



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

BUCKSWOOD ST GEORGES COLLEGE

(Company Registration Number - 04236403)

Full Name	Buckwood St George's College										
Address	7 Holmedale Gardens, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1LY										
Parent\Company name	St George's England Limited										
Telephone Number	01424 813 696										
Email Address	academics@bstg.co.uk										
Website	www.bstg.co.uk										
Principal	Mr Giles Sutton										
Proprietor	Mr Giles Sutton										
Age Range	16+										
Total number of students	37										
Numbers by age and type of study	<table> <tr> <td>16 – 18:</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18+:</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL only:</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FE only:</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL and FE:</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </table>	16 – 18:	9	18+:	28	EFL only:	10	FE only:	4	EFL and FE:	23
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Inspection dates	20 – 22 June 2017										

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 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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Buckswood St George's College is a private college that works closely with Buckswood School. They are jointly owned by a proprietor who also acts as headmaster of the school and principal of the college. The college was established in 2001, and moved to its current premises in 2012. It is located in the centre of Hastings in East Sussex. The proprietor is supported by a management team at the college and in addition members of the Buckswood School senior management team have oversight for specific functions in the college.
- 1.2 The aim of the college is to provide a safe, adult learning environment for students aged over 16 years whose aims are university entrance. It offers general English language and examination preparation courses for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). It also offers one or two year A level courses and a one year University Foundation course in business and management. A minority of students join the football academy programme that runs at Buckswood School.
- 1.3 The minimum age for entry is 16 years, and the average age for students is 18 years. Students are selected after a review of their previous school reports and academic qualifications, plus a review of their English language performance in an approved test. The majority are referred to the college through agents who also provide references for their applicants.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 37 students. The majority are male and the large majority aged over 18 years. Students come from a wide range of nationalities, with the largest numbers coming from China, Nigeria and Vietnam. All students have English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection no students were identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. All students live in the college's residential accommodation which is located within its premises.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 **The college needs improvement.** At the time of the inspection, the following Key Standards for Educational Oversight were not met:

1. Courses offered enable all students to learn and make progress [3].
2. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and regularly reviewed to keep all students safe [37].
3. Leadership provides clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of education, the care of students and the fulfilment of the college's aims and ethos [40].

2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is unsatisfactory. Assessment of students prior to or on arrival is limited. There is no pre-entry assessment and the checking of qualifications against entry requirements is inconsistent. On arrival, an initial assessment test is used to place students on courses, but this is insufficient. As a result, a minority of students are placed on courses which do not fully meet their needs. Course provision is unsatisfactory. The range of courses offered matches the college's aim well. However, at certain times of the year course provision is not well structured and does not maintain students' participation and motivation. In addition, a minority of students report that the provision and facilities do not match the information they had received prior to their arrival, including that from the website. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. Students therefore make satisfactory progress in these lessons. In a small minority of lessons teaching is poorly planned and does not meet students' needs. Tutorials provide an opportunity for students to discuss their progress, but these are not sufficiently structured and do not set students clear learning targets. Classroom resources are unsatisfactory for the university foundation and A level courses. The progress and attainment of students are satisfactory. External examination results show that English language students make satisfactory progress, and the majority of university preparation students complete their course successfully.

2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is unsatisfactory. The management of health and safety is satisfactory. Regular checks of safety issues are made and appropriate records are well maintained. However, actions taken in response to issues raised are not always recorded. The premises are of satisfactory quality and fit for purpose, but the level of maintenance of a minority of areas is insufficient. Risk assessments for external activities are recorded, but do not effectively detail the relevant characteristics of the students attending. Admission and attendance records are accurate and the monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. However, the recording of lateness is inconsistent. Pastoral care is good and valued by students. A new social programme enhances students' educational experience. Good advice

and guidance on careers and higher education is available, but a minority of students are not aware of the regular advice sessions. Safeguarding of students under 18 years is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of procedures and issues. Recently all staff have received training and awareness raising related to safeguarding which has strengthened this area. However, not all the required processes for ensuring the welfare of those under 18 years are in place. The management of residential accommodation, and the quality of the accommodation, are satisfactory. Students report that they value the support they receive from the resident house staff.

- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is unsatisfactory. Relationships between the proprietor and managers are good, but oversight of the college's performance is insufficient. Policies are in place for all key issues. However, a minority of these are not appropriate to the college and there is insufficient monitoring to ensure they are fully implemented. Strategic planning is effective and has resulted in the recent re-structuring of the management team. However, there is confusion regarding the new management roles and responsibilities and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Student feedback is collected regularly and used effectively to identify issues for improvement. However, student achievement data is not analysed systematically or used effectively to evaluate the college's performance. Staff recruitment procedures are good and well managed. All appropriate suitability checks are made on the appointment of new staff. Information provided by the college to students is accurate and clear, but a minority of images on the website are unrepresentative of the college.

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

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

- 3.1 Assessment of students prior to or on arrival is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient rigour in checking students' qualifications against entry requirements. There is no pre arrival assessment and few students are interviewed before they start at the college. Previous school reports and results are requested, but the analysis of overseas qualifications does not always clearly identify their equivalence to UK qualifications. In a minority of cases, the recommendations of agents referring applicants are accepted when such reports are not available, which in a small number of instances results in unreliable information. As a result, a minority of students are placed on courses which do not fully meet their needs.
- 3.2 On arrival, testing is insufficient. The information gained from this testing is used to place learners in classes, but for those following English language courses the number of classes available is limited and this does not support the full range of needs within the student group. For students following the university foundation or A level programmes, limited subject specific testing is undertaken to ensure entry levels of new students are appropriate to the academic demands of the subjects they will follow.
- 3.3 Satisfactory arrangements are in place for students who declare learning difficulties or disabilities or if these are identified by teachers. Additional lessons are provided and advice is sought from experienced staff at Buckswood School.
- 3.4 Relevant information on students gained during admission is not consistently shared with staff, such as teachers and housekeepers, in order to inform their planning and provision for students.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.5 Course provision and the curriculum are unsatisfactory. The college has a clear aim to prepare students for university entry and the range of courses offered matches this aim well. Course programmes are flexible and students are able to combine English language studies with A levels or a university preparation course. However, not all students are placed on courses for which they are suited or which they are likely to succeed on. In addition, a minority of students report that they did not consider they had been well informed about the provision at the college, and on arrival realised they had been influenced by information and photographs which related to Buckswood School rather than the college. The college website has now been changed to avoid this confusion, but there are still images on the website which encourage unrealistic expectations of the college facilities and programmes.
- 3.6 Curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. For short periods of the year a minority of students are not sufficiently engaged in learning or involved actively in alternative

activities. When students have completed their examinations and are ready to move on to the next phase of learning, provision is not well structured and attendance and motivation are therefore poor.

- 3.7 Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.

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

- 3.8 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are satisfactory. The majority of lessons are well planned. Teachers have a good level of knowledge and understanding of subjects being taught. Most teachers encourage participation and use a range of teaching strategies to involve students actively in learning. As a result, students make satisfactory progress in such lessons. However, in a small minority of lessons planning is poor, teachers do not use appropriate strategies to engage students or respond sufficiently to students' needs. As a result, limited learning takes place.
- 3.9 Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the aptitudes and cultural backgrounds of their students. Weekly tutorials provide regular opportunities for students to meet with their tutors and discuss their progress. However, these are not sufficiently structured. They do not fully inform learners of their performance and progress, and do not result in the setting of clear individual learning targets. Tutorial records are maintained but these lack detail and are not used to follow up issues identified during earlier tutorials. There are weekly drop-in sessions in which students can request support on academic issues. However, these are not well attended by students.
- 3.10 Assessment is satisfactory. The majority of work set for students is marked and returned in a timely manner. Marking is thorough, and errors are corrected. However, a minority of assessed work lacks a summary of students' performance and does not indicate what they need to do to improve.
- 3.11 Classroom resources are good for English language courses, but insufficient for the university foundation course and A level subjects.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.12 Students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Data on external examination results is available for most courses but not collected systematically. IELTS results for English language students clearly confirm that the majority make satisfactory progress in comparison to their starting points. Results on the university foundation programme demonstrate that the large majority complete this successfully and achieve satisfactory final grades. A level results were not available for inspectors.
- 3.13 Most students plan to enter university, and the record of university placements indicates that in the recent past a significant minority have successfully obtained places at British universities. However, recent data only indicates universities' offers

rather than places obtained, so it is not possible for the college to judge how successful it is in achieving its aim of university entrance for its students.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

