use of either staff or students (paragraph (5)(k)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



In most respects, the college provides clear information to parents and prospective parents. The college prospectus and the detail provided by other curriculum documentation are notably helpful; they relate well to the aims and ethos of the college. Most information is set out clearly and accessibly. However, parents and prospective parents are not made aware of one or two aspects of the information available from the college which relate to students of compulsory school age, such as the particulars of the college policy on child protection and details of the complaints procedure. Some guidance that is already provided to parents should be enhanced by additional reference to the more detailed information available from the college. All college policies are accessible to teaching staff.

Reports to parents are provided twice a term for GCSE students and once a term for those on advanced level courses. Reporting to parents is supported by the good procedures used in the tutorial system to monitor students' progress both academically and personally. However the effectiveness of the established monitoring and reporting systems would be strengthened by providing more specific detail about what students have achieved and what they must do to improve further.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

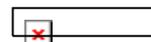
The college complies with most of the requirements.

What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that parents of students and prospective students are fully informed of the availability of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted (paragraph 6(2)(h)); and
- that they are informed that details of the complaints procedure adopted by the college are also available on request, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

7. The effectiveness of the college's procedures for handling complaints



Most complaints are handled informally as the college has succeeded in establishing good relationships with parents and there is regular communication on matters of mutual concern. The students freely raise issues in tutorial sessions or directly with the principals, as appropriate. The school has a written complaints procedure of recent origin which is compliant with the regulations in all but one respect.

Does the college meet the requirements for registration?

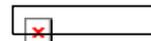
The college meets all the requirements except one.

What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- make the complaints procedure available on request to parents of students and prospective students (paragraph 7(b)).

College details



Name of college:	Hampstead College Of Fine Arts And Humanities		
DfES ref number:	202/6387		
Type of college:	Tutorial College		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of students:	14 - 19 years		
Gender of students:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students):	Boys 48,	Girls 48,	Total 96
Number of students with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 1,	Girls 0,	Total 1
Annual fees (day students):	£12,750		
Address of college:	24 Lambolle Place Belsize Park London NW3 4PG		
E-mail address:	info@hampsteadfinearts.com		
Telephone number:	020 75860312		
Fax number:	020 74830355		
Principals:	Mr N Cochrane and Ms C Cave		
Proprietors:	Mr N Cochrane and Ms C Cave		
Chair of the governing body:	N/A		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Mike Thirkell		
Dates of inspection:	10 - 14 January 2005		

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