



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

BSC EDUCATION

(12655362)

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Director of Operations	Mr Ed Brandt	
Proprietor	BSC Education Ltd	
Age Range	16+	
Total number of students	120	
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 18:	0
	18+:	120
	FE only:	73
	EFL only:	25
	FE and EFL:	22
Inspection dates	13 – 15 December 2022	

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 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival	5
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	5
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	5
(d) Attainment and progress	6
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
(a) Health, safety and security of the premises	7
(b) Student registration and attendance records	7
(c) Pastoral support for students	7
(d) Safeguarding under 18s	8
(e) Residential Accommodation	8
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	9
(a) Ownership and oversight	9
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	9
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	9
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	10
(e) Provision of information	10
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	12

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 BSC Education is a private educational institution that moved to its current premises in Holborn, central London in June 2022. The centre is part of the BSC Education Group whose headquarters are located in Birkenhead, Merseyside. The centre is led by the director of operations who is supported by a small management team. Oversight is provided by the institutions' parent company. The vision of the centre and group is to provide students with steppingstones to their future by delivering outstanding and transformational learning experiences. They aim to provide consistent high-quality educational experiences that their students will remember.
- 1.2 The centre offers a wide range of courses, including general English courses from elementary to advanced levels, business English, and examination preparation courses. Students from 16 years of age are accepted on year-round courses. Enrolments onto courses take place throughout the year and provisional allocation to courses is made on the basis of an online test and submission of written work. An international foundation year (IFY) in Business or Humanities is offered in conjunction with the Northern Consortium of UK Universities (NCUK). This has published entry requirements and a fixed start date in October and January.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 120 students were enrolled. The majority are male and all aged over 18 years old. The vast majority of students come from South Asia, mainly India. All students spoke English as an additional language. No students had identified learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 1.4 When an individual applies to join a course, the centre checks their suitability through the use of a pre-course application form and test to ensure that they meet the academic and English language requirements for entry onto the programme of their choice. Residential accommodation is provided in home-stay and in a commercial student residence.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 **The quality of education at the college is unsatisfactory.** At the time of the inspection, the following Key Standards for Educational Oversight were not met:

1. The teaching enables students to make clear progress according to their ability so that they develop the skills and understanding necessary to follow their chosen accredited course and/or employment **[Standard 8]**.
2. Students reach acceptable levels of attainment and make good progress based on their starting points and the length of their course **[Standard 18]**.
3. The college maintains an accurate admission register and an accurate attendance register **[Standard 33]**.
4. The college reports to the UKVI as required, when a student fails to enrol or otherwise discontinues study or does not fulfil Home Office requirements for attendance **[Standard 34]**.
5. The college provides effective pastoral and personal support to students **[Standard 35]**.
6. The leadership of the college provide clear educational direction which is reflected in the quality of education provided, the care of students, and the fulfilment of the colleges stated purpose, or its aims and ethos **[Standard 45]**.
7. The college has adequate quality assurance mechanisms in place which lead to the improvement of the quality of educational experience or the maintenance of existing high standards **[49]**.

2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is unsatisfactory. The centre has clear educational aims and objectives and offers an appropriate range of courses that meet the stated educational language and academic needs of its students. Course provision and the curriculum are well organised, flexible and provide opportunities for students' educational development. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.

2.3 Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is unsatisfactory. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. However, they have not been used effectively to ensure that all students are placed on the right course in accordance with their abilities, and interests. Teaching is satisfactory but its impact on learning is unsatisfactory. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and attempt to use a range of teaching and learning methods to deliver engaging lessons. However, in the majority of lessons students do not engage or show interest in their learning. As a result, they do not make the progress that they should.

- 2.4 Overall, student attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Students studying on English language courses progress well. However, progress rates for the IFY courses are unsatisfactory, with the number of students withdrawn from their course being very high. Attendance for English language courses is good, but is very low for the IFY course.
- 2.5 Arrangements for the students' welfare, including health and safety, are unsatisfactory. This is due to the deficiencies outline below.
- 2.6 The centre's buildings are very well maintained and provide a safe and comfortable environment which effectively supports learning. Appropriate policies and procedures for managing and maintaining high levels of health and safety and fire safety are consistently implemented and updated.
- 2.7 Student registration and attendance recording is unsatisfactory. Effective systems are not in place to monitor attendance and to take the necessary action should a student fail to attend. Attendance records are now accurate. However, issues with the electronic system have led to students' initial poor attendance not being highlighted in a timely manner and appropriate action taken. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are unsatisfactory, with students who should have been withdrawn not being reported in a timely manner.
- 2.8 Pastoral support is unsatisfactory and does not provide an appropriate level of support and guidance for students. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are secure and reflect official guidance.
- 2.9 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is unsatisfactory. A clear educational strategy and curriculum policy is in place. However, leaders have not ensured that effective systems and procedures are in place so that an appropriate quality of education is maintained and that students on Student visas are reported to the Home Office in a timely manner where necessary.
- 2.10 There is an effective relationship between the senior staff at the centre and the BSC group. The centre is successful in securing, supporting and developing sufficient high-quality staff and ensuring their suitability to work with students. Quality assurance mechanisms are unsatisfactory and have not resulted in the maintenance of or the improvement of the quality of the educational experience. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are good, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken.

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

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

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to and on arrival is unsatisfactory. Clear and detailed entry criteria are set. However, accurate information, advice and guidance is not provided to all students before they arrive at the college. As a result, students are not fully aware of the requirements of their chosen course, including regularly attending classes and the expected behavior when in class.
- 3.2 Initial assessment is unsatisfactory. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place but have not been used effectively to ensure that all students are placed on the right course in accordance with their abilities and interests. A large increase in student IFY registrations, and delays in their arrival at the centre, has led to established enrollment procedures not being followed. Consequently, effective assessment of students' academic ability, language skills and identification of any existing learning needs has not taken place for all students to ensure that they have the appropriate level of interest, ability and language skills to undertake their selected course. As a result, support, care and guidance are not based on sound assessment and do not adequately promote students' progress, with a large majority of the IFY student body not effectively engaging with their studies.
- 3.3 Good quality information is available to students through the centre's website. The website is detailed and includes accurate information about the centre, its premises and the curriculum on offer.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is good. The centre has clear educational aims and objectives and offers an appropriate range of courses that meet the language and academic needs of the students. The range of courses available provides students with appropriate progression opportunities into higher education.
- 3.5 The courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 3.6 Courses match those listed on the website and in other marketing materials.

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

- 3.7 Teaching is satisfactory but its impact in the majority of lessons is unsatisfactory. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and identify a range of teaching and learning methods designed to deliver engaging lessons. However, in the majority of lessons students do not engage or show interest in their learning. As a result, the pace of lessons is slow and students do not make the progress that they should during these lessons.

Classroom management is satisfactory and effectively challenges inappropriate student behavior and attempts to ensure that students engage in their learning. However, in the majority of lessons such challenges are not successful in promoting student engagement with their learning.

- 3.8 Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for other people including those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.9 Assessment is appropriate and accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in students' progress. Feedback to English language students is positive, encouraging and clearly identifies areas for improvement. There are appropriate systems in place to monitor students' progress and attainment in English language courses.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.10 Student attainment and progress is unsatisfactory. Students studying on English language courses progress well given their starting points. However, attainment and progress rates for the IFY course are unsatisfactory, with the number of students being withdrawn by the centre for failing to attend their course being very high.
- 3.11 Evidence from lesson observations show that appropriate standards are being reached in English language courses but not on the IFY programme.
- 3.12 Attendance for English language courses is good, but is very low for the IFY course.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

- 4.1 Arrangements for the health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. The building is fit-for-purpose, very well maintained and provides a well-resourced learning environment which enhances the students' education. Classrooms are spacious, light and well furnished. All electrical equipment is tested regularly as required. Toilet facilities are well maintained and adequate in number. Security arrangements are very good. A wide range of detailed policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.
- 4.2 Measures taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are good and conform to requirements. An appropriate health and safety policy is in place with clearly allocated responsibilities. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments are carried out with clear follow-up actions which are regularly reviewed. Detailed individual risk assessments are carried out for organised off-site activities. A high number of trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place as well as first aid kits and accident books. Fire action notices are clearly displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Regular fire drills are carried out which are well recorded. Free drinking water is readily available throughout the centre. As a result, students report that they feel safe on the premises, at their accommodation and in London generally.
- 4.3 Proper provision is made for students who are ill or injured. The centre is located in a Grade 2 listed building and is therefore not accessible by wheelchair users.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Arrangements for student registration and the recording of attendance are unsatisfactory. Clear admission procedures are in place but not properly observed. Attendance records are now accurate. However, issues with the electronic system have led to students' initial poor attendance not being highlighted in a timely manner and appropriate action taken.
- 4.5 Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are unsatisfactory. Attendance requirements for students who are studying under Student visa arrangements are not fully understood or effectively implemented by staff. As a result, students who should have been withdrawn are not reported in a timely manner.
- 4.6 Clear policies and procedures are in place for the collection and refund of student fees and deposits. The policy is fair and applied consistently.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.7 Pastoral support for students is unsatisfactory. Student welfare is a key priority and the centre has an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place to meet its aim of providing a safe and supportive environment where students can progress.

- 4.8 On arrival, an appropriate induction is planned which is aimed at helping students settle into their course and know who to see and where to go if they have a concern. However, a large number of IFY students failed to attend the timetabled induction, with the centre not having the processes or procedures in place to effectively deal with the late arrivals. Consequently, not all students have received an effective induction to enable them to fully understand the requirements of their course or to provide the centre with the relevant contact information so that they can be contacted and offered support. As a result, many students do not follow the centre's attendance policy and attendance rates are very low.
- 4.9 A detailed complaints policy is set out on the centres website and clear anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively.
- 4.10 Appropriate careers advice ensures that students are prepared for further study choices and life beyond their course. The centre provides a varied social programme for its students in the form of trips, hospitality and culturally based events.

4.(d) Safeguarding Under 18s

- 4.11 The safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are good. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of all strategies is appropriately checked by senior managers. There is a designated child protection officer who is appropriately trained. All relevant persons are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to or on appointment, and an accurate central register is maintained of suitability checks on staff.

4.(e) Residential Accommodation

- 4.12 The quality of residential accommodation is good and forms a valuable part of the students' education and personal development. Comprehensive arrangements are made by the centre for securing appropriate accommodation for all students including under-18s.
- 4.13 Managers and student services staff work closely and effectively with accredited external agencies that offer residential and home-stay accommodation. Rigorous monitoring ensures students benefit from accommodation that is registered and meets national requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance and oversight are unsatisfactory. The BSC group advisory board provides appropriate oversight, has a clear vision for the future of the centre and effectively shares this with staff. The group through their senior management team discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future. However, they have not been successful in ensuring that appropriate systems and procedures are in place so that an appropriate quality of education is maintained and that students on Student visas are reported to the Home Office in a timely manner where necessary. Relationships between the BSC group, senior managers and staff are good.
- 5.2 All necessary legal permissions are in place for the use of the premises, including relevant insurances and licences.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities within the centre are satisfactory. An appropriate management structure, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities is in place. Appropriately defined policies and procedures are introduced and regularly reviewed by senior managers. Communication between managers and other staff is good. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meetings with staff show that managers are very supportive of the college.
- 5.4 The centre is successful in securing and retaining appropriately qualified staff. An appropriate system of staff review is in place and is used effectively to ensure staff are well qualified for the work they do.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance including student feedback is unsatisfactory. A clear process of self-assessment and evaluation is used to inform improvement planning and effectively ensures that the necessary financial resources are in place to meet the changing needs of the centre. However, quality assurance systems have not resulted in the improvement of the quality of the students' educational experience or ensuring that the quality of education is maintained.
- 5.6 Procedures to obtain student feedback have recently been introduced but have not been effectively implemented. As a result, appropriate feedback from IFY students has not been obtained. Student attendance data is available and effectively summarised to ensure key issues are highlighted for leaders and managers. Consequently, issues regarding IFY student attendance have been identified and a number of actions taken to try to bring about improvement. This has been impeded by the lack of engagement by students in the learning process. However, the actions

taken to bring about improvement have not been successful in ensuring that attendance is of a consistent satisfactory standard.

- 5.7 The complaints procedure is clear and appropriate.

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

- 5.8 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. A comprehensive recruitment policy ensures that suitably qualified and experienced staff are recruited. All required recruitment checks have been carried out in a timely manner and appropriately recorded. The process to validate previous applicants work history and qualifications is good, with due regard to statutory requirements concerning the identity of staff. A comprehensive central record is maintained and monitored by senior staff.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 The provision of information is good. The website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and relevant information to inform their study choices.
- 5.10 The centre was very responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions required to meet the Standards

In order to meet the Standards of Educational Oversight, the college must:

- Ensure that the teaching enables students to make clear progress according to their ability so that they develop the skills and understanding necessary to follow their chosen accredited course and/or employment **[Standard 8]**.
- Ensure that students reach acceptable levels of attainment and make good progress based on their starting points and the length of their course **[Standard 18]**.
- Ensure that the college maintains an accurate admission register and an accurate attendance register **[Standard 33]**.
- Ensure that the college reports to the UKVI as required, when a student fails to enrol or otherwise discontinues study or does not fulfil Home Office requirements for attendance **[Standard 34]**.
- Ensure that the college provides effective pastoral and personal support to students **[Standard 35]**.
- Ensure that the leadership of the college provide clear educational direction which is reflected in the quality of education provided, the care of students, and the fulfilment of the colleges stated purpose, or its aims and ethos **[Standard 45]**.
- Ensure that the college has adequate quality assurance mechanisms in place which lead to the improvement of the quality of educational experience or the maintenance of existing high standards **[49]**.

Recommendations for further improvement

In addition to the above action points, the college should:

- Ensure that initial assessment is used effectively to place students on the most appropriate programme and to provide effective support to help them with their studies.
- Ensure that all students receive an appropriate induction which effectively prepares students for the requirements of their studies.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with students. They held discussions with senior members of staff and attended registration sessions. The responses of staff to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the centre.

Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector