



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

BSC EDUCATION

(12655362)

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Proprietor	BSC Education Ltd
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	47
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 18: 8 18+: 39 EFL only: 47
Inspection dates	8-10 October 2024

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival	5
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	5
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	5
(d) Attainment and progress	6
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
(a) Health, safety and security of the premises	7
(b) Student registration and attendance records	7
(c) Pastoral support for students	7
(d) Safeguarding for under 18s	8
(e) Residential accommodation	8
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
(a) Ownership and oversight	10
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	10
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	10
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	11
(e) Provision of information	11
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	12
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	13
7 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY CHECK	14

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 BSC Education Ltd is a private education company that owns colleges across the UK and abroad. Its headquarters are located in Birkenhead, Merseyside. The two colleges that form the basis of this inspection are London and York. London moved to its current premises in Holborn in June 2022 and York reopened in its current form in October 2021. Each college is run by a college manager supported by a number of centralised functions such as operations, finance, and HR. Oversight is provided by the board of directors. The colleges' vision is to provide customers with stepping stones to their future by delivering outstanding and transformational learning experiences.
- 1.2 BSC London and York offer English language courses from elementary to advanced levels and preparation courses for the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examination for students over the age of 16 years. IELTS courses were only operating in York at the time of inspection. BSC also offers courses for young people in closed groups and Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) training courses, but these were not being provided at the time of inspection. The wider BSC group also offers International Foundation Year courses at their Malta site, but this did not form part of this inspection.
- 1.3 Students are assessed when they apply for a course through an online placement test. Further speaking and writing testing takes place on the students' first day to ensure they are placed on the correct course and level. Residential accommodation is provided in homestay and commercial student residences, which are managed by external companies. Students under the age of 18 years must choose homestay accommodation. The London college occupies a Grade 2 listed building with no lift and cannot be adapted to provide access for persons with reduced mobility.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 47 students were enrolled. The large majority were male and over the age of 18 years. At the London college the students originate from a wide range of countries. At the York college, the majority of students studying were from Kuwait. All students spoke English as an additional language. No students had identified learning difficulties or disabilities. No students were studying under Student Visa arrangements.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The colleges meet expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Key Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is good.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. Assessment of students prior to and on arrival is good and ensures that students are placed at the appropriate level. Course provision is good. Courses are well-matched to students' objectives and capabilities and the aims of the institution. Courses for students studying under Student Visa arrangements are not offered currently at either college. Teaching and its impact on learning is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan effective lessons that students find interesting and motivating. Students work hard within a mutually respectful atmosphere. They make good progress in lessons and develop their confidence in reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, in a minority of lessons the pace is not sufficiently brisk or challenging, so that students make less rapid progress. Teachers assess students' work regularly and give constructive feedback. In a minority of cases this is not detailed enough to help students to improve their work. Teachers do not give students sufficient opportunity to learn by allowing them to correct their own work. Students' progress and attainment is good overall. The vast majority of students progress to the next level in the expected time frame.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. The premises are safe, secure and well maintained. They provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for students. There are highly effective arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff, including appropriate measures for fire safety and first aid. Attendance and registration of students is good. Both colleges keep highly accurate registration and attendance records and follow up absences promptly. Pastoral and personal support for students is good. Students receive very effective support on personal matters from well-trained and approachable staff. Students benefit from a comprehensive induction, a varied social programme and helpful advice for their next steps in education or employment. Arrangements to safeguard students under the age of 18 years are excellent. Detailed policies and procedures are effectively implemented. Designated safeguarding leads (DSL), trained at the appropriate level, oversee safeguarding at each college. All staff and homestay hosts are well trained in safeguarding. Residential accommodation is good and provides a safe, clean and secure environment for students.
- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The board of directors provides good oversight of both colleges. They ensure sufficient investment in high-quality staff, premises and resources so that a good standard of care and education is provided for students. Working closely with college managers they fully discharge their duties to maintain the health, safety and welfare of all students and to safeguard students under the age of 18 years. All legal permissions are met. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and student feedback is used effectively to make improvements. Leaders and managers monitor all aspects of the colleges' performance carefully. However, systems to review achievement and

attendance data are not sufficiently well-developed to allow for detailed analysis of trends over time. Staff recruitment processes are good and all necessary checks are made to ensure their suitability, including to work with students under the age of 18 years. Provision of information is excellent.

