



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

MONITORING VISIT

BRITISH STUDY CENTRES LONDON

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Principal	Mr James Baker
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Age Range	16+
Total number of students	218
Numbers by age and type of study	16-17: 4 18+: 214 EFL only: 218
Inspection date	17 March 2015

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 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;
- 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.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the 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. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 British Study Centres (BSC) schools of English is a group of private language institutions teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to international students. It was founded in the 1930s by the grandfather of the current chairman and remains a privately owned family company. A managing director has oversight of the group of language schools. The aim of the school is to provide a creative, rewarding and successful learning and working environment for students and staff.
- 1.2 The school in central London was the third of the group of four to be established, in 2004. It shares its premises with West London College, a business school, also owned by BSC, which provides undergraduate and post-graduate courses. The other EFL schools are in Oxford, Brighton and Bournemouth. The group operates junior schools for students under 18 years of age during the Easter and summer holidays. The four centres collaborate on devising policies.
- 1.3 The school offers general and externally certified English language courses from beginners to advanced level. One-to-one, teacher training courses for overseas teachers and an internship programme are also provided.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection 218 students were enrolled, of whom four are under the age of 18. Four international students are studying on international visas. The majority of students are female. Most students are from Europe, Brazil, South Korea and Japan. All students have English as an additional language (EAL). Two students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.5 The school was last inspected on 25 March 2014 and was judged to meet expectations. The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Implement a system for collating and analysing all feedback data to inform quality improvements.
 - Improve the on-line platform so that students understand their progress and to allow teachers to analyse the termly progress of all students.
 - Implement a process of self-evaluation which considers the views of all staff in order to contribute to on-going improvement.
 - Increase awareness of all staff of how to recognise signs of learning difficulties and how to provide appropriate support.
 - Update staff files to include information on interns.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 25 March 2014 the language school 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 excellent. Assessment of students prior to or on arrival is very good and results in students being placed on courses that accurately meet their needs. The school provides a wide range of courses, which successfully meet students' needs and aspirations. Teaching is excellent. Teachers are highly qualified and skilled. Lessons are well-planned and stimulating. Consequently, students enjoy their learning and achieve well. Tutorial information is now effectively uploaded onto the on-line platform and as a result teachers are able to analyse the progress of all students. Teachers now recognize students' learning difficulties and provide appropriate support. A small minority of teachers do not use the school's marking scheme for written work so students' progress in this skill is less clearly measured. Courses meet the definition of home office approved qualifications.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. Arrangements for the management of health and safety, including fire safety and first aid are thorough. The premises are well maintained and provide easy access for wheel chair users. Pastoral care is effective. The school provides very good advice and guidance to students. Attendance and admission records are accurate and management of punctuality and attendance is rigorous. Provision for the safeguarding of those under 18 is good. The school meets Home Office requirements for registration and reporting for international students studying on Tier 4 visas.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The school's management is effective in identifying areas for development and appropriate actions lead to improvements in the quality of education. Feedback from both staff and students is used well in planning for improvement. Quality assurance is good and the school demonstrates a strong commitment to staff development. However, assessment data from class tests is not available to managers electronically, impeding tracking and evaluation of students' achievements. The staff appointment procedure is rigorous. All appropriate checks on staff are completed prior to their appointment. Self-evaluation is good and now considers the views of all staff. Staff files have been updated to include required information on staff working as interns within the school.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Improve the on-line platform so that students understand their progress and to allow teachers to analyse the termly progress of all students.
 - Increase awareness of all staff of how to recognise signs of learning difficulties and how to provide appropriate support.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made in addressing the first recommendation. Detailed and comprehensive information from tutorials for all students is regularly entered into the on-line platform. As a result teachers are able to effectively monitor and analyse the termly progress of all students.
- 3.4 Good progress has been made in implementing the second recommendation. Teachers report that they feel confident in recognizing learning difficulties. Teachers of students requiring additional support are given specific guidance as to how best assist the student. They share good practice in useful workshops. and make good use of a bank of appropriate and well-designed materials. As a result students with learning difficulties receive the help they need and make good progress.
- 3.5 Assessment of students prior to or on arrival is very good. The school is rigorous in ensuring students are placed in classes at the correct level. An online test, followed by a placement test and interview on arrival, ensures that students are allocated to classes which meet their needs. Students report that they are enrolled on courses appropriate for their level.
- 3.6 The school offers general English and external examination preparation courses which are very appropriate to the ages and abilities of the students. The wide range of course levels, aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides excellent progression routes. Courses meet Home Office requirements for international students studying on Tier 4 visas.
- 3.7 Teaching is excellent. Teachers skilfully elicit student responses and successfully encourage them to express themselves with confidence. The great majority of lessons are stimulating and lively so that students enjoy learning and make good progress. The teaching programme is based on course books designed specifically for each level, ensuring that lesson content and delivery are well-planned and consistent in all classes. In addition teachers devise additional material suited to the needs of individual lessons. Teachers carry out excellent learning checks to ensure students understand new vocabulary and grammar. Very good use is made of resources to support and promote learning. A small minority of teachers do not use the school's marking scheme when correcting written work so students cannot easily judge their progress in written English.

- 3.8 Progress and attainment are very good. Students reach acceptable levels of attainment based on their starting points and the lengths of their courses. The vast majority of students progress through the levels as expected. The very few students who are not ready to proceed are given good support so they are able to achieve their goals. All students complete a learner diary weekly. This includes details of class assessments and feedback from homework. As a result students know what they have to do to improve. Results in public examinations are higher than national averages.

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 Arrangements for health, safety and security of the premises are good. Fire evacuation practices are conducted in accordance with regulations and accurate records are kept. Equipment is checked annually by an external contractor and the fire exits are well-signed and free from obstruction. A large majority of the staff are trained as fire marshals providing good cover. There are a large number of qualified first aiders on site. Comprehensive risk assessments of the building are regularly conducted and all necessary measures taken to ensure safety.
- 4.3 The premises are maintained to a high standard and are suitable for the school's requirements. The good facilities include well-equipped classrooms, a well-stocked resources centre and a large number of computers available for student self study. There is easy access for wheelchair users.
- 4.4 The school keeps accurate attendance and admission registers. The attendance of individual students is monitored closely and consistently. Attendance and punctuality is very good and the vast majority of students achieve the school's attendance target.
- 4.5 Pastoral support for students is good. A thorough induction programme enables students to settle in quickly. Accessible and effective student advice and guidance is provided and students say they feel well supported. Good additional support is available through weekly themed session, for example on money management.
- 4.6 Career advice and guidance is effective. A well-managed internship programme successfully supports students in work experience following their studies at the school. A regular job club where students learn the skills required for gaining employment is very helpful in instilling students with confidence for when they apply for work.
- 4.7 Safeguarding arrangements are good, reflect official guidance and have proper regard for students' welfare. Policies relating to child protection are comprehensive and regularly updated. The designated child protection officer is appropriately trained. All staff have received the necessary training. Host families for students under 18 are checked closely by the school. All staff have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and an accurate central record is maintained.
- 4.8 There is an appropriate fee refund policy. Procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits are fair and clear.
- 4.9 The school has effective arrangements in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office when a student fails to enrol or discontinues study or does not fulfil the Home Office requirements for attendance.

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:
- Implement a system for collating and analysing all feedback data to inform quality improvements.
 - Implement a process of self-evaluation which considers the views of all staff in order to contribute to on-going improvement.
 - Update staff files to include information on interns.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made in addressing the first recommendation. The school systematically collects staff and student feedback and effectively analyses the information obtained to identify areas for improvement.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made in relation to the second recommendation. The school has developed a thorough and effective self-evaluation process, which considers the views of all staff. Findings from annual staff surveys are analysed and included, where appropriate, in the business plan. The school implements actions to address issues raised by staff according to clear deadlines.
- 5.5 The school has made good progress in implementing the third recommendation. The school completes files for staff working as interns within the organisation and these include all required information.
- 5.6 Ownership and oversight are good. The managing director of the BSC group, acting on its behalf, provides clear educational direction and support for the school. In collaboration with the school, the BSC managing director devises a realistic strategy for long-term growth based on good analysis of potential markets. The school's managers are very effective in setting well-thought-out targets and in ensuring high quality provision to meet those targets. Financial planning is strong. Regular meetings of both academic and operational teams ensure that all staff participate fully in the organisation. The schools' managers do not have electronic access to students' assessment data from class tests and external examinations, so tracking and evaluation of student outcomes is impeded.
- 5.7 Quality assurance is good. All teachers are observed formally once a year. They regularly take part in peer observations. Brief, regular oversight visits to lessons further ensure that teaching standards are maintained. The staff training programme is linked to areas for improvement identified in observations and is effective in addressing any development needs. The school provides financial assistance to teachers to obtain higher level qualifications, further demonstrating its firm commitment to good quality teaching.

- 5.8 The school is successful in recruiting well-qualified and experienced staff. Procedures for recruiting teachers are strong. All necessary checks are completed. A rigorous interview process ensures suitable high quality teachers are appointed
- 5.9 Responses to questionnaires and evidence from interviews indicate a good level of satisfaction expressed by both staff and students.
- 5.10 The school's students are covered by a suitable school protection scheme.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure all teachers use the school's marking scheme to assist students in assessing their progress in written English.
- Implement an electronic system to record students' assessment data so as to improve monitoring and evaluation of outcomes for students.

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. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school.

Inspectors

Ms Jane Beeson	Lead Inspector
Ms Sara Bailey	Team Inspector
Mr Allan Shaw	Team Inspector
Ms Sharon Weston	Team Inspector