



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

**LANGUAGE STUDIES INTERNATIONAL LONDON HAMPSTEAD**

Full Name of College      **Language Studies International London Hampstead**

Address                      13 Lyndhurst Terrace, London, NW3 5QA

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Email Address             ham@lsi.edu

Principal                    Mr Greg Wickline

Proprietor                 Mr David Immanuel

Age Range                 13+

Total Number of students 164

Numbers by age and type 13 - 18:        83

of study                    18+:            81

EFL only:                164

Inspection dates         **3 – 4 July 2012**

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language colleges. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the college's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and English language colleges.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Standards for private colleges;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations to colleges 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. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 Language Studies International London Hampstead is a private English language school, established in 1976, and situated in the residential area of Hampstead, North London. It is part of a global company founded in 1965 with headquarters in London. The school director reports to the general manager for UK schools who, in turn, reports to the deputy managing director based in Hampstead and to the managing director/proprietor at the head office in London.
- 1.2 The company has four year-round schools in England with others in France, Switzerland, Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand and has a partnership arrangement with a school in Malta as well as with a number of schools worldwide.
- 1.3 A separate young learners' programme for students aged between 13 and 17 operates from mid-June to August and from January to mid-February. During peak periods the school hires classrooms at Hampstead Town Hall or the Swiss Cottage Library. A separate academic and social programme is arranged for this group.
- 1.4 Approximately half of 164 students are young learners between the ages of 13 and 18. The majority of students are part of a recent summer school intake. Just under half of the students are from European Union (EU) countries, with the remaining students coming mainly from Israel, Brazil and Turkey. Most students are on Student Visitor Visas and are recruited by agents. The school presently has no students on Tier 4 visas. English is an additional language (EAL) for all students.
- 1.5 In addition to general English, the school offers courses in business English, one-to-one tuition and examination preparation for First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The school can also cater for groups with specific requirements on request.
- 1.6 Upon booking, students can choose from the range of courses on offer. There is a level requirement of CEFR B1+ for examination courses and business English which can either be assessed prior to or on arrival. At present, the school has no students assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

### 2.(a) Executive Summary

	Section of the Standards	Grade awarded 1-4
3.	The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement	2 Meets expectations
4.	Students' welfare, including health and safety	1 Exceeds expectations
5.	The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	1 Exceeds expectations

- 2.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning meets expectations. Separate programmes operate for young learners and for older students. All students benefit from a thorough initial assessment which ensures that they are placed at the most appropriate level for their ability and age. The comprehensive curriculum, supported by regular testing and level checks, is designed to ensure that students make progress and are able to maximise their potential. Students express a very high level of satisfaction with their course and feel well informed about their progress. The vast majority of teaching is good, and some is very effective. The school has recently set up a learning centre for self-study, which aims to provide further support for students with specific learning goals and to encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- 2.2 Student welfare, including health and safety, exceeds expectations. Comprehensive measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards and proper regard is given to health and safety during student induction. Due regard is given to the welfare, health and safety of the young learners. All policies and procedures, including safeguarding, are in place. Student registration and attendance records are accurately maintained and attendance is very well monitored. Relationships between staff and students are harmonious and students speak very highly of the friendly support they receive from all staff. Host families are carefully monitored and well matched to students' needs, thus contributing to students' cultural development. This is further enhanced by wide-ranging social programmes tailored to the specific age groups. The premises are secure and the building is clean and well maintained.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school exceed expectations. Governance is highly effective and focused on quality assurance. The proprietor provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the future of the school. Comprehensive oversight is combined with a high level of financial support so that welfare, health and safety of students are secure. Good practice is shared across the four UK schools through exchange in-service training (INSET). There is an effective system of staff appraisal and senior managers set and implement appropriate measures for improvement and self-evaluation. Student feedback is used very effectively to make improvements.

### 2.(b) Action points

#### (i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

- 2.4 At the time of the inspection, the college met all the key standards for private further education colleges and quality is high. **The college exceeds expectations for the quality of education.**

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Make constructive use of resources, including multi-media, to enhance the students' learning experience.
2. Share good practice in relation to classroom management.
3. Ensure that the code of conduct is consistently applied in all classes.
4. Ensure that errors in pronunciation and grammar are corrected in all lessons to promote student learning and progress.

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

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

- 3.1 The assessment of students on arrival is excellent. The school assesses students on entry to establish their level of competence in language skills and aptitude for their selected programme. The test consists of a grammar and vocabulary test, writing and an interview. The assessment also takes account of a student's personality, educational background, length of stay and any specific educational goals. Although an assessment test is available online for students wishing to join examination classes, the school does not feel this alone is sufficiently accurate or comprehensive.
- 3.2 Students are placed in classes according to their test and interview results. These results are made available to teachers. At the end of the first week students complete a questionnaire which, together with the teacher's assessment and weekly test result, identify whether the student is correctly placed. Students can then transfer to a more appropriate class if necessary.
- 3.3 In questionnaires and meetings students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the information and advice received from the school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

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

- 3.4 Students are well educated in accordance with their objectives and the school's aims. The school operates a cyclical ten-week grammar syllabus for adult students ranging from elementary to advanced level (Common European Framework CEFR A1 to CEFR C1) which covers all grammatical structures. The course is then re-run using different materials and resources. This ensures that a student may study for twenty weeks at the same level if necessary without repeating material. Regular testing identifies when a student is ready to move to the next level. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are all given proportionate time. Students are grouped in classes according to their level.
- 3.5 A similar programme operates for young learners but using a four-week cycle as courses are generally much shorter. As well as consolidating and expanding students' existing knowledge, emphasis is also placed on developing communication skills through discussion and project work led either by student interest, or linked into the afternoon social programme. Students thereby gain confidence in using the language in real life situations.
- 3.6 Programmes are well planned. Detailed schemes of work, linked to up-to-date textbooks and suited to the separate programmes for adults and young learners, ensure that teachers have effective guidance. The school encourages teachers to adapt and supplement these schemes of work to suit the needs of individual classes, thus maximising student motivation and progress. Weekly lessons plans are monitored and approved at the beginning of each week by the assistant director.
- 3.7 Classrooms are well resourced and the school has recently invested in several flat-screen televisions linked to computers; there is also an interactive whiteboard in one of the classrooms. However, in lessons observed no use was made of the school's multi-media resources to enhance the students' learning experience. Teachers relied on the textbook, hand-outs and the whiteboard.



- 3.8 Courses are in accordance with those detailed in the prospectus and in other marketing materials.
- 3.9 The vast majority of students complete the course for which they register.

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

- 3.10 The quality of teaching and learning is generally good, with some excellent practice observed. Where teaching is excellent, teachers maintain a lively pace and ensure that all students are engaged and contributing. Effective and varied teaching methods encourage student application and self-confidence and enable them to learn. Where teaching is less effective, classes are largely teacher-dominated. In these classes teachers allow a few students to dominate the group, planning and classroom management are weak and understanding is not adequately checked. Consequently, progress is limited in these classes.
- 3.11 The school recently opened a learning centre with 12 computer terminals available for self-study. This facility aims to provide further support to students with specific learning goals and to encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning. In addition to branded online material, there are level specific resources with a diagnostic test to guide students to areas they need to study. Informative posters with study tips are displayed around the room. This facility is staffed for two hours each week so that students may receive guidance and help where required.
- 3.12 Scrutiny of a sample of marked student work indicates that marking is satisfactory. Although the use of a marking scheme is consistent, some marking offered no comments for improvement, making it difficult for students to see the progress they are making or understand how to improve. In classes observed, some teachers offered useful oral feedback and correction, whilst in others errors remained uncorrected. This limited the students' ability to improve.
- 3.13 Study skills workshops, which are additional classes and free to all students, are run for an hour each week. Teachers offer different topics and skills and direct students to websites to reinforce the work covered. These classes are well attended and students speak highly of the excellent support they offer.

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

- 3.14 Very few students sit public examinations. Results of these examinations are published on the school's website and are in line with national averages.
- 3.15 The vast majority of students attend non-accredited general English courses and make very good progress against their learning goals and targets. A school database records student outcomes measured against their levels at the start of the courses. Weekly tests and questionnaires identify students' progress. This then informs planning so that lessons are more precisely tailored to meet student needs. Tests also identify students who are able to move up to the next class level. Results of more in-depth monthly tests and tutorials are also recorded centrally and are monitored by senior management. A self-study plan is made available to students in the welcome booklet which enables motivated students to set their own learning targets and assess progress. The school operates an open-door policy and staff are always available for guidance and advice. In interviews and questionnaires students expressed a very high level of satisfaction with their progress.

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

### **4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises (in line with expectations of educational institutions)**

- 4.1 The school's regard for students' welfare, health and safety exceeds expectations. Thorough and comprehensive policies are in place for fire and other hazards which are regularly updated by the proprietor. A detailed fire risk assessment has been carried out by qualified consultants. The school has three trained fire marshals and all staff receive an induction which includes fire safety awareness. Regular drills and sound alarm tests are carried out and details recorded. Fire evacuation notices are prominently displayed in six languages in all rooms; fire exits are clearly marked.
- 4.2 The assistant director is responsible for health and safety, supported by two members of staff. The school has eight trained first-aiders with names and certificates displayed on the main noticeboard. There is an accident book and well-stocked first-aid box in reception and tutors are given first-aid packs to take on excursions. Social activities are risk assessed.
- 4.3 Students who are ill can be taken to the local surgery, an NHS 'drop-in' centre or to Accident and Emergency at the local hospital. Currently there are no students with learning difficulties, but very comprehensive policies are in place with information for staff detailing a range of learning disabilities. The site is unsuitable for students with physical disabilities.
- 4.4 Classrooms in the main building, as well as the room used at Hampstead Town Hall, are well decorated, fit for purpose and maintained in a clean, tidy and hygienic state. Lighting, heating and ventilation are excellent, although sound insulation in one classroom is only satisfactory. There are adequate washrooms. During peak periods, such as when the summer young learners' programme is in operation, separate toilets are designated for adults and the young learners.
- 4.5 The school has 22 fixed personal computers and wireless internet access is available throughout the building. There is a drinks machine and a pleasant student lounge and garden. The young learners have access to a separate lounge. Security at the school is very good.

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

- 4.6 Admission and attendance registers are meticulously maintained both manually and on the school's database. The school operates a strict attendance policy in accordance with UK Border Agency (UKBA) requirements. The policy is detailed in the school's code of conduct which is made known to and signed by all students during induction. Teachers register students at the beginning of each lesson and details are recorded on the student database. Absences are followed up by the school director. Students are required to have 80 per cent attendance (100 per cent in the case of young learners) and weekly records for each student are posted on a noticeboard. A verbal warning, followed by three written warnings, is issued to students whose attendance is poor.
- 4.7 Special care is taken to monitor the attendance of younger students. The co-ordinator of the programme checks attendance shortly after lessons begin; host families are contacted immediately if a student is absent. All young learners are issued with identity cards which include the school's emergency number. These cards must be carried with them at all times.

- 4.8 Clear and fair procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits are provided for students.

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

- 4.9 The school provides excellent support and guidance for students in accordance with the school's aims. The school has a trained welfare officer who is introduced to students during induction and whose contact details are displayed on noticeboards. Students are given comprehensive information about the school and the wide-ranging weekly social and activities programme. A separate programme is arranged for the young learners. A new 'buddy' scheme has been put in place to offer support and friendship to less confident students. End-of-course reports are sent to all parents/sponsors of students on the young learners' programme and are available on request for all other students.
- 4.10 The excellent atmosphere between staff and students and the support provided during tutorials ensure that all students feel well supported. Student relationships are excellent and there is a culture of mutual respect. The code of conduct for students and the standards of behaviour for staff underpin the school's ethos of integration and tolerance. Robust policies are in place to counter bullying and harassment and in interviews and questionnaires students reported feeling safe and well supported.
- 4.11 A recently formed student council offers students the opportunity to voice their opinions and have a valuable input into the organisation of the school.
- 4.12 The school director offers informal advice regarding career opportunities and further education. University prospectuses are displayed in reception.

#### **4.(d) Child protection/safeguarding**

- 4.13 Policies and procedures regarding child protection and safeguarding are robust and have regard to official guidance. All host families who house students under the age of 18 are subject to enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and have their details recorded on the school database. Host families are made aware of their responsibilities. All staff have CRB checks and the details are recorded on a central register. No member of staff is allowed to teach students under the age of 18 until their CRB application has been processed.
- 4.14 All staff receive child protection training during induction and a record of this is kept on the staff database. Three members of staff have received level 3 NSPCC Safeguarding training and others have Basic Awareness certificates. Copies of the safeguarding policy must be signed by all new staff.

#### **4.(e) Residential accommodation**

- 4.15 Arrangements for the allocation and management of homestay accommodation are excellent and meet national requirements. All students aged under 18 live in homestay accommodation. The accommodation officer is thorough in checking the suitability of families and maintaining accurate and comprehensive records. Students are carefully matched to homestay families; comprehensive information and excellent support ensure the satisfaction of both parties. Host families visited during the inspection and student questionnaires reported a high level of satisfaction with the support offered by the school.

- 4.16 Homestay accommodation is visited and checked every two years. Accommodation provided by the school plays a valuable part in the students' education and personal development and contributes effectively to the school's aims.

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

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

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight exceed expectations. The proprietor has been successful in establishing the school and provides clear oversight of its operation, strategic direction and management. The focus of governance and leadership is forward looking, with a very strong inclusive ethos and emphasis on supporting students. The proprietor is highly effective in communicating this to the teachers and fully discharges all responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Senior managers are well supported in carrying out their roles.
- 5.2 The proprietor knows the school well and has a clear insight into its day-to-day workings, both through the management experience of the general manager for UK schools and through reports received from other school's directors which enable the sharing of good practice. Oversight of the school development plan is based on secure self-evaluation. Responsibility for admissions, curriculum planning and student support is devolved and monitored very effectively by the school directors. The school's work is supported financially by excellent structures. As a result, the school buildings are well maintained. The proprietor ensures that the school meets its legal obligations in regard to safeguarding, health and safety and fulfils his statutory duties for students under 18. Appropriate legal permissions are in place including appropriate use for the premises, relevant licences and insurance.

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

- 5.3 Staff questionnaires report a clear management structure with excellent relationships between staff and senior management. Policies are well implemented and communicated to staff. Weekly meetings are held between staff and academic management which, together with the open-door policy, ensure good levels of communication on all matters.
- 5.4 Leadership and management set a clear educational direction. A development plan extending across the four UK schools clearly identifies priorities for improvement; these plans are regularly reviewed by senior managers. Managers work well together to sustain and further the aims of the school.
- 5.5 All staff are suitably qualified and trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all students. The school is generous in supporting on-going professional development and training. Appraisals, as well as peer observations, ensure that good practice is identified and shared. In-service training is shared across the four UK schools and a detailed record is kept of all development activities.

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

- 5.6 Quality assurance, including student feedback, exceeds expectations. Information from tutorials, end-of-course questionnaires and student council meetings, as well as from informal arrangements, is reviewed by management and used effectively to plan development. All student feedback is electronically scanned and kept on file and any issues are quickly responded to by management. Any aspect of a student's experience which fails to meet expectations is thoroughly investigated and resolved.

- 5.7 The school's complaints procedure is published on the website and made known to students. The procedure allows for external arbitration and provides for appropriate written records to be kept of all complaints.

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

- 5.8 All staff have a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) or a similar relevant alternative qualification. Two members of staff have the diploma (DELTA) qualification. The school applies thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of all staff employed. Staff records are well kept and all staff have appropriate contacts and job descriptions. Authenticated copies of documents and qualifications are kept on file. Some long-serving members of staff do not have appropriate references but more recent appointments include all required documentation.
- 5.9 All staff have CRB checks with the exception of one, where the application is still pending.

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

- 5.10 The school's website contains all the information required.
- 5.11 The school was meticulous in providing all the required information for proper conduct of the inspection.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and staff and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, and saw registers being taken at the beginning of class. An inspector visited homestay accommodation. The responses of staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Lynne Heath	Lead Inspector
Mrs Suzanne Bell	Team Inspector
Mr David Godfrey	Team Inspector
Ms Sarah Williamson	Team Inspector