



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**CARDIFF SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

**(Company Registration No. 6500485)**

Full Name	<b>Cardiff Sixth Form College</b>
Address	1 - 3 Trinity Court, 21- 27 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0AA
Telephone Number	02920 493121
Email Address	enquiries@ccoex.com
Website	www.ccoex.com
Acting Principal	Mr Gareth Collier
Proprietor	The Board of Trustees
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	323
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 18: 205 18+: 118 FE only: 323
Inspection dates	<b>12-14 April 2016</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival	5
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	5
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	6
(d) Attainment and progress	6
<b>4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) Health, safety and security of the premises	8
(b) Student registration and attendance records	8
(c) Pastoral support for students	9
(d) Safeguarding for under 18s	9
(e) Residential accommodation	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) Ownership and oversight	11
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	11
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	12
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	12
(e) Provision of information	12
<b>6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	

## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Cardiff Sixth Form College is a private further education college, established in 2004 and located in the centre of Cardiff. It is a registered charity and a private company limited by guarantee. It is governed by its board of trustees and led by a small senior management team. The college's mission is to maintain its current excellent standards by providing students with first class teaching and expert guidance to enable them to achieve high academic success. It aims to prepare students for the top universities and for highly competitive degree courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Law and Optometry.
- 1.2 The college offers a wide range of subjects at AS/A level. Courses are designed to offer the students the best opportunities for progression to higher education. Students are required to display a very high level of competence in English but for those needing help and/or additional support, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examinations are offered.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 323 students, the majority of which are under 18 years. There are slightly more female students than males, who come from a very wide range of countries including Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. There were no students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 When an individual applies to join a course, the college checks their suitability through the use of a pre-course application form. Selected candidates are invited for interview where their commitment to the course and language skills are assessed. The college provides accommodation, with the majority of students being boarders.
- 1.5 The college was last inspected on 18-20 February 2014 when it met all key standards and the quality of education exceeded expectations.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Students receive an extremely good education in accordance with their objectives and the college's aims. A wide range of high quality courses are offered that fully meet the needs and aspirations of the students and provides clear routes to higher education. Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is accurate and is highly effective in ensuring that students are placed on the appropriate course in accordance with their abilities and career aspirations. Students are supported by excellent teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use effective teaching methods to motivate and keep the students' interest. As a result, students demonstrate very high levels of knowledge development across the range of courses and are very well prepared for their external examinations. Feedback on assessments is thorough and clearly identifies suggestions for improvement. Students' progress and achievement are outstanding.
- 2.3 Arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of students are excellent. The college's building is well maintained and provides a comfortable environment which effectively supports learning. A comprehensive range of health and safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively. The college provides a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all students and staff. Student registration and attendance records are accurate, extremely well managed and are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure. The college's pastoral structure provides excellent support and guidance for the students in accordance with its aims. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are excellent and reflect official guidance. Residential accommodation is excellent. Students report that they are happy, safe and extremely well supported.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of trustees provides excellent oversight and discharges their responsibilities very well for financial planning and investment in the future. The welfare, health and safety of students is a priority and all appropriate legal permissions are in place. Leadership and management are excellent. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is highly effective communication between managers and other staff. Well-defined policies and procedures are introduced at all levels, and implemented and monitored appropriately. Mechanisms to monitor quality and the tracking of student progress are excellent. Self-evaluation is well developed and performance data is used systematically to evaluate and improve performance on the different courses offered. However, actions identified in the development plan

are not always measurable or have dates set for completion. The college successfully attracts highly qualified and experienced administrators, teachers and managers. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken. The college maintains excellent communication with parents and students. Students in interviews expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the education provided.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival**

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to, and on, arrival is excellent. Detailed entry criteria are set and used effectively to provide accurate and appropriate advice and guidance to prospective students. On arrival, students undergo an extremely thorough and comprehensive assessment programme to ensure they have the appropriate level of subject competence and literacy and numeracy skills for their selected programme of study. As a result, course placement is highly accurate and students are very satisfied with their course placements, which they feel are appropriate to their future career aspirations.
- 3.2 Regular tests, course reviews and tutorials clearly identify any issues that students may have with the demands of their chosen programme of study. Excellent use is made of this information by teachers to guide their planning and provide any necessary support or guidance. Detailed advice is provided to students if they wish to change subjects.
- 3.3 High quality information, advice and guidance are made available to students through the college's website and its agents. The website is detailed, professional and includes accurate information about the college, accommodation and curriculum on offer. Students confirm that they are highly satisfied with the pre-enrolment advice they receive.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Students are extremely well educated in accordance with the college's aims and objectives. The curriculum is broad, carefully planned and highly effective in meeting the different needs of the students. The provision is highly flexible and enables a programme of study to be tailored to students' individual higher education and career aspirations. As a result, retention on all courses is excellent, with almost all students completing their programme of study. The range of courses and levels available provide students with excellent progression opportunities in line with the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Students complete a period of work experience which provides opportunities for the application of developing skills and helps to confirm their choice of career. A comprehensive range of enrichment and social activities and excursions, which effectively enhances students learning.
- 3.5 Student evaluation is very well integrated into all courses and the college makes effective use of student feedback to inform planning and assessment. Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.6 Courses match those listed on the website and in other marketing materials.



