



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

ST CLARE'S OXFORD PFE

(charity 294085)

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Principal	Mr Andrew Rattue
Proprietor	Mr Jens Tholstrup
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	60
Numbers by age and type of study	16+: 11 18+: 49 EFL only: 9 FE only: 17 EFL and FE: 34
Inspection dates	28 Sep 2021 to 30 Sep 2021

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 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 St Clare's Oxford was established in 1953 with the aim of advancing international education and understanding. It comprises two different colleges: an International Baccalaureate College (IB) and an International College (IC) situated in Oxford. Both colleges are overseen by one board of governors. The principal, who reports to the governing body, leads both colleges. The vice principal academic oversees the academic courses in the IC and the English language teaching (ELT) operations in both.
- 1.2 The International College offers a university undergraduate programme (UP), and a university foundation programme (UFP). These courses have fixed enrolment dates twice a year. For these courses, students are required to meet specific entry criteria, as well as having the appropriate English language level.
- 1.3 In addition, the International College offers an English plus academic subjects programme, and English language courses for examinations. All English language courses have five entry points during the year. During the summer the college runs a large summer programme. The focus of this inspection is the provision in the International College.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection 60 students were enrolled in the International College and eleven students were under the age of 18. The largest nationality groups are from The Netherlands, Germany and the United States. There are more female than male students and seven students are identified as having additional learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority speak English as an additional language. There are 13 students holding Student visas.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the lease of one of its buildings has come to an end and all International College teaching takes place in one building. A total refurbishment programme of the International College has been completed including for facilities and technologies.
- 1.6 Accommodation is available in residences for all students from both the IB and IC in close proximity to the college. Residences for students under 18 years are shared with the IB college and all students can eat in college. The residences for under 18s have house parents who live on-site. Over 18s have kitchen facilities but can also choose to eat in college if they so wish.
- 1.7 The college was last inspected on 12 March 2019, 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. Assessment prior to and on arrival is thorough, guiding students effectively to their choice of course with flexibility to change if required. Course and curriculum provision is excellent. The wide range of academic courses and higher education guidance, a strength of the college, ensures that students needs and aspirations are extremely well met. Courses meet Home Office requirements. Teaching is excellent, enabling students to maximise their learning. Teachers' academic knowledge is excellent ensuring high levels of student engagement and motivation. Assessment is timely, reliable and consistent. Students are informed of their progress through class tests, in tutorials, and from marked work in academic assignments so that they know their progress and how to improve. Small group work effectively supports all, including those with any learning difficulties. Students achieve high levels of success and the overwhelming majority receive places at their first-choice university. Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for other people, including those with any learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety is, excellent. All health and safety procedures are effectively implemented. Staff and students are well informed about health, safety and emergency procedures. Fire safety measures are very well managed. All necessary fire and emergency equipment and procedures are systematically checked. Security levels are high for all buildings. The premises are of a high quality and very well maintained. Admission and attendance records are accurate. Attendance is very well monitored. Pastoral care is excellent. Students are very well supported by a dedicated welfare team, which they value highly. Thorough induction and an excellent activities and enrichment programme linked to academic studies enhance students' experience. Arrangements for safeguarding of students under 18 years are rigorous. All staff have appropriate safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities. Provision for residential accommodation is excellent with separate residences shared with IB students for those under the age of 18.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Oversight by governors for financial planning and strategic direction are highly effective in ensuring the aims of the college are met. Clear educational direction ensures that the college remains up to date with students' learning requirements and relevant course provision. High standards are maintained supporting the excellent work of staff and students. The management of the college is excellent. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The college is highly effective in securing and retaining high quality staff. Quality assurance procedures are good in analysing and responding to student feedback. Not all teaching staff are observed to support

them in their professional development. Appropriate checks for staff suitability to work with students under 18 years are carried out rigorously and accurately recorded. The college has a clear complaints and fee policy. The website provides all the required and relevant information. The college provided all requests for information promptly for the inspection team.

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 is excellent.
- 3.2 Highly effective procedures are in place to accurately ascertain a student's English language level and to understand their learning needs. Accordingly, students are placed appropriately so that they gain maximum benefit from their course of study.
- 3.3 Students who register for the UP and UFP programmes or an English plus academic subjects programme are carefully assessed and interviewed prior to arrival. Clear entry criteria are set and managed effectively by the specialist higher education team who work supportively with students to ensure they are satisfied with their chosen course of study. Students report that the support and guidance is highly effective in directing them towards the appropriate academic courses. There is flexibility for students to move courses if required or to add additional courses of study on arrival in the college.
- 3.4 Effective procedures to support students with identified learning needs are well established. Teaching staff are trained to recognise students' additional learning needs and to provide suitable support so that students are able to maximise their progress. These highly effective procedures result in high success rates in students' continuing with their course.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.5 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. St Clare's has a clear statement of educational purpose. To be true to its aim, the advancing of international education and understanding, the college provides an extensive range and mix of academic and English language courses so that students can achieve their goals to extend their horizons through study at higher education institutions across the world.
- 3.6 The appropriate range of English language and examination courses provided are highly effective in promoting students' progress. English language courses are based on the relevant syllabuses, which are benchmarked to the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR). Courses are registered with the appropriate awarding bodies and lead to formal qualifications. Detailed and appropriate schemes of work are matched to students' learning needs and the examination criteria.
- 3.7 The courses for UFP, UP and English with academic subjects include detailed schemes of work. The courses lead to recognised qualifications that are in accordance with information in the marketing materials and are designed well to match students' needs. Courses provide a coherent study programme in line with

university criteria. The specialist higher education team provide excellent guidance to staff and students on specific course criteria and steer students carefully in their choice of subjects.

- 3.8 Course provision is accurately represented on the college website. The courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 3.9 A full and varied range of enrichment activities and outings linked to academic subjects and a well-organised social and activities programme enhance students' learning exceptionally well.
- 3.10 Retention on all courses is high. Students report that they thoroughly enjoy their time in the college and as a result, the overwhelming majority complete their course of study.

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

- 3.11 Teaching is excellent and promotes highly effective learning. Teachers are exceptionally knowledgeable and highly experienced. Well planned lessons ensure teachers have a very clear understanding of the learning needs, aptitudes and cultural background of students. Teachers know their students very well and work with them individually so they can maximise their learning. Teachers set challenging tasks, promote close reading of texts and facilitate excellent participation. As a result, students work consistently at a high level, using higher order thinking skills and are eager to participate in lessons. Teaching builds increasingly on prior learning, promoting students' confidence in presenting their work in class on a given theme or topic or responding accurately using the new language they are learning. Students listen attentively, are highly motivated to know more and fully engaged in their learning. Students discuss topics in pairs and in small groups; they learn from each other, promoting mutual respect and acceptance of others within a convivial atmosphere and enjoy their learning. Focused questioning and a range of tasks ensure students remain on task. The pace in almost all lessons is highly effective in maximising students' learning.
- 3.12 Assessment of students' work is excellent. Consistent assessment in all courses provides detailed information on students' progress in English and in their academic written assignments. This is used effectively to inform next steps in teaching and provides excellent support for students. Regular one-to-one tutorials ensure that students are provided with opportunities to recognise their strengths and to know what to do to improve. Tutors are highly supportive and help students to set their own individual targets, promoting effective independent learning.
- 3.13 Homework assignments are set regularly and written work is marked using the appropriate criteria. Helpful comments and one-to-one discussion help students to improve. The marking of initial work for assessed writing in the UFP helps students to focus on key points and to raise their attainment levels in submitted work.

- 3.14 The teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for others including those with any learning needs or disability.
- 3.15 Classroom resources are excellent. A wide range of additional published resources are made available to teachers. Resources are used very effectively to enhance students' learning.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.16 Attainment and progress are excellent. Progress of students is tracked through regular class tests, in tutorials and from academic assignments and results are recorded centrally. This allows for ease of access for managers, teachers and students. Teachers use assessment results to inform their planning in lessons and for individual feedback to students. Tutors liaise with teachers to support students in providing individual targets and monitoring in particular areas for improvement.
- 3.17 The overwhelming majority of students following English language courses make consistently good or excellent progress throughout their course and achieve excellent results. Levels of attainment on the UP and UFP are consistently high so that students achieve their aspirations of progressing into higher education, the overwhelming majority to their first-choice institution.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

- 4.1 The health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are implemented effectively to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, including for any who are ill, injured or have disabilities. Specialist companies provide excellent advice and appropriate checks for all aspects of health and safety. A suitable range of risk assessments is undertaken and updated regularly to mitigate risk. Risk assessments are conducted for all external visits and activities and updated as required.
- 4.2 All necessary measures are implemented effectively to reduce the risk of fire which conform to legal requirements. Signage is suitably placed in all buildings. There are sufficient numbers of trained fire marshals. Systematic checks are made of all necessary fire and emergency equipment and procedures. Regular fire drills take place in all buildings. Records of all checks and fire drills are very well maintained. Effective arrangements are in place for evacuation procedures, including for those with any disabilities.
- 4.3 First aid provision is appropriate. The first aid policy includes all the required information and is effectively implemented. There are a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid. Arrangements for first aid are made clear to students in induction. Any incidents or accidents are logged centrally and followed up where necessary. Students report that they feel safe in the college and in the residences.
- 4.4 The premises are of a very high quality providing excellent facilities including newly installed technologies for teaching and learning. All buildings including residences have outdoor areas for students to meet. Security arrangements are highly effective to ensure the safety of students.
- 4.5 The premises are very well maintained and equipped. They are well decorated, tidy and clean. Lighting, heating and sound insulation are good. Furniture and fittings are appropriate for staff and students. In the residences, kitchen facilities are provided for students over 18 years of age. Free drinking water is available. Students share the dining facilities with the IB college and all students under 18 years eat in college. The dining hall has excellent kitchen facilities for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food. There are sufficient washrooms for staff and students, including for those with special needs and disabilities.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.6 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. Admission registers are accurate. Appropriate attendance and lateness policies are made clear to students in induction. Attendance is recorded electronically and monitored effectively by senior managers. Absence and lateness are addressed promptly by the welfare officer who meets with students to help them improve their punctuality. Very few students are

late and this helps to maintain high attendance rates. Completion of course rates are high.

- 4.7 Appropriate procedures are in place for monitoring and reporting to the Home Office for students registered on Student visas and the college make timely reports if necessary.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.8 Pastoral support for students is excellent. The college have extended the welfare team to include a number of highly qualified staff with substantial experience. Communication within the team is excellent through regular meetings and ensures staff follow up student concerns that may arise.

- 4.9 On arrival, students have a comprehensive induction and orientation programme where they meet welfare staff. The college promotes integration and tolerance and has effective procedures to prevent bullying and harassment. Students confirmed in discussion that they feel safe and know who to go to with any concerns. They spoke very positively of the very high levels of care they receive.

- 4.10 Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. All staff have received awareness training and show suitable understanding of the procedures for reporting concerns.

- 4.11 Provision for specialist higher education advice, a strength of the college, is excellent. Students receive high levels of individual advice and guidance which helps them make informed choices for their future study and employment.

- 4.12 The college provides a varied social and activities programme and an enrichment programme linked to academic subjects. Students are encouraged to sign up and are monitored for attendance. The range of outings and trips, sports and music activities and clubs enhance students' cultural and educational experience in the UK exceptionally well.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.13 Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent and have due regard for students' welfare and safety. Comprehensive safeguarding policies are in place and are regularly reviewed, updated and effectively disseminated to staff. All staff receive the appropriate safeguarding training and for the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Training for staff is regularly updated in line with government guidance. Staff have a very good awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and effectively support the work of the safeguarding team.

- 4.14 Safeguarding is given a high priority by senior leaders who ensure that all required guidance is followed correctly. The college has the appropriate links with the local safeguarding partnership and are supported by the local designated officer for safeguarding (LADO). The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies are trained to the appropriate level by the Oxfordshire safeguarding team. Safeguarding

records are suitably maintained and any safeguarding concerns are shared with the appropriate agencies when required.

- 4.15 All staff and board members have undergone enhanced suitability checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.16 Residential accommodation is excellent. The college offers accommodation in separate residences, for over and under 18-year-olds in close proximity to the college. Students under 18 years are exceptionally well looked after by the resident house parents. All residences are supported by excellent security and are registered in line with national standards. Residences are well equipped and comfortable with very good social indoor and outdoor areas.
- 4.17 Students benefit much from living in residences with students from many different cultures and backgrounds. In addition, through participating in the wide range of extra-curricular activities with many others, students' cultural experience and personal development is enriched.
- 4.18 Students report that they are highly satisfied with their accommodation. Any concerns regarding their accommodation are promptly dealt with.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Oversight by the well-established governing body is highly effective. Regular meetings of the whole board and subcommittees ensure that members of the board have a very clear understanding of the college. New governors are appointed to bring additional experience. Close liaison with senior leaders ensures that the college aims continue to be met. Strategic objectives are set, careful operational planning and monitoring ensure the board continues to develop the college so that the future of the college is secure.
- 5.2 Financial planning is robust and forward looking. This has allowed for recent, significant investment. Priorities for development are appropriately identified and have resulted in the recent renovation and upgrading of the main buildings, facilities and technologies. Risk is appropriately managed and the college has continued to operate and maintain high standards throughout the recent Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.3 A range of appropriate policies is overseen by the board, regularly reviewed and updated and shared with all staff in training. Policies are effectively implemented for all aspects of the work of the college.
- 5.4 Responsibilities within the board are suitably delegated. Relationships between governors, the principal and senior leaders are highly supportive. Individual board members visit the college and the residences and meet with leaders who have responsibility for safeguarding and the single central register. They meet with managers and teaching staff, observe lessons and talk with students. As a result, the board are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities and ensure that all relevant legislative requirements and statutory duties are met.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.5 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. Leaders and managers are appropriately experienced and highly effective in their roles. Communication throughout the organisation is excellent. Responsibilities are appropriately delegated within a clear management structure.
- 5.6 Educational direction is excellent. Standards of achievement are consistently high. Leaders meet regularly and monitor closely the work of the college to maintain high standards in all aspects of the educational provision. Innovative academic courses and higher education guidance ensure that students continue to be highly satisfied and achieve their aspirations. Success rates are consistently high.
- 5.7 Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders work closely together in identifying the strengths and areas to develop. They are reflective in their self-evaluation, in

identifying priorities, ensuring they are achieved with the focus of students' experience and outcomes at the forefront of their planning.

- 5.8 Staff throughout the college are experienced and of high quality. They are well supported by managers who ensure they are suitably qualified for their roles in meeting the needs of students. Regular staff meetings take place to keep staff informed of developments and to ensure staff have opportunity to provide their views in the planning of the educational provision. Relationships within the college and between managers and teachers are highly positive.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.9 Quality assurance including student feedback is good. There is a strong culture of seeking the views of students and of responding to their views. The college handles the concerns of students effectively and follows its published procedures.
- 5.10 Feedback is systematically gathered at the end of week one of a student's time in college and on their departure. In almost all cases responses are highly positive. The college have introduced a mid-stay feedback form for students with limited responses. Informal discussions with students indicate that they have many ways in which they feel supported through individual tutors, teachers, the welfare and safeguarding team and house parents if they are under 18. They confirm they are highly satisfied with all aspects of the provision.
- 5.11 The responses to pre-inspection questionnaires and in meetings with inspectors indicate students' high levels of satisfaction with the provision.
- 5.12 Teaching staff are given regular opportunities to provide feedback through team meetings and in response to student feedback. They report that managers support them well in their views and take up suggestions when possible.
- 5.13 Data on student attendance, progress and achievement is used appropriately to review the effectiveness of courses and to improve provision.
- 5.14 Performance management of staff is good and is in the process of being further developed for academic staff. The process has been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Procedures for formal lesson observations are in place but not all teaching staff are observed to help them in their professional development. Teachers report that they have had regular opportunities for training, including for online teaching over the course of the last year. Teachers new to the college have excellent opportunities for peer observations which they confirm helps them to develop their skills.
- 5.15 Appraisal procedures for permanent staff are thorough and effective in identifying areas for development with targets set and followed-up. Part-time and short course staff have not been appraised and is an area that is being actively pursued by the college.

- 5.16 A clear complaints procedure is in place and made known to students. The very few concerns and complaints are centrally logged and followed through to resolution. Managers are prompt in their response to any concerns that arise. Students are highly satisfied that they are listened to and that the college acts swiftly to deal with their concerns.
- 5.17 Students have access to a fee protection scheme which is well explained on the college website.

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

- 5.18 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. The recruitment policy is very clear on the rigorous procedures for the recruitment of staff. The human resources department are highly trained and very experienced. All staff undergo relevant checks prior to appointment. Checks include identity and proof of right to work in the UK, enhanced DBS and barred list checks. References are taken up prior to appointment. Checks are systematically recorded on the single central register of appointments and relevant evidence is kept in staff files.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.19 Provision of evidence is excellent. Information on the website is detailed and accurate and provides ease of access to students in selecting appropriate courses to meet their needs. The website has all information specified in the Standards.
- 5.20 The college provided all the information required by inspectors promptly.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Develop the excellent appraisal system currently in use to include part-time and short course teachers.

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 and observed registration in lessons. 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

Mrs Flora Bean	Lead Inspector
Mr Saul Hyman	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector