



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

CAMBRIDGE SEMINARS COLLEGE

(Company registration number – 08183749)

Full Name	Cambridge Seminars College
Address	87-89 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 7BS
Parent Company name	Camsem Investment PLC
Telephone Number	01223 300123
Email Address	admin@cambridgeseminarscollege.co.uk
Website	www.cambridgeseminarscollege.co.uk
Principal	Mr Philip Scherb
Proprietor	Camsem Investment PLC
Age Range	15+
Total number of students	22
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 18: 05 18+: 17 FE only: 22
Inspection date	06 July 2021

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

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 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.

An extended monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the quality Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Cambridge Seminars College is a private educational institution established in 1981. It is located close to Cambridge city centre and moved into its current premises in March 2021. Since June 2021 the institution has been fully owned by Camsem Investment PLC (CIP), with the two proprietors of CIP also being directors of the college. The college is led by the principal and its two directors. A new principal was appointed 21 June 2019 and is supported by a small management team. The aim of the college is to ensure every student can fulfil their academic potential and achieve their life aspirations.
- 1.2 The college offers A-level, Foundation, pre-masters and pre-doctoral programmes in a variety of academic subjects. It also provides English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses and preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Cambridge examinations. Selection is based on initial assessment of previous academic attainment, English language skills and future learning goals. Enrolment to A-level courses generally occurs in September or January. For Foundation courses enrolment occurs in September and March. Pre-masters and pre-doctoral courses can start at any time. EFL programmes are offered throughout the year and are of variable length, ranging from two weeks to nine months. Courses are open to students aged 16 years and older and students of 15 years are occasionally accepted.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 22 students enrolled at the college, the majority being male and over 18 years old. Students come from a wide range of different countries and English is an additional language for most students. At the time of the visit no students were identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. Accommodation is offered through the provision of a student residence and host family option.
- 1.4 This monitoring visit has been extended due to a change of address. For this reason, Section 4 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.
- 1.5 The college was previously inspected on 25 – 27 June 2019 when it was judged to meet expectations and the quality good. The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Strengthen financial management and ensure that contractual obligations on staff pay are met in a timely manner.
 - Implement a rigorous approach in the use of attendance data to quickly assess and address repeated student absence and lateness.
 - Strengthen management processes by collating and analysing data to inform evaluation and improvement.
 - Ensure that areas for development identified in lesson observations are effectively monitored by further observation or professional discussion.

- Ensure that targets set during tutorials are shared with subject staff and are detailed, measurable and set in an appropriate timeframe.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 25–27 June 2019 the college was found to meet expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. A well-developed and managed curriculum provides a wide range of courses that meet the academic needs and future aspirations of the students. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment is good and accurately places students on the right course in accordance with their language skills, prior academic attainment and future higher education needs. Overall, teaching is good and ensures that appropriate levels of progress are maintained. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the vast majority uses an appropriate range of effective teaching methods to engage and keep the interest of their students. However, in a very small number of lessons, the teaching methods used, limits student engagement and progress. Attainment is high and attendance rates good.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. The colleges' buildings are very well-maintained and provide a very comfortable and safe environment which effectively supports learning. Procedures for managing health and safety are good and are consistently implemented and updated. A high level of fire safety is maintained. Student registration and attendance recording are good. Records are accurate, well managed and are used effectively in monitoring attendance and taking necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are secure. Pastoral support is good and provides an appropriate level of support and guidance in accordance with the college's aims. Relationships between staff and students are good. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are comprehensive, fully implemented and reflect official guidance. Students report that they are well supported. Residential accommodation is of a good standard, secure and well maintained.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The directors provide good oversight and discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future. Welfare, health and safety of students are key priorities and regularly reviewed by senior managers. All appropriate legal permissions are in place. Leadership and management are good. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is effective communication between managers and other staff. Well-defined policies and procedures are introduced, implemented and monitored appropriately.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure that targets set during tutorials are shared with subject staff and are detailed, measurable and set in an appropriate timeframe.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendation. Since the previous inspection the tutorial system has been redesigned. Following each eight weekly term test, subject tutors meet with individual students to assess progress, discuss results and set targets for the next eight weeks. As a result, targets are now appropriately recorded and collated in a student learning journal and progress regularly reviewed.
- 3.4 The quality of course provision and curriculum is good. Students are well educated in accordance with the college's aims and their objectives. The curriculum is well-managed and based on a clear policy statement. It is well planned and provides a wide range of courses that meet the different needs and academic aspirations of students. Initial assessment is good. The process is accurate and teachers use the information effectively to plan lessons and help students to make good progress. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.5 Teaching is good and is characterised by effective planning, with care taken to match tasks to individual levels of ability. The lessons are delivered at a lively pace and the vast majority of teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods to suit different learning styles and to foster interest. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are enthusiastic and motivate their students to enjoy and engage with their learning. They have a clear knowledge of students' previous learning and consistently challenge them to meet their learning goals. However, in a very small number of lessons, the teaching methods used, limits student engagement and progress.
- 3.6 Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for other people including those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.7 There are highly effective systems in place to monitor students' progress and attainment. Attainment is high and attendance rates good.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Implement a rigorous approach in the use of attendance data to quickly assess and address repeated student absence and lateness.
- 4.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendation. Attendance is effectively monitored and collated on a daily basis, with action taken the same day if a student fails to attend their scheduled class. Students, who are repeatedly absent, or their attendance falls below 90%, are appropriately dealt with via the colleges' disciplinary process. At the same time, the student services manager contacts the student to offer support and help with any welfare or other issues that may be affecting the student.
- 4.4 Following a change of premises, student's welfare, including health and safety, has been examined in detail.
- 4.5 The college's premises are fit for purpose, very well-maintained and enhance the students' learning experience. Detailed policies and procedures ensure that the health and safety of students and staff are effectively managed, and the college premises secure. Classrooms are spacious, light and very well furnished. Washroom facilities are adequate in number and well maintained. All required measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards have been taken. An appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid are in place. Free drinking water is readily available throughout the college. The ground floor of the college is accessible by wheelchair users or students with mobility difficulties. Students report that they feel safe, secure and comfortable.
- 4.6 Systems for recording registration and attendance are well-managed. Admission procedures are good. A central register is accurately maintained and individual student files contain all relevant information. Attendance records are accurate and daily attendance is closely monitored. Home Office monitoring and reporting procedures for students who are studying under Student visa arrangements or under the Student visa route are well understood and adhered to.
- 4.7 Pastoral support for students is good. On arrival students receive an appropriate induction which is effective in helping them settle quickly in their course, the college and the local area. Relationships between staff and students, and amongst the students themselves, are very good with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. An appropriate range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and the expectations of appropriate behaviour and conduct. Students report that they are very happy at the college and feel well supported. Effective careers advice ensures that students are well prepared for further study choices and life beyond their course.

- 4.8 The safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are good. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of all strategies is appropriately checked by senior managers. There is a designated child protection officer who is appropriately trained. All relevant persons are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to or on appointment, and an accurate central register is maintained of suitability checks on staff.
- 4.9 The quality of residential accommodation is good and forms a valuable part of the students' education and personal development. The accommodation is secure, well managed and registered in accordance with national standards. Students report that they are satisfied with the accommodation provided and feel that it is managed effectively.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Strengthen financial management and ensure that contractual obligations on staff pay are met in a timely manner.
 - Strengthen management processes by collating and analysing data to inform evaluation and improvement.
 - Ensure that areas for development identified in lesson observations are effectively monitored by further observation or professional discussion.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. An in-depth review and reorganisation of the colleges' management structure has taken place since the previous inspection. Improved marketing operations, reorganisation of the delivery of classes and a centralised exam structure have helped to significantly reduce the costs and overheads of the college. This, together with robust financial oversight has ensured that all contractual obligations have been met since the 2019 inspection.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made against the second recommendation. The college has developed and implemented more frequent feedback questionnaires for students and staff, designed to provide relevant data to help monitor performance and drive improvement. This, together with other relevant data, is collated and used to produce an annual review which effectively reviews all areas of the college's performance in the preceding year and highlights areas for improvement for the next year.
- 5.5 Good progress has been made against the third recommendation. A new system of lesson observations has been implemented which effectively identifies areas for development and sets appropriate action points. Progress against action points is effectively tracked and assessed either before or during subsequent observations. In addition, the academic management team monitors the action points and identifies common areas for staff development.
- 5.6 The college is well managed. The directors provide good oversight and discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future. The focus of governance and leadership has a clear emphasis on ensuring the welfare, health and safety of students, as well as improving academic performance.
- 5.7 The college's work is supported by a well-developed management structure, and clear roles and responsibilities, which ensure that the resources necessary to make its aims achievable are in place. A comprehensive range of policies are fully implemented and regularly reviewed by the leadership team to ensure their

effectiveness. All appropriate legal permissions are in place. Relationships between the proprietors and the leadership team are good and there is effective communication between managers and other staff. Staff are very supportive of the college.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained good quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Identify inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in order to further improve academic standards.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students. They held discussions with senior members of staff 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 Maureen Deary-Walker	Team Inspector