EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE COLLEGES

MONITORING VISIT

BRITISH STUDY CENTRES, BRIGHTON

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Full Name of College	**British Study Centres Brighton**
Address	British Study Centres, Fairfax House, 47 Cromwell Road, Hove BN3 3ER
Telephone Number	01273 229740
Fax Number	01273 208401
Email Address	john.veale@british-study.com
Principal	Mr John Veale
Proprietor	Mr Simon Cleaver
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	132
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 18: 8 18+: 124 EFL only: 132
Inspection date	**21 March 2013**

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PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight 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 UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges, including 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 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 for private colleges;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations to colleges 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.

A 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.

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1. CONTEXT

1.1 British Study Centres (BSC) is a privately-owned family company, part of which consists of four schools teaching English to international students. Strategic leadership for the development of the schools is provided by the managing director. The school is led by the director, who reports to the managing director. The school in Brighton is situated close to the attractions of the city.

1.2 The school aims to provide a creative, rewarding and successful learning and working environment for its students and staff. It is located in two large properties in a residential street in Hove, near Brighton. It offers general English courses at different levels, which can be combined with different electives. It prepares candidates for external examinations and offers one-to-one tuition.

1.3 The minimum age of student accepted is 16 years old, with a majority being between 21 and 25. Students stay on average seven weeks, although this varies by season. In the busy summer months, when numbers rise significantly, bookings are shorter. Nationalities most represented are Swiss, Korean, Italian and French, with smaller numbers from at least 50 other countries. There are more female than male students. At the time of the inspection there were 132 students enrolled. There are no students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

1.4 The last inspection took place on 13 – 14 March 2012. At that time the school was judged to meet expectations.

1.5 The main action points and recommendations from the previous report are:

- Devise a system of tracking the academic progress of students so that tutors can use the assessment data generated consistently to guide lesson planning.
- Establish consistency in monitoring learning against the aims of lessons.
- Devise a system to keep all students informed of their progress.
- Ensure that all teaching is at the standard of the best lessons.
- Secure a better balance of tasks to encourage a greater degree of independence in learning for all students.

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2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** The previous inspection of 13 – 14 March 2012 was judged to meet expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been improved.

2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Thorough assessment on arrival places students in appropriate classes. The vast majority of teaching is excellent and teaching approaches focus on the student and the learning taking place. A wide range of information technology and teaching aids are effectively used to maximise learning opportunities. Supplementary classes are well matched to student needs and maximise progress. A comprehensive system for tracking progress is in place. The on-line learning platform provides students with a clear indication of their progress by the recording of test results and tutorial discussions. An enhanced focus on learner achievement is reflected in successful student outcomes.

2.3 Welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school premises are attractive and well maintained. Levels of fire safety are good. Pastoral care is first rate. The specialist training undertaken by the welfare officer results in a high degree of provision to better support students. Induction is comprehensive and allows students to settle quickly. A suitable social programme is offered to allow students to maximise their time spent in the UK. Safeguarding training undertaken has raised awareness of related issues. Different accommodation choices are available, but in a small minority of cases students are dissatisfied. Background suitability and disclosure checks are routinely applied to ensure the safety of students under the age of 18. The school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers. Procedures for contact with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) are appropriate.

2.4 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Communications are very frequent and effective. Relationships between staff are positive and contribute to the success of the school. Quality assurance is of a high standard. Excellent action planning, which is regularly reviewed, forms part of annual planning. School-led staff development is excellent and provides a wide range of workshops. Teacher attendance at external training events is high and this professional development impacts positively on teaching. A system of annual appraisals is in place, although there are some inconsistencies in the process. Student feedback is collected and issues arising are dealt with promptly. However, analysis of this feedback is limited. Staff turnover is low, so students benefit from a settled and experienced staff.

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

3.1 The quality of curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All key Standards continue to be met.

3.2 The recommendations in this area from the last inspection report are:

- Devise a system of tracking the academic progress of students so that tutors can use the assessment data generated consistently to guide lesson planning.
- Establish consistency in monitoring learning against the aims of lessons.
- Devise a system to keep all students informed of their progress.
- Ensure that all teaching is at the standard of the best lessons.
- Secure a better balance of tasks to encourage a greater degree of independence in learning for all students.

3.3 Excellent progress has been made against the recommendations. A comprehensive system for tracking academic progress is now in place and includes weekly written homework, class tests and regular tutorials. The recent successful piloting of the learning diary, developed in the school, further supports effective tracking of progress. Information gained is used by teachers to guide lesson planning, giving rise to the delivery of clearly focused and appropriate lessons. Consistent monitoring of students' learning and achievement in class is evident in the vast majority of lessons observed. Test results and tutorial discussions are recorded on-line, so providing students with a clear indication of their progress.

3.4 The vast majority of teaching is excellent. Variation in the quality of the teaching is minimal and improvements in classroom practice are supported by a thorough observation system. These observations are key to identifying topics for teacher-led elements of the internal staff development programme. A number of steps have been taken to address the final recommendation; a wide range of information technology and teaching aids are being effectively used to maximise different learning opportunities for students. The on-line facilities greatly enhance students' independent learning.

3.5 Lessons are dynamic, varied and interactive, and engage and challenge learners fully. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a wide range of effective techniques to engage learners. Teaching approaches place the student at the centre of the process. Successful student outcomes result from the increased focus on achievement. Supplementary classes are well matched to learner needs and maximise progress.

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4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All key Standards continue to be met.

4.2 The school premises are well maintained and provide a very comfortable learning environment. Fire safety is good and is supported by an external company that conducts regular testing of fire alarms. Appropriately trained first aiders are known to students. A small minority of the contents of the first aid box are out of date.

4.3 Pastoral care is excellent. Students know who to approach with a problem and any issues are dealt with sensitively and promptly. Specialist training undertaken by the welfare officer contributes to the first rate support of students. Induction is thorough and a separate meeting for students staying for a long period of time gives additional information to facilitate living and studying in the UK. Teachers make themselves available for extra support if needed. A varied and interesting social programme, operating daily, allows learners to maximise their time in the UK.

4.4 Key staff have been trained in safeguarding, so increasing awareness of related issues. The safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly updated. Students have a choice of accommodation options available which include home-stay families or student houses owned or rented by the school. Relationships with the home-stay providers are excellent, and are supported by a regular newsletter. This impacts positively on students. Facilities in the houses vary, giving rise to a small amount of student dissatisfaction. All staff and home-stay families accommodating students under the age of 18 are checked through the disclosure and barring service (DBS).

4.5 Accurate admissions and attendance registers are excellently maintained and appropriate reports to UKBA are made as required. Stringent monitoring of attendance ensures high levels of class attendance.

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5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All key Standards continue to be met.

5.2 Communications are very good. The range of different team meetings afford valuable opportunities for reporting back on activities and updating, which includes the review of student feedback. There is a strong sense of rapport between the principal and staff, which has a positive effect on the entire learning environment.

5.3 Quality assurance is good. The self-evaluation was completed by the principal and provides some useful information. This includes information about key strengths and areas for development, as well as how the recommendations from the previous inspection report have been addressed. It does not yet involve the wider staff, so reducing its effectiveness. Excellent action planning, which is regularly reviewed, forms part of the process.

5.4 Student feedback is collected in the first week of the course, mid-way and on course completion. Any issues resulting from the first week and mid-course questionnaires are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively. All results are collated on an annual basis and some analysis takes place. Analysis of this data is limited. Consequently, opportunities are missed to supply quality management information from data on students' progress, complaints and the use made of on-line resources.

5.5 The school is committed to professional development. Staff development organised by the school is excellent and provides a wide range of sessions delivered by the staff, as well as external specialists. Teacher participation in external training events is high. These high levels of professional development further enhance the excellent learning environment. A system of annual appraisals for all staff is in place. Forms are thoroughly completed. Development points from the previous year are effectively reviewed and targets for the following year are clearly identified, resulting in enhanced performance. The quality of different forms used differs, so staff do not always benefit from best practice.

5.6 Staff files are well maintained. Staff turnover in the school is low, resulting in highly trained and experienced staff who offer consistency of service to the students.

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6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The language school has improved the good standards found at the last inspection.

Suggestions for further improvement

In order to improve the excellent quality provided, the language school is advised to:

- Ensure that accommodation in student houses benefits all students equally.
- Review appraisal documents to ensure best practice.
- Analyse students' progress, feedback, complaints and on-line usage more effectively to support business improvements.

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and staff and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed.

Inspectors

Ms Nicole la Hausse de Lalouvière	Lead Inspector
Ms Liz Brynin	Team Inspector
Mr Raymond Parker	Team Inspector
Ms Christine Powell	Team Inspector

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