



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRAMPTON COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Full Name of College	Brampton College
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Principal	Mr Bernard Canetti
Proprietors	Brampton Educational Services Ltd
Age Range	15 to 19
Total Number of Students	263
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (134 boys, 129 girls)
Inspection dates	31 Jan 2012 to 03 Feb 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous inspection was conducted by Ofsted in February 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Jim Bennetts	Reporting Inspector
Mr Michael Dodd	Team Inspector (Head of department, ISA school)
Mrs Elizabeth Ferrand	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Jonathan Ullmer	Team inspector (Head teacher, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Brampton College is a co-educational sixth form college for students aged between 15 and 19 years. Established in 1989 in Golders Green, the college moved to its present site in the centre of Hendon, north-west London, in 1998. It is owned by Brampton Educational Services Ltd, of which the principal is the controlling director. The college initially provided intensive A level courses, mainly for re-sit students, but has focused increasingly on provision for those on two-year A level courses.
- 1.2 The large majority of students are on two-year A level programmes. However, the college provides a range of one-year courses at GCSE and A level as well as one term and one year A level re-sit courses.
- 1.3 The college aims to help each individual student succeed in their aspirations and achieve their best possible examination results. It also seeks to develop the students' confidence, self motivation and capacity to think for themselves in preparation for university education.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 263 students (134 boys and 129 girls). While most come from the local area, others travel from more distant parts of London and about one-tenth of the students come from overseas. Students join the college after earlier schooling in maintained or independent schools, with a significant proportion from the independent sector. Students are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The prior attainment pattern of students starting AS and A level courses is in line with the national average for such students. The college makes provision for any students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for any who need support in learning English as an additional language (EAL).

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The students' academic and other achievements are excellent. Students make exceptionally rapid progress academically. They achieve their examination goals with resounding success. A strong contributory factor is the confidence and determination which students bring to the task. The college is highly successful in achieving its aims of fostering high academic outcomes and at the same time boosting students' capacity for vigorous independent academic effort and personal organisation. Students develop striking strengths and confidence in a wide range of study skills. They speak cogently, write lucidly and are incisive in analysis. Mathematical skills are developed to an impressive standard. Students have notable success in sporting, artistic and wider areas of engagement. Students' highly positive attitudes enable them to profit greatly from the excellent teaching that is provided across a wide range of subjects. The college's curriculum is excellent in meeting a very wide range of aspirations. It is highly flexible in accommodating individual students' needs, including the needs of those who find aspects of learning difficult and those who are not fully proficient in the use of English.
- 2.2 Students' personal development is excellent. It is shaped and cultivated by the college's excellent pastoral care system, which requires students to be rigorous in self-evaluation and determined and sharply focused in their efforts. Acting on a recommendation from the last inspection, the college has put in place a highly motivating system to recognise and reward students' achievement. Welfare arrangements are good. Since the previous inspection, shortcomings in safeguarding training and appointment checks have been rectified, and arrangements now meet requirements.
- 2.3 The governance of the college is excellent. There is highly effective oversight of all aspects of the college's work and the proprietors are diligent in discharging their responsibilities for statutory requirements. Financial and development planning are perceptive and sagacious. Excellent relations with parents are supported by high quality arrangements to keep them informed of students' progress. The excellent leadership and management of the college is shrewd in its emphasis on an ethos in which students feel valued and thrive through a worthwhile educational experience. Leaders and managers attach great importance to the college's rigorous regime of continuous testing, marking and evaluation of students' progress as a key motivator for students as well as a means of recording their progress. Senior staff recognise that a key asset is the high quality of teachers' input in the classroom and their support for students. They know that there is variety in classroom practice and take steps to build upon the great strengths so that they are shared more widely in the college. Students have a mature and positive outlook. There is scope for harnessing their insight more fully in the college's deliberations as it moves forward in its development.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

2.4 The college meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Continue to raise all teaching to the quality of the best by appropriate intervention, including the dissemination of existing excellent practice.
2. Explore ways for the student voice to contribute to the college's development.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Students develop strengths across a wide range of personal skills and attributes. Many students attain the highest grades in A level examinations, with instances of students gaining four or five A* results. Many students are highly articulate, with impressive confidence in speaking to an audience, excellent command of a wide range of vocabulary and a keen sense of when to make a cogent and telling remark. In discussion, they can pick up suggestions of prevarication or irony. Students apply their knowledge of mathematics in a range of contexts. Scientific skills are high; students have undertaken medical research, publishing articles, for instance on the placebo effect. Several students are taking the Extended Project Qualification, and their work shows a good level of research skills. Students go on to a wide range of higher education courses. Prowess in sport has been demonstrated by a student representing Britain in skating and a student who was one of the most highly rated for table tennis nationally.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at A level have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results improved from 2008 to 2010. More than half the A level results have been at grades A or A*. These levels of attainment show that students are making a high rate of progress relative to the average for students of similar ability, as shown by standardized measures of progress. This is confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. The inspection found that in a substantial proportion of lessons seen, and in discussions, students were making impressive progress. The attainments and progress of the small number of students on GCSE courses match that of those on more advanced courses. Students with particular needs, such as SEND and EAL, make progress that is as good as that of their peers.
- 3.4 Students are highly motivated, and say that they have been galvanised into much greater effort than they had shown in the past. In particular, the very close monitoring of their progress is a strong motivating factor. The inspection found this determined effort evident in their work. Students of all backgrounds and abilities present themselves as alert, attentive and keen to do well. They take a great pride in all that they do. They gladly support and encourage one another. Many take initiative in personal organisation and in extending their studies.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.5 The overall curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.6 The academic curriculum is excellent and is a major strength of the college. Class sizes are very small and there is flexibility in the range of courses and subjects offered. As a result, a timetable can be tailored to the individual requirements of each student. There are accelerated courses, such as one-year A levels, and one-term re-sit A levels, in addition to the traditional two-year A level course. There is a one-year GCSE programme available for students who wish to complete or re-sit their GCSEs. Provision is made for students coming from abroad who are seeking a foundation to A level work. Programmes within subjects are well-matched to

students' needs, for instance when re-taking examination modules additional tutorials and teaching sessions are arranged. Support is offered to overseas students with EAL where necessary. Support is also given to those with SEND and the ablest students are offered the opportunity to work towards the Extended Project Qualification. All students are supported through a structured programme of subject tutorials; some of these are timetabled, some are offered as 'drop-in' sessions and some are available on request. The college is willing to accept students who are not in the conventional age group for a particular course of study.

- 3.7 Students receive excellent guidance regarding university admission. They are carefully and skilfully advised about appropriate courses and universities. In addition, there is a medical forum which thoroughly prepares students for the rigorous admission processes for medicine and related courses. Potential applicants for other courses are given appropriate subject support in addition to interview guidance and practice. Experienced careers advisors are available at the college for one-to-one advice.
- 3.8 The extra-curricular programme is good. Though not extensive, it meets the students' requirements and contributes significantly to their personal and social development. Subject-based activities take advantage of the amenities of London such as the theatres, art galleries and university lecture programmes, and many subjects have a series of visiting speakers. There is a thriving charity committee run by the students. It has a commendable track record for raising extensive funds for various charities. Many of the fund-raising events give students the opportunity of spending time with each other and having fun, for instance in a talent show. Overseas students are offered an introductory programme of activities ranging from workshops on how to open a bank account to outings to the various sights of London. All students are encouraged to take on some form of community service and the co-ordination of this is being further developed by the college. Those participating in sports teams and competitive sport outside the college are given every encouragement. Prior to examination periods, a series of workshops aimed at mastering examination stress is available to all students and has proved very popular.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 Teaching is excellent.
- 3.10 The contribution of the teaching drives the students' excellent achievement and exceptional academic progress.
- 3.11 All lessons are characterised by teaching that is based on excellent subject knowledge and by excellent relationships amongst students, and between students and their teachers. Students regard their teachers highly and value their subject expertise and the painstaking way in which they provide support. Teachers have cultivated an exceptionally strong work ethic, which pervades lessons and is palpable as students tackle their demanding preparation work in the college library. Students encourage one another and value each other's contribution. Highly committed and effective administrative and support staff play a vital role in supporting teachers in their work.
- 3.12 Teachers know their students' needs and this is continually updated by a strict regime of extensive weekly or fortnightly tests that are closely marked. This enables teachers to plan lessons that meet the identified needs as well as taking forward the

coverage of material in syllabuses. Students are given extensive advice for improvement through the detailed marking of their work.

- 3.13 In the best lessons, erudite and often well-illustrated presentation by the teacher is consolidated and reinforced by timely and well-focused independent note making or other tasks. In a language lesson, a student was expected to undertake running translation of a text into the target language. Psychology students took a psychometric test to pick up their sleep styles. Such independent work, and opportunities for discussion, enable students to make the learning their own. In a small number of lessons, where the teacher's presentation lacks focus, students do not always grasp the key points of the lesson easily. Students benefit greatly from 'drop-in' tutorials where they can choose to see a teacher to talk through any difficulties and where there is opportunity for any lack of understanding in lessons to be rectified.
- 3.14 Most teachers challenge students at an appropriate level through probing questioning that enhances their thinking. For example, in a science lesson students were able to argue convincingly about whether kinetic energy is conserved when alpha particles penetrate matter. Occasionally in less successful lessons, opportunity for discussion by students is limited or only some participate. Teachers adapt lessons well to students' needs; for example, in an art lesson a dictionary was used to help a student, who was not proficient in English, to understand precise terms.
- 3.15 The college takes considerable care in identifying students' needs for additional support, including any needs for additional time or resources in routine tests and examinations. There is well-conceived provision for such needs and some students have additional opportunities, for instance to develop coping skills with learning difficulties. Those with EAL benefit from appropriate classes which lead to certification of proficiency.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is excellent.
- 4.2 Spiritual development is excellent. Students develop a strong sense of responsibility towards each other through effective collaborative work in class and the strong lead shown by the students' charity committee, which has raised extensive sums over the past two years. This year it is concentrating its activities on a charity focused on deprivation in Britain, a medical charity, and an orphanage in Borneo where one of the students has had personal experience.
- 4.3 Students are focused and attentive both in lessons and in listening to presentations from their peers. They clearly demonstrate the college's success in achieving its aim to develop students' confidence, self-motivation and capacity to think for themselves in preparation for university education.
- 4.4 Moral and social development is of the highest quality. Lessons in subjects such as English and modern foreign languages explore themes of relationships, family and suffering; meanwhile, religious studies and economics allow students to discuss and delve into philosophical and topical issues in depth in an animated and sophisticated way. Many students throughout the college are confident and articulate in expressing their views. While they are given personal and individual support they are challenged to think for themselves. Students speak warmly of the diversity of background and culture within the college and of how it helps them broaden their perspectives. However, there are limited opportunities for students to express views about the ongoing development of the college and its facilities.
- 4.5 Cultural development is a major strength. The personal development programme has a clear agenda on citizenship, and students appreciate the support of personal tutors along with activities such as those in the medical forum in helping them discuss moral, ethical and social issues. A prayer room is provided for students' use. An atmosphere of determination not only to achieve, but also to support others, pervades the college. At the time of the inspection, a Chinese New Year celebration was greatly enjoyed and students were planning a fund-raising event for Valentine's Day. Students have access to a range of sporting activities in the local community and cultural trips to London theatres. High-quality student artwork can be seen throughout the college.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.6 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.7 Clear lines of communication between staff, and detailed record keeping ensure that the needs of students are met and that any problems are dealt with quickly. The small classes and good relationships between staff and students provide a very favourable environment for academic study to flourish.
- 4.8 All students have a personal tutor who monitors their progress and provides guidance on such matters as study skills, university applications and citizenship issues. Students meet with their personal tutor every week in a timetabled session. An organised course in personal, social and health education is provided for all students in Year 11. The students are very appreciative of the efforts of the staff and feel able to approach them with both academic and personal problems.

Inspectors found that students show overwhelmingly that they are happy in the college and appreciate the adult manner in which they are treated, though there is no recognised forum for students to raise suggestions with senior management.

- 4.9 The college makes clear that it will not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. The anti-bullying policy is effective and students report that bullying is very rare in the college but dealt with effectively if it occurs.
- 4.10 To celebrate students' achievements, staff are asked to nominate students for particular awards. These are presented at various college events, published in newsletters, and posted on the college website. This motivating development has been put in hand in response to a recommendation at the last inspection.
- 4.11 Questionnaire responses and discussions with students show high levels of satisfaction with all that the college offers. They greatly value the close monitoring of their progress and the strong support of staff. Many feel encouraged to bring to their work much greater commitment than in earlier stages of their education. Inspectors found students highly motivated and they spoke with dedication and gratitude for the support they had found at the college.
- 4.12 International students and those with SEND receive support which does not affect their timetabled lessons. The college also has a counsellor who deals with a wide range of issues including pre-examination anxiety. Referrals can be made to an educational psychologist and to other psychological support services outside the college, should the need arise.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.13 The arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.14 The college's safeguarding policy meets all requirements, and arrangements follow official guidance. Members of staff are suitably trained in safeguarding matters and this rectifies a shortcoming at the previous inspection. The college has very good links with appropriate support agencies for students who are vulnerable because of their circumstances. There is a child protection officer and there are suitable arrangements in place if she is unavailable. There are appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) on staff who work in the college, and since the previous inspection, secure systems to check the national vetting and barring list for staff who start work before a CRB check is received. Previously, the college had long-standing arrangements to ensure that members of staff were properly supervised while CRB clearance was awaited; students were not put at risk. Policies and practice are reviewed annually. Admission and attendance registers and their administration are effective and absence is followed up thoroughly.
- 4.15 There are regular fire drills and three members of staff are trained in first aid. Risk assessments are made for all science experiments and trips away from the college. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the storage of chemicals and electrical appliances are tested annually. The college does not provide food but this is readily obtainable from local shops and some students bring a packed meal. There are some limited opportunities for organised sport.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 Governance is excellent.

5.2 The college is owned by Brampton Educational Services Ltd; there are two directors and the leading director is the principal of the college. The governance arrangements provide vigorous and adroit oversight of the college and its on-going development in line with the college's aims. There is highly effective discharge of responsibilities with regard to academic standards, pastoral support, financial planning and investment in premises, resources and staff. The development plans for the college set out an ambitious but realistic agenda for development. Governors know that the key to the college's success lies in the excellent culture of earnest effort, amongst both students and staff, that has been built up over many years. Governors have ensured that all policies, including those relating to the safeguarding of young people and the recruitment of staff meet regulatory requirements. There is appropriate annual review of policies. Policies and guidance to students and staff about the development of harmonious relationships is exemplary. The college is highly vigilant in matters of health and safety and the governors are supported in this by a safety committee convened by the bursar. Though procedures for safeguarding checks on newly recruited staff prior to full clearance have not always been in accordance with the college's policy and national guidance, this matter had been fully resolved by the time of the inspection.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

5.3 Leadership and management are excellent.

5.4 Leaders and managers are highly effective at all levels. Senior staff are highly ambitious for the success of the college and its students. They have a keen awareness of the levers for the promotion of vigorous endeavour and high achievement, which are consistent with the college's declared aims. Policy documentation and procedures on regulatory matters, including safeguarding, are of a high standard. Staff are appropriately trained in all matters of safeguarding and safety.

5.5 The college has clear educational direction: it is highly successful in enabling students to make rapid progress and attain their personal goals of admission to places on prestigious university courses. Perceptive and candid self-evaluation of the college's work enables senior leaders to steer development with a steady hand. The college uses questionnaires and other means of sampling opinion. These procedures endorse what is already self-evident: students feel strongly supported and greatly value their educational experience. The college is very successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff; all required checks are in place. Senior leaders know that staff feel empowered to give of their best and recognise that on occasion timely advice or dissemination of good practice can bring further dividends.

5.6 Links between the college and parents are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the education provided for their sons and daughters. They are emphatic in saying that the college is well led and managed and that students are

happy and feel safe. Parents are provided with the full range of information that is required. They are fully informed about academic progress through regular written reports and through parents' evenings held in October and February. Students and their parents are able to access reports from outside the college at any time via the recently introduced e-portal system. Parents sometimes participate in the life of the college by sharing their specialist knowledge or talents in support of college activities. The college takes every care to address parents' concerns. The ready availability of senior staff ensures that any issues are dealt with informally, swiftly and sensitively, in line with published complaints procedures.

- 5.7 The college provides ample opportunities for students to air any concerns they may have about their personal progress and well-being. However, opportunities to take account of the student voice on general developments in the college might facilitate productive dialogue and enable leaders to benefit more from students' mature perspectives and astute insights.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.