



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

CAMBRIDGE SEMINARS COLLEGE

(Company 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 phil.scherb@csc.uk

Website www.csc.uk

Principal Mr Philip Scherb

Proprietor Camsem Investment PLC

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 10

Numbers by age and type of study 16 – 17: 2

18+: 8

FE only: 10

Inspection date **16 November 2023**

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 owned by Camsem Investment PLC. The two proprietors of Camsem Investment are also the directors of the college. The principal and the two directors lead the college. A small management team supports the principal. The college aims 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 various academic subjects. It also provides academic English courses and preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Cambridge and LangCert examinations. In addition, existing or prospective students may study GCSEs on a one-to-one basis if required, but only alongside an existing course. The college also offers a short academic experience course in the summer months to closed groups of students.
- 1.3 Student recruitment and selection is based on initial assessment of previous academic attainment, English language skills and future learning goals. Enrolment to GCSE, A level and Foundation courses occurs in September, January and March. Pre-masters and pre-doctoral courses can start at any time. English language 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. At the time of inspection, only A level and Foundation course were running.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection, ten students were enrolled at the college, the majority of whom were female and over 18 years old. Students come from a wide range of countries, and English is an additional language for most. At the time of the visit, no students were identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. Accommodation is offered through two student residences or a host family option. At the time of inspection, all students were accommodated in student residences.
- 1.5 The college was previously inspected on 20 September 2022, when it was judged to meet expectations and the quality was good. The recommendation from the previous report is:
- Identify and share the good practice in the quality of teaching in order to further improve the good academic standards.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 20 September 2022, 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. Courses meet the needs and abilities of students well. The curriculum is well planned and implemented to ensure students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to progress. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have relevant subject expertise for the courses they teach. Teachers understand the academic needs of their students well. Teachers select and use discussion topics and case studies that engage students' interest and encourage them to participate and progress. Students benefit from small class sizes and high levels of personalised academic support. Teachers provide students with clear, specific and constructive feedback that helps them to improve. Progress and attainment are good. Students make at least expected progress towards attaining their learning goals from their starting points. Success rates on Foundation programmes are high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety is good. Leaders and managers implement highly effective arrangements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. The college has an appropriate level of fire safety, which conforms to legal requirements. The college premises provides staff and students with a clean and comfortable environment for learning and work. A highly accurate admissions register is properly maintained. Attendance records are accurate, and daily attendance is very closely monitored. Staff clearly understand Home Office requirements regarding enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student visas. Overall attendance rates are high. Manual attendance tracking systems are time-consuming and hinder managers' ability to access specific attendance data efficiently. Pastoral support is good. Safeguarding arrangements for students under 18 are effective. Comprehensive and up-to-date safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented in line with official guidance. Residential accommodation is good.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. Senior leaders provide effective oversight and educational direction in line with the college's aim. This is reflected in the good quality of education and care that students receive. The proprietors effectively discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety, to the principal and the management team. Leaders and managers implement appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Leaders and managers clearly understand the college's strengths and where further improvements are needed. Staff recruitment, qualifications, and suitability checks are good. Leaders and managers have systematic arrangements in place to ensure all the necessary suitability checks on staff are completed. Information provided for inspectors was well organised and readily accessible.

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:
- Identify and share the good practice in the quality of teaching in order to further improve the good academic standards.
- 3.3 Satisfactory progress has been made against the recommendation. Managers identify good practice in the quality of teaching through formal lesson observations. Managers share examples of effective practice with teachers in meetings and through the online information platform. Teachers also complete observations of their colleagues' teaching to identify and share useful strategies when teaching students in small groups or one-to-one. However, these measures have not yet led to a consistent further improvement in academic standards.
- 3.4 The quality of course provision and curriculum is good. The range of courses and qualifications offered meet the needs and abilities of current students well. The curriculum is well planned, sequenced and implemented. This ensures students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to 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 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have relevant subject expertise for the courses they teach. Teachers plan lessons effectively. They set learning activities and homework tasks that help students develop independent learning skills. Teachers understand the academic needs of their students well. Teachers select and use discussion topics and case studies that engage students' interest and encourage them to participate and progress. Lessons are inclusive and students are respectful of their teachers and each other. The teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 3.6 Students benefit from small class sizes and high levels of personalised academic support. This helps students to develop in confidence when learning about more challenging topics and new concepts. Teachers use suitable assessments to regularly check students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide students with clear, specific and constructive feedback. This helps students know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- 3.7 Progress and attainment are good. Students make at least expected progress towards attaining their learning goals from their starting points. Success rates on Foundation programmes are high. As a result, students are well prepared to progress onto their next stage of education.

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 Health, safety and security of the premises are good. Leaders and managers implement highly effective arrangements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Health and safety policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and effectively shared with students and staff. This helps them to understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping themselves and each other safe. Those working in the science laboratory receive the specific safety guidance and personal protective equipment they need to work safely. Risk assessments, safety training and emergency drills are completed in line with college policies. As a result, students and staff understand what action to take in an emergency.
- 4.3 The college has an appropriate level of fire safety, which conforms to legal requirements. Appliances, emergency systems, and firefighting equipment are regularly serviced and maintained. A suitable number of staff have been appropriately trained in first aid and as fire marshals. The college has an appropriate first aid policy, which it implements effectively. Health and safety records, including the effective monitoring of incidents and accidents, are systematically maintained. These arrangements help keep staff and students safe.
- 4.4 The college provides staff and students with a clean and comfortable environment for learning and work. The premises are hygienic, well decorated and well maintained. Classrooms, science laboratories, and social areas are furnished and equipped to a good standard. Heating, lighting and ventilation are all adequate. The college is accessible to all staff and students, including those with special needs and disabilities. Free drinking water is available. Washrooms are clean and sufficient for the current number of staff and students. Effective security arrangements are in place.
- 4.5 The college maintains a highly accurate admissions register, which is properly maintained. Attendance records are accurate, and daily attendance is very closely monitored. The college knows when a student is late or does not attend. A clear attendance policy is understood by staff and students. Highly effective procedures are in place for making timely contact with absent students. Overall attendance rates are high.
- 4.6 Attendance monitoring arrangements are effective for the current number of students. Students' overall attendance is effectively collated and shared with students and their parents to help them monitor trends over time. However, manual attendance tracking systems are time-consuming and hinder managers' ability to access students' specific attendance data efficiently. Staff clearly understand Home Office requirements regarding enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student visas. There are clear and fair procedures for collecting and refunding fees and deposits.

- 4.7 Pastoral support is good. Students receive a comprehensive induction that allows them to settle into their studies quickly. Students benefit from high levels of support for dealing with personal issues. Regular personal tutorial sessions ensure students' individual needs and progress are systematically reviewed, monitored and supported throughout their course. There are very effective relationships between staff and students and amongst students. Students have access to a suitable programme of social and enrichment activities which supplement their academic studies. Students are provided with personalised progression advice and guidance, effectively supporting their next steps to higher-level study.
- 4.8 The college has clear procedures to promote tolerance and respect and effective measures to guard against and deal with abusive behaviours, bullying or discrimination. Leaders and managers have suitable arrangements, training and policies in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- 4.9 Safeguarding arrangements for students under 18 are good. Comprehensive and up-to-date safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented in line with official guidance. Relevant senior staff are identified as designated safeguarding leads (DSLs). DSLs and all other staff receive the required safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their role and level of responsibilities. Clear safeguarding reporting and recording arrangements are in place. DSLs ensure that safeguarding concerns are appropriately monitored, and the necessary actions taken to keep students safe. Staff undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to ensure their suitability to work regularly with students under 18. Students report feeling safe at the college and in residential accommodation.
- 4.10 Residential accommodation is good. The college manages two residences that provide clean, safe, and comfortable student accommodation. The accommodation is appropriately managed, monitored, and registered in accordance with local authority requirements. Effective pastoral support is available to students living in residences. Students can access a programme of interesting extra-curricular and social events, such as cooking classes and local excursions, which support their wider personal development and independence. Students are satisfied with the quality of accommodation provided.
- 4.11 The college keeps a well-maintained register of approved homestay residences. Leaders and managers ensure that homestay residences are checked and monitored for safety, security and cleanliness. Relevant DBS checks are completed for homestay families in line with the college policy. At the time of inspection, no students were accommodated in homestay accommodation.

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 quality of leadership and management is good. Senior leaders provide effective oversight and educational direction in line with the college's aim. This is reflected in the good quality of education and care that students receive. The proprietors effectively discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety, to the principal and the management team. There is a clear and appropriate management structure in place. There is an effective relationship between the principal, proprietors, and staff at all levels.
- 5.3 Leaders and managers implement appropriate quality assurance mechanisms that ensure the quality of education and care is maintained. Self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. Leaders and managers clearly understand the college's strengths and areas for further development. They put appropriate action plans in place to address priorities for improvement and development. Student feedback is regularly collected and analysed. Managers take prompt action to respond to student feedback where needed.
- 5.4 Staff recruitment, qualifications, and suitability checks are good. Leaders and managers have systematic arrangements in place to ensure all the necessary suitability checks on staff are completed, including identity, right to work, and reference checks. A detailed and accurate single central register of appointments is maintained and monitored for compliance.
- 5.5 The college website provides details of the complaints procedure and information on how to access key policies, such as safeguarding. Information provided for inspectors was well organised and readily accessible.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Support teachers in developing the quality of education further when teaching students in small groups or one-to-one.
- Implement more efficient attendance recording systems to make data more easily accessible.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with the principal and senior members of staff. 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

Mr Steve Ingle	Lead Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector