



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

LEWIS SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Full Name of College **Lewis School of English**

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Principal Mr Alistair Walker

Proprietor Mr Alistair Walker

Age Range 13+

Total Number of students 142

Numbers by age and type of study 16 – 18: 84

19+: 58

EFL only: 142

Inspection dates **17 – 19 April 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 Lewis School of English is a private limited company offering English language courses to adults and juniors. The school is based in central Southampton in four adjacent Grade II listed buildings. The school was established in 1976 and has been accredited by the British Council since 1989. The present owner is the director, who took over in 1994. The director of studies was appointed in 2011. The aim of the school is to 'bring freshness, sense of purpose, warmth and care to the educational experience offered to students and to bring the same characteristics to bear on the workplace experience for all staff members'.
- 1.2 The school provides six course levels, from elementary to advanced, matched to the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). Adult courses for those over 18 years of age are held in the main school buildings. Junior courses for those aged 8 to 17 years are activity-based with classroom-based sessions held in the main school buildings. The school offers programmes for all ages in general English, as well as specialist adult courses such as English for business. In addition, there are adult examination courses, teacher training courses for teaching English as a foreign language and continuing professional development courses for qualified teachers. The school offers continuous enrolment and new students join courses weekly. Students are offered places on the basis of their application forms and are allocated to courses after an initial assessment test and a one-to-one interview. Summer junior programmes are offered in five activity centres in remote locations in the UK and tailored programmes for groups outside the summer holiday season are held at the main school building.
- 1.3 Students live in homestay accommodation within a short distance of the school. During the peak period in the summer the school provides accommodation in student halls of residences at a nearby university campus.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 58 adult students of 21 different nationalities, with the majority from Saudi Arabia, Spain, Italy and Turkey, with more male students than female. There were also 84 junior students from France and Italy, aged from 13 to 17 years. None of the students have English as a first language. No students were attending on Tier 4 visas. The average age of adult students is 24 years and the average age of junior students is 13 years. At the time of inspection there were no students with 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	1 Exceeds 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 learners' achievement exceeds expectations. The school's admission and selection processes are thorough and well implemented. Initial assessment processes are effective, placing students at the correct level to suit their ability. Information available to students prior to their arrival is clear and comprehensive. The school's unique course provision is excellent, very well organised and highly responsive to students' individual requirements. Courses are offered at six levels, which enable the school to meet individual needs and offer progression opportunities. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Lessons are extremely well planned and teachers are highly innovative with their teaching methods and resources used in classes. Students enjoy learning, are extremely well motivated and thoroughly engaged in their studies. Assessment is systematic and on-going and directly informs lesson planning. The school offers students a range of formal and informal opportunities to discuss their progress with their teacher and academic managers. Teachers are entirely student-focused and consequently students make excellent progress and attainment.
- 2.2 Students' welfare exceeds expectations. Systems and procedures are effective in ensuring the health and safety of students, both in the school and in local homestay residences. Health, safety and welfare management procedures are clear and very well implemented. The school has exceptionally thorough risk assessments, which alongside excellent systems, enable highly effective management of health and safety. Student attendance monitoring is excellent, with effective systems for reporting absence to the UK Border Agency (UKBA). Students receive a high level of support on both academic and welfare issues, as well as support enabling them to fully integrate into the local student culture and community. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are good, with a comprehensive policy and procedures. The school has excellent arrangements for supporting and monitoring students under 18. The school offers high quality homestay accommodation.
- 2.3 Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has very clear and shared educational aims and direction. The relationship between the director and the senior leadership team is excellent. Responsibilities for managing the school are clearly delegated; the director sets the school manager's targets and monitors the school's performance closely. A good system supports timely review and management of all school web-based and printed literature, including policies and procedures, as well as tracking and managing legal compliance. The school management structure is highly effective and managers are focussed on raising standards across the whole school. Roles and responsibilities of staff are well defined with very effective communication between staff and managers. The school appoints very high quality staff with a strong commitment to continuing professional development. The quality assurance process is well established and very successful. Student feedback is collected systematically and regularly and results in clear actions when required.

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. Identify an end-of-course speaking and listening skills assessment to capture and record the high level of progress and achievement the vast majority of students make on their courses.

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

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

- 3.1 Assessment of students on arrival is thorough and highly effective. Each student's language competency and comprehension are assessed through an interview and placement test. Subsequently, students are quickly allocated to the class appropriate to their level of proficiency in English. The school pays great attention to ensuring that students are studying at the right level. Teachers are informed about students' initial language ability and use this information to quickly integrate students into classes. Additional information is gathered on students if they are planning to follow an examination course.
- 3.2 Initial, diagnostic and continuous teacher assessment is highly effective in identifying individual support requirements for adult and junior students. There is clearly defined and managed progression through the levels. The outcomes of continuous assessment ensure students' learning needs are monitored, recorded and used to inform teaching and learning, as well as progression to higher levels.
- 3.3 The school makes very good provision for SEND students by offering a good range of additional support and resources. Students receive very thorough information, advice and guidance prior to and on arrival at the school.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 Course provision is outstanding and exceeds expectations. The school curriculum is promoted as the 'Lewis School Syllabus' and is designed to give students a choice of levels and qualifications that are relevant to individual needs across both the junior and adult programmes. Programme content and activities are supportive and very well matched to students' differing needs. The school also offers tailored programmes for groups on request.
- 3.5 Retention on all programmes is outstanding, with the vast majority of students completing their course. Students say that they are actively engaged in all aspects of their progress and achievement. They especially value the opportunities given to evaluate their progress and give weekly feedback to teachers on their achievement. Student evaluation is extraordinary and well integrated into all courses. The school makes very good use of student feedback to inform planning and assessment.

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

- 3.6 The overall quality of teaching and its impact on learning is outstanding and students make excellent progress. Teaching and learning are outstanding as teachers use highly effective teaching methods. Teaching resources are bespoke and inspirational, regularly updated and underpin superb teaching and learning. Teachers are well qualified and highly skilled in their use of class resources, especially whiteboards. There is a high level of mutual respect and trust between teachers and students, which promotes students' self-confidence and aids their learning and achievement. Teachers know their students well and are extremely supportive. The school has effective procedures for identifying and supporting students with specific learning needs and the curriculum enables all students to progress.
- 3.7 Students have access to a computer room and a self-access centre which provides resources and space for them to work independently or in small groups. The school

offers all students additional study groups and clubs, further encouraging students to be responsible for their own learning. Students make good use of these additional opportunities. Students demonstrate very good skills as independent learners. Homework is set on most days and work is marked carefully, with constructive feedback and guidance given.

- 3.8 Teachers clearly understand, actively promote and develop cultural differences between students and use this effectively to enhance teaching in the classroom.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.9 The progress and attainment of students on general English courses are outstanding. The school does not currently assess the progress made across all levels in speaking and listening, however the curriculum enables students to make excellent progress during their programme in comparison to their starting points. Few students choose to undertake external public examinations. Those who do reach very good levels of attainment. Students develop excellent skills, knowledge and understanding that are relevant to their language aims and personal aspirations.
- 3.10 All students confidently demonstrate extremely high levels of skill and learning in the classroom. Students say it is clear to them that they are making good progress and confirm that their work is interesting and challenging.

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 Health, safety and welfare across the school are managed very well. The premises provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. Relevant policies deal with risk from fire, emergencies and first aid, and are well implemented across the school. Training has been provided for fire marshals and first aiders and signage related to fire procedures and first aid provision across the school is very clear. Students are asked on enrolment for information about allergies or medical conditions and this information is collected, recorded and shared as appropriate for the safety of the student.
- 4.2 Policies for the risk assessment of health and safety issues are comprehensive and clear. Checks on school procedures are carried out regularly and systematically and comprehensive manuals are available to staff, supporting them in enabling compliance with requirements across the school. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for all visits and activities. These risk assessments result in detailed and clearly stated action plans which are monitored closely for their implementation. Feedback from students and staff on health and safety or premises issues are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. Very good systems and effective procedures support students who are unwell or have additional support needs,
- 4.3 The school premises are fit for purpose and very well maintained. They provide very good quality and interesting teaching and learning environments for students and staff. The building is of Georgian construction and its layout and structure cannot accommodate wheelchair users or those with mobility challenges. This information is clearly stated on the school website and in marketing materials. Security is appropriate for the area and the school.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records are accurate. Procedures for contacting students who miss lessons are systematic and applied consistently. Attendance monitoring is very thorough and appropriate systems identify students at risk of poor attendance at an early stage, so the school can respond before attendance becomes a significant problem. As a consequence, attendance is excellent.
- 4.5 Good systems ensure timely reports are made to the UKBA if students miss ten expected contacts, fail to enrol or do not complete their course. The system is well managed, consistently implemented and records are kept. The school has clear and comprehensive procedures for the collection and refund of fees.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.6 The school delivers excellent pastoral care. Students are given a particularly good handbook which provides a clear guide of the school's expectations, policies and safety procedures. Students state that they feel well looked after.
- 4.7 A clear anti-bullying and harassment policy is well promoted across the school. Such problems between students are very rare. Staff are trained and encouraged to be sensitive about their choice of lesson content so that it is appropriate to a multi-cultural student group. Teachers actively encourage students to integrate and make

new friends; where appropriate the school supports discrete groups of female students.

- 4.8 Support, guidance and care ensure students are well prepared for learning at the school and when they leave. The academic counsellor is available to provide advice to students concerning their future studies. This leads to very good outcomes for students and as a consequence, the number of withdrawals from programmes is very low.

4.(d) Child protection/safeguarding

- 4.9 The school clearly recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection and has developed thorough policies and procedures for managing this area of responsibility. A copy of the policy is in the staff handbook. The safeguarding policy is included in the staff induction programme and the topic has been addressed in staff training sessions. Safeguarding is managed by a nominated child protection officer, assisted by a deputy with responsibility for students under the age of 18. The child protection officer and deputy are undergoing training to the appropriate level. The systems to ensure the identification, monitoring and support of these students are good. All staff have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
- 4.10 When students arrive in the UK for the first time the school has very good systems for managing, monitoring and supporting the transfer of students under the age of 18 to their accommodation. The school undertakes CRB checks for taxi drivers collecting new students on arrival and gives students good, clear advice on how to keep safe whilst in the UK.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.11 All students under 18 and the vast majority of other students stay with school approved and well-monitored homestay families. Arrangements for managing student accommodation are very good; students stay in safe and very high quality homestay accommodation. All homestays are registered in accordance with national requirements. Students told inspectors that they appreciate and value the additional learning opportunities offered by staying with host families. Pastoral support is excellent and students' physical and emotional needs are very well met. Students speak highly of their accommodation and take part in an extensive range of good extra-curricular activities which enhances their understanding of UK culture.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The educational direction is clear and has been shared successfully with all staff. There is a strong commitment to and focus on continuous improvement. The relationship between the director of the school and the director of studies is positive and very effective. The director maintains oversight of the school. He identifies strategic direction and supports senior managers in ensuring that legislative requirements are fulfilled. The quality of the students' experience is monitored through student feedback, achievement analysis, student complaints and end-of-course questionnaires. This results in an emphasis upon achievement and maintenance of high standards, and a timely response to any less than positive feedback.
- 5.2 The director encourages and leads on developmental teaching projects between the school and other schools across the European Union. School managers are set appropriate targets and he monitors the progress of the school systematically.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 There is a clear and strong management structure in the school. Managers monitor effectively and work constantly to raise standards to provide a high quality education. They are responsive to critical feedback and the school effectively identifies priorities and implements changes. The framework of meetings supports good communication and management. Academic management meetings are regular and address both strategic and operational issues. The school has a highly effective management information system to underpin the activities of leaders and managers. This system allows for effective monitoring and provides evidence for quality assurance.
- 5.4 Staff performance is reviewed effectively through regular staff appraisals, which include clear feedback and individual targets for development. Teachers are observed during lessons four times a year, the results of which are used for quality assurance purposes and to support teachers' continuing professional development. Extensive opportunities for continuing professional development are offered through an effective and well-managed teacher training and development programme. Teachers are encouraged and supported to take control of their own professional development and share good practice with colleagues in regular and frequent staff training sessions.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 There is a strong culture of improvement in the school and quality assurance is very good. Self-assessments are regularly undertaken and all staff are supported to take part in regular professional development, with clear links to the quality assurance cycle. The school has a high quality assessment strategy with teachers and academic managers, undertaking weekly student progress reviews that actively include students' written and oral feedback.
- 5.6 Students told inspectors they chose this school for its city centre location, the local culture and school facilities. Feedback is collected systematically through questionnaires and discussions with students. This feedback is analysed, shared with staff and managers and used regularly to inform teacher development, academic

action planning and the identification of school priorities. End-of-course questionnaires are analysed by senior academic managers and changes are implemented if appropriate.

- 5.7 The complaints procedure is clear and appropriate. Complaints are handled and reported on effectively which has a direct impact on quality assurance and improvement planning.

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

- 5.8 There is a very strong commitment to appointing high quality staff and recruitment is well managed. The school has a comprehensive and appropriate recruitment policy, and detailed guidelines to support those involved in the selection of staff. Staff are well qualified and all appropriate checks, including enhanced CRB checks for all staff, are made to ensure their suitability for appointment.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 The website provides comprehensive and detailed information about the school's facilities, courses and procedures as required. Information presented on the website and in school literature is clear and accurate.
- 5.10 The school provided all the information required for the inspection process.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and school staff and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with the director, senior members of staff and observed class registration at the start of sessions. Inspectors visited home-stay 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 Jacqueline Lawrence	Lead Inspector
Mr Tony Gill	Team Inspector