



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

COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, OXFORD

Full Name of College	College of International Education, Oxford
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Co-Principals	Mr John Hudson Mr Luke Murgatroyd
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Age Range	9-18+
Total No. of students	238
Numbers by Age	9-15: 26 16-18: 26 19+: 186
Numbers by Type of Course	EFL only: 238
Inspection dates	29th – 31st August 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language colleges. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the college's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and English language colleges.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Standards for private colleges;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations to colleges 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. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 The College of International Education (CIE) combines the roles of tutorial college, language college and college of further education for both UK and international students from nine years of age to mature students. Founded by its present proprietors in central Oxford in 1974, it is a company limited by shares. CIE is a subsidiary of United Travel Study Service (UK) Limited and is affiliated to United Travel Study Service based in Japan. It aims to enable students from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds to achieve their academic and social potential. The college is owned and governed by a Japanese partnership. There are co-principals, one of whom is director of studies, as well as a financial manager, who reports regularly to the proprietor.
- 1.2 CIE provides English language courses for students from the UK, EU and the rest of Europe, as well as East Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere. In addition to the general English course, it provides a business English course and prepares students for International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and other language examinations. It caters for groups and individuals, including some bespoke courses, such as one for Spanish groups and Japanese groups, as well as a range of holiday revision courses. CIE is also accredited to provide a business foundation diploma, validated by Oxford Brookes University. Finally, it runs a range of language and academic courses for pupils of school age, including preparation for boarding schools and holiday revision courses. Because of the timing of the inspection in the academic vacation period, not all the courses could be directly inspected.
- 1.3 Numbers vary throughout the year, and are at a peak between June and early September. At the time of the inspection the college had 238 students on its roll, of whom 186 were over 19 years of age, 26 were between 16 and 18 years, and 26 were under 16. CIE provides accommodation for most students with host families approved by the college.
- 1.4 The college recruits students through a network of trusted agents, who operate the college's recruitment requirements on its behalf, as well as through direct application. The recruitment process includes an opportunity for applicants to identify any special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). None have been identified as needing support.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

2.(a) Executive Summary

	Section of the Standards	Grade awarded 1-4
3.	The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement	1 Exceeds Expectations
4.	Students' welfare, including health and safety	2 Meets Expectations
5.	The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	2 Meets Expectations

- 2.1 The quality of education is excellent because of the depth and breadth of course planning and high quality of teaching and learning. Assessment before and on enrolment ensure that students, including tier 4 students, are eligible and placed on appropriate courses. The courses are rigorously and broadly planned to fulfil the college's aim to balance academic success with personal and cultural development. The extra-curricular provision is a particular strength. Teaching is of a high quality because of a well qualified teaching force, well supported by effective observation, guidance and staff development. Assessment is accurate and effective in relation to individuals, although overall data is not gathered or critically analysed. Marking of examined courses is meticulous; that for general English is more uneven. The small size of groups and personal attention all students receive to a large extent overcomes the lack of formal systems to identify and support students with SEND. As a result, students of all ages make rapid progress, despite the relatively limited range of book and ICT resources and limited resources for the youngest pupils.
- 2.2 The quality of welfare, health and safety meet expectations. Rigorous attention is paid to health and safety. Procedures are carefully reviewed and the very few minor oversights identified during the notification period were quickly and effectively dealt with. Premises meet requirements overall, but the CIE building is barely adequate because it has insufficient toilet provision, and limited social and administrative space. The quality of pastoral care exceeds expectations. Excellent relationships prevail amongst students and between students and staff. Good arrangements exist for the safeguarding of students under 18, including pupils from 10 to 14 years of age. The provision of residential accommodation is satisfactory overall and has strong features in the good relationships and support for cultural and language development. However, occasionally twin bedrooms are too small.
- 2.3 Governance and management are good overall and have some excellent aspects. The owner has a clear strategic vision and exercises incisive oversight, which respects the educational autonomy of the principals. Broad and intelligent aims and objectives, effectively implemented, establish a clear sense of educational direction for all staff and students. Leadership has been scrupulous in complying with all the requirements for tier 4, for health and safety and for safeguarding. Management is

highly effective in the recruitment, retention, monitoring and support and development of staff. Development planning is appropriately informed by quality assurance, although this makes insufficient critical use of numerical data. The college is aware of a lack of rigour in the detailed recording and filing of documents and information.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

2.4 At the time of the inspection, the college met all the key requirements of the standards for private further education colleges and quality is good. **The college meets expectations for the quality of education.**

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Further improve standards and welfare by making greater use of the analysis of objective data to monitor and evaluate its quality and effectiveness.
2. Provide adequate washroom facilities and improve the space available for administration and recreation in the CIE premises.
3. Ensure that all twinned residential homestay accommodation is sufficiently spacious for comfort, study and privacy.
4. Make greater use of aggregated data to strengthen management's understanding of quality in relation to groups and the college as a whole.
5. Improve the storage and retrieval of documents and information.

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

3.(a) Assessment of learners prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 The initial assessment of students is good overall and meets expectations. Both students recruited through agents and those applying directly provide all the necessary information and evidence about their identity, nationality and prior educational experience. There are clearly explained English language requirements for all tier 4 students. Careful checks are made of the ability of students or their parents to finance their period of study. The college receives scanned versions of passports and other required documents, of which the originals are checked upon arrival. The college application form seeks detailed information about the students and their needs. However, because agents often send their own application material, not all the college's questions, such as whether a student has a special educational need, are answered.
- 3.2 Upon arrival, all students are interviewed and at this stage all are accurately assessed and placed in groups at appropriate levels. Students for the foundation business course also have their English assessed in case of any need for support. Teachers receive this information and use it effectively in the planning of early lessons, conducting a test at the end of the first week. Almost all students responding to the pre-inspection survey, as well as those interviewed during the inspection, agree that they received helpful information and guidance and were placed on the right courses. Consequently, very few drop out of the courses on which they enrol. Students report that they receive accurate advice and guidance from the agents and from the college website and staff.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.3 The quality of the curriculum is good and has some significant strengths. In particular, the planning and broad ethos of the curriculum, together with extensive enrichment activity both outside and within lessons closely match the college's aims.
- 3.4 The college's substantial range of language courses, including short and longer term courses in English language, both examined and non-examined, provides for a wide variety of students' needs and meets their long term educational and vocational aims. In addition, the college successfully plans for a range of one-off courses for organised groups. The sole academic course in foundation business fits the college's underlying portfolio of preparation for secondary and higher education in the UK. The information provided on the college website is a detailed and accurate reflection of the provision. Virtually all students complete the courses for which they were enrolled and many return for further study. All courses on offer to tier 4 students lead to qualifications which meet the definition of an approved course for the purposes of a study visa.

- 3.5 The planning of all courses is thorough and effective. The language courses are based on suitable course books to guarantee continuity in the intensive summer months when teacher turnover is higher than in the rest of the year. The pre-session work for younger pupils in preparation for UK schools is well suited to the needs of the full age range. All students under 16 are required to be in college every afternoon, when they undertake either further studies or take part in an interesting range of enrichment activities.
- 3.6 The foundation business course is meticulously planned and requires at least 15 weekly hours of study. It includes a required recognised English language test as part of the university entry requirement, marked internally and externally moderated. The planning of the group courses is meticulous and provides the opportunity for the group to develop their English through investigation and group work.
- 3.7 The range and variety of outside visits provide strong reinforcement to the core programmes. Full use is made of the educational and cultural opportunities offered in Oxford. Visits further afield include Bath, Brighton and London. Some such visits are built into the core language courses.
- 3.8 Arrangements for identifying needs for support in English are satisfactory. In the absence of a formal system for identifying or supporting students with SEND, other than self referral, individual attention in the small groups observed was sufficient to cater for any students who struggled, and this is the view of students interviewed. However, it does not guarantee that any specific difficulties, such as dyslexia, will be identified and supported.

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

- 3.9 Teaching and learning are excellent overall, so that almost invariably students are able to make rapid progress in line with their varying abilities, in accordance with the college's aims. The teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and well qualified to teach them. It is a strength that for the youngest students, the college has appointed staff with experience of working with primary children. The inevitable high turnover of teachers during the busy summer season mostly operates smoothly, because of the individual student profiles and lesson summaries maintained by teachers and handed over when they leave. However, this is a recent development and the process of handover has not always ensured that all new staff are fully familiar with them. Almost all lessons are thoroughly prepared and at their best well timed to maintain pace without leaving any students behind. They consistently vary the kinds of work to engage students fully. Moreover, the college's policy of having students taught by two different teachers for different topics in a day brings further variety to their experience. Students work enthusiastically both individually and in pairs and groups. They listen closely to their teachers and strive to do well. The provision of resources is adequate and relies heavily on photocopied sheets. The supplementary teachers' books are very successful in introducing ideas for activities, but the provision of ICT in the classroom is limited, as is library provision and provision of materials for the youngest students.

- 3.10 A strength of the many excellent lessons is that teachers are very effective at linking vocabulary, grammar and idiom to real life situations, developing students' understanding of the culture in which the language is rooted. They challenge argument and use imaginative approaches like dramatisation. Teachers have high expectations of work to be done at home, which ensures that what students learn in the day is consolidated and developed in the evening.
- 3.11 Teachers know their students very well and use that knowledge and the small class sizes effectively to support and challenge each individual student, including those who may be struggling. However, there is no systematic scheme for identifying and supporting any student that may have specific difficulties. End of week tests and, in the longer courses, six-weekly assessments enable language students to be placed in the groups best suited to their developing levels. The assessment of the foundation business course is rigorous. Detailed marking is used very effectively to correct, guide and instruct. Marking and correction of written language work is more uneven.

3.(d) Attainment and Progress

- 3.12 Overall attainment is high. In the one publicly certificated further education (FE) course, the foundation business course, virtually all students pass and in the most recent year most attained either credit or distinction. Similarly, students on the IELTS course consistently make at least good progress and all achieve their target levels. In the language courses, the college does not use its individual student level information to build up a picture of the rate of progress overall. However, in lessons students display good or rapid progress. They acquire and consolidate their vocabulary and grammar in a secure way and learn to use idiomatic as well as formal English successfully.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises (in line with expectations of educational institutions)

- 4.1 The college's arrangements for the health and safety of its students are good. The accommodation is adequate overall, despite weaknesses in relation to the main college site. Management is scrupulous in providing detailed policies for health and safety and takes thorough steps to make sure that all staff and pupils are properly inducted into the procedures. Risk assessments for the college building are conducted and monthly reviews carried out at staff meetings. Suitable risk assessments are carried out for all activities outside the college, with clear arrangements for staffing, first aid and emergencies, and signed off by a senior member of staff. Staff are especially careful to maintain proper supervision of students under the age of 16.
- 4.2 The college has a trained fire marshal and carries out frequent drills, taking account of the short stay of some students. Fire equipment is routinely serviced and tested and this is properly recorded in the log book. A recent fire risk assessment is being systematically followed up and actions noted in the report. The college has suitable policies and guidance on first aid and sufficient trained first aiders. Management have checked informally that other educational premises hired by the college have corresponding arrangements for health and safety and were quick to respond to inspectors' observation of the need for specific written assurance from the proprietors. This is now an established part of their procedure.
- 4.3 The main college premises are small and cramped, though in most respects adequate for the numbers of students present. Classrooms are of satisfactory size and adequately furnished. Administrative space is very limited and impedes the efficiency of important aspects of filing and record keeping. There is no room where sensitive telephone and face-to-face conversations can be conducted confidentially. The building is not suitable for access by students with mobility problems, and could not reasonably be adapted. There were no such students or staff using the premises at the time of inspection. Washrooms are adequately clean but insufficient for the number and age range of the pupils. One toilet is located on the route of the alternative fire exit. The alternative premises, including university colleges, are pleasant and generally suitably equipped.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 The students' registration and attendance records are accurate and meet requirements. Admission registers show a clear picture of whether necessary checks on students have been made, as well as a regularly updated record of their address and payment details. Proper arrangements for any repayment of fees are in place and carried out.

- 4.5 There is a suitable paper-based system for checking attendance and punctuality. The class registers are not always taken into the classroom, creating a delay in getting information to management. Management was already working on the improvement of the system before notification of the inspection. Information on the database is consistently accurate. The database is used effectively to monitor individual attendance and any students with attendance problems are warned and, where necessary, reported to UKBA in accordance with the requirements. However, the database is not used as a critical tool to monitor the attendance and punctuality of groups of students and in the college as a whole.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.6 Pastoral support for students is excellent, and fulfils the aims of the college. Virtually all students responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that relationships with staff and amongst students are positive. This coincides with comments made to inspectors and observation in class. The common point of contact is the accommodation and welfare officer, and students are also provided the number of an outside counsellor they can consult. Many students say they can also contact one of the principals. Outside the summer period all students have tutors and a weekly tutorial system, which the management is considering applying in a modified form to the intensive summer period. Staff are approachable and many give their time willingly to students. The welfare officer keeps in close contact with parents and guardians, especially in relation to students under 16. The use of primary experienced teachers for these latter pupils makes an important contribution to their sense of security. The welfare officer helps students with any problems and is contactable at any time.
- 4.7 The clear and reasonable policy on behaviour and sanctions is well understood and behaviour during and between sessions is generally good. Students report that they feel they are treated equally and fairly and that members of staff are interested in them as people. The college makes clear to students and to staff that it does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment, and makes sure that students are aware of the policy through their handbook and associated documentation. The college is registered with local surgeries and so is able to support students in choosing appropriate medical support.
- 4.8 The college is aware of and sensitive to the differences of culture and faith, and an atmosphere of tolerance prevails among students.
- 4.9 Particular care is taken in relation to pupils under 16 years of age. For example, a clear curfew policy ensures that all are in their homestays by an appropriate hour for their ages. They are supervised throughout the college day and escorted between college premises and between the college and their accommodation.
- 4.10 Few students require specific career guidance but the college brings in an experienced adviser to provide guidance on higher education for any who require it.

4.(d) Child protection

- 4.11 The college's arrangements for child protection are good. Management have gone out of their way to ensure that all staff are fully familiar with safeguarding requirements through online safeguarding training and discussion at staff meetings. There is a named safeguarding person and deputy with up-to-date training and good links to the local child safeguarding board. Guidance to staff is comprehensive. Teachers have a very good understanding of the relevant issues. The college has good links with social services and routinely informs the county accommodation officer if a student under 16 is in homestay for more than 28 days. A weakness in the systems for filing has made it difficult to demonstrate compliance in every case. The college is now strengthening its systems to prevent any recurrence of this lapse. All staff and relevant host families with students under 18 are subject to enhanced checks through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.12 Overall the provision of residential accommodation meets expectations. The great majority of students say they get on well with their hosts. The college has clear expectations of the homes and families, and provides good guidance. All residential accommodation for students under 18 are visited and registered by social services. The accommodation officer and assistant visit all homes before they are accepted and revisit at least every two years. Students are included in family meals and often on weekend trips, so increasing their experience of the UK and its life and culture. Families are fully aware of their responsibility to help develop students' English. There are rigorous communications to ensure that all students, especially the youngest get safely to and from college. Despite the college's requirements, some families put students in twin bedrooms too cramped for the purpose, although in every case this had resulted from the wishes of the students themselves. However, the college has now realised that it has not been strict enough about ensuring that its expectations about sharing and bedroom size are always followed, and is planning to remedy this. The college is responsive to its surveys of students and responds to problems that arise and has changed hosts in cases where students or host families have not been happy together.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

5.1 The college is excellently governed by its proprietor, on behalf of the company. The proprietor is passionately committed to the college and its educational ethos and quality, and has a strong insight into its workings. The company balances proper oversight against the need to respect the autonomy and initiative of the principals very well. Consequently, the owner's clear strategic and financial vision complements the educational priorities of the college leadership. The company ensures that the college is on a sound financial footing and receives weekly reports from its local finance manager in addition to the regular management accounts. The company is scrupulous in reviewing the effectiveness with which all policies, including those for safeguarding, are in place and effectively implemented. Oversight is not sufficiently well supported by specific data about progress, attendance and students' views. A very good balance is struck between support and challenge. The college has all required licences and permissions.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

5.2 The leadership of the college is excellent and its management is good overall. The outstanding strength of the leadership is in the intelligent clarity, simplicity and humanity of its aims and objectives, with their emphasis on balance between academic achievement, human development and personal welfare and safety, all fulfilled to a high degree.

5.3 The leadership has been very effective in establishing a team of teachers well qualified in their subjects, with training in teaching and matched to the needs and ages of their students. They are very effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and in supporting all staff through extensive planned staff development. As a result, a good relationship exists between staff and management, which has achieved strong continuity over the year as a whole. They are effective in monitoring the quality of pastoral care, although they do not automatically discuss it at staff meetings. They are scrupulous in their attention to the safety and welfare of all students, and were quick to address the issues identified during the run-up to the inspection. However, their otherwise effective subject monitoring and documentary checking is not sufficiently supported by the use of hard data.

5.4 Management is effective in self-evaluation and in setting priorities through a good development plan, to which staff are able to contribute and which has made use of the outcome of lesson observation and student views. The management structure is uncomplicated and well understood by staff. The principals are aware that the storage and use of records is an area for improvement.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 The college's arrangements for quality assurance are good in most respects. The self-evaluation submitted before the inspection shows a generally good understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Management has a sound understanding of student views and responds promptly to any concerns identified by individuals. They obtain these views through surveys after the first week and at the end of the course. These are helpful for a general picture of academic and pastoral life but lack the detail to pinpoint specific strengths and weaknesses. All students' comments are discussed at management meetings, and actions taken reported to staff and the students themselves.
- 5.6 All teaching staff are subject to lesson observation by a member of the management team both at an early stage after appointment and every year subsequently. These are well recorded and used to guide personal improvement and development and to inform the college's improvement planning. The information from observation and student surveys informs course reviews. The college has a complaints procedure in line with the expected standards, including the appropriate records. The college is aware that it does not sufficiently recognise the value of consolidated data from student surveys, observations and course outcomes as a tool for quality assurance. Students responding to the pre-inspection survey almost without exception expressed approval and often strong approval of the education and care provided by the college, in tune with the judgements made by inspectors.

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

- 5.7 The college ensures that staff and volunteers are well qualified and suitable to work with young people. All staff employed and any volunteers and host families are subject to enhanced CRB checks before they begin working for the college. For any staff who have recently lived and worked overseas, suitable additional checks are made. The college maintains a suitable single central register of appointments.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.8 The provision of information meets expectations. That provided for students and parents or guardians on the website is clear, detailed and accurate. The information provided is clear and understandable. All the necessary information about the college and its courses and policies are available. They are supplemented by very good staff and student handbooks. Good information is sent to parents and guardians at regular intervals. Induction briefings for both staff and students are comprehensive.
- 5.9 The college fully co-operated with the inspection process and provided all the required information both before and during the inspection. They have appropriate plans to distribute the report to students, parents and guardians.

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 with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mr Tony Hubbard	Lead Inspector
Mr David Straughan	Team Inspector