



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

**MONITORING VISIT**

**CAMBRIDGE SEMINARS COLLEGE**

**(Company Registration No. - 08183749)**

Full Name **Cambridge Seminars College**

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Website www.cambridgeseminars.co.uk

Principal Professor Stuart Wall

Proprietor Professor Stuart Wall and Dr Mukhamed-Ali Kurmanbayev

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 25

Numbers by age and type of study Under 18: 2  
18+: 23  
EFL only: 13  
FE only: 12




Inspection date **27 June 2017**

## 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.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the 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.

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Cambridge Seminars College is a private further education college founded in 1981 and located close to the centre of Cambridge. It is jointly owned by two proprietors, one of whom is the principal. The principal is supported by a small management team. The aim of the college is to provide students with the best opportunity for their future in terms of their courses and the time they spend in college.
- 1.2 The college offers GCSE, A level, foundation and pre-masters courses in a range of academic subjects. It also provides general English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses and preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Cambridge First Certificate and Advanced examinations. A Level students are recruited locally and the majority of EFL students are European, while foundation and pre-masters students are recruited from a wide range of countries around the world. Students aged 16 years and above are accepted, based on initial assessment of academic attainment, English language skills and learning goals. Enrolment onto GCSE and A Level courses takes place in September and January, while for Foundation and pre-masters courses enrolment occurs in September, January, April and June. EFL is offered throughout the year and students may join at any point. At the time of the inspection A level courses had just finished, and there had been no enrolments on GCSE or pre-masters programmes.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 25 students enrolled from a wide range of countries. Most students were over the age of 18-and there were equal numbers of male and female. No student had been identified with having additional learning needs.
- 1.4 The previous inspection took place on 10-12 May 2016 when the college met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to meet expectations. The recommendations from the previous report are:
- Systematically monitor the dialogue between teachers and students regarding informing students of how the might progress so as to improve whole school evaluation.
  - Use staff appraisal and CPD effectively to improve the development of whole school development plans.
  - Systematically analyse the impact of management decisions to enable effective whole school self-evaluation.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 10-12 May 2016 the college was found to meet 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. Course provision is excellent. Programmes closely meet students' needs and learning objectives, which are effectively identified through accurate initial assessment. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent, with highly student-centred lessons delivered by knowledgeable teachers. Assessment is effective and supports progress. Learning is reviewed in regular tutorials. Tutorial records, which include agreed targets, are not provided to students, thus limiting the effectiveness of the process. Attainment and progress are excellent.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. Appropriate policies and procedures to promote health and safety are effectively implemented. Premises are secure, fit-for-purpose and very well maintained. Admissions and attendance recording are accurate and reporting procedures for Tier 4 visa students meet Home office requirements. Attendance rates are high. Pastoral support is excellent and meets the needs of all students. Safeguarding of students aged under 18 is satisfactory and conforms to statutory guidance. All staff and homestay hosts for under-18s have undergone enhanced Data and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Residential accommodation through homestay is well managed and greatly appreciated by students.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. Educational direction and oversight of the college is good, resulting in high standards of academic and welfare provision. The aims of the college are fulfilled. There are positive relationships between the proprietor and senior staff. Formal self-evaluation is underdeveloped and makes limited reference to data and other sources of evidence. Informal evaluation takes place within given areas of responsibility, but there has been no progress against recommendations from the previous inspection to provide input into a whole college self-evaluation process. Development planning is insufficiently specific, without reference to actions, responsibilities or timescales. There has been unsatisfactory progress against the recommendation to include staff appraisal and continuous professional development (CPD) plans in whole college development planning. Plans to meet the college's key priorities are informal but effectively implemented. Quality assurance is good. The college is very responsive to student views, resulting in high levels of satisfaction. Quality assurance outcomes are not systematically used in self-evaluation. Staff recruitment procedures are good and all required checks are made prior to confirmation of appointment. Provision of information is good.

### **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 Initial assessment is accurate and results in placement on suitable programmes of study, which closely meet students' needs and objectives. Course provision is excellent. Courses are in line with the college statement of educational purpose. They are linked to external frameworks, supported by appropriate schemes of work and provide a coherent programme of study which promotes progress. This includes effective support for development of English language skills where necessary. Course content is up-to-date, and teachers personalise materials and select resources that will be engaging for their students. Students have regular opportunities to provide feedback on the effectiveness of their courses, and this informs planning. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 3.3 Teaching is excellent. Lessons are highly student-centred and well-planned, based on thorough knowledge of students' prior attainments and needs. Teachers are sensitive to cultural factors affecting learning. They demonstrate high levels of subject expertise and use questioning effectively to confirm understanding and provide further challenge. As a result, most students know their subjects well and are very adept at applying this knowledge. The majority of teachers pay great attention to their students' use of English, ensuring correct usage and pronunciation. Students make excellent progress in class and are well prepared to enter UK higher education.
- 3.4 Assessment is regular and very effective. Formal and informal testing informs students of their progress. Written work is accurately corrected, and constructive comments are provided to support improvement. Results of tests and copies of marked work are shared with the director of studies, who discusses progress and sets targets for students in individual tutorial meetings. Outcomes are recorded on a student learning plan, which is reviewed at subsequent meetings. Targets set are not always sufficiently specific and the student is not provided with a copy of the plan, thus limiting its effectiveness.
- 3.5 Attainment and progress are excellent, with examination results consistently above national benchmarks. Most students progress on to their choice of higher education.

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

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The college has appropriate procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of students and staff, which are effectively communicated and consistently implemented. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Provision for first aid is suitable and appropriately publicised. Premises are secure, and very well maintained with regard to health and safety. They provide a good environment for teaching and learning. Standards of cleanliness and decoration are high throughout the building.
- 4.3 Admissions and attendance recording is accurate. Admissions procedures are excellent. Procedures for reporting on Tier 4 visa holders are robust and meet Home Office requirements. Any cases of absence are well addressed, resulting in high rates of attendance.
- 4.4 Pastoral support is excellent. Very effective personal support is provided by an experienced range of experienced staff. Any concerns are very effectively shared among relevant staff and suitable records are kept. Relationships throughout the college are positive and students state that all staff are very approachable.
- 4.5 Safeguarding of under-18s is satisfactory and is in line with official guidance. The required policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed. Staff undergo enhanced DBS checks prior to confirmation of appointment and all have completed appropriate safeguarding training. The Designated Safeguarding Person, who demonstrates good understanding of the college's safeguarding procedures, is known to all staff. They are also aware of their responsibilities with regard to suspected radicalisation.
- 4.6 Residential accommodation through homestay is well managed to promote the satisfaction and safety of students. Arrangements for accommodating under-18s follow statutory guidance, including DBS checks on the main carer. Any issues are promptly resolved and well recorded to support effective monitoring of provision. In inspection meetings and surveys students were extremely positive about the provision.



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

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
-  Systematically monitor the dialogue between teachers and students regarding informing students of how they might progress so as to improve whole school evaluation.
  -  Use staff appraisal and CPD effectively to improve the development of whole school development plans.
  -  Systematically analyse the impact of management decisions to enable effective whole school self-evaluation.
- 5.3 Progress against recommendation one is unsatisfactory. No new procedures have yet been implemented to monitor the dialogues between teachers and students so the outcomes of these discussions are not used to inform whole school evaluation.
- 5.4 Progress against recommendation two is unsatisfactory. The college has appropriate procedures in place for lesson observations and appraisal. These procedures took place last year and appropriate CPD activities were identified as a result. A minority of staff undertook these activities with support from the college. CPD plans were not collated or used in whole college development planning.
- 5.5 Progress against recommendation three is unsatisfactory. The impact of management decisions is reviewed informally and has not yet contributed to formal college self-evaluation.
- 5.6 The leadership of the college provides effective educational direction, which results in the maintenance of high standards of academic and welfare provision. The college aims are fulfilled. Oversight is good overall and ensures that the college meets its statutory obligations. Financial management is effective; nonetheless it has been necessary to restructure the college in the last year, removing a number of administrative roles. This has increased the responsibilities of managers, which has been a barrier to college development, in particular the strengthening of procedures for formal self-evaluation, improvement of whole school development planning and implementation of agreed outcomes from appraisal. The management structure is clear, with appropriate lines of reporting.
- 5.7 There are very positive relationships between the proprietor and senior staff. Regular, minuted management team meetings support effective operation of the college. Occasional strategy meetings, which include the proprietors, provide a forum for discussion of development plans and feedback on their implementation. Communication between staff at all levels is generally good. Teachers feel well supported by managers and appreciate the positive atmosphere of the college.






- 5.8 Formal self-evaluation is underdeveloped, with limited exploration of the strengths and areas for development of the college. There is insufficient reference to data and other sources of evidence. Senior leaders do, however, demonstrate good awareness of the key strengths and the priorities for the college. Development planning is insufficiently specific, without reference to actions, responsibilities or timescales. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that strategies designed to address key priorities identified by senior leadership are effectively implemented.
- 5.9 Quality assurance is good overall. Course review takes into account student assessment outcomes and the views of staff. It has recently informed changes to modes of delivery and assessment methods in foundation courses. The college is very responsive to student views, resulting in high levels of student satisfaction. Quality assurance outcomes are not systematically used in formal self-evaluation.
- 5.10 Staff recruitment procedures are good. Prior to the confirmation of appointment of all staff appropriate checks are carried out to confirm identity and right to work in the UK. Staff files are well maintained and contain evidence of all required checks.
- 5.11 Provision of information on the website and for the inspection is good.

## 6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained the good quality found at the last inspection.

### Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the good quality provided, the college should:

-  Provide students with tutorial records that include details of progress and measurable targets with review dates to maximise achievement.
-  Implement a structured approach to formal self-evaluation that draws upon all relevant data, including outcomes of quality assurance processes.
-  Systematically analyse the impact of management decisions to enable effective whole school self-evaluation.
-  Ensure that development planning includes actions, assigned responsibilities and timescales to better support college improvement.
-  Collate staff CPD plans agreed in appraisal and integrate this into the school development plan to ensure CPD is completed in a timely manner.

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

### Inspectors

Ms Dawn Hart	Lead Inspector
Mr David Cox	Team Inspector