

School inspection report

26 to 28 March 2024

Cambridge Tutors College

Water Tower Hill

Croydon

CRO 5SX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The school is an outward-looking, diverse community that actively promotes mutual respect between the nationalities represented in its multi-cultural intake. Leaders ensure that a personal focus underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils are treated as young adults and encouraged to challenge themselves to realise their potential in all activities. Pupils are well-prepared to make the transition to the independence of life beyond school.
2. Leaders apply their skills and knowledge well to meet their responsibility to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils in support of their personal and academic development.
3. The curriculum is adapted to suit each pupil's stage of development and prior learning as well as their aspirations and command of written and spoken English. Pupils with varying aptitudes make consistent progress and often exceed initial expectations so that they achieve well in external examinations. A large majority of leavers are successful in securing their choice of course and destination in higher education.
4. Teaching focuses on the individual and careful monitoring ensures that pupils make typically good progress towards their aspirational targets. Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of examination specifications and develops subject-specific and study-skills well. However, the lack of sharing of practice by staff in small subject departments has led to some unevenness in the quality of teaching.
5. The curriculum successfully nurtures self-knowledge and self-esteem so that pupils are happy and confident to take responsibility for their learning. They fully understand that individual support is readily available when required.
6. The senior leadership team and governors successfully ensure that policies and procedures relating to the safety of pupils on and off-site are reviewed and updated as required. However, lines of responsibility are not always clear and some incoherent record-keeping inhibits the clear oversight of actions taken with respect to health and safety.
7. The curriculum and pastoral care in the school foster an atmosphere of mutual respect that encourages productive working relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern society and well supported to make informed decisions about their futures. Relationships between pupils are harmonious and highly respectful. Pupils know that they can voice their opinions at any time but pupil committees allowing younger pupils to have an input into the decision-making process are not as effective as possible.
8. Boarding in lodgings arranged by the school is well managed and led by senior leaders. They liaise closely with hosts and boarders to ensure a high quality of provision that is valued by both parents and pupils.
9. Safeguarding practices are managed effectively by dedicated senior staff that always make the welfare of pupils their highest priority. This approach is shared by staff at all levels ensuring that pupils are known as individuals and that they have trusted adults that they can turn to if they have any safeguarding concerns.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps.

Leaders should:

- ensure that roles of responsibility for the management of health and safety are clearly defined and that the recording of checks is clear enough to enable effective monitoring
- enable subject teachers to share best practice more effectively
- enable younger pupils to have a more effective input to decision-making in the school through the pupil committee.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The governors exercise appropriate oversight over the work of leaders to ensure that the Standards, including those relating to boarding, continue to be met. Leaders and governors ensure that all school policies and procedures are reviewed in a timely manner and are implemented effectively.
11. Leaders assess risk well, particularly in recognition of the challenges presented to both boarders and day pupils in the context of an urban environment. Appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate risk both on-site and offsite and leaders ensure that risk management is a dynamic process. Helpful advice on issues such as safety on public transport or walking home at night is incorporated into induction programmes. Leaders engage external agencies to make presentations to pupils on issues such as substance abuse and gang related violence.
12. Leaders successfully manage the challenge of timetabling and staffing a broad pupil-centred curriculum. However, there are currently few opportunities for staff to formally discuss strategies to promote the sharing of the most effective practice and its impact on learning. Leaders' oversight of teaching and learning across departments is not developed sufficiently to ensure that the quality of teaching matches that of the best in all subject areas.
13. The school's aim is to nurture academic success, life skills and the self-confidence required to be independent learners in higher education. Teachers provide strong encouragement for pupils to achieve their absolute best in all of life's challenges.
14. The complaints policy and procedure are effectively implemented to include careful monitoring of informal concerns. This ensures that parents receive prompt consideration of any issues raised and that most concerns are resolved informally.
15. Leaders make comprehensive arrangements for pupils who board in lodgings with host families. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements highly efficiently to include termly visits and frequent meetings with boarders.
16. Leaders ensure that all on-site and offsite health and safety checks, maintenance and fire safety arrangements are completed as required. With recent changes in the management of these areas, some lines of responsibility have become blurred and a co-ordinated approach to record-keeping is lacking. As a consequence, leaders' monitoring of health and safety measures is not as effective as possible.
17. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are understood and met through the drawing up and implementation of a three-year accessibility plan to ensure that the needs of any pupils with a disability are addressed.
18. Leaders provide all required information to parents, including an annual written report about their child's progress, via the school website and parent portal.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. A balanced GCSE curriculum with the option of one or two-year programmes of study provides experience in all areas of learning allowing pupils to access successfully a range of sixth-form courses. Leaders have structured a range of pathways in the sixth form that allow each pupil to follow a bespoke curriculum comprising two year, one year or eighteen-month A-level programmes or the Northern Consortium United Kingdom (NCUK) foundation course. The successful completion of all NCUK units guarantees a place for overseas pupils on a university programme. The personalised curriculum, delivered by dedicated subject specialists, ensures that pupils are successful in gaining places on a range of competitive university courses in the UK and overseas. Pupils speak highly of the opportunity to tailor their programmes to their aptitude, interests, and aspirations.
21. Teaching is clearly focused on each individual and the close monitoring and support provided enables pupils to make typically good, and often rapid progress to meet or exceed personal targets. Teaching is well-planned to ensure that pupils are fully engaged and make mostly good progress in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. In the most effective lessons, progress is assured by passionate teaching that establishes high expectations and challenges pupils with the use of sophisticated subject-specific language. In biology, pupils showed a clear understanding of the impact of different amounts of auxin on plant roots and were able to describe the difficulties of isolating the impact of individual hormones in experiments. Pupils including those who have English as an additional language (EAL) are highly articulate and enjoy the opportunity to engage in discussion. In economics, pupils showed secure understanding of the retail price index and used subject terminology effectively to describe the causes and impacts of hyper-inflation. In a minority of lessons, the nature of tasks set are not sufficiently challenging, resulting in slower progress or a lack of engagement.
22. The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met by classroom teachers and by the pupils themselves who learn to manage their learning effectively. Concise and helpful information is shared at the weekly briefings by the senior leaders with oversight. Summaries of specific needs alongside self-help strategies are shared with both teachers and pupils and this ensures that pupils who have SEND make progress that is at least in line with their peers.
23. The admissions process that ensures placement on appropriate programmes, together with specialist support allows pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) to access the curriculum fully. The school successfully supports pupils from a range of nationalities to achieve the required score in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to access the next stage of their education. As a result, pupils who have EAL settle quickly and are highly successful in meeting their personal targets.
24. The assessment regime of formal weekly tests in each subject is valued highly by pupils and parents who have continuous access to the results of these tests. Pupils use the tests to set their own targets for improvement and identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding. There is a high level of individual support and clear feedback in lessons that ensures that each pupil understands the progress that they are making and what they need to do to improve. Senior leaders monitor each pupil's progress weekly and subject tutors convene case conferences for pupils that are a cause for concern. As a result, individual support is swift and effective in keeping pupils on track to meet their

targets. Appropriate provision is made for pupils with higher prior attainment who embrace opportunities provided by the flexible curriculum to take an additional subject, complete and extended project or compete in subject based competitions. These additional qualifications or wider achievements contribute to pupils' success in moving to the next stage of their education.

25. A suitable range of extra-curricular activities is provided that includes recreational or cultural trips and visits in the evenings or at the weekend. Pupils with musical interests are supported to take lessons towards grades. These experiences contribute to the high levels of success in subject related activities such as mathematical competitions, science Olympiads or art competitions and exhibitions. Pupils with musical interests are supported to take lessons towards grades.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 26. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. Teaching is highly effective in promoting self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. This is a result of the supportive individual attention given to each pupil by subject and personal tutors. Pupils who typically have high levels of self-confidence help prepare them well for the challenges of life beyond school.
28. Pupils live and work in harmony in the multi-cultural environment. They mix well and are at ease in each other's company. They enjoy the blend of backgrounds, cultures and interests of their community. Pupils exhibit much mutual respect and trust that is nurtured further by personal and subject tutors who actively encourage a collaborative approach to all aspects of life in school. Leaders set out clear expectations for behaviour based on courtesy and respect for others. Pupils take full responsibility for their own mature and respectful behaviour and incidences of bullying are very rare. Leaders deal effectively with any incidents that occur.
29. Pupils are well prepared by the tutorial, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes to meet the challenges of life in a city environment. They rapidly develop the independence to manage their lives responsibly. The PSHE programme is delivered to all pupils together in a weekly session that encourages debate and interaction between pupils of different ages. Pupils appreciate the relevance of the topics and say that they acquire new knowledge such as learning about knife crime, drugs education and how to stay safe outside school. Parents are provided with information about the schemes of work and express satisfaction with the RSE programme. Pupils give termly feedback on the topics delivered that informs future planning. For example, leaders incorporated units on religious tolerance and understanding into the spring term programme in response to the conflict in Gaza.
30. The premises are well-maintained and health and safety checks are carried out as required to ensure that the campus is maintained appropriately and securely. Appropriate provision is made for first aid at school and on trips and the medical needs of boarders are attended to promptly. Pupils are well-supervised when on-site as well as on trips and visits. However, some disorderly filing and completion of documents makes it difficult for leaders to track how health and safety policies are being implemented and how issues are being monitored and recorded on a day-to-day basis.
31. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained as required. Pupils' attendance is logged in each lesson and any absenteeism is followed up carefully by leaders.
32. Boarders speak highly of the arrangements made for homestay lodgings and enjoy high levels of care from hosts. They are confident to discuss any issues or concerns readily with the senior leaders with particular responsibility for boarding and know that prompt action will be taken. Boarders' sleeping accommodation is of a suitable quality, allowing them privacy and the opportunity to personalise their rooms. Food is of an appropriate standard and the catering team meet the dietary requirements of pupils well, acting on the information gathered by leaders during the admissions process. The homestay environment supports the mental and emotional wellbeing of boarders and helps them to develop life skills for the future.
33. Leaders provide detailed handbooks and thorough induction for both boarders and hosts. Boarding managers monitor homestay arrangements for pupils closely that include termly visits and seek

regular feedback from both hosts and pupils. Information is formally recorded and acted on promptly if concerns arise.

34. An appropriate programme of weekly physical education is in place that includes sessions that focus on personal fitness as well as the development of skills in a range of individual and team sports. Pupils are encouraged to attend activities and clubs outside curriculum time, such as the Friday evening badminton sessions that allow pupils of different ages to enjoy recreational opportunities together.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 35. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

36. The well-structured PHSE programme is delivered together to pupils of all ages and this further promotes the harmonious social and cultural mixing that is evident throughout the school. Across the curriculum, and in all activities, mutual respect and tolerance for pupils from different backgrounds, beliefs or protected characteristics is evident. Pupils speak highly of the friendships made with people from different backgrounds. Pupils enjoy opportunities to collaborate with other and develop effective teamwork skills through activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) and Model United Nations (MUN). Pupils enjoy opportunities to engage in debates and value the MUN highly for its promotion of cultural understanding as well as public speaking and language skills.
37. Voluntary work and charitable fundraising help pupils to develop their understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world. They understand the importance of the rules that govern society and the value of the democratic process. For example, pupils studying government and politics showed a detailed knowledge of the application of hard, soft and smart power in contrasting political systems. Pupils clearly distinguish right from wrong and have an awareness of current affairs. The school provides clear expectations of conduct that, together with close monitoring, helps them to develop personal responsibility for their own learning and conduct. Clear and comprehensive induction programmes are provided when pupils arrive at any entry point during the school year, helping them to overcome any anxiety and to feel emotionally secure. PSHE sessions focus on preparation to live independently and safely as pupils prepare for the transition to higher education.
38. Older pupils demonstrate an informed awareness of international issues as well as heightened social and economic understanding. This is demonstrated by their ability to speak authoritatively about their high-quality research papers written on topics such as 'climate change' or 'the role of women in society'. The opportunity to manage their own programmes and the extended school day provides effective preparation for life at university and the world of work.
39. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in decision-making and the democratic process. Older pupils speak highly of their experience of the pupil committee. Positions of responsibility, such as president and treasurer of the committee provide opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility and develop skills such as team work, public speaking and to hone their organisational skills. Younger pupils stated that they would relish opportunities to strengthen their role on the committee, feeling that the older pupils' focus naturally switches to examinations in the last stages of their time at the school. Activities and events organised by the committee have included charity fundraising and voluntary work, the management of a tuck shop and running social events such as a Halloween party. However, activity has been more limited during the previous year.
40. Well-informed and highly-personalised careers advice is given by subject teachers who discuss the pathways and options that can be accessed with different subject combinations. Personal tutors take an overview and help pupils to refine their thoughts about possible future careers. Pupils are encouraged to pursue their interests and to be aspirational as well as realistic. Pupils appreciate the personal support and guidance as well as the encouragement to research options and make their own informed decisions. This ensures that pupils have fully researched their options to make informed decisions. The university entry process is well managed and pupils take advantage of

opportunities to visit higher education institutions as well as hearing of the experiences of former pupils. Pupils following the NCUK foundation course benefit from the mechanisms in place to ensure their placement on a suitable course. This includes the services of an external support team that assists pupils with the writing of personal statements as well as the applications process.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

41. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

42. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements effectively to identify any areas for improvement. The school's safeguarding policy is updated at least annually and fully reflects local procedures and advice as well as current statutory guidance.
43. Committed and experienced safeguarding leaders ensure that issues are quickly identified and dealt with promptly in line with school policies and the procedures set out by local partners. Referrals are made promptly to external agencies when appropriate. The safeguarding team promotes vigilance and the understanding that 'it could happen here'. Staff know pupils well and readily raise any concerns. A developed culture of safeguarding pervades all aspects of school life. The safeguarding team engages well with local agencies and maintains an effective formal and informal dialogue to discuss any emerging issues in school or in the local area.
44. The well-qualified designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL know the pupils in the school well and ensure that prompt support is put in place when required. The DSL engages actively with local safeguarding partners and agencies to ensure that training for all staff is up to date and reflects the issues prevalent in the area. Regular training is carefully recorded and monitored to ensure that all staff receive timely updates and are confident to identify and report issues or concerns. For example, recent training has focused on online safety and the school's current system for monitoring and filtering internet use. Governors also receive appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns including those that may relate to another member of staff.
45. Leaders have developed a detailed risk assessment incorporating external advice with respect to the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Measures to ensure vigilance and act upon any concerns have been shared with staff and used to inform the planning of units in the PSHE programme.
46. Pupils, including those in lodgings arranged by the school, feel safe when they are on-site. They value the advice given by tutors and reinforced in PSHE that advise them how to stay safe out of school, whether when travelling on public transport, attending social events or engaging with social media. Pupils say that there are always staff that they can turn to and that there is prompt action when they raise concerns.
47. Recruitment checks are carried out in a thorough and timely manner and recorded accurately in the single central record of appointments (SCR) as required. Personnel files give a clear chronology and provide evidence of the required checks that matches the entries in the SCR.
48. Hosts for boarders in lodgings complete a thorough induction and safeguarding training prior to undertaking the role. Leaders liaise effectively with these hosts to support the wellbeing of the pupils when in lodgings.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 49. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Cambridge Tutors College
Department for Education number	306/6095
Registered charity number	312878
Address	Cambridge Tutors College Water Tower Hill Croydon Surrey CR0 5SX
Phone number	020 86885284
Email address	main@ctc.ac.uk
Website	www.ctc.ac.uk
Proprietor	Cambridge Tutors Educational Trust
Chair	Mr Sampathkumar Mallaya
Headteacher	Dr Christopher Drew
Age range	14 to 23
Number of pupils	57
Number of boarding pupils	21
Date of previous inspection	11 to 12 March 2020

Information about the school

50. Cambridge Tutors College is an independent day and boarding school for male and female pupils, 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 five members, alongside the college's principal (ex officio), form the council of trustees responsible for governance. Established as a tutorial establishment in Warlingham in 1958, the school moved to its present site in 1967 and became a charitable trust in 1973.
51. Boarders are placed by the school into long-term lodgings.
52. The school has identified 11 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
53. English is an additional language for 20 pupils.
54. The school states its aims are to help every one of our students to reach their top potential within a multi-cultural and adult-focused environment. To nurture the academic success, life skills and self-confidence required to be independent learners in higher education and to achieve their absolute best in all of life's challenges.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 March 2024

55. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

56. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarders' lodgings accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

57. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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