



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

MONITORING VISIT

OXFORD HOUSE COLLEGE

Full Name	Oxford House College
Address	Oxford House College, 24 Great Chapel Street, London, W1F 8FS
Telephone Number	020 7580 9785
Email Address	t.matthew@oxfordhousegroup.com
Website	www.oxfordhousecollege.co.uk
Principal	Mr Tim Matthew
Proprietor	Larkspur (Oxford) Limited
Age Range	11+
Total number of students	315
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 0 16-17: 5 18+: 310 EFL only: 281 FE only: 30 EFL and FE: 4
Inspection date	21 October 2014

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 Oxford House College is an English language provider with centres in central London, Richmond, Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon. Founded in 1974, it was acquired by Larkspur (Oxford) Limited in 2010. The company directs the college through an appointed board of governors. Leadership of the group is provided by the principal, who is based at the central London centre. A centre manager in each location is responsible for day-to-day management. The academic manager, based in Oxford, is responsible for curriculum and quality of teaching throughout the group. The principal and academic manager make regular visits to the other centres. The college mission is to provide a quality learning experience in a friendly, caring and professional learning environment and to ensure that all students gain the maximum enjoyment and benefit from their course.
- 1.2 The Richmond centre does not fall within the scope of the inspection. The three centres inspected offer general English courses and a range of courses preparing students for external examinations such as the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) and Cambridge English examinations. During the summer, numbers of younger students increase significantly, particularly in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Oxford and Stratford centres take students as young as age 11 in closed groups, while the central London centre takes students from 13 years of age in closed groups. Independent students aged over 16 are integrated into adult classes. The college in central London is a teacher training centre offering individually designed professional development courses for overseas teachers as well as the Cambridge certificate and diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA and DELTA). Selection for the Cambridge training courses is made according to awarding organisation requirements.
- 1.3 Enrolment is continuous throughout the year and the majority of students enrol independently although the college does recruit through a network of agents in 26 different countries. At the time of the monitoring visit there are 315 students enrolled, of whom 38 are attending teacher training courses. The remainder are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students come from a wide range of countries, with significant numbers from Japan, Brazil, Spain, Turkey and the UK (teacher trainees). The majority of students are female; five are aged under 18 years. No student is identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 The college was last inspected on 1 October 2013 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was found to meet expectations. The recommendations from the previous report are:
- Extend the recording and follow up of goal setting on tutorial forms to formally monitor the achievement of targets.
 - Ensure consistently effective communications with peers in the organisation to support the sharing of best practice.

- Implement a process of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning which considers the views of all staff and leads to an improvement action plan which measures performance.
- Make changes to the system for recording accommodation complaints to allow for the easy and meaningful retrieval of data to support improvement planning.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 1 October 2013 the college was found to meet 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. The curriculum is well designed to meet students' needs and fulfil Home Office requirements. Quality of teaching is high, with knowledgeable teachers making effective use of class time. Students are engaged and progress rapidly. Excellent progress has been made towards the recommendation regarding goal setting in tutorials. Assessment methods are good and detailed feedback supports improvement. Attainment is very good.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. The college has very effective health and safety procedures, which are consistently implemented. Premises are properly maintained, secure and well suited to their use. Registration and attendance of students is accurate and absence monitoring procedures are effective. There are appropriate arrangements in place for reporting to the Home Office. Good pastoral support is provided and relationships within the college are positive. There are appropriate arrangements for safeguarding students aged under 18.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The board of governors is closely involved with the college and provides very effective oversight, maintaining positive relationships with senior leadership. Excellent progress has been made with regard to the recommendation to ensure effective communications between peers in the organisation. Quality assurance systems are very effective. Good progress has been made against the recommendation on self evaluation and quality improvement planning. An excellent process for lesson observations supports teacher development and staff have good access to training both from the London centre and externally. Students have a range of means for sharing their views on provision, but the college does not gather responses from all students regarding overall quality of accommodation.

