



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

OXFORD INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GROUP

(COMPANY REGISTRATION NO. 02666738)

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Principal	Mr Kris Hall
Proprietor	Mr Robert Darell, Mr David Brown & Mr Alan Brown
Age Range	12+
Total number of students	453
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 93 16 – 17: 48 18+: 312 EFL only: 341 HE only: 112
Inspection dates	28 – 30 April 2015

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 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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Oxford International Education Group (OIEG) consists of a number of schools, colleges and companies offering educational services in the UK, the US and Canada. It is a private limited company, some of whose shareholders work for the company and are based at the head office in Greenwich. Its aim is to support students in gaining the highest level of academic achievement possible on its programme and to help prepare them to meet their future aspirations.
- 1.2 This inspection reviews the all-year English language schools in Greenwich and London Central, as well as the college operating in partnership with De Montfort University. The two language schools offer a range of courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as well as certificate level EFL teacher training courses. The school in Greenwich is one of the original schools in the company and was previously known as ISIS Greenwich. The school in London Central, formerly known as United International College, was acquired by OIEG two years ago. Leicester International Pathways College (LIPC), which was established last year, offers a range of pathway programmes which lead directly to courses at De Montfort university.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 453 students enrolled, of whom 141 are under 18. The vast majority of young students attend in closed groups at the Greenwich school. The majority of students at the two language schools are female, and at LIPC are male. At the language schools the highest numbers of students come from Thailand, Korea, Austria and Turkey. At LIPC the highest numbers are from China, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. None of the students speaks English as a first language. There are currently no students enrolled with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 This visit took the form of a full inspection at LIPC, as this school was reported as an additional branch, and monitoring visits at the Greenwich and London sites.
- 1.5 At the previous inspections of 29 - 30 May 2013 the two language schools, inspected separately, met all the key Standards for private further education colleges and the quality at both was judged to exceed expectations. The recommendations from the previous inspection reports for ISIS Greenwich and United International College are:
- **Evaluate the impact of the changes to systems and processes to the junior school on customer satisfaction.**
 - **Monitor students' work to ensure the marking code is used in conjunction with written feedback so students know what they need to do to improve.**
 - **Evaluate the impact of the new materials on the progress and achievement of junior students.**
 - **Ensure that all students attend an induction so they are well informed about their course, the school and life in the UK.**
 - **Analyse external examination results to better inform provision and the setting of targets.**

- **Implement a system for collating all feedback and recording action planning to inform quality improvements.**
- **Implement an efficient tutorial system to ensure regular and effective tutorials with all students.**
- **Update the complaints log to include complaints about accommodation.**

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets 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. Initial assessment is effective in placing students on appropriate courses. Classes at the language schools are offered at a variety of levels and meet student needs. Specially tailored courses for students under 18 are highly effective in allowing them to progress and achieve. At LIPC a small range of different foundation programmes are provided. These are successful in allowing students to progress to courses at the university. Courses meet UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements. Teaching is satisfactory. In the majority of lessons teaching is effective and students make good progress. In a minority there is insufficient student engagement and at LIPC learning is reduced as the level of materials used by teachers is too high. Regular assignments and homework are given. Inconsistencies in the standard of comment provided do not always allow students to know what to do to improve. Good progress has been made against the recommendation to ensure regular and effective tutorials. However, they do not yet consistently identify clear targets. Students report making good progress. A system for determining overall progress is not yet in place to allow staff and students to know progress made. Achievement levels are high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety is good. Fire safety measures and detailed risk assessments ensure the safety of all. Appropriately trained staff support very good health and safety arrangements. The premises on all sites are well maintained and provide comfortable environments. Admission and attendance registers are accurate and well monitored, but the management of attendance and punctuality is underdeveloped at LIPC. Procedures for contact with UKVI are appropriate. Levels of pastoral support are high and effective. Student induction is excellent. All students now attend an induction to prepare them for their life in the UK. Standards of safeguarding in the language schools are high, but different standards of safeguarding between the language schools and LIPC result in inconsistencies, so reducing the effectiveness of support provided. All staff have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and have undertaken related training. Residential accommodation at LIPC, provided through the university, is of a high standard and meets student needs.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is satisfactory. Effective governance and leadership are provided by the proprietors to ensure the good quality of the provision. Policies provided are not routinely reviewed for appropriateness and are not implemented consistently. Senior managers do not yet have effective systems in place to effectively monitor provision at LIPC. . There is currently limited interaction between the language schools and the Pathways college reducing quality improvements. Self-evaluation does not involve all staff and does not offer a realistic view on strengths and areas for improvement. Student feedback data is collated and discussed, but does not yet result in an action plan to support

