



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

ST CLARE'S OXFORD PFE

(charity 294058)

Full Name **St Clare's Oxford PFE**

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Principal Mr Andrew Rattue

Proprietor Mr Charles Richard Dick

Age Range 17+

Total number of students 90

Numbers by age and type of study

16 – 17:	5
18+:	85
EFL only:	19
FE only:	30
EFL and FE:	41

Inspection date **14 March 2017**

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.

An extended monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the quality 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. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 St Clare's Oxford was founded in 1953 with the aim of advancing international education and understanding. It consists of two distinct types of college: a Sixth Form College and an International College. Both are led by the principal, who reports to the governing body. The focus of this inspection is the provision in the International College in Oxford.
- 1.2 The International College offers three programmes of study providing pathways into higher education: Liberal Arts (LA), English plus Academic Subjects (EA), University Foundation Course (FC). It also offers English for Everyday and Exams (EL) and summer courses. Students can join the LA and EA programmes in September and January and the FC in September or November. Students can join the EL courses on a flexible basis. Acceptance onto the academic courses requires students to meet given entrance criteria as well as the appropriate English language level. Accommodation is provided in both residences and homestay families. All students under the age of 18 stay in homestay accommodation.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 90 students were enrolled, with a small minority being under 18 years old. Highest numbers come from the United States, Belgium and China. There are more female than male students and none is identified as having special needs or disabilities (SEND). The vast majority speak English as an additional language. There are 27 students holding a Tier 4 visa.
- 1.4 The college was last inspected from 9 – 11 February 2016 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations. This monitoring visit has been extended due to a change of principal. For this reason, Section 5 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.
- 1.5 The recommendation from the previous report is:
 - Ensure error correction is consistent in all English language classes

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 9 – 11 February 2016 the college 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. Initial assessment places students on appropriate courses. Information given to teachers allows them to better understand their students. Academic and EL courses are highly effective in meeting student needs. Courses meet the definition of an approved qualification for Tier 4 students, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent and is characterised by classes where students are challenged and motivated to learn and progress. Teachers are knowledgeable and know their subjects well. Error correction has been focused on as part of staff development in order to promote a more consistent approach in the classroom. Tutorials are regular and set clear targets to support improvement. Students make excellent progress and reach high levels of attainment.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. Fire safety measures are excellent. Effective risk assessments are undertaken for all off-site activities. These ensure the safety of students. The high standard premises provide a comfortable environment. Admission and attendance registers are accurate. Levels of attendance and punctuality are extremely high. Prompt action is taken if a student is absent. Procedures for contact with the Home Office are appropriate. Excellent levels of pastoral care are provided to ensure effective support of students. A comprehensive induction allows students to settle quickly. Levels of safeguarding are excellent. All staff have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), as have homestay providers accommodating those under 18. Safeguarding training is undertaken by all staff to support the safety of students under the age of 18.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The new principal is having a very positive impact on the college and staff speak highly of his inclusive and open approach. The board and senior management provide effective oversight of the college and support for improvement. Communications between staff at all levels are frequent and effective. Self-evaluation does not consistently provide focused information, so weakening opportunities for improvement. Areas for development are clearly identified in a development plan and progress is effectively monitored, so supporting improvements. Results from regular student feedback are not collated or analysed to drive higher levels of quality improvement. Annual appraisals clearly identify development goals to support improvement. Lesson observations have a positive impact in the classroom. Appropriate checks are in place to confirm the identity and suitability of staff.

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.
- 3.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure error correction is consistent in all English language classes
- 3.3 Excellent progress has been made against this recommendation. A clear direction is offered by academic managers on error correction in the classroom. Excellent examples of correction were evidenced in observations. An internal workshop has focused English teachers on when and what to correct in order to further support student improvement, so promoting a more consistent approach.
- 3.4 Advice and guidance provided by the college, by the students' home university, together with information on the website allow students to make informed choices about their courses. Requirements for entry onto different courses vary. Where appropriate, students' grades are submitted in advance to the college. For students taking English language courses, English tests are given on arrival. The system is highly effective in placing students onto appropriate courses. Flexibility allows change of course if necessary. Information passed to teachers supports effective planning.
- 3.5 A clear statement of educational purpose leads to a first rate learning experience for students. The suitability of course provision and the curriculum is excellent and ensures that students are well educated in accordance with their objectives and the college's aims. An appropriate range of academic courses effectively support students to achieve their future aspirations. They develop their knowledge and skills in their chosen subject and where necessary, also improve their English. The courses are appropriately linked to the requirements of degree programmes of specified universities. English language courses are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). These language courses are based on cross-course themes, which promote interest in a range of topics, leading to language improvement. Students are highly satisfied with their courses. As a result, the vast majority complete the course for which they enrol. Courses meet the definition of an approved qualification for Tier 4 students, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.6 Teaching is excellent. The highly motivated teachers employ a diversity of strategies to interest and challenge students. They demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and motivate students to learn and progress. Lessons are well planned and good use of a variety of resources engages students. The positive atmosphere contributes to the active involvement of students in their learning. Individual classes are offered to students who need extra help to ensure they achieve their aims.

- 3.7 Students are regularly informed of the progress they are making through regular tutorials and assignments. They make excellent progress. Attainment levels are excellent, enabling students to progress and fulfil their aims.

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 Procedures for managing the health and safety are excellent. Comprehensive policies and clear procedures are in place to promote a safe working and learning environment. Up-to-date risk assessments, including for off-site activities, further support safety. Measures taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are comprehensive and well documented. Fire drills are held regularly. Clear signage ensures that staff and students know what to do in case of an emergency evacuation. Appropriate numbers of trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place.
- 4.3 The high quality premises provide a comfortable environment for all. They are clean, well decorated and maintained to a high standard. They have good lighting, heating and sound insulation. Classrooms are bright and appropriately furnished. There are sufficient numbers of washrooms.
- 4.4 Admission and attendance registers are accurate. Monitoring of attendance is systematic and effective. Clearly communicated attendance and lateness policies ensure extremely high levels of attendance and punctuality. Any absences that do occur are followed up promptly. Appropriate procedures are in place to make any necessary reports to the Home Office. Procedures for the collection and refund of fees are fair and appropriately communicated.
- 4.5 Levels of pastoral support are excellent and students know who to approach for advice. Students benefit from a comprehensive induction that effectively introduces them to the college, to Oxford and to living in the UK. This helps them settle into their course quickly. Students report that relationships between staff and students and amongst the students themselves are excellent and are effective in promoting a positive culture at the college. Inspectors support this view.
- 4.6 Safeguarding arrangements are excellent and ensure that students are effectively safeguarded. All staff, including contractors and homestay providers accommodating students under-18 years, are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This information is held in a single central record of appointments, together with appropriate references and information on right to work and identity checks. All staff have undergone appropriate training. Regular updates are provided to ensure everyone is up to date with developments.

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 Oversight is outstanding. Leadership provide clear educational direction as reflected in the high quality of the provision, care of students and fulfilment of the college's aims. Senior staff are well informed about the day to day workings of the college and use this information in their monitoring and planning. Very good relationships between staff and managers creates a positive atmosphere, which is of clear benefit to staff and students. Frequent formal and informal communications between staff successfully support a full understanding of organisational requirements. Policies are developed centrally by senior managers and regularly reviewed to ensure their suitability. Robust financial management ensures a sufficiency of resources for all departments. All necessary legal permissions are in place from the relevant bodies.
- 5.3 Self-evaluation is satisfactory. A substantial amount of information is provided in the self-evaluation document, but in a majority of areas does not provide a clear insight into the college's strengths and areas for development. However, management is successful in setting priorities and ensuring these are implemented through effective planning and regular monitoring in a development plan. This contributes to on-going improvements.
- 5.4 Quality assurance is good. Feedback from students is sought regularly and has a positive impact on the provision. However, the data is not systematically collated or analysed to drive higher levels of improvement. However, the college is very responsive to feedback given and follows up issues promptly if necessary. Achievement data is collated and indicates high success rates.
- 5.5 A complaints policy is in place which allows students to know what to do if they have a complaint. External bodies are identified in the case of complaints that cannot be resolved.
- 5.6 The college is successful in securing and supporting high quality staff. A wide range of internal and external training activities are effective in supporting development and contribute to the existing high standards. Annual developmental lesson observations and an excellent system of regular peer observations have a positive impact on teaching and learning. A first-rate annual appraisal system supports staff in their development, so contributing to the high standard of provision.
- 5.7 Appropriate checks are carried out prior to the appointment of staff to confirm their identity and suitability.
- 5.8 The website is informative and provides information in line with requirements. The college was very helpful in providing inspectors with detailed information before and during the inspection.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Introduce a system for student feedback which allows for collation and analysis of data to show trends over time and inform improvements.
- Develop the self-evaluation process to ensure a more accurate reflection of strengths and areas for development to promote continuous improvement.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and staff. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with a governors' representative. 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

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