

Fine Arts College Hampstead

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	202/6387
Unique Reference Number	100084
Inspection number	329564
Inspection dates	15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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 students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding students and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Fine Arts College, Hampstead, formerly known as Hampstead College of Fine Arts and Humanities, was founded in 1978 by the current joint principals with the aim of *'creating a college where the arts and humanities are given special attention...in a learning environment that acts as an effective bridge between school and university life'*. A wide range of courses is offered for students at various stages of development. These lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2), and as well as Pre-Foundation and short 'Portfolio' courses in art and design. Admission to the college is by interview. Currently there are 21 students of compulsory school age taking GCSE courses and 99 other students. The college is located close to both Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage tube stations in a quiet, secluded courtyard with additional teaching facilities close by. The college was last inspected in 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Fine Arts College, Hampstead offers a good quality of education, which has many strengths. It provides consistently good teaching by experts in their fields using an outstanding curriculum and is a welcoming, friendly community in which the talents of every individual are nurtured. The college met most of the regulations for registration in 2005 and has made good progress in addressing the outstanding issues. The college now has to ensure that essential training is up to date for staff with regard to welfare requirements.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding and directly relevant to the needs of the students of all ages and abilities, enabling them to make good and in many cases outstanding progress. Provision for students of compulsory school age is broad and balanced with a sufficient range of GCSE subjects available for study. In addition the college offers

an extensive range of subjects including classical civilisation, drama, fine art, graphic design, Latin, Spanish, French, photography and music. Students of compulsory school age spend one afternoon each week at a local sports centre and have the opportunity to take part in a variety of sports under specialist tuition. Many students, including older ones, expressed a wish to have more regular exercise as part of the planned programme. Older students studying for AS and A2 levels have the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects including business studies, graphic design, classical Greek, economics, film studies, history, fine art, government and politics, history of art, media studies, music technology, philosophy, sociology and textiles. This extensive range of subjects enables the students to access higher education at university, art or drama school. There is a high degree of flexibility in planning each student's timetable, which enables the college to respond well to individual needs. This is effective in enabling students to develop skills and aptitudes according to their abilities. Students confirm in discussions that they receive well-judged advice in choosing their course of study, helping them to become well-rounded individuals able to pursue new interests to a high level. An appropriate age-related programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship within personal tutor sessions is enlivened by visits from experts in the local community. A rich and varied programme of visits outside the college to galleries, concerts and exhibitions further enhances the curriculum. Students also have the opportunity for art study visits to Paris and Florence. Students who need additional help or who have a statement of special educational needs are ably supported.

The teaching and assessment are good and much outstanding practice exists. The staff are well informed about their subject, convey their enthusiasm and teach in a lively and interesting way. The pace in lessons is good, staff use questioning effectively to engage the students' interest and encourage them to think for themselves. Discussion is an important part of lessons, for example, in business studies considering case studies and in classics analysing photographic evidence. Expectations are high. Staff generally plan their lessons well and most have a short plenary session at the end of each lesson. The proprietors now plan to monitor teaching. Students are encouraged to work at a purposeful rate, many covering a two-year programme of study in one year, for example, in photography. New students may have not been used to this pace of work but respond by listening, concentrating and working hard. Some students have moved from other schools where they have failed to thrive; they respond in a positive way to the atmosphere at the college, enjoy being treated as responsible young people and appreciate that the staff are there to help them. One new student commented, 'it is like a family here,' with others saying that they have settled in very quickly and made many friends. Resources are good and effectively used. Provision for practical science experiments has been arranged with a local school.

The college assesses students' learning in a variety of ways. In lessons, assessment is continual and feedback is clear, detailed and immediate, resulting in good progress. Each tutor fills in a fortnightly assessment of students' progress which is discussed at length between the student and a personal tutor. Many students reported that this was an effective way of helping them to improve their work. Parents and older students are given very regular feedback in the form of reports

and have opportunities to meet staff. As a result of the outstanding curriculum and lively, well-informed teaching, the students make good and in many cases outstanding progress and achieve high standards in examinations. During the last year all the students attained places at their chosen destination.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The college makes good provision, with many strengths, for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. The positive, welcoming atmosphere, where students are treated as individuals, encourages them to interact well, make new friends and express themselves in a mature way. The older students, become responsible young people with a self-confident outlook on life. Many are very articulate and express their opinions confidently, which is encouraged by the staff, with discussion an integral part of learning. The students' behaviour is good, they mix well socially and respond to the trust put in them by the staff. The younger students are well supervised and new students have settled very quickly into the life of the college. The students are adamant that there is no bullying and they thrive in the safe, nurturing environment which allows them time to mature. Relationships at all levels are excellent and students are valued for their unique talents. Students of all ages and backgrounds mix well, and form strong relationships. They gain a good understanding of both race and culture and learn to be tolerant and kind. Staff are very positive role models with the overall tone of the college set by the proprietors. There are excellent opportunities for cultural development through the arts curriculum. The students make a positive contribution to the wider community through charity fund raising and visit a local home for the elderly. Students' attendance is good. They are helped to prepare for their economic well being through their range of studies and the strengths of their personal development.

Safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety

The college takes all reasonable steps to minimise risks to students' welfare, health and safety and provides a good level of care for them. All essential policies are in place and effectively implemented. There are good recruiting procedures in place for all staff who have been checked for their suitability to work with young people. A single central register is in place, recording that all the necessary checks have been made which is important when not all staff are full time. Staff trained in safeguarding and those who administer first aid now need to renew their training. The college reacted very promptly when informed of this and booked the staff onto training courses. The college is vigilant about fire safety and holds regular documented drills. There is a good awareness of disability and the college fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.

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 provision for students' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that staff are trained in safeguarding to comply with latest DCSF guidance (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that first aid training is up-to-date (paragraph 3(6)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- make additional provision for students to participate in physical exercise
- establish a system to monitor teaching

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of students		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

Name of school	Fine Arts College, Hampstead		
DCSF number	202/6387		
Unique reference number	100084		
Type of school	Fifth and Sixth Form College		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1978		
Age range of students	14-19		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 55	Girls: 65	Total: 120
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Annual fees	£14,400- £14,650		
Address of school	24 Lambolle Place Belsize Park London NW3 4PG		
Telephone number	0207 586 0312		
Fax number	0207 483 0355		
Email address	mail@hampsteadfinearts.com		
Headteacher	Mr N Cochrane & Ms C Cave		
Proprietor	Mr N Cochrane & Ms C Cave		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	15 October 2008		