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

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival to the college is good. Students receive accurate information and guidance prior to arrival that enables them to choose an appropriate course. Students are encouraged to undertake initial assessments online prior to arrival. If they have not done so they complete it on the day of arrival. Further teacher assessments of speaking and listening are also undertaken on the first day which ensures that students are placed at a level that suits their capabilities and needs. The vast majority of students feel that they have been placed on an appropriate course.
- 3.2 Initial assessment effectively identifies any additional learning and support needs so that appropriate support can be put in place. Students are closely monitored in classes and through regular tutorials so that additional needs that become apparent are swiftly addressed.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.3 Course provision is good. The college offers a wide range of English language programmes that meet the needs and aspirations of students well. Students are well-educated in accordance with their objectives and those of the organisation. Courses are well-matched to students' ages, aptitude and language capabilities. Consequently, students make good progress and nearly all complete their course.
- 3.4 Courses on offer to students match those advertised on the website and in the prospectus. The college declares it is not currently offering courses for students studying under Student Visa arrangements. However, the full-time English courses at B2 and above meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

- 3.5 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are well qualified and demonstrate good subject knowledge, which they use well to plan effective lessons. They use a wide range of teaching methods and resources, such as videos and voice recordings, to keep students interested and aid their learning. Teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes and cultural background of their students and use this knowledge well to meet students' individual needs in classes. Students work well individually, in small group activities and whole class discussions. They take responsibility for their own learning and progress during their time in the UK.
- 3.6 Teachers use questioning well to check learning and encourage students to speak. They consistently correct errors of pronunciation and grammar. Consequently, students make good progress in lessons and develop their confidence in reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, in a minority of lessons the pace is not sufficiently matched to students' progress or challenging. As a result, a minority of

students do not improve their English language skills as rapidly as possible in the time available.

- 3.7 There are good relationships in classes and students work within a mutually respectful environment that promotes British values. Students are not discriminated against because of any protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.8 Assessment of student work is good. It is timely and fair, with the large majority of teachers providing constructive written and verbal feedback. However, in a small minority of cases this is not detailed enough to help students to improve their work. Teachers do not give students sufficient opportunity to learn by correcting their own work, for example through the use of a self-marking code.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.9 Students' progress and attainment is good. Students are kept well informed of their progress through regular tutorials and progress testing. The vast majority of students on English language courses progress to the next level in the expected time frame. The college uses the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) framework to measure progress in English language.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY.

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises

- 4.1 Health, safety and security of premises is good. The premises of both colleges are fit for purpose and well maintained with due regard to the health and safety of students and staff. As a result, they provide a safe and comfortable learning and social environment for students. Classrooms and communal areas are kept in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. Lighting, heating and sound insulation are satisfactory. The décor, furniture and fittings are appropriate. Free drinking water is provided to support students' wellbeing.
- 4.2 Security arrangements are good. There is appropriate access that allows students and staff to enter and leave safely, including in an emergency. Sufficient washrooms are provided. There are appropriate access arrangements and washrooms for those with disabilities at the York college. The London college site is not suitable for those with limited mobility due to its listed status.
- 4.3 There are highly effective arrangements in place for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. Staff and students receive appropriate information and training so that they know how to keep themselves safe. As a result, students report that they feel safe and are confident that any concerns they have will be addressed. The college takes all necessary measures to protect students from risks from fire and other hazards. There are a good level of fire safety measures including; appropriate risk assessments, regularly checked fire-fighting equipment, trained fire marshals, regular fire alarm checks and evacuation drills. An effective first aid policy is in place and effectively implemented. There are appropriate arrangements to provide assistance for students who are ill or injured. Any incidents or accidents are meticulously recorded.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records are good. Highly accurate admissions and attendance registers are kept. An appropriate attendance and punctuality policy is in place and effectively implemented so that staff are aware of the whereabouts of all students on the register. Students who miss classes are contacted promptly; immediately if they are under the age of 18 years. As a result, attendance rates are good.
- 4.5 No students are currently studying under Student Visa arrangements. However, staff are aware of the procedures for reporting to the Home Office if required.
- 4.6 The procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits are clear and fair.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.7 Pastoral and personal support for students is good. Both colleges ensure that students receive effective pastoral and personal support throughout the duration of their course. There are excellent relationships between staff and students and students

themselves. Staff are appropriately trained to support student welfare, such as mental health first aid to ensure that they can provide high levels of personal support to students. Students report that they know who to go to if they have a problem. BSC has appropriate anti-bullying and abusive behaviour policies and instances of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Parents and guardians are kept informed of the progress and attendance of students under the age of 18 years

- 4.8 A clear and comprehensive induction prepares students well for their studies and life in the UK. The colleges provide a varied social programme of internal and external activities that enhance the student experience. For example, visits to local places of interest, conversation clubs, quizzes, tea parties and cultural events, which students enjoy.
- 4.9 Students have access to good quality careers advice that enables them to make informed choices about future employment and educational opportunities. BSC provides students with information on progression to universities and workshops related to employability such as writing your curriculum vitae, interview practice and making job applications.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.10 Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Safeguarding has a high profile with management and is discussed during weekly and monthly meetings. There are clear and effective strategies in place for protecting students under the age of 18 years. Implementation of safeguarding procedures is checked regularly by leaders and managers.
- 4.11 BSC has a comprehensive, up to date safeguarding policy that is reviewed annually. It reflects the most recent guidance and contains all the necessary information, including on e-Safety and staff codes of conduct. As a result, staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, what to do and who to contact in the event of any concerns. There is a 24-hour emergency number for students to contact if they have a problem. Students sign a student agreement so that they understand the conduct and behaviour that is required of them.
- 4.12 Each college has a DSL to oversee safeguarding at that location. DSLs have training at the appropriate level to include multi-agency working. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding on induction and this is updated annually. Staff also receive appropriate training in preventing radicalisation and extremism. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, are obtained for all staff prior to the commencement of their employment. An accurate single central record is maintained.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.13 Residential accommodation is good. Accommodation in residences and homestays is arranged for students through BSC and managed by external agencies. BSC staff ensure that residences and homestays are effectively managed and registered according to national requirements. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that high

standards of safety, security and cleanliness are maintained. Residences have pleasant communal spaces where students can take part in social activities.

- 4.14 DBS clearance is obtained for all adults living at homestay addresses. Hosts receive appropriate training in welfare and safeguarding to enable them to support students under the age of 18 years effectively. The vast majority of students are happy with the suitability and management of the residential accommodation.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.2 Ownership and oversight of the school is good. The board of directors provides effective oversight of the two colleges to ensure a good standard of care and education is maintained for students, in line with the organisation's stated aims. They provide a clear statement of educational purpose and direction, which is communicated clearly to staff at all levels. They ensure sufficient investment in staff, premises and resources through effective financial management. They fully discharge their duties to maintain the health, safety and welfare of all students and to safeguard students under the age of 18 years. All legal permissions are met.
- 5.3 The board of directors has good insight into the working of both colleges and provides clear strategic development plans. They monitor the colleges' performance carefully and support the college managers well to make improvements. There are excellent relationships between the directors, senior leaders and managers throughout the organisation. Appropriate policies are put in place and regularly reviewed.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities are good. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. College managers ensure that policies are fully implemented and that all staff fulfil their responsibilities to provide a high standard of education and care for students, including to safeguard students under the age of 18 years. BSC is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high-quality staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles. Self-evaluation is accurate and sets priorities for improvements. Managers work hard to ensure that actions to improve the student experience are successfully implemented.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance is satisfactory. The board of directors lead an effective quality assurance cycle, which ensures that all aspects of the colleges' provision are evaluated regularly. They make good use of student feedback to improve the student experience and have taken steps to increase the proportion of students who provide feedback. BSC makes good use of opportunities for regular staff appraisal, which includes the outcomes of lesson observations. These inform staff development plans and contribute to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- 5.6 The college managers, and board of directors, have effective processes to track attendance and achievement data for individual students and for each college. However, this is not sufficiently developed to allow for detailed analysis of trends over time and by cohort or class.
- 5.7 BSC has an appropriate complaints policy and procedure that is effectively implemented. The vast majority of complaints are resolved informally. The policy

includes provision for independent adjudication of any complaints that remain unresolved.

5.8 Students report, and inspectors agree that they are treated fairly, supported well and their views are taken into account. The vast majority of students report that the college is well managed and would recommend it to a friend.

5.9 BSC does not operate a fee protection scheme for students.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

5.10 Staff recruitment and suitability checks are good. BSC carries out appropriate checks to confirm the identity of staff and their right to work in the UK. Enhanced DBS checks, and overseas checks, are obtained for all staff prior to the commencement of their employment. If a DBS result is not returned in time, then a risk assessment is carried out. Any member of staff is fully supervised until clearance is received, if students under the age of 18 are present in the college. References are obtained and appropriate checks are made to verify employment history and qualifications prior to appointment. An accurate single central record is maintained.

5.(e) Provision of information

5.11 Provision of information is excellent. The BSC website contains comprehensive, accurate and detailed information which is helpful to students and prospective students. The college provided detailed and well organised information to inspectors promptly.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Develop and implement a marking code that students can use to self-correct and improve their own work.
- Ensure that teachers consistently deliver lessons that are well-paced and which challenge all students to learn at the highest level possible.
- Further improve the collation of attendance and achievement data, so that trends can be analysed and used effectively to measure performance.

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 and with the representatives from the board of directors. 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

Ms Angela Moir	Lead Inspector
Mr Saul Hyman	Team Inspector
Mr Mark Marr	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector
Ms Margaret Arokiasamy	Team Inspector

7. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY CHECK

ISI has shared a summary of financial sustainability data with the Home Office.