### **3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning**

- 3.7 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Comprehensive planning and an extensive understanding of the needs of their students allow teachers to successfully adapt lessons to meet individual learning needs and effectively challenge students. Teachers use an appropriate range of effective learning activities and resources which engage and motivate students. As a result, students make outstanding progress in relation to their ability and starting points.
- 3.8 Teachers are very well qualified, highly experienced and have an excellent understanding and knowledge of their subject and associated examination board. Relationships at all levels are extremely productive, with teachers and students working collaboratively to enhance learning and progress. Lessons are well paced and provide excellent opportunities for students to participate and apply their learning to past examination questions. Teachers ask searching questions that prompt students to think and respond successfully. Students work extremely well in small groups, showing excellent co-operative learning.
- 3.9 Teachers readily offer individual help and support to ensure high levels of skills, knowledge and understanding are developed. The high expectations of teachers ensure that all students are consistently challenged and well supported to meet their learning goals. Resources are used effectively to stimulate students to explore ideas and develop their understanding of the subject and examination requirements.
- 3.10 Assessment is regular and thorough; it accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in the students' progress and highlights areas for improvement. Feedback to students is positive, encouraging, accurate and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Students are encouraged to continue their learning outside of lessons, with regular setting of homework and extension activities. As a result, students develop their confidence and independence.
- 3.11 Arrangements for tracking students' progress are outstanding. The progress of each student is very carefully tracked, allowing managers, teachers and parents to monitor their progress effectively. Tutorials are held regularly and effectively support students to review their progress in relation to tests, homework and teachers' observations.

### **3.(d) Attainment and progress**

- 3.12 Progress and attainment are outstanding. The evidence from lesson observation and scrutiny of work shows that the overall standards being reached are excellent. Analysis of success rates over the past six years indicate that attainment is outstanding and that extremely high levels of achievement have been maintained.
- 3.13 The results for the students who sit external examinations are outstanding and show that in 2015 it was the top performing A-level college in the UK, achieving 99 per cent A\*-B grades at A-level. Most students progressed onto top UK universities including Oxford and Cambridge to study degrees in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy

and veterinary medicine. Attendance levels are high and very few students withdraw from their chosen course of study. Students report that they are extremely pleased with their progress.

## **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises**

- 4.1 Arrangements for the health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. A wide range of very detailed policies and procedures ensure that the arrangements for the health and safety of students and staff are effective, and the premises secure. The building is fit-for-purpose, very well maintained and provides a well-resourced learning environment which enhances the students' education. Classrooms are spacious, light and well furnished. All electrical equipment is tested regularly as required. Where food is prepared and served there are excellent arrangements to ensure hygienic preparation and service. Toilet facilities are adequate in number and well maintained. Security arrangements are excellent. As a result, students report that they feel safe, secure and comfortable.
- 4.2 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place with clearly allocated responsibilities. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments are carried out with clear follow-up actions. These are regularly reviewed. Detailed individual risk assessments are carried out for organised off-site activities. There are an appropriate number of trained fire marshals and first aiders, as well as first aid kits and a well maintained accident book. Fire action notices are clearly displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Regular fire drills are carried out which are well recorded. Staff and students are fully aware of their responsibilities and have received appropriate health and safety training.
- 4.3 Proper provision is made for students who are ill or injured. The college is fully accessible by wheelchair users or students with mobility difficulties.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.4 Arrangements for student registration and the recording of attendance are excellent. Admission procedures are comprehensive and properly observed. A central register is accurately maintained and individual student files contain all required information.
- 4.5 Daily attendance is accurately recorded and closely monitored, with all unexpected absences effectively followed up. Communication between administrators and academic tutors is excellent and is highly effective in identifying students who fail to show for specific sessions. Attendance and lateness policy and procedures are clearly outlined in the student handbook, and students are fully aware of procedures to monitor punctuality and absences. As a result, attendance is high and there is a minimum of disruption to classes by those arriving late.
- 4.6 Management and administrative staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment and attendance requirements for Tier 4 students and adhere to them rigorously. Accurate records of all these matters are recorded on the college's database and in students' individual files.

- 4.7 Clear policies and procedures are in place for the collection and refund of student fees and deposits. The policy is fair and applied consistently.

