



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

**OXFORD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE**

**(5027233)**

Full Name	<b>Oxford International College</b>
Address	1 London Place, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 1BD
Telephone Number	01865 203988
Email Address	info@oxcoll.com
Website	www.oxcoll.com
Principal	Mrs Kim Terrar
Director/Proprietor	Dr.Mario Peters
Age Range	15+
Total number of students	101
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 2 16 – 18 53 18+: 46 FE only: 101
Inspection dates	<b>9 – 11 February 2016</b>

## 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 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.

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Oxford International College Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. Established in 2002 the college has relocated into new premises three times, most recently in August 2013 into larger rebuilt leased accommodation near Oxford city centre. The college also has three licensed schools in China and Switzerland. It is led by a senior leadership team and governed by the director of the company who co-owns it.
- 1.2 The aim of the college is to prepare students between the ages of 14 and 21 for entry into higher education, through a curriculum consisting of a wide range of subjects offered at GCSE and A-level. The majority of teaching is by means of one to one tutorials or small groups although the college is increasingly developing larger groups in popular subjects.
- 1.3 There are currently 101 students enrolled of whom 44 are female and 57 male. The majority of students are from South East Asia and the UK. A minority is from European Union (EU) countries, the Middle East and Russia, and all of these students, including those from South East Asia, have English as an additional language (EAL). The college reports that four students have been assessed to have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 The college confirms student suitability prior to enrolment by means of an application form, assessment and interview. Student accommodation is provided for the majority of students in a new purpose-built hall of residence, although for some younger students there are homestay arrangements with local families.
- 1.5 The college received an extended monitoring visit on 18 March 2015, 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. Courses fully meet the aims of the college in preparing students for university entry. Initial assessment is highly effective in placing students on courses appropriate to their aspirations and abilities. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in providing personal tuition. Recent changes in provision have resulted in larger groups, which require different teaching strategies. Most teachers have less experience of this style of teaching. Assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and achievement. Excellent progress has been made in consolidation of information on student performance. The development of an individualised learning plan (ILP) has enabled students to monitor their progress and manage their performance effectively. Student attainment and progress are excellent; success rates are high compared with national benchmarks and most students progress to higher education. Students are closely monitored and introduction of frequent mock tests has increased students' confidence in exams. Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Arrangements to promote welfare, health, safety and security of students and staff are excellent. Policies for fire safety, and first aid are effectively implemented. The premises are regularly monitored for health and safety and risk assessments are carried out, records are maintained centrally and actions followed up promptly. Staff are appropriately trained. Premises are excellent, fit for purpose and well maintained. Systems to record and monitor admissions and attendance are effective and meet Home Office requirements. Safeguarding of students aged under-18 is excellent. The college has highly effective safeguarding policies. All staff receive Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, safeguarding training and are informed of actions to take in the event of an incident. The residential accommodation is excellent, very well managed and located a short distance from the college. This provides a safe and well supported environment helping students prepare for independent living before university.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Oversight is highly effective. Relationships between the proprietor, senior managers and staff are good. Communication is effective and managers are very supportive of staff. The senior leadership team (SLT) provides a detailed and comprehensive range of policies which are effective in directing the college's activities. Good progress has been made reinforcing the monitoring of the college's performance through regular reporting against key indicators. There are effective strategic developments in place to improve staffing and support planned growth. The college has strong mechanisms for quality assurance, which result in improvement. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable in their subjects, but only a small minority have

teaching qualifications. Opportunities for sharing good practice or developing teaching skills are not fully exploited. Staff retention is high.

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

#### **3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival**

- 3.1 The college has a clear statement of its educational aims and purpose set out in an effective curriculum policy. This is well supported by a robust development plan, academic plans and schemes of work. The aims of the college are communicated well and are shared by all staff resulting in a positive learning experience for all students.
- 3.2 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival is excellent. The college undertakes accurate assessment of students' suitability on application, which is confirmed on commencement of their studies. Each student is interviewed and comprehensive information, advice and guidance is provided to ensure that the student is following a course appropriate to their aspirations and abilities and is able to learn and progress. Clear criteria for entry to the college are set for English language ability and prior academic achievement.
- 3.3 Information from initial assessment is used effectively by tutors to plan their study programme providing individual support where necessary. Support for students in using Standard English is excellent. Comprehensive and flexible language support is offered to all students who require it. Subject teachers support the use of English effectively and provide written feedback on assignments. Students who have been identified as having learning difficulties receive appropriate support.
- 3.4 Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.5 Course provision and curriculum are excellent. Courses are well matched to students' needs for progression to higher education and are designed to enable students to learn well and make good progress. In determining the student's programme of study, college staff confirm that specific qualifications and subjects are acceptable to universities and for entry to individual courses.
- 3.6 Courses are accurately described on the college website and information is maintained well and updated regularly. Additional course brochures and the college prospectus enable prospective students to make an informed choice of college and course of study.
- 3.7 The completion rate is very high and most students complete the course for which they initially enrolled.

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

- 3.8 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is good. Students make good progress and develop the skills and understanding necessary to be successful in external examinations.
- 3.9 All teaching staff are highly qualified academically and have excellent subject knowledge. Teachers use suitable activities to promote interest, and students demonstrate application and perseverance in their studies. Classes are well planned to ensure that students make good progress and achieve. Planning for individual tutorials or teaching in small groups is most effective. Tutors demonstrate a good understanding of prior attainments, aspirations and cultural needs of students, incorporating these in their planning. Teaching is well supported by good classroom accommodation, modern laboratory facilities and sufficient teaching resources.
- 3.10 A large majority of teaching is at least good with examples of excellence. Traditionally the college's teaching has been through successful one-to-one tutorials. Recent collaborative partnership with other providers has resulted in an increase of teaching in groups, demanding different teaching strategies. Many of the tutors have less experience of this style of teaching; consequently, a minority of the work in larger groups is less effective. The impact of these new developments has not been entirely appreciated and the college has not fully responded to the challenges of teaching larger groups of students.
- 3.11 Most teachers use assessment effectively to monitor progress and achievement. In the large majority of lessons, assessment is continuous, with learning checked at key points and good feedback provided to support improvement, consolidate understanding and enhance student confidence. In the less effective lessons teachers miss opportunities to check learning and progress regularly.
- 3.12 The different sources of information on student performance and assessments are consolidated and presented in a coherent format. This is used well as an individualised learning plan (ILP) to set targets and enables students to monitor their own progress more easily. The introduction of weekly group tutorials has been used very effectively to support students in managing their own performance and increasing their participation. Students report that this has improved their awareness of how well they are doing.
- 3.13 Students are enthusiastic about their work at college and have a positive attitude towards their learning, appreciating the support provided by their teachers.

### **3.(d) Attainment and progress**

- 3.14 Attainment and progress are excellent. Student learning is very good, success rates are high compared with national benchmarks and most students progress to higher education.

- 3.15 Students receive regular testing and assessment opportunities. Effective feedback is provided and outcomes are closely monitored by group tutors, the director of studies and principal. In consequence, students are aware of what actions they need to take in order to improve. The introduction of frequent mock test papers at key points during the academic year has been highly effective in improving students' examination skills and increasing their confidence.

## **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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

- 4.1 Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and security of staff and students are excellent, all Key Standards continue to be met. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Health and safety checks, including fire safety equipment, are carried out weekly and records are maintained centrally. Actions required are followed up promptly. Risk assessments for fire, general and off-site activities are effective and are conducted regularly. Staff and students are well briefed during induction and are fully aware of their responsibilities for health and safety.
- 4.2 Staff are trained appropriately in first aid, fire prevention and health and safety. Signage is good and qualified staff are identified on notices throughout the college buildings. Health and safety, and first aid policies are communicated to students and staff at induction and accurate records are maintained of incidents and fire evacuation drills.
- 4.3 The premises are excellent; they are fit for purpose and are maintained in good order. Security arrangements are good, both for the college and hall of residence. Arrangements for access allow all students, including those who have disabilities, to enter and leave in safety. Washroom facilities are adequate for the numbers of staff and students. Facilities for the preparation, serving and consumption of food are maintained to a high standard of hygiene and are closely monitored. Classrooms are light, well-ventilated, appropriately insulated for sound and maintained at a comfortable temperature. All rooms are kept in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. Furniture and fittings are appropriate for the needs of the staff and students. Maintenance and decoration are to a high standard.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. Records for admission and attendance are accurate and meticulously maintained; full and detailed information is maintained in student files and on a management information system. This allows the production of reports enabling managers to monitor levels of attendance easily. Students appreciate the need for punctuality and good attendance; absence and lateness are followed up promptly. Student attendance in residence is accurately recorded and leave is allowed only by parental approval. Attendance rates are high. Effective systems are in place for reporting to the Home Office where a student under Tier 4 arrangements fails to enrol or does not meet attendance requirements.
- 4.5 There is a clear fees policy, which specifies the terms under which fees are collected and refunds made. The college also has scholarships and a bursary scheme in cases where there is financial hardship. Students are covered by a suitable fee protection scheme.

**4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.6 Pastoral and personal support is excellent; there are effective arrangements to provide support and guidance on personal and academic matters. Tutors and support staff are readily available to assist with a range of issues. The introduction of a new group tutorial system ensures that personal and academic matters of concern are identified at an early stage. Students appreciate the time and effort which staff take in order to make them feel at ease and enjoy their time at college. Relationships between staff and students and between students are good and are based on a culture of mutual respect. This culture is reinforced through suitable policies to promote equality and diversity and prevent bullying and harassment.
- 4.7 All students follow a comprehensive induction programme which provides effective preparation for their academic studies and outlines the college's requirements. Students meet the principal for an in-depth discussion on career aspirations, subjects of study and grades. Students find this helpful to ensure that they are placed on the most appropriate course. Further opportunities are provided for discussion with experienced staff for careers advice and guidance.
- 4.8 The college has a well-developed social programme including a range of visits, cultural activities and enrichment, which affords good preparation for progression to university. Students also have access to sports and leisure facilities locally and are eligible to be members of the Oxford Union.
- 4.9 Students' personal and welfare needs are very well met.

**4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s**

- 4.10 Child protection is excellent; the management of all aspects of safeguarding is effective. The college has in place all appropriate documents and procedures to support the safeguarding of under 18s, which are reviewed regularly. All necessary arrangements are made for appropriate checks on college staff prior to appointment and a single central record is kept of all checks made. There is a highly effective safeguarding policy which is communicated to staff and students through induction, staff and student handbooks and the college website. Clear guidance is provided on how to respond to incidents within the college and liaise with external agencies where appropriate. This is supplemented by a separate, effective E- safety policy, which provides guidance for the use of information technology systems and devices at the college. All staff have received suitable training in safeguarding at a level appropriate to their role at college. All newly appointed staff are required to undertake the training and provision is made for regular updating, staff are also required to undertake anti-radicalisation training. Staff attendance on training events is planned, monitored rigorously and records kept up to date, consequently they demonstrate good awareness of what to do.

**4.(e) Residential accommodation**

- 4.11 Residential accommodation is excellent. The college leases new, high quality, purpose built student residential accommodation a short distance from the college. This provides for the vast majority of existing students. A very small number of younger students are placed in homestay accommodation with local families. All of these have a long-established relationship with the college and all adult members of the family have undertaken enhanced DBS checks. Accommodation is registered in accordance with national requirements.
- 4.12 The accommodation is extremely well managed through senior managers, the student services manager, house parents and wardens. The hall of residence is a secure site with security staff available throughout the night. House parents and wardens are resident on site. Health and safety, security and first aid are highly visible and well managed. The house parent role provides excellent supervision for students to ensure that they can have a safe and comfortable, well- supported residential experience. Key roles are held by qualified and experienced staff, who provide excellent support on personal matters.
- 4.13 The hall of residence affords opportunities for self-catering but provision is made for meals at the college including breakfast, lunch and evening meals and at weekends. Students recognise the value of opportunities for the development of skills for independent living in preparation for university life.
- 4.14 There is effective, frequent communication between the local authority, social services and college.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are excellent. The proprietor provides effective oversight of the college and plays an active and visible role in leadership and management of the college, addressing its aims and providing clear educational direction. His responsibilities for educational standards are well understood and effectively discharged through robust financial planning and appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.2 The proprietor provides highly effective leadership for the strategic development of the college and with the senior leadership team has reinforced the monitoring function through clear identification of key performance indicators. Appointment of an information system manager has enabled the production of regular management reports. These allow the SLT to accurately monitor the college's performance and form the basis of clearly defined action plans, which lead to priorities for improvement.
- 5.3 The strategic decision to appoint more contracted teaching staff has been successful in creating a more stable staffing structure in support of planned growth. This has been matched by appropriate investment in accommodation and facilities in the form of science laboratories and teaching resources.
- 5.4 Responsibilities for safeguarding, health and safety are effectively discharged. The proprietor ensures that all legal permissions required by the college are in place and monitored closely to confirm compliance and reflect any changes in legislation which impact on the college. Statutory duties for students under 18 are met fully.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.5 Leadership and management are excellent. Management structures are very effective; all staff have clear job descriptions and fully understand their roles and responsibilities, supporting the aims and educational direction of the college. Relationships between the proprietor and senior managers are excellent and highly effective in providing leadership and direction for the college. Communication between staff and managers is good; staff report that management is supportive and responsive to feedback.
- 5.6 The senior leadership team provides highly appropriate policies which are fully implemented, actively monitored for effectiveness and reviewed regularly. The college has a comprehensive range of policies to direct its activities, which are communicated effectively to students and staff through student and tutor handbooks and the college's website.
- 5.7 Managers have a good awareness of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. The senior leadership team conducts a rigorous process of self-

evaluation, to which all staff contribute. This is effective in identifying strengths and areas for development. Priorities are identified in an action plan, through which accountabilities and timescales are set. The action plan is monitored through regular SLT meetings and outcomes are incorporated in the strategic development plan.

- 5.8 The college leadership is very effective in providing clear educational direction and establishing an ethos, which is supported by a comprehensive development plan. This is illustrated by the quality of educational provision and the care and support of students. All students are known to senior staff, with whom they have regular meetings to review their progress and ensure that they are achieving their objectives for higher level study.
- 5.9 The college is very successful in recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff. Appropriate training is provided in support of their role to meet student needs including welfare, health and safety, and safeguarding.

### **5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.10 Quality assurance is excellent. There is a comprehensive quality assurance policy, which identifies the critical elements in managing and improving the college's performance. Links with essential, related policies and procedures are made explicit. The college has effective quality assurance mechanisms in place, which are used well to improve the quality of provision.
- 5.11 Opportunities provided for staff and student feedback are good. Information is clearly documented and used effectively to make adjustments to college provision or facilities. Students report that the college has placed them on the right course and they are well informed of the progress they are making. They perceive that the college is a safe and secure environment and that relationships between tutors and students and among students are positive. They have reflected that the opportunities for socialising outside college are limited; the college has addressed this successfully through development of social activities in collaboration with similar colleges in the city.
- 5.12 Information on student performance is used effectively. The recent appointment of a manager for academic assessment with specific responsibility for collection and analysis of student achievement data is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards by strengthening the use of external examination data and information from internal assessment. Introduction of the group tutorial structure and development of ILPs has had a strong impact in developing students' independence in monitoring their own progress and managing their performance.
- 5.13 There is a highly effective process by which matters of concern are drawn to the attention of management. Both informal and formal feedback is documented and raised in the appropriate forum. Records are kept of the actions taken. There is an effective complaints policy, details of which are given on the college website. Provision is made for written records to be kept and the stage at which resolution

was achieved. Should the complaint not be resolved through internal processes, there is the opportunity for external independent arbitration.

- 5.14 There is an appropriate appraisal strategy, which makes good use of the students' achievement data alongside effective feedback from teaching observation. Appraisal is linked effectively to staff development. Training which meets individual and college needs is well supported by the college, but there are few opportunities for sharing good practice or developing teaching skills through peer observation.

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

- 5.15 Staff recruitment is excellent; the college attracts highly qualified staff from the university and similar colleges within Oxford. Staff retention is high.
- 5.16 There are highly effective procedures for the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff. The processes are adhered to rigorously. Detailed records are maintained on staff files. Information is summarised effectively, showing completion of all checks made on the single central record. Staff files and the central record are updated regularly.
- 5.17 Prospective staff are interviewed by senior management of the college. Prior to appointment, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their identity and right to work in the UK. All prospective staff and volunteers undergo enhanced DBS checks and a barred list check. Qualifications and employment history are verified and two references are taken up. All teaching staff have good academic qualifications but only a small minority have teaching qualifications.

#### **5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.18 Provision of information is excellent. All standards for the provision of information are fully met. Comprehensive information is available on the college's website. It is sufficient for prospective students and parents to make an informed choice of college and programme of study. Additional information is provided in the college prospectus and supplemented by leaflets for specific courses and activities provided.
- 5.19 The college provided all the information requested by inspectors.

## 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 a clear institutional response to the challenges presented by the new courses to improve provision for students studying in larger groups.
- Provide further opportunities for the development of teaching skills and sharing good practice to improve the learning experience for students in groups.

## 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. 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

Mr Peter Wood	Lead Inspector
Mrs Sue Arnold	Team Inspector
Mrs Linda Ross	Team Inspector