



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

LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (LSI PORTSMOUTH)

(1874846)

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Principal Mr Lea Brophy

Proprietor Mr Mark Dacey

Age Range 18+

Total number of students 104

Numbers by age and type of study 18+: 104
EFL only: 104

Inspection dates **12–14 October 2021**

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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 LSI Portsmouth is a private educational institution located in the centre of Portsmouth. The school was established in 1985. Its mission is to be the best English language school they can be and aims to provide students with the best experience they can have in every aspect of their stay. The day-to-day management of the school is the responsibility of the principal. In 2010 the school was acquired by the Neath Port Talbot School group (NPTC) and holds charitable status. Oversight and governance are provided by the NPTC board of directors.
- 1.2 The school provides English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses to students over the age of 18 years. General English courses are offered from beginners to advanced level, as well as specialist optional courses, examination preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Cambridge main suite examinations. One-to-one tuition is available including an Executive programme. The school also offers University Preparation Programmes through pre-sessional classes, designed to help prepare students for all aspects of their higher academic study in the UK.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 104 students were enrolled in the school, all of whom are over 18 years. There were slightly more male than female students and the largest nationality groups were from Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and Kuwait. English is an additional language (EAL) for all students. At the time of the visit no student was identified with language and learning difficulties or disabilities. Students are recruited throughout the year. There are no students enrolled currently on Student visas for Home Office requirements in the school. Accommodation is available through homestay families organised by the school.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent and fully meets the school's aims. Initial assessment is thorough and is used well to accurately ascertain students' level of English and place them on an appropriate course of study. Course provision and curriculum planning are excellent and fully meet the needs of students so that they are well educated in accordance with their objectives. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teachers' knowledge is excellent with well-planned lessons that include a wide range of activities and resources that ensure students are fully engaged in their learning and make rapid progress. However, in a very small number of lessons, students online are less clear as to how to complete a task and have to ask for the teacher to repeat the instructions. Assessment procedures are thorough. Students are informed of their progress through regular class tests and from marked work so they can identify how to improve in their written work. Weekly tutorials support students further in providing opportunities to discuss their progress and when required to provide advice and guidance on future plans. Students achieve high levels of success in their learning and in examinations. The vast majority complete their course of study and fulfil their aspirations to move to higher level qualifications or to employment opportunities. Students' attendance and punctuality is excellent and as a result, completion rates on courses are high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. A comprehensive range of policies are in place and effectively implemented for the health and safety of students. Students are well informed in induction about health, safety and emergency procedures and confirmed in discussion with inspectors that they feel safe at the school. The premises are secure. Fire safety measures are very well managed. All necessary fire and emergency equipment and procedures are in place and systematically checked. Procedures for first aid are appropriate and a suitable number of staff are trained in first aid. The premises are maintained to a very high standard with regard to the health and safety of students. They are clean, tidy, well equipped and appropriately decorated. Risk for health and safety is effectively managed. Risk assessments are appropriate and updated as required for the premises and for all outings and trips. The school is accessible for all students including for those with disabilities. Free drinking water is available. The school maintains highly accurate admission and attendance registers. Students are well informed of attendance procedures. Attendance is consistently monitored and the school has effective systems in place to report to the Home Office if a student on a Student visa is not fulfilling Home Office requirements and makes a timely report. Pastoral care is excellent. Students are very well supported by the welfare team. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Students confirm that they

value highly the support they receive. A thorough induction ensures students have all the required information and settle quickly into life in the school and in the UK. A well-organised social programme enhances the students' experience. Provision for homestay accommodation is excellent and meets national requirements.

- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Oversight by the board of governors for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources is highly effective in ensuring that the aims of the school are consistently met. Regular meetings of the chief executive of the board and the principal ensure that the board have clear insight into the working of the school and monitor closely the quality of provision. Relationships between governors and leaders are highly positive and promote the vision set by school leaders who carefully plan the strategic objectives of the school to meet the needs of students. A comprehensive range of policies are in place and are fully implemented. The board of governors discharge their responsibilities effectively in ensuring that all legal requirements are met. The management of the school is outstanding with ongoing development planning, priorities set and met consistently to the highest standards. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There are clear lines of communication at all levels and staff work extremely well together to support students. Quality assurance procedures including annual appraisal for all staff are excellent and provide staff with opportunities to identify training needs. Teachers confirm that they are very well supported for all aspects of their work. Student feedback is regularly collected and consistently analysed to ensure that students are highly satisfied with all aspects of the provision. Staff respond swiftly to any concerns raised and resolve issues as quickly as possible. Recruitment procedures are excellent. The school is highly effective in securing and retaining high-quality staff. All appropriate checks for staff suitability to work in the school are carried out rigorously prior to appointment and are accurately recorded. The school has a clear complaints procedure and fee policy. The website provides all the required and relevant information and is accurate.

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 is excellent. Initial assessment is thorough and is used well to accurately establish students' existing language skills and individual needs.
- 3.2 Managers and teachers use the initial assessment information very effectively to place students on the appropriate course of study to match students' needs and aspirational goals. There is flexibility for students to move course if required. Students report that they are highly satisfied with the initial guidance they receive on course choice. Retention rates are high.
- 3.3 The school's website provides detailed and accurate information on its courses. Students confirmed that information and advice received on initial contact with the school was very helpful.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum planning is excellent. The school has a clear statement of educational purpose which leads to an appropriate learning experience for students. Programmes of study include detailed plans and schemes of work so that students have an appropriate learning experience. Courses on offer are appropriately matched to the ages, aptitudes and language capabilities of students.
- 3.5 General English courses are based on appropriate syllabuses with course materials adapted to match the learning needs of students and are benchmarked to the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR). Examination courses for the Cambridge suite of examinations and for the international examination language testing system (IELTS) provide a clear study programme in line with the examination criteria.
- 3.6 Executive course content is agreed with individual participants, ensuring relevant content to match the needs and aims of the students. Pre-sessional classes are very well planned to match students' needs and aspirations and to help prepare them to be independent learners.
- 3.7 Procedures for the identification of students with additional learning needs or disabilities are highly effective. Teaching staff are trained to recognise students' additional learning needs and provide suitable support in lessons and in tutorials when required.

- 3.8 Course provision is accurately represented on the school website. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 3.9 Retention rates on all courses are high. Students report that they enjoy their time at the school and the vast majority complete their course of study.

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

- 3.10 The quality of teaching is excellent which promotes highly effective learning. Teachers are experienced and plan extremely well to match the learning needs of students. They know their students very well and adapt materials to build on students' prior learning. Excellent use of technologies supports learning well, including for those who are learning online. However, in a very small number of lessons, students online are less clear as to how to complete a task and have to ask for the teacher to repeat because instructions are less clear. In the vast majority of cases teachers set appropriately challenging tasks, and facilitate excellent participation in pair and group work. As a result, students engage actively in their learning and remain highly motivated. Students listen attentively, ask questions to ensure they understand and in many lessons are spontaneous in their discussions demonstrating excellent progress in the use of newly acquired language. Students learn from each other, promoting mutual respect and acceptance of others within a convivial atmosphere. The pace in almost all lessons is excellent and is highly effective in maximising students' learning.
- 3.11 Tutors are highly supportive and help students to set their own individual targets, promoting effective independent learning. Regular one-to-one tutorials ensure that students are provided with excellent opportunities to discuss their progress. Students confirm that they are extremely well supported in all aspects of their learning. Teaching effectively supports the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It consistently encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and their academic progress during their time in the UK.
- 3.12 Homework assignments are set regularly and written work is marked using the appropriate criteria which ensures students' rapid progress. Helpful comments and one-to-one discussion help students to know the areas that require further focus. Tutors discuss individual writing tasks with students which promotes effective preparation for examinations.
- 3.13 Classroom resources, including technologies are excellent. A wide range of additional published resources are made available to teachers. Resources are adapted and used very effectively to enhance students' learning.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.14 Attainment and progress rates are excellent. Progress of students is effectively tracked through regular class tests, in tutorials and from written assignments. The

results are recorded centrally and managers appropriately analyse assessment results to track overall progress.

