



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

**MONITORING VISIT**

**BRITISH STUDY CENTRES LONDON**

Full Name of College **British Study Centres London**

Address Hannah House, 13-16 Manchester Street, London W1U 4DJ

Telephone Number 020 7317 0160

Fax Number 020 7317 0161

Email Address james.baker@british-study.com

Principal Mr James Baker

Proprietor Mr Simon Cleaver

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 272

Numbers by age and type of study  
Under 18: 2  
18+: 270  
EFL only: 272

Inspection date **11 March 2013**

## 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 private limited company teaching English to international students. It was founded in the 1930s and remains a privately owned family firm. There are four language schools, located in Bournemouth, Brighton, London and Oxford. The centres work together to provide policies for the group, which are implemented locally.
- 1.2 BSC London began operating in 2004 and functions as the head office of the group. It is located in the West End of London and shares part of its premises with West London College, also part of the BSC group. The aim of the school is to provide a creative, rewarding and successful learning and working environment for students and staff.
- 1.3 The school operates all year and experiences a large increase in numbers in the summer. Its most popular course is general English, which can be taken with elective courses in the afternoon. It also offers one-to-one classes and examination and teacher methodology courses. At the time of the inspection 272 students were enrolled. The minimum age of student is 16 years, with a majority aged between 18 and 25. Students mainly come from Europe, Japan, Brazil and South Korea. A majority are female. There are no students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 The last inspection took place from 29 February to 2 March 2012. At that time the school was judged to meet expectations.
- 1.5 The main recommendations from the previous report are:
  - Improve consistency in the setting of learners' work.
  - Improve the communication of progress to all learners and make the use of constructive, formative feedback on their work a more consistent feature.
  - Draw up an action plan with priorities for addressing identified areas for improvement.
  - Develop a private area for communication between staff and students.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school meets expectations.** The previous inspection of 29 February to 2 March 2012 was judged 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 learning is excellent. A comprehensive placement test, taken on arrival, places students in appropriate classes. Assessment information is given to teachers and supports planning to meet students' needs. Course descriptions are available for each level of class so students are aware of what they will be covering. A wide selection of book resources is available and supports effective learning. The limited use of interactive whiteboards and classroom computers reduces opportunities to further enhance learning. The vast majority of teaching is good or excellent, and is characterised by actively engaged students and well-paced classes. Feedback on students' work is helpful in indicating how to improve. Learning diaries have a very positive impact on student progress.
- 2.3 Welfare, health and safety are good. The school has effective processes in place for ensuring the safety of its students. The premises are maintained to a high standard and provide a comfortable learning environment. Pastoral care is good and supports students well. An excellent induction, supported by an informative student pack, allows new arrivals to settle into their courses quickly. An excellent and varied social programme allows students to maximise their time spent in the UK. An effective policy is in place for contacting students who miss lessons and is rigorously implemented. Procedures for contact with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) are appropriate. Awareness of safeguarding issues to ensure the safety of those under 18 years old is limited to key staff. The good quality of accommodation on offer contributes positively to students' overall experience the UK.
- 2.4 Governance, leadership and management are good. Communication between the principal and proprietor is effective. Communication amongst the wider staff is frequent, but misses opportunities for consistency of approach, thereby reducing improvements. Self-evaluation is undertaken by senior managers and does not include regular review. Effective action planning is in place for teaching and learning and is having a positive impact. Student feedback is collected and quickly acted on if issues arise. A wide-ranging programme of continuous professional development has high participation rates amongst teachers and impacts positively on teaching and learning. A system of appraisal is in place, but is not yet sufficiently embedded to fully support staff in their development. Staff files are incomplete.

### **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:
- Improve consistency in the setting of learners' work.
  - Improve the communication of progress to all learners and make the use of constructive, formative feedback on their work a more consistent feature.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendations. A clear homework policy has been established and is implemented consistently. On-going measurement of attainment is now excellently recorded in students' learning diaries. Review of these is undertaken weekly and provides clear evidence of progress. Feedback on students' work is varied, ranging from simple corrections to useful feedback which identifies key errors and enables learners to improve.
- 3.4 A comprehensive placement test, focusing on writing and speaking, takes place on arrival. The process is efficient, resulting in students being placed in appropriate classes. Assessment information is given to teachers and supports planning. Course descriptions are available for each level of class so students are aware of what they will be covering. A wide selection of book resources is available to teachers, providing good choice to meet learners' needs. The curriculum is based on up-to-date quality coursebooks. The process of choosing this is negotiated with students, which impacts positively on learning. There are interactive whiteboards and computers in every classroom. However, these are not yet fully exploited by teachers to support higher levels of engagement. The new self-access centre is satisfactory, but students do not fully benefit from the resource due to limited opening hours.
- 3.5 The majority of teaching is excellent. Particular strengths observed are inspired students who engage with each other, the teacher and the topic. Classes are well paced and teachers use a good variety of correction techniques and strategies which encourage the active involvement of students. Satisfactory lessons lack a creative use of material and a small minority demonstrate insensitivity to appropriacy of language.
- 3.6 High levels of achievement are evidenced by participation levels and student confidence, and are supported by clear differentiation strategies in lesson plans. Students themselves consider they are making good progress. Inspection findings support this view.

#### **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 last inspection report is:
- Develop a private area for communication between staff and students.
- 4.3 Progress against the recommendation is satisfactory. Whilst a room has recently been identified, it is not yet being used for its intended purpose, limiting opportunities for privacy in communication between staff and students.
- 4.4 Comprehensive policies and procedures are effective in ensuring the health and safety of students and staff and the security of the premises. Trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place, as are first aid kits and accident books. Good risk assessments for off-site activities support the safety of students. The well-maintained premises provide a comfortable learning environment to enhance students' education.
- 4.5 Pastoral care is good and supports students well. An excellent induction, supported by an informative student pack, allows new arrivals to settle into their courses quickly. An interesting and varied social programme of daily activities is offered to allow students to maximise their time spent in the UK. Welfare issues are logged on individual student records, but are not collated or analysed.
- 4.6 Student registers are effectively monitored. Prompt action is taken to report the absence of students under 18 and students on Tier 4 visas. Those with attendance below 85 per cent cannot gain a certificate when leaving the school. Procedures for contact with the UKBA are appropriate.
- 4.7 Safeguarding is satisfactory. Related training is limited to key staff, which reduces awareness of related issues by other staff. Due care is taken to identify students aged under 18 on registers. Agents and parents are contacted promptly if problems arise. Students are only placed with homestay families who have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 4.8 Accommodation is offered in student houses, homestay families and residences in the summer. All accommodation is well managed and allows students to make the most of their time in the UK.



## 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 recommendation in this area from the last inspection report is:
- Draw up an action plan with priorities for addressing identified areas for improvement.
- 5.3 Satisfactory progress has been made against the recommendation. An effective plan with clearly identified actions and timelines has been drawn up for the academic side of the school. Overall, these actions have brought about positive changes to teaching and learning. Areas outside the curriculum identified for improvement do not yet have a similar process in place.
- 5.4 Communication between the principal and proprietor is frequent and effective. Regular communication frequently takes place between different teams, resulting in focused actions which have positive outcomes for students. However, in a minority of instances, opportunities are missed to ensure consistency of approach, thereby reducing improvements. Relationships amongst staff are generally positive and contribute to the success of the school.
- 5.5 A wide ranging programme of continuous professional development is in place and has high take up amongst teachers. Teachers meet in a group, which encourages them to reflect on good practice and enriches opportunities for professional development. The school contributes financially to staff undertaking some qualifications, leading to quality improvements.
- 5.6 A system of appraisal is in place, but is not yet implemented systematically. Development actions are not yet routinely identified for staff, so limiting improvement. Teachers benefit from a regular system of observations. Feedback on observations does not always set clear goals, so opportunities for development can be missed. Staff files do not contain all necessary information, such as next of kin details or references.
- 5.7 A substantial amount of feedback is gained from students about accommodation and their experience at the school. The online learning platform allows feedback to be given at any time. Appropriate action is taken promptly when issues are raised and progress data is collected. However, both the student feedback data and progress data are not collated or analysed, and as a result useful management information is lost.
- 5.8 A complaints policy is in place and is known by students. Different types of complaint are logged and actioned, but the general complaints log is not up-to-date.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **Suggestions for further improvement**

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

- Ensure consistently effective communications with peers in the organisation to support the sharing of best practice.
- Implement a process of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning which considers the views of all staff.
- Ensure staff are regularly appraised and that professional development activities are appropriately linked to development needs.
- Update staff files to ensure they are complete.

## 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 and attended a registration session. 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