#### **4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.8 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Staff provide highly effective support and guidance in accordance with the students' needs. High levels of personal support and a comprehensive induction, system of progress reviews and attendance reports ensure that students' personal and academic development is reviewed regularly. On-site access to a health care professional is available should they need advice on medical matters. Consequently, students report that they know who to go to if they have a personal problem and feel confident to approach members of staff for help.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and students and amongst the students themselves are excellent, with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and the expectations of behaviour and conduct. The college has clear anti-bullying and harassment policies and procedures, and students report no instances of such behaviour. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and meetings with students, show that they feel that the college is providing them with a very safe and comfortable environment which is highly effective in meeting their learning needs. Nearly all would recommend the college to others.
- 4.10 Comprehensive careers advice ensures that students are very well prepared for further study choices and life beyond the college. Students value and regularly participate in a wide range of high quality enrichment and social activities and excursions, which effectively enhances their learning.

#### **4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s**

- 4.11 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of all strategies is frequently checked by senior managers. There is a designated child protection officer in place who is appropriately trained. All staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to or on appointment, and accurate records are maintained by the college in a centralised register of appointments.
- 4.12 A range of suitable policies is in place and effectively implemented. Staff are made aware of safeguarding issues through appropriate training.

#### **4.(e) Residential accommodation**

- 4.13 The quality of residential accommodation is excellent. The buildings are very secure, well maintained and managed. All health and safety measures are in place to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Facilities are of a very high standard and contribute effectively to the college's aims and to the education and personal development of the students. The premises are properly registered in accordance

with national requirements and students report high level of satisfaction with their accommodation.

- 4.14 Detailed risk assessments of residential accommodation are carried out, and students are regularly asked for feedback. Appropriate evening activities are arranged by the college and students appreciate this greatly.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 Governance and oversight are excellent. The educational direction of the college is clear and understood by staff. The focus of governance and leadership is forward looking, with a clear emphasis on supporting students and developing and maintaining extremely high academic standards. The board of trustees and senior management team has established management structures and both formal and informal procedures that are highly effective in monitoring all aspects of the college's performance. Policies and procedures are very well developed, regularly reviewed and effectively contribute to the high quality of education and the care of students. Relationships between the board of trustees and the senior leadership team are excellent.
- 5.2 Comprehensive oversight ensures that the college meets its obligations with regard to safeguarding, health and safety and fire safety, including all statutory duties in respect of students under the age of 18. Financial management is highly effective and ensures that excellent teaching and learning resources are in place. All necessary legal permissions are in place for the use of the premises, including relevant insurances and licenses.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The leaders are highly successful in sharing the organisational vision and development plans with staff. As a result, appropriate action is taken with regard to course development, maintenance of premises and student welfare and accommodation. Managers are highly effective in monitoring procedures and evaluating outcomes to ensure high standards of academic and personal development continue. A culture of caring for students is successfully embedded throughout the whole organisation and this ensures that all decisions and actions consider the student experience and meet students' needs.
- 5.4 Well established management structures effectively ensure that roles and responsibilities of staff are clear and well understood. Communication between all staff is excellent. Staff and students report that they have excellent opportunities to express their views on issues and that the college is responsive to their comments.
- 5.5 The college is highly successful in securing and retaining well-qualified staff. An effective system of staff review is in place and this is used to ensure staff are well qualified for the work they do, and are appropriately supported by the management team. An excellent programme of staff development is in place to effectively ensure that staff are appropriately trained for their roles.

**5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.6 Quality assurance including student feedback is excellent. Managers successfully identify priorities for improvement. Self-evaluation is very good, resulting in a clear and realistic analysis of strengths and areas for development, and effectively identifies targets for action or further research. A detailed development plan is in place, but the actions identified for improvement are not always measurable or have dates set for completion. Student feedback is regularly and systematically collected through questionnaires and discussions with students. This feedback is effectively analysed, shared with staff and managers and used regularly to inform teacher development, academic action planning and the identification of college priorities. Comprehensive performance data is available and summarised to ensure key issues are highlighted for leaders and managers.
- 5.7 The complaints procedure is clear and appropriate. Complaints are handled and reported on effectively which has a direct impact on quality assurance and improvement planning.
- 5.8 Appropriate arrangements for the protection of student fees are in place.

**5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks**

- 5.9 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. Very well-qualified and experienced staff are secured through a thorough and efficient staff recruitment policy. All required recruitment checks have been carried out in a timely manner and appropriately recorded. The process to validate references and qualifications is excellent and the audit trail is clear with due regard to statutory requirements. A detailed central record of appointments is in place and effectively monitored by senior staff.

**5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.10 Provision of information is excellent. The website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and highly relevant information to inform their study choices.
- 5.11 The college were very responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the college should:

- Improve the development plan so actions identified for improvement are measurable and have dates set for completion .



## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

### Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Ms Sue Arnold	Team Inspector
Mrs Flora Bean	Team Inspector
Mr Roger Pilgrim	Team Inspector