



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

BLS ENGLISH

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Principal	Mr Ben Logan
Proprietor	Mr Patrick Murphy
Age Range	13+
Total number of students	19
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 18: 2
	18+: 17
	EFL only: 19
Inspection date	28 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.

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 Bury Language School, known as BLS English, is a private English Language school in Bury St Edmunds, owned by the founder, who is also director, together with the principal as a shareholder. The school is accommodated in three premises, two in the centre of the town and one 15 minutes walk away in a residential neighbourhood.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a range of English language programmes that enable students to be better equipped for their future work or study and living in the UK. The majority of students attend programmes from pre-intermediate to upper intermediate level. The school offers preparation courses for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), General English and One to One English Language courses to the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) and the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) examinations in response to student demand. Year-round courses are aimed at adults, with peak months being from April to July. The school also offers a range of summer courses for 13-17 year olds throughout July and August. During peak months student enrolment numbers rise to approximately 200 learners.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there are 19 students enrolled, two are under the age of 18. All students have English as an additional language (EAL). Students come from a range of different countries, including Spain, Italy and France. There are slightly more female than male students and no students have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 This monitoring visit has been extended due to the acquisition of new premises. For this reason, Section 4 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.
- 1.5 The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Further restrict the range of proficiency levels in IELTS preparation classes to ensure that every student is fully challenged and makes optimum progress.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 22nd October, 2013, the language school 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. Initial assessment procedures are effective in ensuring that students are placed on the appropriate course. Course provision complies with Home Office requirements. Good progress has been made against the recommendation to restrict language proficiency levels in the IELTS courses. Recruitment processes have improved and student language proficiency levels within classes are now broadly similar. Teaching is good, and lesson plans are used effectively to promote learning. Students are enthusiastic and are highly motivated. Tutorials are effective in checking and monitoring progress, although teachers do not consistently set targets for improvement. Staff are knowledgeable and have good working relationships with students in lessons. Homework is marked regularly, although helpful and constructive feedback is not always provided to help students to improve and to make progress. Attainment is excellent and the vast majority of students make good progress.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The school has recently relocated its adult provision to new premises which are fit-for-purpose and conform to all legal, health and safety requirements. Security arrangements, including those in the new premises, are effective and there are sufficient physical resources to meet the needs of the current students. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid and fire safety. The school keeps highly accurate admission and attendance records and reports concerns to the Home Office when required. Student induction is thorough and effectively prepares students for their studies. Pastoral care is excellent. Consequently, students feel safe and well supported. The school provides a varied programme of social activities, which enhances students' learning. Support with personal issues is available if required. Staff provide suitable guidance that helps students make their next step into further training, education or employment. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, including that for the under 18's, are clearly understood and effectively implemented. The management of accommodation is good, meeting students' welfare needs.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Educational direction is clear and ensures high standard provision. Quality assurance processes are very good. Teaching and learning are regularly observed and developmental feedback through appraisal is used to improve performance. Appraisals are effective and continuous professional development is linked to the observation process. Self-evaluation is effective and accurately identifies priorities for improvement, although not all staff contribute to this process. Relations between the proprietor, managers and staff are positive, which promotes the school's aims and ethos. Safeguarding arrangements are good and all staff including homestay

families have a good awareness of child protection; an appropriate policy is implemented effectively.

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:
- Further restrict the range of proficiency levels in IELTS preparation classes to ensure that every student is fully challenged and makes optimum progress.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made in relation to this recommendation. All students complete an IELTS test to assess their proficiency levels at the start of the course. Language proficiency levels within classes are largely similar and the majority of students make good progress. Lessons are well planned and well paced, and make suitable arrangements for students who require EAL support. Good use of targeted questions allows teachers to check knowledge, stimulate discussion and correct language errors.
- 3.4 The school has a clear curriculum policy which is reflected in practice and well supported by plans and schemes of work. Initial assessment is accurate and students are appropriately placed according to an assessment of English grammar and reading skills at a level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Provision meets the students' learning goals and fulfils Home Office requirements for students on Tier 4 visas.
- 3.5 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and take into account the ages and cultural backgrounds of students. Planned learning outcomes are well explained and learning is checked regularly. Most teachers are adept at encouraging students to participate with confidence. Students are highly motivated and are involved and, as a result, make good progress. Teaching is well-paced and provides a suitable variety of interesting activities to promote understanding and the learning of new language. Errors are corrected and students are clear about how to rectify their mistakes. Teachers are knowledgeable and have highly effective working relationships with students in lessons. Learning resources are good and are used effectively to enhance learning.
- 3.6 Students are encouraged to become independent learners and make good use of their time outside of lessons. One-to-one tutorial support ensures that most students are aware of the progress that they are making, although teachers do not always make use of the assessment information available to set further targets for improvement. Homework is marked regularly, although comments do not always give sufficient detail about what the student needs to do to improve.
- 3.7 Attainment is excellent, and the vast majority of students make good progress in relation to their starting points, completing their studies and proceeding to higher qualifications or employment. Attendance levels and punctuality are excellent.

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 Arrangements for health, safety, welfare and the security of the premises are excellent. Health and safety aspects are managed effectively in line with school policy. Comprehensive risk assessments for activities on- and off-site are completed and are up to date. First aid policies reflect requirements, are clear and are well communicated to students. Detailed procedures regarding the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are rigorous and applied consistently in practice to ensure effective care for younger students. Outcomes are regularly monitored and processes reviewed by the senior management team.
- 4.3 During induction, students are given a tour of the premises and are effectively briefed on health and safety arrangements, together with the names of staff responsible for health, safety and first aid. Security arrangements are good. The school has clear arrangements to guard against the risk of fire. Fire alarm checks are carried out frequently and fire evacuation practices carried out on a regular basis. Students are provided with detailed information on fire evacuation procedures. The number of first aiders and fire marshals is sufficient.
- 4.4 The school has recently relocated its adult provision to a new site. The relocation was successfully planned and executed in a highly effective way. Staff report a seamless transition with little disruption to learning. The relocation has improved facilities and learning resources and has had a positive impact on the progress of students studying at the school.
- 4.5 Premises, including the new building at Kings Road, are fit for purpose, well maintained, secure and provide a suitable environment for teaching and learning to take place. Classrooms are clean, suitably decorated, and there are sufficient washrooms for staff and students. The furnishings and fittings are appropriate to the needs of the students, including those with SEND. Lighting, heating, sound insulation and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the college is excellent and is conducive to student learning.
- 4.6 There is adequate access for all staff and students, including access for wheelchair users to classrooms and residential accommodation. The buildings and residential accommodation are well managed and conform to fire safety and first aid legislation.
- 4.7 Records of admissions and attendance are accurate. All systems for recording registration and attendance are accurately kept and attendance is closely monitored and recorded. Registers are well maintained and there are appropriate procedures in place to inform the Home Office of absence, if required. An appropriate lateness policy is also in place and students confirm that this is consistently applied.
- 4.8 Pastoral care for students is excellent. Student induction is thorough and is enhanced by a detailed student handbook, issued to all students. Consequently,

students are very well prepared for their studies. A team of experienced support staff know students well and ensure that they are given guidance and support that meet their personal and academic needs. Students' learning support needs are identified promptly and the range of systems offered has a positive impact on achievement and progress.

- 4.9 Students' learning experience is enriched by a varied social programme which is suitable for adults as well as young students. An external careers adviser regularly visits the school to provide suitable guidance and advice on applying for jobs and for higher education courses in the UK. Students report that they receive very good advice for further study, career and employment options.
- 4.10 Safeguarding arrangements, including those for students under 18, are good. Staff, including host families, have a thorough awareness of child protection and appropriate safeguarding and welfare policies are implemented effectively. An up-to-date register provides accurate information on the checks carried out on all staff. Checks on the accommodation used by under-18s are thorough, secure and well maintained and include regular communication with the local authority.

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 school's leadership has a clear strategic educational direction and provides comprehensive oversight of its work. This is reflected in the excellent quality of education, the excellent care of students and the fulfilment of the school's aims. As a result, appropriate action is taken with respect to course development, maintenance of premises and student welfare. An appropriate management structure provides clarity of responsibilities; relationships between the proprietor, managers and staff are effective. Policies are well documented and are reviewed regularly to ensure there are sufficient resources to develop and promote learning.
- 5.3 The school has very good quality assurance arrangements in place that support improvement. Senior academic managers conduct lesson observations and use these to monitor the standard of teaching. A highly effective appraisal process takes place and continuous development plans help drive improvement. The school's self evaluation provides an accurate account of the school's key strengths and areas of development, although not all staff are involved in the self evaluation process. Student and staff feedback is used effectively to assess and improve quality of provision.
- 5.4 The school meets its obligations in relation to safeguarding, particularly for those under the age of 18, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all staff. Staff qualifications and references are checked rigorously before a contract of employment is offered. Copies of all documents are kept in well-maintained files, which also contain copies of appraisals, staff development records and, where applicable, lesson observations.
- 5.5 The college website is clearly laid out and contains clear information on all required matters, including the curriculum and the range of courses offered. Policies are effectively reviewed and monitored to ensure learning resources and priorities are met. The complaints policy is effective and well documented. Records of complaints are monitored and recorded; the school makes every effort to resolve concerns should they arise. Suitable arrangements are made for unresolved complaints from students to be considered by an external independent adjudicator. All information requested, prior to and during the inspection, was provided promptly.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The language school has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure that targets are consistently recorded and monitored regularly to support progress and attainment.
- Ensure that all students receive detailed and constructive feedback on their written work on how they can improve their work.
- Involve staff at all levels in the self-evaluation process to collectively and accurately identify strengths and areas for development.

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. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school.

Inspectors

Ms Eileen O'Gara	Lead Inspector
Mr Tony Gill	Team Inspector