- 4.1 Health and safety of the premises are satisfactory. Policies and procedures for health, safety and emergencies are clear and sufficient. There are satisfactory arrangements for managing the health and safety of students and staff. However, these arrangements are shared between more than one manager which leads to a lack of clarity over individual responsibilities.
- 4.2 Students and staff receive sufficient information on health and safety at induction and in their handbooks. Procedures for checking health and safety issues are systematic, including regular fire and building risk assessments. All checks are recorded and the majority of resulting actions are responded to promptly. However, records are not always kept of actions completed. Frequent fire drills and equipment checks are undertaken.
- 4.3 Emergency procedures are well planned. Emergency signage is clear throughout the college. First aid procedures are thorough, with sufficient trained first-aiders.
- 4.4 The college's premises are of a satisfactory quality and fit for purpose. They provide appropriately furnished, light and spacious teaching rooms, dining room and students' social area. However, the level of maintenance of a minority of areas, particularly the grounds of the college, is insufficient. For example, the steps into mobile classrooms are temporary and unsafe. During the inspection significant maintenance work was carried out in the building and the grounds which improved the appearance and quality of the premises.
- 4.5 Risk assessments are undertaken for external student activities. These are all recorded and available to group leaders. However, they are unsatisfactory and do not identify specific student characteristics or needs, such as the age group attending or whether any students have medical conditions.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.6 Admission and attendance records are satisfactory. Records are accurate. Admission information is thorough and well recorded. However, there is no process for monitoring files to ensure that they are up to date.
- 4.7 Attendance recording is systematic. Attendance monitoring is satisfactory and appropriate responses are made to absences, in line with Home Office requirements. Attendance rates across the year are satisfactory.
- 4.8 The college rules regarding lateness to lessons are appropriate but they are not well publicised. The college's policy requires that any lateness is recorded in registers. However, during the inspection students late to lessons were not appropriately recorded or challenged regarding their lateness.

- 4.9 Home Office regulations relating to Tier 4 visa students are well understood, and the college reports appropriately to the Home Office where appropriate.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.10 Pastoral support for students is good. There is a structured induction programme which covers all appropriate issues during the first week of a students' course. This prepares students well for living and studying in the UK.
- 4.11 All students attend weekly tutorials which cover both academic and welfare issues. They also have daily close contact time with house staff who are responsible for them in the boarding houses. This provides continuous access to staff, and students value highly the support they receive, particularly from house staff. Records of significant pastoral issues raised by students are maintained but they are not consistent and lack the detail which would be necessary if the issue required following up.
- 4.12 Relationships between students, and between staff and students, are good. There is a clear focus on integrating students from various cultures.
- 4.13 A good social, cultural and sports programme has recently been introduced. Students spoke positively about this as a way of mixing with other students. The programme enhances the educational experience of students. Satisfactory advice and guidance on careers and higher education is available to students. University entrance is discussed at the start of a student's course, and support is provided with the admissions process. A minority of students were not aware of the regular advice and guidance sessions.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.14 Safeguarding for students under 18 years is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient oversight of safeguarding. Important training has recently taken place to increase awareness of safeguarding issues, and the college's own procedures. In addition, all staff have undertaken formal training at an introductory level and confirm that they are aware of procedures to follow in the event of an issue arising.
- 4.15 An appropriately trained safeguarding lead is in place. However, they are a member of staff at Buckswood School and does not have sufficient time to monitor safeguarding procedures systematically. There is an assistant lead at the college but they have not yet received appropriate training. Safeguarding policies and procedures have recently been developed, but not all processes for ensuring the welfare of those under 18 years are in place. Risk assessments and attendance records are unsatisfactory and do not adequately identify vulnerable students or those under 18 years. In addition, they do not highlight those with particular medical or other associated needs. There are no special arrangements for monitoring the attendance of younger students or ensuring that they have appropriate levels of support.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.16 Residential accommodation is satisfactory. Arrangements for its management are appropriate. All students are located in two on-site boarding houses, one for male and one for female students. All meals are provided in the college dining room.
- 4.17 Well-trained and experienced house staff are available at all times, and liaise effectively with academic and welfare staff when necessary. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory, with the majority of students accommodated in single bedrooms. The house staff are involved in many of the social activities, encouraging students to actively participate in the life of the college.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are unsatisfactory. The proprietor oversees the operations of the college and is fully involved in the setting of its clear mission and educational direction. Members of the senior management team at Buckswood School have recently been given responsibilities to oversee specific college functions, including safeguarding, but they have limited time to monitor the college's performance closely. Weekly reports are provided to the proprietor on school issues, but they are limited in scope. The relationship between the proprietor and the senior college managers is good. However, he attends few formal meetings which limits his understanding of the college's performance and priorities for improvement.
- 5.2 The proprietor is aware of his statutory responsibilities for health and safety, welfare and safeguarding of students. He has recently signed off a large set of policies underpinning these and other key issues. However, most of the policies were originally written for the school and a minority need to be adapted to make them appropriate for the college. There is a very large number of policies, some of which overlap or cover related issues. This limits their clarity.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are unsatisfactory. A major reorganisation of the management team took place shortly before the inspection. This resulted from strategic planning at a senior level, but there was a little discussion with college staff about this process. As a result, there is confusion regarding the new management roles and the responsibilities undertaken by each of the managers. This has a negative impact on the motivation of staff.
- 5.4 Communication between staff and managers is insufficient. Until recently there have been few formal meetings at all staff levels, and therefore limited records of decisions taken or actions identified. There is a clear commitment across the management team to improve the college's performance, and managers and staff are aware of most of the areas in the college that need to be improved.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance is satisfactory. The collection and use of student feedback to identify issues for improvement is good. This is a relatively new system but its impact can be seen in examples of actions taken in response to this feedback. Teacher feedback is also collected. However, feedback generated in staff meetings is limited by the small number of such meetings. The analysis of student achievement data is poor. Results are not analysed systematically or used by managers to evaluate the college's performance.

- 5.6 Staff reviews and lesson observations of teachers are regular and result in clear development targets. However, there is no policy to determine the number of lesson observations that should be undertaken. Staff training activities are not clearly linked to the outcomes of appraisals and observations. However, in the last four months effective training activities have been undertaken by support staff and teachers, with an appropriate focus upon safeguarding and student welfare.
- 5.7 The complaints procedure is clear and comprehensive and includes access to an independent external adjudicator. All formal complaints are recorded thoroughly through to their resolution.

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

- 5.8 Staff recruitment is good. The selection of new staff is thorough and well managed. The safe recruitment policy provides appropriate procedures to follow in the selection and recruitment of staff, and is well implemented. All appropriate suitability checks are carried out for all staff, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, identity checks and personal references. There is a complete and up to date single central record of all suitability checks.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 The college's website is clear and comprehensive. It is supported by accurate information in college prospectuses. Certain images on the website are unrepresentative of the college and create unrealistic expectations. The college was responsive in providing all requested information to inspectors in connection with this inspection.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions required to meet the Standards

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

- Ensure that courses offered enable all students to learn and make progress [3].
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements are in place and are monitored and reviewed to keep all students safe [37].
- Ensure that the leadership of the college provides clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of education, the care of students and the fulfilment of the college's aims and ethos [40].

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Plan course programmes so that students' time at college is fully structured at all times, maintaining high attendance and motivation.
- Fully implement existing plans to strengthen initial assessment prior to and on entry.
- Ensure that risk assessments for external activities are specific to the activity, signed by the group leader, and make provisions for vulnerable students under 18 and those with medical conditions.
- Improve students' achievements in external examinations and use achievement data to evaluate the college's performance.
- Strengthen tutorials so that students' progress is monitored systematically and individual targets are set in order to improve learning.
- Increase the level of maintenance of the premises, including the external area, in order to improve safety and the appearance of the college
- Review all policies to ensure that they are appropriate for the college and do not overlap with other policies.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. 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

Mr Neil Haynes	Lead Inspector
Ms Sarah Colmar	Team Inspector