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:
- Extend the recording and follow up of goal setting on tutorial forms to formally monitor the achievement of targets
- 3.3 Progress against this recommendation is excellent. Tutorial forms have been developed for the four-weekly tutorials to include reference to the outcomes of previous meetings. Negotiated targets are set between the student and teacher and both the student and the centre retain a copy. The centre copy stays with the student's file so that teacher can access it to inform future lesson planning and ensure students are aware of their progress. This arrangement also supports continuity between teachers when the student moves to a different class. Comprehensive feedback is given to the students informally and formally, orally and in writing, to enable all parties to set and monitor realistic achievement targets.
- 3.4 Courses fulfil Home Office requirements for students on Tier 4 visas. The curriculum is recently enhanced and meets the needs of students in all centres. It is mapped to the Council of Europe Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and is supported by excellent schemes of work and lesson plans. General English programmes are course book-based, but include a substantial proportion of supplementary material selected with regard to the particular group. In specialist classes, such as the conversation and pronunciation option, the curriculum is negotiated with students to reflect their interests. Methods of assessment are very effective and students are provided with comprehensive feedback for further development. Marking of written work has improved to consistently include constructive feedback, and teachers use outcomes of marking to inform planning.
- 3.5 Teaching is excellent. Well qualified and experienced teachers demonstrate high level subject understanding and skills. Lessons are very well planned to meet the needs of all learners through a good range of motivating, enjoyable activities that make effective use of time. Students have well-developed learning skills and are very engaged. Classroom resources are adequate and are used effectively, but there is little use of information technology. Where teaching is less successful, it is mainly due to insufficient planning for the differing ability levels within the class.
- 3.6 The majority of students progress rapidly. Very few EFL students take external examinations, but achievement as measured by fulfilment of personal targets and progress through levels is very good. Results in teacher training courses are good overall with excellent results in CELTA. In interviews, students expressed strong satisfaction with academic provision.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 Arrangements for ensuring health and safety continue to be very effective. Senior managers make regular audits of safety checks, which are up-to-date and well recorded. Students and staff demonstrate appropriate awareness of safety procedures. The premises of all centres are secure, fit-for purpose and well maintained, providing good environments for teaching and learning.
- 4.3 Student registration and attendance is accurately recorded on the college database. Effective attendance monitoring is completed centrally by a designated compliance officer. Suitable procedures for reporting to the Home Office are in place. Absence is well addressed, resulting in good attendance across the centres.
- 4.4 Pastoral support is good: students can access help on personal issues from a range of staff and know who to approach with a problem. In interviews they confirmed that there are positive relationships between staff and students and among students. Inspectors agree. Students also expressed satisfaction with the programme of social activities at each centre.
- 4.5 Suitable arrangements are in place for safeguarding students aged under 18. Training has been delivered to all staff, and in interviews most were very clear about procedures. A small minority of staff are not clear about the procedures. Delivery of a refresher course is planned to follow completion of inter-agency training by relevant managers. Data and Barring Service (DBS) or equivalent checks have been completed on all college staff and on the home stay hosts accommodating young learners.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Ensure consistently effective communications with peers in the organisation to support the sharing of best practice.
 - Implement a process of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning which considers the views of all staff and leads to an improvement action plan which measures performance.
 - Make changes to the system for recording accommodation complaints to allow for the easy and meaningful retrieval of data to support improvement planning.
- 5.3 Excellent progress has been made against the first recommendation. The college has very good systems in place for ensuring good communication with peers in the organisation. Daily and weekly reports, as well as monthly senior staff meetings arranged at different sites, ensure a collaborative approach. The principal makes monthly visits to Stratford and Oxford to monitor provision and maintain relationships with local staff. Open communication ensures consistency of standards across the colleges. Sharing of good practice between staff in different centres has been promoted by centralised training of those in management and administration positions. The academic manager works across all centres to support high academic standards.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made in respect of the second recommendation. Self evaluation draws upon the views of all staff taken through minuted weekly meetings at each centre. The self evaluation and development plan are circulated to staff for discussion and changes are made as appropriate. Analysis of data has resulted in setting of measurable targets in sections of the development plan and all actions have review or completion dates.
- 5.5 Very effective oversight of the college is reflected in the good quality of provision. Members of the board of governors are in regular communication with senior leadership and play an active role in college development. Relationships between the board and senior leadership are positive
- 5.6 Good progress has been made towards the third recommendation. The college has developed a suitable electronic database in which all accommodation complaints are recorded in detail. Meaningful retrieval of information and data is effective in identifying recurring issues and in ensuring that complaints are resolved to the student's satisfaction. However, the college does not actively seek the views of all students regarding the overall quality of their accommodation and how well homestays enhance their learning experience.

- 5.7 Good quality assurance procedures are in place and are implemented effectively to drive improvement. The college seeks feedback from students through a range of means, including written evaluations and focus groups. Student views are now collated in action plans and responded to promptly. There is a suitable complaints procedure with recourse to an external adjudicator
- 5.8 The college has excellent procedures for formal lesson observations, which are conducted by very experienced staff and result in exceptionally high quality reports with clear grading against a range of appropriate criteria. All reports include points for development and these are very well targeted in relation to the level of experience of teacher observed. Teachers confirm that these are followed up informally by the observer and formally in appraisal. The college offers very good access to continuing professional development through the central London Centre and supports its initially qualified teachers to take the DELTA. Staff are also encouraged to attend external activities.
- 5.9 The college participates in a fee protection scheme.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has improved the good quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure the college actively seeks the views of all students regarding the overall quality of their accommodation and how well homestay enhances their learning experience.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and teachers 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, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

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