- 3.15 Data from class tests and homework assignments demonstrates very high levels of attainment reached by students based on their starting points and length of course. The vast majority of students following an examination course make rapid progress throughout and achieve excellent examination results.
- 3.16 Levels of attainment on the pre-sessional courses are consistently high so that students achieve their aspirations of progressing into higher education and to their first-choice institution. Executive course students are recorded at the beginning and end of their course to demonstrate progress. Students confirm that they are highly satisfied with their progress.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

- 4.1 The health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. The school provides a safe and secure environment for staff and students. All health and safety aspects are carefully managed and minimised through a range of appropriate and detailed risk assessments which are regularly updated. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all external visits, trips and activities as needed.
- 4.2 Arrangements for fire safety are thorough and conform to fire safety regulations. Fire risk assessments, fire equipment and safety measures are regularly checked so that the risk of fire is minimised. Signage is clear and suitably placed. There are sufficient staff trained as fire marshals. Regular fire drills take place and records of all checks and fire drills are well maintained. Effective arrangements including for those with any disabilities are in place for evacuation procedures.
- 4.3 First aid provision is excellent. The first aid policy is appropriate and sets out clear guidance for staff and students should the need to manage an accident or injury arise. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid procedures and training is kept up to date. Arrangements for first aid are made clear to students in induction. Any incidents or accidents are logged centrally and followed up where necessary.
- 4.4 The premises are very well maintained and equipped. They are well decorated, tidy and clean. Lighting, heating and sound insulation are suitable for teaching and learning. Furniture and fittings are appropriate for staff and students. Students have a large and comfortable lounge area to meet out of lessons and areas to study. Free drinking water is available. The café has adequate kitchen facilities for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food. There are sufficient washrooms for staff and students, including for those with special needs and disabilities.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.5 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. Admission registers are accurate and well maintained. Appropriate attendance and lateness policies are in place and made clear to students in induction. Attendance is recorded electronically and monitored effectively by teachers who report to senior managers. Absence and lateness are addressed promptly by the welfare officer who meets with students to ensure they have no unspoken concerns which are leading to lateness or absence. Punctuality is good and attendance rates high. Most students complete their course.
- 4.6 Appropriate procedures are in place for monitoring and reporting to the Home Office for students registered on Student visas and the school make timely reports if necessary.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.7 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Welfare staff are experienced and placed in reception so that they can get to know students very quickly. Communication within the welfare team is excellent through regular meetings and ensures that they follow up any student concerns swiftly that may arise. As a result, students report that they are well supported.
- 4.8 On arrival, students receive a comprehensive induction and orientation programme where they meet welfare staff. This is supplemented with a more relaxed student meeting for new arrivals at the end of day one. Students confirm that they know who to go to with any concerns. Teachers and leaders work very closely with the welfare team to ensure any concerns are passed to them so students feel well cared for. Students speak very highly of the levels of care they receive.
- 4.9 Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. All staff have received awareness training and show suitable understanding of the procedures for reporting concerns. The school promotes integration and tolerance and has effective procedures to prevent bullying and harassment.
- 4.10 Provision for advice and guidance for students moving to higher education institutions is excellent. Students receive high levels of individual advice and guidance which helps them make informed choices for their future study and employment.
- 4.11 The school provides an excellent social, activities and trips programme. Students are encouraged to sign up and take part and almost all students participate. This enhances students' experience of life in the UK extremely well. Students confirmed that taking part creates a highly positive community atmosphere that builds lasting friendships between students. They thoroughly enjoy being part of the school community.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.12 Procedures in place to allocate students to a homestay family are excellent. Host families complete the required documentation and are visited by the accommodation officer to ensure they comply with all national requirements. Records of accommodation in homestay indicate that all required checks are systematically carried out for the safety of students and national requirements are consistently met. Students confirm that they are very well looked after by host families.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Oversight by the board of governors is excellent. They are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities so that the aims of the school are consistently met. Regular meetings of the chief executive of the board and the principal ensure that the board have clear insight into the working of the school and closely monitor the quality of provision. Governors are highly successful in maintaining the high standards in the quality of the educational provision and in supporting the welfare of students. Detailed operational planning by school leaders sets the vision and strategic direction of the school and is effectively shared with governors who provide support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement.
- 5.2 A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place, regularly reviewed and are effectively implemented so that the school runs smoothly. Policies are effectively shared with staff so that they are kept up to date with any new guidance.
- 5.3 Staff responsibilities are appropriately delegated. There are clear reporting systems throughout the school. Relationships between the board and senior leaders are highly positive. As a result, the board fully discharges its responsibility and leaders in the school ensure that all relevant legal requirements and statutory duties are met.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities are outstanding. Managers are highly experienced and effective in their vision in developing the school. The principal operates an open-door policy which is much appreciated by staff. Communication is very good throughout the organisation. Staff work extremely well together to support each other and the students.
- 5.5 Educational direction is clear and results in high standards in the academic provision and excellent outcomes for students. Managers are supportive of teaching staff in providing a wide range of materials and resources. Regular meetings ensure that staff have opportunities to discuss their teaching and can identify training needs.
- 5.6 Self-evaluation is excellent. Senior leaders are rigorous in their planning and reviewing of the quality of the provision to ensure that they consistently meet the needs of students. They strive to continually develop the school to introduce new courses to match the needs of students.
- 5.7 Relationships amongst staff and managers are highly supportive which contributes to the convivial atmosphere that students experience in the school.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.8 Quality assurance including student feedback is excellent. The strong culture of excellence throughout the school results in continuous evaluation of the provision and of improvement planning. Senior managers are successful in identifying priorities for improvement and setting systems in place to meet those priorities.
- 5.9 Feedback is taken regularly from students, collated and analysed and used to inform planning. Data from student surveys is appropriately analysed and shared with staff and timely actions taken to address any underlying issues. Informal feedback is gathered regularly from students and action plans are formulated and issues addressed promptly. Any concerns raised by students are followed up by managers who try to ascertain the reasons and resolve the issues. Data on student attendance, progress and achievement is used effectively to review and improve course provision. Responses to pre-inspection questionnaires and discussions with students indicate very high levels of satisfaction for all aspects of the school's work.
- 5.10 Staff provide feedback in regular meetings and in suggestion boxes and surveys. Staff report that managers are responsive to their views and will take up suggestions when possible.
- 5.11 Annual appraisal procedures for all staff are very effective in identifying areas for development to meet individual needs. Appraisals are linked to lesson observations to drive improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers have regular opportunities for ongoing training in and out of school. Teachers appreciate the high level of support they receive. The school support staff financially in gaining further qualifications.
- 5.12 A clear complaints procedure is in place and is made available to students. Complaints are logged and tracked to the point of resolution.
- 5.13 Students have access to a fee protection scheme.

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

- 5.14 Staff recruitment is excellent. The school applies thorough and reliable arrangements for checking the suitability of staff. All staff undergo relevant checks prior to appointment including qualifications, identity and proof of the right to work in the UK. References are taken up prior to confirmation of appointment. All checks are systematically recorded on a single central register of appointments and appropriate evidence is kept in staff files.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.15 Provision of information is excellent. Information on the website is excellent. The website provides the relevant information for students. The school provided all information required by the inspectors promptly.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Provide further training for teaching staff to develop their technology skills and methodology for teaching face-to-face and on-line students in hybrid classroom situations.

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 chair of governors and checked registration procedures and attendance. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean	Lead Inspector
Mr Mark D Marr	Team Inspector