monitoring. Feedback received on changes made to the junior school indicate high levels of satisfaction. Staff development workshops are well attended and support improvements. The complaints log now includes well documented actions relating to accommodation.

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 good. An on-arrival language proficiency test effectively determines the level of English of students in the language schools, placing them in a class at the appropriate level. At LIPC the same test screens students to check whether they are appropriate for a course and this, together with one-to-one interviews, determines their capabilities for their selected programme. These measures, together with guidance offered prior to enrolment, support the matching of students to courses. Flexibility in the provision allows students to change course at LIPC or move levels of English class at the language schools, so meeting their needs. Teachers are not routinely informed of the outcome of the initial tests, so reducing opportunities to gain a better understanding of students and their aspirations.
- 3.2 Comprehensive advice and guidance are provided on the websites. This includes accurate information on the courses on offer. It allows students to make informed decisions about their course. They confirm they are satisfied with the pre-enrolment advice they are given.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.3 The suitability of course provision and the curriculum is excellent and ensures that students are well educated in accordance with their objectives and the colleges' aims. Students are very satisfied with their courses, which are appropriately matched to their needs. This results in the vast majority of students completing the course for which they enrol.
- 3.4 At the language schools, classes at different levels are appropriately aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The detailed schemes of work provided allow for good progress to be made. The additional skills lessons, as well as the online learning materials and drop in sessions, provide highly effective support. They are successful in further enhancing language improvement.
- 3.5 Specialist in-house courses, using tailor-made materials meet the needs of closed groups of students under the age of 18. Processes to determine the impact of these materials on learning have been put in place. These include daily student self-assessment, student end-of-course feedback, teachers' assessment and the perceptions of group leaders. This feedback indicates that high levels of progress and achievement are attained. Consequently, excellent progress has been made against the recommendation to evaluate the impact of the materials on the progress and achievement of junior students.
- 3.6 At LIPC a wide variety of foundation courses, with extra English and numeracy classes provided, are effective in supporting students to achieve their future aspirations.

Students develop knowledge and skills in the chosen subject as well as improve their English and their self-confidence, making rapid progress as a result. Flexibility across subject areas allows changes of course if desired. In this way, individual student needs are effectively met. The courses are designed specifically to meet the requirements of degree programmes and are externally approved by the university. This allows for excellent progression routes into university courses.

- 3.7 Courses are in accordance with those detailed in publicity and meet UKVI requirements for those on Tier 4 visas.

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

- 3.8 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and in the majority of cases is effective in promoting students' progress and independence as learners. The good rapport between teachers and students provides a positive learning environment to support successful learning. Classroom resources are very good and enhance learning. Teaching encourages students to take responsibility for their progress. In the best classes, teachers employ excellent questioning and correction techniques, which support development. Effective planning includes activities that differentiate between different types of student to keep all students engaged. In the classes for young learners, activities and materials are carefully chosen to reflect the needs of the learners and so foster interest. In the language schools the interactive whiteboards are well used to enhance learning. Where teaching is less effective, there are few tasks to check on understanding and progress. Lessons provide limited opportunities for discussion, so reducing student engagement. At LIPC the level of the materials used is frequently too high, so students are unable to respond appropriately. Here too, limited planning is in place and a lack of consideration is given to individual requirements. Consequently, students do not remain engaged. Furthermore, in a minority of lessons inaccurate information is given by teachers which reduces opportunities for learning.
- 3.9 Assignments at LIPC and homework at the language schools are set regularly. Effective marking templates at LIPC are used consistently, but in the absence of clear guidance students do not always know what they need to do to improve. At the language schools all written work is graded, but use of the marking code is inconsistent. In the vast majority of cases, comments are provided. However, these are mostly too general to support improvement. Where comments are specific, they clearly indicate to students what to do to improve, so contribute to progress. As a result of these inconsistencies, satisfactory progress has been made against the recommendation to monitor students' work by using the marking code in conjunction with written feedback so students know what to do to improve.
- 3.10 Good progress has been made against the recommendation to implement an efficient tutorial system to ensure regular and effective tutorials. All students receive a regular tutorial linked to the assessment. In the language schools development workshops have taken place regarding tutorials and target setting to ensure a shared understanding of what is required. An inconsistency in the setting of clear and

measurable targets across the three centres reduces the effectiveness of improvements. As a result, not all students know what to do to improve and this reduces progress.

- 3.11 Identification of any specific learning needs is limited to self-declaration on the application form. However, students in the language schools who are identified as having a special need in classes are given additional help to support improvement.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.12 Attainment and progress are good. Bi-weekly progress testing in the language schools, together with regular tutorials, keep students informed of the progress they are making. Progress data in all centres is collected but is not yet analysed to provide staff and students with a full picture of what progress is being made.
- 3.13 In the language schools a small minority of students take external examinations. These results are excellent. Inspectors observed good progress being made in classes. Students express satisfaction with the rates at which they are improving and report they benefit from the support given by their teachers. Inspectors support this view.
- 3.14 At LIPC progress and attainment are excellent and all students have progressed to higher level courses in the university in accordance with their wishes.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

- 4.1 Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and security of staff and students are excellent. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire drills are held regularly. Clear signage ensures that staff and students know what to do in an emergency. Appropriate numbers of trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place on all three sites. Electrical equipment has been tested for safety. Security arrangements are good. General risk assessments are detailed and highly effective and are reviewed regularly. Comprehensive policies on areas such as first aid and health and safety are in place to support a safe working and learning environment.
- 4.2 Provision for the health and safety needs of vulnerable students and staff is very good. Students and relevant staff are involved in completing a risk assessment and a clear personal emergency evacuation plan to ensure effective arrangements are in place in case of an emergency. These are reviewed regularly. LIPC and the school in Greenwich are accessible for wheelchair users or those with a mobility disability.
- 4.3 All the buildings provide excellent accommodation for students. Rooms are well maintained with good lighting and sound insulation. Furniture and fittings are modern and of a high standard. There are sufficient numbers of clean washrooms. These all provide a comfortable environment for staff and students.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance registers are good. Appropriate records are accurately maintained. Communications between administrators and academic staff are excellent and ensure that that monitoring of non-attendance is systematic and prompt. Procedures for monitoring the attendance of students under 18 in the language schools are highly effective and ensure that any absences are made known and followed up immediately.
- 4.5 Attendance and punctuality policies are clearly communicated to students. The management of attendance and punctuality is underdeveloped at LIPC, so attendance rates and punctuality in classes are inconsistent. This reduces opportunities for improvement and can cause disturbances in classes.
- 4.6 Appropriate procedures are in place to make any necessary reports to UKVI.
- 4.7 Fair and clear procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits are clearly communicated.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.8 Pastoral care for students is excellent. Highly effective support and guidance are provided in accordance with the college's aims. Welfare officers are located at all

sites and they provide flexible and easily accessible support. A referral system used by teachers at the language schools to identify students who need help is effective in offering well-targeted support. Any issues that arise are addressed promptly and effectively. Students at LIPC can make use of the wide range of support services offered by the partner university. This is highly effective in addressing needs. Students report that all staff are accessible and helpful.

- 4.9 Relationships between staff and students and between students themselves are excellent, with a culture of integration and tolerance. Procedures are in place to prevent bullying and harassment. Students report no such instances. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that students consider the college provides a safe and comfortable environment, which effectively meets their needs. The vast majority of students would recommend the college.
- 4.10 Excellent progress has been made against the recommendation that all students attend an induction so they are well informed about their course, the school and life in the UK. Different handbooks, targeted at general English adult students, pre-university students and those under 18, contain a wide range of relevant information in a clear format, suited to the particular type of student. This allows for a good understanding of studying and living in the UK. The induction at LIPC is outstanding and allows students to settle quickly in their new environment.
- 4.11 An excellent, varied and well-managed programme of social activities is provided. This enhances students' learning experiences and allows them to make the most of their time in the UK. Students have access to high standards of guidance to enable them to make informed choices about future courses and careers.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.12 Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. A comprehensive safeguarding policy is in place to support the safety of students under 18. All staff are checked through the DBS on taking up employment. There is a designated senior person (DSP) with appropriate training on each site. Staff undertake suitable initial training on safeguarding as part of their induction. In addition, regular updates are given to staff during the year. As a consequence of these measures, standards of safeguarding in the language schools are high and ensure the safety of students under 18.
- 4.13 At LIPC the policies for students under 18 in accommodation are underdeveloped. These policies come from the partner university, as well as a third party accommodation agency. Although detailed, in areas they lack sufficient rigour. This is being addressed by LIPC through the university. The college has completed good risk assessments for students under 18, so supporting their safety.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.14 Residential accommodation is good. Accommodation in residences for students at LIPC is provided by the university. It is of a high standard and provides a clean and

comfortable living and working environment. It is appropriately managed and registered in accordance with national requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance and leadership are good. The proprietors provide effective oversight of the college and schools, in line with their aims, through their senior managers. They fully discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, investment in staff, welfare, health and safety and resources. They fulfil their statutory duties for students under 18. Robust financial management ensures each centre and its staff are effectively provided for.
- 5.2 The proprietors provide a clear educational direction. They are effective in providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement. They provide a supportive and forward thinking ethos, which runs throughout the operation. This gives rise to a positive working environment and quality improvements that raise standards. They provide policies, which are yet to be consistently reviewed for effectiveness. Consequently not all policies are implemented effectively throughout the operation, leading to missed opportunities to raise standards.
- 5.3 All necessary legal permissions are in place from the relevant bodies.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities are satisfactory. Lines of responsibility are clear and promote systems that allow for the changing needs of the three centres to be met. Appropriate systems are not yet in place to effectively monitor provision, so giving rise to differences in standards in the provision. Relationships between senior managers and staff in each centre are good and have a positive effect on the learning environment. Leadership is open and inclusive, which encourages commitment to the operation.
- 5.5 A variety of formal and informal communications are frequent and effective in keeping staff abreast of developments. Communications and sharing of good practice are very strong between the two language schools. These effectively support planning, so driving improvement. Management is yet to provide systems to support effective communications with between managers at LIPC and the schools to ensure consistently high standards, where appropriate. As a result, opportunities are missed to raise standards. The annual staff meeting in the language schools provides a highly effective forum for staff from the different schools to meet and share best practice. Staff feel a sense of commitment and share the vision for the operation.
- 5.6 Senior managers produce an effective development plan for the operation which identifies priorities. The associated action plan successfully monitors actions taken. Self-evaluations produced for the inspection by the three centres are limited in that they do not benefit from the involvement of all staff, so reducing the effectiveness of

the documents. A substantial amount of information is provided but in some areas it does not provide a clear insight into the centres' strengths and areas for development. An absence of action planning and monitoring results in opportunities being lost for improvements in the provision.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.7 Quality assurance is satisfactory. Progress against the recommendation to implement a system for collating all feedback and record action planning is satisfactory. An effective system for collating feedback is in place. This shows feedback to be highly positive. It is discussed at meetings and prompt action is taken to address any issues. A process for action planning is not yet in place to ensure efficient monitoring. Targets are set for satisfaction rates, but these are not sufficiently realistic to drive improvements. Responses to pre-inspection questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the provision from the students, which was reported in meetings held with them by inspectors.
- 5.8 Following the recommendation to evaluate the impact of the changes to the junior school, feedback about the quality of the provision from junior school students, group leaders and agents is now highly positive. Moreover, more groups are returning for more courses. Consequently, excellent progress has been made against this recommendation.
- 5.9 The two language schools are successful in securing and retaining high quality staff. LIPC has not been in operation long enough to draw any conclusions. An effective system of annual appraisal is in place to ensure staff are appropriately qualified for the work they undertake and to support improvements in the provision. It includes observations for teaching staff. This has led to a culture of on-going development and sharing of good practice. At LIPC observations are not carried out sufficiently promptly for new staff to always ensure an appropriate standard of teaching. As a result, standards of teaching and learning vary significantly.
- 5.10 Management is strongly committed to professional development. Staff at the two language schools undertake regular professional development activities, many of which are delivered internally. They are effective in that they are focused clearly on topics related to improvement in the provision. Excellent development opportunities are available to staff at LIPC through the partner university. However, these are not necessarily targeted to identified staff needs, leading to reduced opportunities for improvement.
- 5.11 A small minority of adult students currently take external examinations. Where they do, the schools are establishing a system to record statistically valid information over time. The junior students in closed groups take external examinations. Pass rates are close to 100 per cent. It is therefore not possible to measure progress made against the recommendation to analyse external examination results to better inform provision and the setting of targets.

- 5.12 The complaints policy is made clear to students at induction and in the handbook. An appropriate complaints log is in place on the database. This consists of chronological records of all types of complaint, with actions taken and outcomes recorded. Accommodation complaints additionally show the number of complaints against a particular homestay provider. These complaints are resolved efficiently and in a timely manner. As a result, excellent progress has been made against the recommendation to update the complaints log regarding accommodation. An external body is identified in the case of complaints that cannot be resolved.
- 5.13 All students are covered by a fee protection scheme which protects their fees in the event that the school or college is unable to continue operations due to insolvency or closure.

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

- 5.14 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are good. Well-qualified staff are appointed through a thorough recruitment process. Required recruitment checks are carried out appropriately in a timely manner. A new system for the recording of required information when appointing staff is in development to ensure consistency between all centres and evidence that safer recruitment standards are met.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.15 The provision of information is good. There are a number of websites, which provide detailed information in line with requirements. They are a good source of information for prospective students and their guardians. However, given the number of different websites, it can be difficult to find specific information.
- 5.16 All three centres provided information required by the inspectors, in a timely fashion.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Share good practice throughout the organisation to ensure consistency of quality standards in order to drive improvement.
- Strengthen self-evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms so they involve all staff and result in action plans to secure continuous improvement.
- Develop the tutorial system to include the identification of specific and measurable targets that are monitored and allow students to progress.
- Ensure that all teaching engages students fully in learning and provides them with accurate information at an appropriate level.
- Develop a system for the analysis of student progress data so that staff and students are fully informed of progress made.
- Review policies to ensure they are clear and can be fully implemented.

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 with the proprietors. 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 Nicole la Hausse de Lalouvière	Lead Inspector
Ms Helen Chambers	Team Inspector
Ms Julie Gibson	Team Inspector
Ms Dawn Hart	Team Inspector
Mr Tim Miller	Team Inspector
Ms Diana Morriss	Team Inspector
Ms Christine Reba-Edge	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector