



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

**MONITORING VISIT**

**ST CLARE'S OXFORD PFE**

**(charity# 294058)**

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

Address 139 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7AL

Parent\Company name St Clare's Oxford

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Website www.stclares.ac.uk

Principal Mr Andrew Rattue

Proprietor Mr Charles Richard Dick

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 60

Numbers by age and type of study

16-17	2
18+	58
EFL only:	12
FE only:	19
EFL and FE:	29

Inspection date **12 March 2019**

## 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 St Clare's Oxford was established in 1953 with the aim of advancing international education and understanding. It comprises two different colleges: a Sixth Form College and an International College in Oxford. The principal, who reports to the governing body, leads both colleges. The director oversees the ELT operations in both. The focus of this inspection is the provision in the International College.
- 1.2 The International College offers an undergraduate programme, a university foundation programme, an English plus academic subjects programme and English language courses. Students can join the English language courses every Monday. The other courses have fixed enrolment dates twice a year. For these courses, students are required to meet specific entry criteria, as well as have the appropriate English language level. During the summer the college runs a large summer programme. Accommodation is available in residences and with homestay providers. All students under the age of 18 years stay in homestay accommodation.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 60 students were enrolled, the majority of whom were young adults. The largest nationality groups are from Belgium and the United States. There are more female than male students and one is identified as having additional language and learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority speak English as an additional language. There are nine students holding Tier 4 visas.
- 1.4 The college was last inspected on 17 March 2017, when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations.
- 1.5 The recommendations from the previous report are:
  - 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.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 14 March 2017, 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 in appropriate classes. Flexibility in the placement system allows students to change their course if necessary. Courses effectively meet student needs and Home Office requirements for those on Tier 4 visas. Teaching is excellent and results in high levels of student engagement and motivation to learn. Teachers display excellent subject knowledge. Students benefit from the small classes, which promotes progress. Helpful comments on marked work are effective in allowing students to know what to do to improve. Students are regularly informed of the progress they are making through tests, tutorials, and assignments on the academic courses. Levels of attainment are high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Effective measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all. Appropriate risk assessments support the safety of staff and students. The recently refurbished premises are of an excellent standard and provide a comfortable environment for working and learning. Admission and attendance registers are accurate and show excellent rates of attendance. Procedures for contacting the Home Office, if necessary, are suitable. Careers guidance given to students is of an excellent standard, supporting informed decision making. Levels of safeguarding are excellent. Safeguarding training supports the safety of students under the age of 18.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of governors and senior management provide excellent oversight of the college and clear educational direction to support the quality provision. The self-evaluation document is suitable and accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. A focused development plan allows for actions to be monitored, to promote improvement. Student feedback is collated but is not consistently analysed to show trends over time. The process does not offer the opportunity for long-term students to regularly provide feedback, which reduces opportunities for improvement. The college is highly supportive of staff development, so benefitting the college and staff. Staff teaching academic programmes do not consistently have a performance review to support quality improvements. Staff suitability checks are appropriate.

### **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 Initial assessment is excellent. This is conducted prior to and on arrival and effectively places students in English language and academic classes. Students taking a university foundation course or English plus academic subjects programme are tested for suitability prior to arrival. An online interview effectively supports further assessment, if required. For other courses, students undertake comprehensive and appropriate assessment that tests the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The college advises students on the most appropriate course to take based on future academic aspirations and ability. Flexibility in the placement system allows students to change course if necessary, so ensuring satisfaction. Continuous enrolment is well managed and allows English language students to join classes weekly. Courses meet student needs. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.3 Course provision and the curriculum are excellent and are successful in promoting progression and in meeting students' needs. In addition to the range of English language courses on offer, the college provides a choice of specialist academic courses tailored to student learning goals. The college works with universities to ensure they provide suitable curricula. Consequently, the vast majority of students are satisfied with the courses.
- 3.4 Teaching is excellent and promotes successful learning. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, and inspire students to make excellent progress. Lessons are well-planned and the variety of activities supports student engagement and high levels of motivation. Classes are small and this allows attention to be paid to individuals to help achieve their goals quickly. Assessment of students' work is effective. Correction of marked work is of a high quality. Comments provided are constructive in identifying and explaining errors and allow students to know what to do to improve.
- 3.5 Progress and achievement are outstanding. All students have regular tutorials where progress is discussed, and targets identified to support improvement. Students are encouraged to self-assess so they understand their own progress and what they need to do to improve. Progress is effectively monitored through regular tests. Extra support is given if necessary, to ensure high standards in the provision. Students were observed making good progress in classes. Data demonstrates excellent levels of attainment.

#### **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 health, safety and security are excellent. Clear policies and procedures are in place to support the safety of all. These are effectively communicated and are implemented consistently. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments further support safety, as do risk assessments for off-site activities. The school has high levels of fire safety. All necessary measures are taken to effectively assess the risk from fire and other hazards and to implement procedures to minimise such risks. An appropriate number of suitably trained fire marshals and first aiders are on site. Good signage ensures that staff and students know what to do in an emergency evacuation. Provision for first aid is excellent. A clear policy on first aid is in place and is implemented effectively. First aid boxes are appropriately stocked.
- 4.3 The premises provide a high-quality environment for all. They have recently been refurbished. Consequently, standards of decoration are excellent. The premises are comfortable and suitably furnished. The heating, lighting and sound insulation are appropriate. Standards of cleanliness are high. Sufficient washrooms are provided. There is suitable access to the building for wheelchair users.
- 4.4 Admission and attendance registers are accurate. Levels of attendance are excellent. Clear and effective procedures are in place to follow up absences, including for students under 18 and those on Tier 4 visas. Appropriate arrangements are in place for reporting to the Home Office if required.
- 4.5 Standards of advice and guidance given are high and support students to make informed choices about future courses and careers. The varied social programme is well attended. It is developed with suggestions from the students, so enhancing their learning experience.
- 4.6 Safeguarding arrangements are excellent and ensure that students are effectively safeguarded. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place to support safeguarding. These are regularly reviewed for relevance. All staff and homestay providers accommodating students under the age of 18 years are checked for suitability through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Enhanced DBS checks have been completed and recorded for all relevant staff and the information is held in a single central register, which is accurate and complete. All staff have undergone appropriate training and have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Regular updated training is undertaken to ensure they are 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 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- 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.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. Data from the end of course student feedback is now collated and used to inform improvement. It is not consistently analysed. Feedback from students on careers guidance they receive is collated, analysed and clearly shows trends over time. It is helpful in evaluating the quality of the provision and in informing changes. Consequently, standards in the provision are constantly improving.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made against the second recommendation. The self-evaluation document is detailed and gives an overview of the college's strengths and areas for development. Management is successful in setting priorities and ensuring these are implemented through regular monitoring of progress of these targets in the development plan. This promotes on-going improvements.
- 5.5 Oversight is outstanding. Leadership provides 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. The governing body provides excellent expertise and challenge to ensure continued improvement. Frequent formal and informal communications between staff successfully support a full understanding of organisational requirements and developments.
- 5.6 Quality assurance, including student feedback is excellent. Feedback from students is collected in the first week and at the end of course. However, this is not consistently analysed, so reducing opportunities for improvement. Feedback is not formally collected during the course from students studying for an extended period. Consequently, a small number of opportunities for improvement are missed.
- 5.7 Appraisals are in place for all staff teaching on the English language programmes. Development goals are identified for these staff to ensure maximum benefit to the individual and to the organisation. Those teaching academic programmes do not consistently have a performance review, so reducing opportunities for improvement. A variety of suitable lesson observations take place regularly. Teachers benefit from the feedback given. The college is highly supportive of staff development. The development programme is varied and effectively meets teachers' needs. The

college supports staff who wish to undertake further qualifications or attend external events. In these ways improvements in staff performance are promoted.

- 5.8 Staff recruitment, qualifications and security checks are good. All necessary checks are carried out on staff prior to confirmation of appointment. These are appropriately recorded in staff files.
- 5.9 The college was very helpful in providing inspectors with information in a timely fashion 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:

- Develop the systems for reviews of academic teaching staff to provide a consistency of approach.
- Develop and implement a formal mid-programme survey for students on longer programmes of study to support the quality of the provision.
- Analyse student feedback data consistently in order to inform improvement.

## 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. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed.

### Inspectors

Ms Nicole la Hausse de Lalouvière	Lead Inspector
Ms Flora Bean	Team Inspector
Ms Angela Moir	Team Inspector