

CATS Canterbury

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	886/6075
Unique Reference Number	131411
Social care URN	SC023670
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Inspection dates	14-15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI
Social Care inspector	Debbi Flint

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).

Inspection of social care (welfare) was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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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. The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided and to inform the Secretary of State at the DCSF as to the school's continued suitability for registration as an independent school.

This report details whether the school meets the requirements for educational provision and outlines the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.

Information about the school

The Cambridge Arts and Sciences (CATS) College in Canterbury was founded in west London in 1952 and was originally known as Stafford House Tutorial College. It is owned by the Cambridge Education Group under the proprietorship of Palamon, a private equity company. The college relocated to Canterbury in 1974 and in 2007 its name was changed to CATS Canterbury in order to align itself with its sister college, CATS Cambridge.

This college provides education and residential accommodation to students aged 15 years and above. The majority of students are aged from 16 to 19 years and, with the exception of one student who lives locally, all are from overseas. There are currently 197 students on roll, including four students of compulsory school age, and this is in excess of the registered number for admission of 170. The college is currently working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to update the documentation to increase its admission number and is planning to expand its provision further over the next two years. Residential accommodation for the majority of students up to the age of 18 years of age is in two large houses within a short walking distance from the college. Approximately a quarter of the students live locally with 'Home Stay' families.

The college mission statement is to *'foster academic excellence and prepare students for university in an environment where each individual can realise his or her potential and, in so doing develop their sense of social responsibility and obligation'*.

The college's educational provision was last inspected by Ofsted in 2003 and the residential accommodation was inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) in September 2006. This is a time of considerable change and development for the college. Some members of the senior management team are new to their posts and responsibilities, including the head of boarding, the co-vice principal and the operations bursar.

Evaluation of the school

CATS Canterbury provides students with a satisfactory quality of education. It is successful in fulfilling its aims. Aspects of the pastoral support and welfare are good and make a significant contribution to students' good academic progress and personal skills. However, the overall quality of the provision for national minimum standards for boarding and that for students' welfare, health and safety are inadequate because of a failure to meet important regulations relating to students' well-being. Since the last inspection of education the college has improved its procedures for dealing with complaints, provided more opportunities for careers information and devised a plan in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Quality of education

The overall quality of educational provision is satisfactory, as is the quality of the curriculum. There are appropriate policies and schemes of work for most subjects, but these vary in quality and some are underdeveloped. The college provides too little guidance about its expectations for programme planning. This results in a lack of consistency and too little detail to support the teaching of individual subjects effectively. There is a wide range of courses to enable students to learn English and other curriculum subjects in order to equip them adequately to gain a place at a British university. The college is able to respond flexibly to the requests and aspirations of most students. For those whose English skills are not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to follow a GCSE or the International Baccalaureate there is an intensive programme of English. A minority of students follow GCSE and A-level courses but most post-16 students pursue the college's own foundation course which provides successful students with a guaranteed place at a partner university. The college offers a generally broad range of subjects for the few students of compulsory school age but, as in the last inspection, it provides too little on creative and aesthetic areas of learning in subjects such as art, music and design and technology. The provision for the student with a statement of special educational needs is satisfactory, although there is a limited focus on developing literacy skills. In general, the curriculum provides good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills but the provision for personal, social and health education is not suitably planned, particularly for the younger students of compulsory school age. The provision for careers education is satisfactory and has improved with the appointment of a member of staff with a specific responsibility and a planned programme that has included visits from members of various professions and universities. Opportunities for sport and recreation are provided on two afternoons each week and the college makes good use of a local sports centre and nearby facilities for other sports such as tennis and hockey. The college is aware that the number of extra-curricular activities at the end of the day and for the weekends is too limited.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. The teachers have good subject knowledge but not all maximise opportunities for students to develop their English skills at an appropriate level alongside their academic studies. When this is

done well, teachers use appropriate methods to ensure that the students' literacy skills are not a barrier to their participation or increased understanding of the subject. In addition, the best teaching is characterised by tasks and questions that help the students to apply their learning, to learn from their misconceptions and to explain their thinking. All teachers plan lessons according to learning objectives but some of these rely too much on what the students will do rather than what they will learn.

Students' skills are thoroughly assessed during induction week, particularly to test the level of their competence in English. This is effective in placing students on courses that best match their needs and interests, for example, to continue with science or business studies. Regular assessments throughout the year help students and teachers to know how well they are doing. The college is about to implement a system to track this progress more rigorously against national levels of attainment. Some good teaching, together with good additional support that they receive for their personal development, enables most students to make good progress. As a result, all students who complete their studies gain a university place and improve their International English Language Testing System scores by an average of 1.5 points in a year. Recent results show that students attain particularly good grades in law, physics and mathematics.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The college promotes students' self-knowledge and self-belief effectively. This helps them to improve their academic performance and to grow in confidence. Consequently, it prepares them well for their future well-being. Students attend well and say that they are happy at the college. Their behaviour is good; they demonstrate good attitudes to learning, are attentive and responsive to questions in lessons. They willingly accept the college's rules and adopt a mature attitude to learning. This is reflected in their positive relationships with each other and with the staff, which creates a harmonious learning community. It is also shown in their willingness to contribute to the local community, for example, cleaning up sections of a local beach and stretch of woodland. They have also successfully raised funds for a number of charities. While the college provides students with a satisfactory understanding of English public institutions and services, this area of the curriculum remains less well developed. The support provided by the staff is a key feature that enables most students to make good progress in their academic work and personal development. They are very appreciative of the support and guidance from their personal tutors and teachers. Students come to the college from across the globe to join a truly international institution. The many nationalities in the college are respectful and tolerant of cultural differences and there are good opportunities for groups of students to give presentations on their way of life to the rest of the student body. The school also organises cultural events, such as, a Japanese or Nigerian evening in order to promote diversity.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The college makes inadequate provision for students' welfare, health and safety. This is because the policies and procedures for recruiting staff, first aid, anti-bullying, the management of behaviour and educational visits are insufficiently detailed to ensure that effective practice takes place. The monitoring of the effectiveness of these policies, especially in relation to the particular needs of students from overseas, is not rigorous enough. As almost all students are boarders at the college, further details are given in the section below evaluating boarding provision. The college meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The college does not have the required single central register of staff. In addition, the procedures for recruiting staff and maintaining appropriate personnel records are not sufficiently robust to ensure that the required checks have been undertaken prior to offering staff permanent appointments.

School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation for teaching varies in quality, but is safe and is satisfactory for learning overall. Most of the classrooms are small. The lack of space in some rooms limits opportunities to involve students actively in their learning, whereas the lecture room provides a good learning environment. There are small specialist facilities for science teaching, which are appropriately resourced. There is a small library and computer suite, and students are encouraged to use additional library facilities in the town. The canteen facilities are a source of considerable discontent amongst students and the college is looking for ways to improve this area. Although the number of toilets for males and females is sufficient, the college does not meet the regulation requiring separate facilities for staff and students. All areas of the building are well-maintained.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents and carers receive a range of useful information prior to students arriving at the college, supported by agents in their countries of origin. Information contained within the prospectus and student handbook provides clear information on course requirements, as well as expectations for appropriate attitudes and behaviour while studying away from home. Students' families receive regular information about progress and personal effort through written reports and email correspondence. Recent revisions to the prospectus ensure that parents and carers are aware that they can request a range of policies and additional information. The required information regarding support for any students with special educational needs (SEN) is not yet available.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints policy has been updated recently and meets all of the required regulations. There has been one formal complaint over the past year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- establish clear curriculum policies and schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that the curriculum for students of compulsory school age provides experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- provide personal, social and health education which reflects the college's aims and ethos (paragraph 1(2)(f)).

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

- revise and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DCSF guidance *Bullying: don't suffer in silence* (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- revise and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of students on activities outside the school which has regard to DCSF guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- revise and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst students which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 3(2)(d))
- have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 3(3))
- revise and implement a written policy on first aid to ensure that students' particular medical requirements are appropriately addressed 3(6)).

The school 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 (including volunteers), ensure that appropriate checks been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and has such information been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, in addition to the requirements of paragraphs 3(2)(a) to (d), have regard to Standard 38 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 4(2)(e))
- maintain a single central register of all staff and volunteers in post on or after 1 August 2007 to show checks made and the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained, or where appropriate, that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (List 99); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school; compliance with the relevant National Minimum Standards where boarding accommodation is provided (paragraphs 4C(2, 3 and 9)).

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

- provide sufficient separate toilet facilities for staff and students, including facilities for those with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- have regard to Standards 40–52 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 5(u)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents and carers are aware they can request particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements of SEN (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

Evaluation of boarding provision

The quality of boarding at CATS Canterbury has some strengths but there are significant weaknesses relating to the health and safety of boarders and the school does not meet all of the key National Minimum Standards. The school has recently overhauled its management structure and appointed new members of the senior management team including a head of boarding, a bursar and a co-vice principal. The school has made some improvements since the last inspection which relate to certain aspects of the care of boarders. These include the appointment of a designated person for child protection, improved fire safety and security measures, the provision of internet access in halls of residence, an effective system for the selection of host families and the monitoring of lodgings and the introduction of an annual appraisal system for boarding staff.

The school does not effectively support boarder's health needs. Although there is a welfare officer in place, the medication policy states that the school does not take responsibility for administering medication or providing treatment for minor illness. The staff lack training in the administration of medication and do not obtain consent for medical treatment from boarder's parents. The school does, however, have adequate policies for countering substance abuse.

The school has two dining areas and kitchen facilities which are of a satisfactory condition. The school supports the needs of boarders with special diets. However, the food provided does not support the needs of the boarders as it is of poor quality.

There are significant weaknesses in provisions to safeguard the boarders. Whilst boarders are given guidance on bullying there is no overall policy on countering bullying for use by both boarders and staff. The school's policy on child protection is also inadequate as it does not name the designated person for child protection or detail action to be taken if the designated person is subject to an allegation. There is also no overall behaviour management policy which gives guidance to both boarders and staff. Boarders rely on the student handbook for behavioural guidance and, whilst standards of behaviour are satisfactory, there is no central log for recording any punishments that occur. Therefore, there are insufficient measures in place to ensure the consistency in behaviour management.

There are satisfactory procedures in place to ensure fire safety in the school building. This includes a comprehensive fire risk assessment. Although there are activity risk assessments in place, the school does not yet have a comprehensive system of risk assessment for boarding houses to ensure that residential areas are free from hazards. In addition, some windows in boarding areas do not have restrictors fitted, which is a safety hazard for boarders.

The school's system for recruiting staff is not sufficiently robust to protect the boarders. Some staffing files do not have the information required to comply with the relevant standard, such as, satisfactory references, copy qualifications and interview notes. Although the school carries out the required checks on staff, such as

CRB, there is no evidence that taxi drivers used by the school have also been appropriately checked.

Boarders state that they have good relationships with staff and that they feel supported. The school has a personal tutor system and there is an independent counsellor who is also available to boarders. The school's ethos is that of an international community as almost all students are from overseas, and students state that they get on well together. The school adheres in practice to its equal opportunities policy. There is a student council which advises the school's management team on issues which are of importance to boarders. Boarders state that they are satisfied with the activities provided by the school outside of study.

Boarders up to the age of 18 live in one of two houses within walking distance from the school which are clean, comfortably furnished and well maintained. All boarders have a key to their room and for a lockable box provided in their room. Boarders have either a single or double room with en suite facilities. All boarders have study provision in their rooms. The school uses bunk beds for the majority of its boarders, which is not in line with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. However, most boarders have two bunk beds to themselves and can choose in which bed to sleep.

The school arranges for some students up to 18 years of age to live in private lodgings. These boarders stay with host families and are transported every day to the school. The school has a satisfactory system in place for the selection of host families and the regular monitoring of lodgings.

All boarding staff have job descriptions and receive a comprehensive induction. The school has recently introduced a system of annual appraisal for all staff. Staffing levels are satisfactory and boarders state that there are always staff on duty who they can approach. Although there are some improvements since the last inspection, there has been insufficient progress to ensure that the school effectively addresses the health and safety needs of all boarders.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that appropriate minor illness treatment is made available to boarders (NMS 15.1)
- train competent designated staff to administer medication (NMS 15.7)
- obtain in advance written parental permission for the administration of appropriate non prescription medication to boarders (NMS 15.14)
- ensure meals are adequate in quantity, quality and choice (NMS 24.1)

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- ensure that the child protection policy contains guidance for staff to report any child protection matter to the designated person for child protection and also action to take should the designated person be subject to an allegation (NMS 3.3)
 - ensure that the school has an effective policy on countering bullying which is known to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 2:1)
 - ensure that the school has an appropriate policy on behaviour and discipline which is known to boarders, staff and parents (NMS 4:1)
 - ensure that any administration of a major punishment is recorded in writing in a central log (NMS 4:6)
 - provide evidence that reasonably practicable steps to carry out criminal records bureau checks on taxi drivers booked by the school to drive students unaccompanied have been taken (NMS 38.10)
 - ensure that the school's system for recruiting staff meets all the measures listed in standard 38.2 (NMS 38.2)
 - ensure that windows accessible to boarders above the ground floor are fitted with restrictors or have a risk assessment stating that they are designated safe without such restrictors (NMS 47.3)
 - ensure that the school has an effective system of risk assessment to identify and reduce risks to boarders in the school buildings and grounds (NMS 47.9)
 - ensure that bunk beds are only used in exceptional circumstances for boarders beyond year eight (NMS 42.5)
 - ensure that the Principal or a senior member of staff nominated by the Principal monitors the school's risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents (NMS 23.1).

School details

Name of school	CATS Canterbury		
DCSF number	886/6075		
Unique reference number	131411		
Unique reference number (social care)	SC023670		
Type of school	Tutorial college		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1952		
Age range of pupils	15-19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 113	Girls: 84	Total: 197
Number of boarders	Boys: 111	Girls: 81	Total: 192
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,500-£20,300		
Annual fees (boarders)	£16,500-£21,000		
Address of school	68 New Dover Road Canterbury Kent CT1 3EQ		
Telephone number	01227 866540		
Fax number	01227 451685		
Email address	mlb@catscanterbury.com		
Headteacher	Ms Marie-Louise Banning		
Proprietor	Palamon		
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI		
Social care inspector	Debbi Flint SCO		
Dates of inspection	14-15 May 2008		