



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

ST CLARE'S OXFORD PFE

(Charity 294058)

Full Name	St Clare's Oxford PFE	
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Email Address	duncan.reith@stclares.ac.uk	
Website	www.stclares.ac.uk	
Principal	Mr Duncan Reith	
Proprietor	Mr Jens Tholstrup	
Age Range	16+	
Total number of students	92	
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 17:	10
	18+:	82
	FE only:	23
	EFL only:	31
	EFL and FE:	38
Inspection date	13 December 2022	

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 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.

An extended monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the quality 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. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Established in 1953, St Clare's Oxford is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It comprises two different colleges: an International Baccalaureate College and an International College (IC), both situated in Oxford. Its mission is to advance international education and understanding.
- 1.2 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 and the English language teaching operations in both colleges. The vice principal pastoral oversees safeguarding, pastoral care and boarding in both colleges.
- 1.3 The focus of this inspection is the provision in the IC. The college offers a university undergraduate programme and a university foundation programme. 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.
- 1.4 In addition, the IC offers an English plus academic subjects programme, and English language courses for examinations. All English language courses have five entry points during the year. The college also offers the Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DELTA) and during the summer months, a large English language summer programme.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection, 92 students were enrolled. The large majority of students are female. Most students are aged over 18 and speak English as an additional language. The largest nationality groups represented by the current students are the Netherlands, the United States, and Germany. Twelve students are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 1.6 This monitoring visit has been extended due to a change of principal. For this reason, Sections 5 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.
- 1.7 The college was previously inspected on 28 – 30 September 2021 when it was judged to exceed expectations. The recommendation from the previous report is:
 - Develop the excellent appraisal system currently in use to include part-time and short course teachers.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 28 – 30 September 2021, the college was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The curriculum very effectively supports students in developing the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their educational goals. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. The quality of teaching is excellent. Students benefit from highly qualified and experienced teachers who use their subject expertise to plan stimulating and challenging lessons. As a result, students are highly motivated, focused and enthusiastic. Teachers are highly effective in checking for understanding. They provide high quality feedback on students' written work, which very effectively supports improvement. Students make excellent progress over time from their starting points.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The college implements excellent arrangements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Students have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency. Students benefit from high quality, modern and well-maintained premises that support learning very well. The college keeps accurate admissions and attendance registers. Overall attendance rates are high. Staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student visas. Pastoral support is excellent. Very effective systems are in place for monitoring student wellbeing and providing prompt, personalised support when required. Safeguarding arrangements for students under 18 are excellent. There are very effective safeguarding reporting and recording arrangements in place to ensure any concerns are monitored appropriately and the necessary actions taken.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Governors provide very effective support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that high standards of education and care are maintained. Governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for educational standards, safeguarding, health and safety, and financial planning. Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders and managers understand their roles and responsibilities and provide very clear educational direction. Leaders are very effective in self-evaluation. They understand the strengths of the college and have clear and ambitious plans to develop further. Quality assurance arrangements are good. A range of effective mechanisms are in place to collect, evaluate and respond to students' views. Data on students' overall progress during their course is not currently centralised, limiting managers' ability to easily monitor and respond to trends in students' overall progression. Staff recruitment arrangements are excellent. Leaders and managers have very effective arrangements in place to ensure all the necessary suitability checks on staff have been completed prior to their appointment. Provision of information is excellent.

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 quality of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Courses offered through the IC are very well aligned to the college's mission and educational purpose. The curriculum very effectively supports students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their educational goals. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.3 The quality of teaching is excellent. Students benefit from highly qualified and experienced teachers who use their subject expertise to plan challenging lessons. Stimulating subject matter contributes to high levels of student participation. Students are highly motivated, focused and enthusiastic. They are keen to offer their views and opinions. They engage very effectively in the excellent range of learning activities, discussions and debates their teachers incorporate into lessons. As a result, students make excellent progress in lessons.
- 3.4 Teachers are highly effective in checking for understanding. They use questioning very effectively to extend students' thinking and to identify and correct any misconceptions. Teachers provide high quality feedback on students' written work, which very effectively supports improvement. Students value the very high level of personal support they receive through regular academic tutorials. This ensures that students know how they are progressing and understand what they need to prioritise to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills further.
- 3.5 Progress and attainment are excellent. Students make excellent progress over time from their starting points. Students on English language programmes develop their applied speaking, listening, reading and writing skills very well. Students on the university foundation programme successfully progress to higher level study at their university of choice.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The college implements excellent arrangements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Managers effectively implement comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures. First aid and firefighting equipment are regularly serviced and maintained. A sufficient number of staff are trained in first aid and as fire marshals. Effective arrangements are in place to assess and manage the risks relating to external trips and visits.
- 4.3 Managers consult regularly with students to obtain their views on safety, welfare and the quality and maintenance of the premises. Managers deliver useful safety briefings to students to develop their understanding of local risks and how to stay safe. Students have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency. They confirmed to inspectors that they feel safe at college.
- 4.4 Students benefit from high quality, modern and well-maintained premises that support learning very well. The IC building provides clean, well-equipped and furnished classrooms. The attractive library is well-stocked and gives students access to a wide range of useful learning resources to support their independent study. Heating, lighting and ventilation are appropriate. Washrooms are clean and sufficient for the current number of students. Free drinking water is available.
- 4.5 Systems for recording student registration and attendance are excellent. The college keeps accurate admissions and attendance registers. A clear and suitable attendance policy is effectively implemented. There are robust systems in place for monitoring and accurately recording attendance and lateness. There are highly effective procedures in place for making timely contact with absent students. As a result, overall attendance rates are high. Staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student visas. There are clear and fair procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits.
- 4.6 Pastoral support is excellent. Very effective systems are in place for monitoring student wellbeing and providing prompt, personalised support when required. The college is proactive in supporting students' personal and welfare needs throughout their course, as well as preparing them very well to progress to their next steps. Managers ensure that counselling support is easily accessible to students should they need it. Students value highly the level of support they receive on personal issues. There are excellent relationships between staff and students and amongst students.
- 4.7 Safeguarding arrangements for students under 18 are excellent. Safeguarding has a high priority at the college. Managers ensure that detailed safeguarding policies and procedures are kept up to date and are consistently implemented in line with official guidance. A team of designated safeguarding officers are suitably trained to an

appropriate level. They provide useful and regular safeguarding updates to staff to ensure that they are clear about their role and responsibilities to keep students safe. Very effective safeguarding reporting and recording arrangements are in place to ensure any concerns are appropriately monitored and the necessary actions taken. All staff complete appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to ensure their suitability to work regularly with students under 18.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Develop the excellent appraisal system currently in use to include part-time and short course teachers.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendation. Leaders and managers now ensure that all teachers are included within the appraisal system, which includes observations of teaching. Teachers receive helpful feedback from observers, highlighting areas of good practice and, where appropriate, constructive guidance that helps them improve further. Managers have planned carefully when appraisals for teachers on different types of contracts are completed. This ensures that their performance and development needs are reviewed at the most appropriate point in the academic year.
- 5.4 Ownership and oversight are excellent. A board of experienced and committed governors have established a very effective relationship with the recently appointed principal. They provide very effective support and challenge senior leaders to ensure that high standards of education and care are maintained. Governors meet regularly and receive appropriate reports to ensure they have an excellent insight into the working of the college and are able to hold senior leaders to account. Governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for educational standards, safeguarding, health and safety, and financial planning. They ensure that they meet their statutory duties for students under 18 and relevant legal permissions are fulfilled. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure governors review and ratify key policies and procedures to ensure their fitness for purpose.
- 5.5 Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders and managers understand their roles and responsibilities and provide very clear educational direction. They recruit and support experienced and well-qualified staff who meet the needs of their students very well. Leaders are very effective in self-evaluation. They understand the strengths of the college and have clear and ambitious plans to develop further. Leaders take the time to consult with staff and students across the IC to fully understand their needs and how the quality of provision can be enhanced further. As a result, leaders are effective in identifying priorities for the future.
- 5.6 Quality assurance arrangements are good. Staff are well supported to improve their practice and engage well in relevant professional development activities. A range of effective mechanisms are in place to collect, evaluate and respond to students' views covering the breadth of their student experience. Managers use attainment data effectively to evaluate the quality of education and the impact on students' progression at the end of their course. Data on students' overall progress during their course is not centralised, however. This limits managers' ability to easily

monitor and respond to trends in students' overall progression. The college has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure, and complaints are handled and reported effectively. There are appropriate systems for independent adjudication of complaints. There is a fee protection scheme in place.

- 5.7 Staff recruitment arrangements are excellent. Leaders and managers have very effective arrangements in place to ensure high quality staff are recruited and all the necessary identify and suitability checks on staff have been completed prior to their appointment. A detailed and accurate single central register of appointments is monitored systematically for compliance by senior leaders. Safer recruitment practices are followed very well, including the taking up of verified references.
- 5.8 Provision of information is excellent. The website provides comprehensive, accurate and detailed information about courses and facilities available at the IC. Information provided for inspectors is of high quality, well organised and readily accessible.

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:

- Enhance management information data to help managers monitor and respond to trends in students' overall progression throughout their course.

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 chair of governors. Inspectors attended registration sessions. 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 Steve Ingle	Lead Inspector
Ms Jane Roy	Team Inspector