



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

MONITORING VISIT

UIC ENGLISH OXFORD

(FORMERLY ISIS OXFORD STUDY CENTRES)

(2666738)

Full Name **UIC English Oxford (formerly ISIS Oxford Study Centres)**

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Principal Ms Clare Ahern

Proprietor Mr Robert Darell

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 72

Numbers by age and type of study
16 – 18: 6
18+: 66
EFL only: 72

Inspection date **23 June 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 UIC English Oxford is a private language school and is part of the Oxford International Education Group. It is a private limited company and is one of seven schools in the UK, Vancouver, Toronto and San Diego. The Oxford school was opened in June 2011 and is the smallest in the group. The school is managed by the principal who reports to the board of directors. It is located in the centre of Oxford and aims to be one of the leading language schools offering high-quality tuition in the English language.
- 1.2 Courses are offered throughout the year in General English. Students may take Cambridge examinations and International English Language Testing Systems (IELTs). Junior courses are offered for students aged between 12 and 18 years. There were no junior classes running during the inspection.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 72 students, the vast majority being over 18 years. The majority of students are female and come from the Middle East, Far East, South America, Asia and Europe. There are no students attending on Tier 4 Visas and no students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Students are placed on appropriate courses following an initial assessment on arrival.
- 1.4 Accommodation for students below the age of 18 years is arranged in host families through an external company. Students over the age of 18 are offered accommodation in a local residence or in one of four shared houses, located within walking distance of the school.
- 1.5 The school was last inspected on the 4 June 2013 when it met all key standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations. The recommendation from the previous report is:
 - Integrate the use of the phonemic script in lessons and independent study in order to further improve students' pronunciation skills.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 4 June 2013 the language school was found to exceed 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. Course provision is very good. Courses follow a centrally designed curriculum linked to the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR), which enables students to understanding the level of their particular course. Courses meet the requirements of United Kingdom Visa Immigration (UKVI). Initial assessment is very thorough and accurately places students on courses that meet their needs and career aspirations. Teaching is excellent and enables the majority of students to make excellent progress. The majority of lessons are well planned and contain a range of stimulating activities to meet the needs of all students. Phonemic script is now used very well in lessons which has resulted in significant improvements in students' spoken English. Students are kept well informed of progress during their courses by regular testing and tutorial sessions. Examination results are excellent.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The premises are secure, fit for purpose and extremely well maintained. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure effective health and safety. A high level of fire safety and first aid provision is maintained. Student admission and attendance records, including those for students under the age of 18, are accurate and well managed. Attendance of under 18 students is closely monitored but their names are not highlighted on registers to ensure staff are aware of their presence. Pastoral care is excellent and all arrangements in respect of safeguarding for under 18 students are in place and regularly reviewed. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and all members of staff have been appropriately trained in safeguarding. Residential accommodation is available in host family and residences. Both types of accommodation are very well managed and the provision is excellent.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The leadership provides clear educational direction which ensures that the quality of education, welfare and health and safety of students are all fully met. There is a very effective relationship between the proprietor, principal and all staff which has a very positive effect on student outcomes. The management is successful in recruiting and developing well-qualified teaching staff. Managers are effective in exercising their roles and responsibilities and monitoring the school's performance and key policies. Quality assurance procedures are excellent and are very successful in identifying and implementing priorities for improvement. Recording of examination results does not include information on students' starting points and the length of courses. All members of staff have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to confirm their suitability. An appropriate complaints policy is in place but the recording of complaints is not systematic. They are not summarised and do not sufficiently inform school performance. Channels of communication and

consultation among staff and students are very well developed which lead to continual improvements in the overall provision.

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.

The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:

- Integrate the use of the phonemic script in lessons and independent study to further improve students' pronunciation skills.

3.2 Excellent progress has been made against this recommendation. All classrooms display phonemic charts and teachers are actively encouraged to use phonemic script in their classes. In addition, the staff development programme has included sessions on the best use of the script when addressing pronunciation in lessons. Specific reference is made to effective teaching of pronunciation during formal and informal observations. Students are also introduced to the phonemic chart during the initial induction meeting. They are reminded of the phonemic script in dictionaries and are introduced to online study activities with links to pronunciation activities. Staff competency in teaching the script and students' understanding of it, have been successfully integrated into school practice. As a result, overall standards of spoken English have significantly improved.

3.3 Course provision is very good. The school has a clear curriculum policy relevant to its aims and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. Courses are offered in general English, follow a centrally-designed curriculum and are closely linked to the CEFR which makes for easy understanding of levels. Courses and subject matter meet the needs of students and the requirements of the UKVI. Weekly lesson plans are written by the teachers and shared with the students, allowing them a degree of input into the course content which ensures they meet students' expectations. Courses are successful in enabling students to make excellent progress by building on their knowledge prior to the commencement of the course.

3.4 Initial assessment is extremely thorough and ensures accurate placement of students on courses. Information gained from this assessment is successfully used to guide course planning, plan lessons and devise study plans with individual learners. As a result, students report that they are happy with their courses and make very good progress.

3.5 Teaching is excellent and is highly effective in promoting students' learning. Teachers are very knowledgeable and display very good levels of skill in their teaching. Pronunciation is taught frequently and accurately. Students are encouraged to cooperate and peer correct each other, allowing them to develop a high degree of autonomy in their learning. The majority of lessons are very well planned, contain a range of stimulating activities and take into account individual student's needs. As a result, students make excellent progress. Assessment of students' work is used constructively to identify support requirements for students.

Regular testing takes place and the outcomes are monitored systematically by teachers and used very well to inform lesson planning. Students' attainment levels are very high. There is an excellent tutorial system which is highly effective in helping students understand the progress that they are making. Students confirm tutorials are very useful and that they are highly satisfied with the progress they make.

- 3.6 External results in the Cambridge and IELTS examinations are excellent.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 Arrangements for health and safety are excellent. The school has excellent policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of students, including provision for fire regulation and first aid. The building is very well maintained. The premises are secure and suitable for the courses offered and the sizes of the classes timetabled. All areas of the school are maintained in a clean and tidy state, classrooms are furnished to a very high standard. The premises provide an attractive and very comfortable environment for teaching and learning.
- 4.3 Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained. The attendance of under 18 students is closely monitored and any absence immediately followed up. Their names are not highlighted on registers, however, for teachers' attention to be drawn to their attendance. Attendance rates for all courses are very high.
- 4.4 Pastoral care is excellent. There is a very effective system in place to support the pastoral needs of students. All students receive a comprehensive induction which allows them to settle quickly into the life of the school. Students confirm that they feel safe and very well supported. Staff are approachable and students are very clear about who to approach for advice.
- 4.5 The school provides an excellent social programme. Students appreciate the quality of the social programme which supports their language learning and knowledge of the UK by providing a varied and inexpensive range of activities. Care is taken to provide appropriate activities for students under 18 years.
- 4.6 The safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Effective policies and procedures, which reflect official guidance, are in place and are regularly reviewed. The DSO and the staff have all been appropriately trained. The principal has developed a very good relationship with the local authority safeguarding board and so receives regular updates and notices on forthcoming training programmes. Safeguarding forms part of the comprehensive induction programme for all students and staff. Students confirm they know who to go to for advice, should the need arise and staff also confirm they are made aware of safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 4.7 The management and provision of accommodation are excellent. Accommodation for students under the age of 18 is arranged in host families by an external company. The school has efficient procedures in place to check that students are satisfied with the service provided by the company. Accommodation for students over the age of 18 years is offered in a nearby residence or in four shared houses which are within easy walking distance of the school. Both the residence and the shared houses are maintained to a very high level. The school makes every effort to meet the accommodation needs of the students. If complaints are received, prompt action is

taken to resolve them. The recording of complaints is under-developed as they are recorded on an individual basis and not summarised to inform school improvement.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The leadership team has a clear educational direction and provides effective oversight in line with the school's aims. The team fully discharges their responsibilities to ensure and maintain excellent provision in safeguarding, educational standards, welfare and health and safety.
- 5.3 There is a very effective relationship between the proprietor, principal and senior staff which enables all key managers to work very well together. They are successful in recruiting, supporting and developing suitably qualified staff and ensuring they are effectively trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all students in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.4 All appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the quality of education and care of students are in place and reviewed regularly by the leadership to ensure a safe and secure learning environment.
- 5.5 Quality assurance and self-evaluation are excellent. There are excellent mechanisms in place which lead to the improvement of the educational provision. Challenging targets are set for improvement which are monitored well and regularly met. Staff are actively involved in the evaluation of the school and their views are respected, and where possible implemented. Student feedback is collected systematically and analysed. Channels of communication and consultation at all levels are excellent and contribute significantly to improving outcomes for students.
- 5.6 The recording of examination results is under-developed as the statistics do not contain details of students' starting points or length of courses. As a result, external examination data does not enable comprehensive analysis to inform overall school performance.
- 5.7 The system of appraisals is excellent. Lessons are observed regularly and teachers find the feedback received helpful and constructive. There is a very good professional development programme for staff, which includes training on responding to the needs of students with SEND. The programme is informed by the appraisal system and as a result addresses successfully the development needs of staff. Due note is also taken of the training requests from teachers themselves and these are included in the professional development programme. This leads to significant and continual improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- 5.8 The school has a clear and transparent complaints' policy with provision for consideration by an external adjudicator should a complaint remain unresolved. All complaints received are logged and receive immediate attention. However, the recording of complaints is not systematic as they are not summarised to identify areas to inform overall school performance.

- 5.9 Prior to confirmation of appointment, all required checks are made on staff to confirm their suitability for appointment, including their suitability to work with students under the age of 18. There is a single central register in place which confirms staff details, including a note of references taken up. All staff have current DBS checks which are clearly recorded.
- 5.10 The school web-site provides comprehensive, accurate and detailed information which is helpful to students and prospective students.
- 5.11 Information provided for inspectors was of a high quality, well organised and readily accessible.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Collate and analyse examination data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Improve the recording of complaints in order to enable an analysis to inform school performance.
- Ensure students aged under 18 are highlighted on registers for ease of reference.

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. 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 language school.

Inspectors

Mrs Suzanne Bell	Lead Inspector
Ms Christine Powell	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector