



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

**OXFORD SCHOOL OF ENGLISH**

**(4384992)**

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
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| Website                          | www.oxfordschoolofenglish.com                        |
| Principal                        | Haydar Albasri                                       |
| Proprietor                       | Mr Peter Thompson                                    |
| Age Range                        | 12+  |
| Total number of students         | 56   |
| Numbers by age and type of study | 16 – 17: 1<br>18+: 55<br>EFL only: 56                |
| Inspection dates                 | <b>28 – 30 September 2021</b>                        |

## 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 Oxford School of English is a private English language school, established in January 2000. It moved to its present location in the centre of Oxford in 2003. It is a private limited company with one director who is also the school's chief executive officer.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to maintain its reputation for academic and corporate excellence in a changing market. It aims to deliver high quality education in a caring, family atmosphere.
- 1.3 The school runs general English courses from beginners to proficiency level. It also offers examination preparation courses for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Cambridge suite of qualifications, Occupational English Test (OET) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) qualifications. These courses are offered throughout the year to students aged 16 and over, with students able to start courses each week.
- 1.4 In addition, the school runs business English courses and English for specific purposes including medicine, nursing, law, engineering and aviation. These courses run on an on-demand basis. In the summer months, the school also accepts students aged 12 to 17 years in the junior summer school and in closed groups. At the time of inspection, only adult general English courses were running.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection there were 56 students enrolled, almost all over the age of 18. The majority of students are female. Students come from a wide range of countries. The nationalities most represented by the current students are Japan, Germany, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. All students speak English as a second language. Two students have been identified with learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 1.6 The school was last inspected 21 August 2018 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college 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. Initial assessment arrangements are thorough and accurate. Assessment data is used effectively to ensure students are placed in classes which effectively meet their needs and goals. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office Guidance. Almost all students complete their courses and levels of student satisfaction are consistently very high. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Students benefit from highly qualified and experienced teachers who plan lessons very effectively. An excellent range of resources engages students and extends their developing language skills. Teachers use questioning very effectively to elicit and check learning. They provide high-quality feedback on students' written work, which very effectively supports improvement. Regular academic tutorials provide students with very good opportunities to obtain guidance on independent study. However, they do not always result in setting of specific measurable targets that can be subsequently monitored and reviewed. Students are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They make very good progress from their starting points.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Arrangements to ensure health and safety, and security of the premises, are highly effective. Health and safety policies are very effectively implemented. Students know how to keep themselves safe and what to do in the event of an emergency. The standard of the premises is excellent. Students benefit from a comfortable, centrally located, and attractive place to study. Student admission records are clear and accurate. Attendance rates for most students are very good. Managers have effective processes in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office when required. Pastoral support is excellent. Staff provide very effective support and guidance. They closely monitor the welfare of students and take prompt and effective action when required. Managers place an important emphasis on safeguarding and implement a range of effective mechanisms to protect students in their care. Residential accommodation is clean, safe and very well managed and monitored.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The proprietor provides very effective strategic and operational oversight in line with the school's aims and mission. Consistently high standards of education and student care are maintained with appropriate management of finances and investment in staffing and resources. Oversight of academic standards and safeguarding is effectively discharged to responsible and experienced senior leaders. Leaders and managers provide very clear educational direction. They understand the strengths of the school and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Leaders and managers are successful in securing and supporting highly experienced and qualified staff. Arrangements for staff development are excellent. Staff feel valued and staff turnover is very low. Quality assurance arrangements are excellent. Effective

processes are in place to deal with any student complaints. Managers effectively use examination attainment data to draw conclusions on overall achievement and to identify trends or areas for closer monitoring. However, the system for recording progress tests outcomes does not allow managers to easily monitor progress over time. Staff recruitment and selection arrangements are excellent.

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

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

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to and on arrival at the school is excellent. Initial assessment is thorough and accurate. Students undergo a comprehensive analysis of their learning needs and current skills. Managers use assessment data to ensure students are placed in classes which effectively meet their needs and goals.
- 3.2 Initial assessment information is effectively shared with teachers who use it well in planning the curriculum to meet students' language needs and aspirations. Students are encouraged to disclose any learning difficulties or disabilities, and effective arrangements are put in place to support their learning.
- 3.3 Students receive detailed, accurate information about courses from agents and school marketing materials. They receive very effective information, advice and guidance on the most appropriate course to take and this helps students to make informed choices about their studies.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. The curriculum is well designed to accommodate the needs of adult students at all levels from beginners to advanced levels. Appropriate syllabuses very effectively support students' progression through course levels. The range of optional and specialist classes enable students to follow a course that is very well tailored to their individual needs and interests.
- 3.5 Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office Guidance. Courses match the details found in course brochures and on the website. Almost all students complete their courses and levels of student satisfaction are consistently very high.

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

- 3.6 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Teachers are highly qualified and experienced. They plan lessons very effectively to ensure that all students meet the proposed learning outcomes. Teaching and learning are effectively supported by provision of excellent resources that engage students and consolidate and extend their developing language skills.
- 3.7 An excellent range of communicative activities ensures that all students participate actively and have frequent opportunities to develop their speaking skills. Teachers use questioning very effectively to elicit and check learning. Classroom and time management are consistently excellent.

- 3.8 Students are highly engaged and suitably challenged throughout lessons. They demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm, participating fully in their learning. As a result, students are highly motivated to practise and develop their applied speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- 3.9 Teachers create a highly inclusive learning environment where all students are valued and respected. Student are encouraged to talk about their personal opinions, traditions and cultures during lesson activities and discussions. Teaching reinforces the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.
- 3.10 On-course assessment is comprehensive, regular and promotes excellent progress. Students receive high quality feedback on written work, which very effectively supports improvement.
- 3.11 Regular academic tutorials provide students with very good opportunities to obtain guidance on independent study. However, they do not always result in setting of specific measurable targets that can be subsequently monitored and reviewed.

### **3.(d) Attainment and progress**

- 3.12 Attainment and progress are excellent. Students demonstrate excellent progress and attainment in lessons. Students report high levels of satisfaction with the progress that they make. They develop greater confidence and accuracy, using correct pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.
- 3.13 Achievement for the small minority of students taking external examinations is consistently excellent. End of course tests demonstrate that students make very good progress from their starting points.

## **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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

- 4.1 Arrangements to ensure health and safety, and security of the premises, are excellent. Managers take all the necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. A wide range of comprehensive and up-to-date health and safety policies are very effectively implemented. Firefighting and fire safety equipment is regularly serviced, tested and maintained. Appropriate staff are trained in first aid, with effective arrangements in place to support students who are ill or injured. Electrical equipment is well maintained and regularly tested. Health and safety signage and guidance is clear and helpful. Effective security arrangements are in place to manage visitors to the school. These arrangements ensure staff and students know how to keep themselves safe and what to do in the event of an emergency.
- 4.2 The standard of the premises is excellent, providing a very comfortable, centrally located, and attractive place to work and study. Classrooms are very light and bright, well ventilated and furnished to an excellent standard. Students have access to attractive areas for socialising and practising their speaking and listening skills with their peers. Students benefit from access to personal computers, wireless internet, and a small library facility to support their independent studies. Free drinking water is available, along with a shop providing refreshments at break times. Washrooms are clean, modern and sufficient in numbers. The premises have a lift to all floors and accessible washrooms for wheelchair users.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.3 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. Student admission records are clear and accurate. Student files are very well maintained, providing a clear record of checks on identification and visa status. Student attendance registers are accurate and well maintained. The school attendance policy is clear and shared with students before and on arrival. Electronic registers provide managers with useful and current data on individual and class attendance levels, clearly highlighting where rates fall below the school's minimum requirements.
- 4.4 Managers and admissions staff take appropriate action to address any non-attendance very quickly. As a result, attendance rates for most students are high. Managers have an effective understanding of Home Office requirements for attendance for those on Student visas. Managers have effective processes in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office when required.
- 4.5 Students are provided with clear information on course fees, along with a fair refund and cancellation policy, which is accessible on the school website and in promotional materials.

**4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.6 Pastoral support is excellent and meets the needs of all students. Staff at all levels provide very effective support and guidance in line with the school's aim to deliver high quality education in a caring, family atmosphere. Induction is comprehensive and reinforced by a clear and useful student handbook. As a result, students settle quickly onto their courses.
- 4.7 Staff closely monitor the welfare of students and take prompt and effective action when required. Relationships throughout the school are very positive. Students feel safe and valued and know who to go to with any concerns. Integration and tolerance are very effectively promoted by staff. A culture of inclusion is underpinned by a range of clear and appropriate policies, which are well communicated throughout the school.
- 4.8 The social programme is suitably varied and meets students' needs and interests well. The range of activities and excursions help students to integrate and practise their language skills in different contexts and environments. Students confirm that they have made friends at the school and are enjoying their school experience and time in Oxford. Inspection findings confirm this view.
- 4.9 Students benefit from effective information and guidance to support their progression goals and next steps, for example advice on applying for higher education courses or local jobs.

**4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s**

- 4.10 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Managers place an important emphasis on safeguarding and implement a range of effective mechanisms to protect students in their care. A designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained and has a secure understanding of their role and responsibilities. A comprehensive safeguarding policy outlines the range of measures in place to ensure the safety and security of younger students, including those accommodated with homestay hosts. Attendance monitoring procedures for students under 18 are suitably enhanced and clearly communicated.
- 4.11 All staff complete regular and appropriate safeguarding training to ensure they fully understand their safeguarding obligations. There are clear and systematic processes in place for recognising, recording and reporting safeguarding concerns if required. Managers have implemented effective arrangements to prevent and manage the risks relating to e-safety and from radicalisation and extremism.
- 4.12 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are routinely and regularly completed to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. Managers maintain an accurate central record of safeguarding checks to monitor compliance. These measures help to ensure the safety and welfare of students under 18.

**4.(e) Residential accommodation**

- 4.13 Residential accommodation is excellent. Accommodation is managed and registered in accordance with national requirements. Managers have implemented very effective mechanisms for regularly monitoring the quality and safety of student accommodation, both in externally managed residences and in homestay accommodation.
- 4.14 Apartments in an externally managed student residence provide modern, clean and well-maintained accommodation for a small number of adult students. School staff have established effective and positive relationships with building managers, carrying out regular quality and safety checks and ensuring that any maintenance requests are promptly addressed.
- 4.15 Homestay hosts are appropriately vetted and very well supported by school staff, to ensure the accommodation they provide is safe and meets the needs of students. Hosts accommodating students under 18 undergo regular DBS checks and complete appropriate safeguarding training. They understand how to contact school managers in the event of an emergency. Hosts benefit from clear information and guidance which clarifies their roles and responsibilities. Most homestay hosts are highly experienced and take pride in offering comfortable and clean accommodation where students feel welcome and well supported in their care. They provide valuable opportunities for students to practise and develop their English speaking and listening skills in a family environment, in line with the aims of the school.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are excellent. The proprietor has an excellent working knowledge of the school, providing very effective strategic and operational oversight in line with its aims and mission. The proprietor takes effective responsibility for strategic development, financial planning, health and safety, and ensuring all legal permissions are in place.
- 5.2 The proprietor ensures that consistently high standards of education and student care are maintained with appropriate investment in staffing and resources. Relationships and communication between the proprietor and staff at all levels are excellent. Staff are proud to work at the school and are well supported to maintain the culture of high standards and high expectations established by the proprietor over many years.
- 5.3 The proprietor fulfils their statutory duties for students under 18. Oversight of academic standards and safeguarding is effectively discharged to responsible and experienced senior leaders. The proprietor provides effective oversight of key school policies and procedures which are updated regularly and effectively disseminated to all staff.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. Leaders and managers provide very clear educational direction. They ensure that policies and procedures are effectively and consistently implemented. This helps to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, and students benefit from an excellent standard of education and pastoral care which meets their goals and needs.
- 5.5 Leaders and managers are effective in self-evaluation. They understand the strengths of the school and have identified priorities for improvement. Regular observations of teaching sessions help managers to monitor and evaluate the quality of education and identify any areas for enhancement, taking appropriate action where needed.
- 5.6 Leaders and managers are successful in securing and supporting highly experienced and qualified staff. They have established a programme of regular professional development, and a culture of reflective practice, which helps to maintain and improve the standard of education over time. Staff benefit from a range of useful training opportunities, often led by well-respected English language teaching experts. Staff fully engage in a comprehensive annual performance review process which celebrates their achievements and highlights future objectives and development priorities. As a result, staff feel valued and staff turnover is very low.

**5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.7 Quality assurance arrangements are excellent. Managers regularly collect and analyse student feedback at different points in the learning journey. They take prompt action to address any areas for improvement, making changes and enhancement where required. Students are very positive about their experience at the school. They value highly the academic and personal support that they receive from staff and the positive impact this has on their developing language skills. Students feel that they are treated fairly and their different cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected. Students feel safe and consider the school to be very responsive to their suggestions. Inspection findings confirm their views.
- 5.8 Students have access to a clear complaints policy and procedure which is effectively communicated during induction and shared via the school website. The policy includes arrangements for resolution of complaints by an external independent adjudicator, if required. Managers have implemented effective systems to handle any concerns or complaints raised by students. Appropriate systems allow managers to record, track and monitor the resolution of any formal complaints.
- 5.9 Effective mechanisms are in place to collect and analyse student attainment data derived from external examinations. Managers use the assessment data to draw conclusions on overall achievement and to identify trends or areas for closer monitoring. Currently the system for recording progress tests outcomes does not allow managers to easily monitor progress over time.

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

- 5.10 Arrangements to recruit staff and check their suitability are excellent. Staff recruitment and selection arrangements are thorough and reliable. Managers maintain a clear and accurate record of the checks they complete on new staff, including their identification, qualifications and the right to work in the UK. Managers take up and verify employment references and ensure that DBS background checks are completed in a timely manner. A suitable central record of recruitment checks is well maintained. These measures ensure that staff are suitable for their roles.

**5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.11 The provision of information is excellent. The website is detailed and provides a range of accurate information that helps students to make appropriate study choices that meet their needs and goals.
- 5.12 The school made available to inspectors all the information requested.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

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

- Ensure students are set specific and measurable targets that can be monitored and reviewed.
- Develop the system for recording the outcomes of progress tests to allow managers to easily monitor progress over time.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with the proprietor, senior members of staff, and homestay hosts. 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

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr Steve Ingle | Lead Inspector |
| Ms Dawn Hart   | Team Inspector |