

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

College Reaccreditation Inspection

INSTITUTION: St Clare's, Oxford

ADDRESS: 139 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7AL

This inspection was conducted mainly at:
3 and 18 Bardwell Road, Oxford OX2 6SP

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mrs Paula Holloway - Principal

DATE OF INSPECTION: 11 and 12 November 2014

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Reaccreditation to be awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Accreditation to be withdrawn.

Date: 27 Nov 2014

1. Background to the institution

St Clare's, Oxford (SCO) is a co-educational, residential, international college. It was founded in 1953 to advance international education and understanding. Constituted as a charitable trust in 1964, it became a private company, limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1968. The college currently comprises two distinct academic institutions with the overarching SCO banner: a Sixth Form College and an International College. Both institutions are subject to SCO's ethos: a residential community that seeks to advance international education and understanding, bringing together students from as many countries and cultures as possible, so they can interact with each other in academic and non-academic settings, in a safe and tolerant environment.

SCO is overseen by the Principal who reports to a single Governing Body. Day-to-day operations at the International College are the responsibility of a separate team. However, several facilities and elements of general management are common to both institutions, for example: the Library, IT, health and safety, and buildings and maintenance.

SCO occupies 17 buildings distributed along, or near to, the Banbury Road. This is a busy local artery with residential, academic, retail, bank, café and restaurant, and office buildings, typically of Victorian and Edwardian origins. It is also a regular and frequent route for many local and national buses, including one of the Oxford Park & Ride options. The distance between SCO's most northerly and most southerly buildings is 1.3 miles. The Sixth Form College and the Library are approximately central in the SCO buildings distribution. The International College, at 3 and 18 Bardwell Road, is the most southerly, just over half a mile south of the Library, and one mile north of Oxford city centre.

All academic and English language courses were inspected by ISI in January 2012. The pre-International Baccalaureate and International Baccalaureate (IB) programme have been separately inspected by ISI, most recently in 2013. The boarding provision was inspected by OFSTED in November 2009. The British Council/Accreditation UK inspected the English language provision in October 2014. Copies of the most recent ISI and Accreditation UK reports were available to the inspector, and seen to be satisfactory. SCO has UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor status until 20 April 2015, and is licensed until 30 March 2017. SCO applied successfully to BAC for accreditation in 2010, with inspections in April 2010, and May 2011 to assess the academic courses at the International College on the Bardwell Road sites. The academic programmes at the International College, at Bardwell Road, were the focus of this BAC re-accreditation inspection.

Change to SCO's academic, administrative, and capital issues is driven by the Principal's Development Programme. This has been a rolling series of three-year programmes, focused on: Professionalism, Academic Achievement and Facilities. The latter is progressing well and due for completion in 2015, as was seen by the inspector in the form of the excellent Library, the sensitive development of a nearby large building within the Oxford conservation area, and the upgrading, decoratively and technically, of classrooms and student accommodation. SCO is currently looking for about a ten percent increase in student numbers in the medium term. SCO appears to have an increasingly fine reputation both within the UK and overseas.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The SCO Sixth Form College offers an IB programme. It is based at the 139-143 Banbury Road site, and offers courses mainly to younger students studying for their International Baccalaureate.

The SCO International College, at 3 and 18 Bardwell Road, offers three programmes for students who are mainly 18 plus. Each programme comprises a range of courses that allows a considerable mix of topics personalised for each individual student. In addition, English language courses are provided across the academic year. The three programmes comprise:

1. Liberal Arts - for American students to gain credits towards their home university degree studies;
2. English plus Academic Subjects (formerly Advanced Studies) - for international students. This caters mainly for pre-university and/or gap-year students from the EU. It is a hybrid programme combining EFL and academic subjects, similar to those subjects offered to students on Liberal Arts;
3. University Foundation Course - prepares international students with English language and study skills, and subject preparation they need in order to enter a British university or other HEI. Typically, these students have completed their secondary education, but are without GCE A-level qualifications.

There were 270 students enrolled at the SCO Sixth Form College, and 102 students at the SCO International College.

3. Inspection process

This inspection was carried out by one inspector over two days, and accompanied by a BAC Observer. Its scope was limited to provision for the predominantly 18 plus students in the two buildings at Bardwell Road, although the Sixth Form Centre and the Library also were visited.

Meetings were held with the SCO's Principal, Bursar, Human Resources Manager, Librarian, Estates Manager and Facilities Manager (Health and Safety). Meetings also were held with those staff with specific responsibility for the International College: the Course Director, Assistant Director, Office Manager, Admissions Registrar, Office Administrator, Accommodation Officer, Residential House Manager, Student Activities Organiser, Marketing and Sales Officer and Careers Advisor.

The inspector held meetings with a representative group of eight students and met with four tutors. The inspector also observed significant parts of four classes and spoke with those tutors.

The inspector viewed both the Bardwell Road buildings encompassing the main office, kitchen and canteen, staff and student common rooms, resource centre, teaching rooms, student and tutor work rooms, and a variety of student residential accommodation. At the Sixth Form College, the inspector saw several teaching and meeting rooms and the whole of the extensive Library and its IT-equipped study rooms. A separate, secure, private room was made available for the inspector, and the staff, tutors and students were readily available, helpful, and hospitable. The inspector gave an oral summary to the SCO Principal and the International College Course Director at the end of the inspection.

4. Inspection history:

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	14 and 15 April 2010
Interim	19 May 2011

PART B - JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The institution is effectively managed

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Regular and frequent meetings of both administrative and academic staff, minuted with responsibilities and actions, ensure excellent communication, monitoring and consequential progress.

2. The administration of the institution is effective

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The administration team in the International College office has developed good documentation for some of their important routine procedures.

Each of the office team was able to cover effectively for their colleague's absences.

The IT systems in use were effective, with appropriate levels of security access, and were securely archived.

3. **The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff**

- 3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. Yes No
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

All administrative staff have annual reviews and opportunities for appropriate internal and external training. Staff (and tutors) should be asked to update their CVs at regular intervals.

4. **Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

It is good practice to use a single-source for publicity material for both the SCO website and brochures. SCO engages many overseas agents to recruit prospective students. Appropriate contracts and briefings are in place, and SCO retains the sole right to accept/reject student applicants. Much of the marketing effort is attending overseas fairs, conferences, and exhibitions to recruit new agents.

5. **The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

- 5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students. Yes No
- 5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. Yes No
- 5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately. Yes No
- 5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. Yes No NA
- 5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Considerable efforts are made to ensure students are suitably well qualified, and counselled to opt for the most appropriate programme and course elements.

6. **There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality, requiring that they attend at least 80% of their scheduled classes. Yes No NA
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly. Yes No NA
- 6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is a well established and understood scheme of sequential verbal and written warnings for malpractice and inappropriate behaviour. Non-compliance results in the lowering of final course-assessment marks.

7. **The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

- 7.1 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate. Yes No
- 7.2 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. Yes No
- 7.3 The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. Yes No
- 7.4 There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution's response to the feedback to the student body. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Each student provides anonymous, formal, feedback including free text at the end of their course. Subsequent analysis is fed to all participating staff and tutors, and changes are made as appropriate. Every student has a personal tutor with whom there is a monthly meeting. Efforts are made to gain a high response to the formal feedback.

8. **The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**

- 8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance. Yes No
- 8.2 Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. Yes No
- 8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Frequent and regular staff and tutor meetings provide good opportunities for issues to be reported and discussed, with the opportunity for inclusion of relevant agenda items to appear for Senior Management Group meetings.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9. Academic management is effective

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9.1 | There is a suitably qualified and experienced academic manager or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.2 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.3 | The allocation of teachers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Tutors reported on the considerable support available, both for internal training and for resources. There is some spare capacity of classrooms. This allows students unable to climb stairs to study on the ground floor, the larger classes (maximum of 12) to be reasonably accommodated and special IT resources to be available. It is commendable that tutor meetings are included within tutors' paid employment hours.

10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable students to succeed

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow students to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.4 | Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.5 | Full-time courses requiring students to attend for 15 hours or more per week are time tabled over at least three days. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.6 | Any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.7 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of students are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Streaming of an online video failed during one observed class, possibly due to a weak WiFi signal. All students are encouraged to become increasingly independent learners in all aspects of their study. The students reported quick and comprehensive assignment feedback from tutors.

11. **Teachers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them**

- 11.1 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Yes No
- 11.2 Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. Yes No
- 11.3 The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation. Yes No
- 11.4 Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students. Yes No
- 11.5 Teachers respond to different learning needs of students where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. Yes No
- 11.6 Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Internal pedagogic training is provided.
SCO should consider additional monitoring of any younger less experienced tutors for support and/or training.

12. **The institution provides students and teachers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students and tutors praised the considerable resources made available and the prompt response to additional needs.

13. **Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored**

- 13.1 Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to students and teachers. Yes No
- 13.2 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. Yes No
- 13.3 Students are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement. Yes No
- 13.4 The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders. Yes No
- 13.5 Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. Yes No
- 13.6 Oral and written feedback is given to individual students on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. Yes No
- 13.7 Students have appropriate access outside class time to teachers or personal tutors for academic support. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Maximum class size is 12 students and, typically, is about eight.
All students regularly experience tutorials of one-to-one or one-to-two in the Oxford/Cambridge tradition.
Students have monthly meetings with their personal tutors.

14. **The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate**

- 14.1 For courses leading to the award of a UK degree, the institution has a formal agreement with a recognised UK degree-awarding body. Yes No NA
- 14.2 For courses leading to other UK awards, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator. Yes No NA
- 14.3 For courses leading to the award of an overseas degree, the institution has a formal partnership agreement with the overseas degree-awarding body, which is itself accredited by a recognised national agency. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

SCO has formal agreements with those overseas universities for which students gain credits towards their home-university courses. Regular visits are made by SCO staff to these overseas universities, and vice-versa.
External moderation and examination is by overseas home-university staff, tutors from Oxford Brookes University, Middlesex University and Reading University.

15. **There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards**

- 15.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the NQF/QCF and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level. Yes No NA
- 15.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. Yes No NA
- 15.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments _____

16. **There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment**

- 16.1 The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration. Yes No NA
- 16.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments _____

17. **There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education**

- 17.1 Students have access to advice from appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities. Yes No
- 17.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

There is excellent provision towards preparing students for research methodology in selection of appropriate universities and courses, as well as for higher degrees and subsequent employment.

The Careers Advisor produces a weekly newsletter of information for students.

The Library is well provided for this aspect of study and research, and has a careers-dedicated classroom.

Additional resource and support was available from Oxford University via their Trinity College link.

Students submit specific feedback on the careers advice and support they have received.

INSPECTION AREA - STUDENT WELFARE

18. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 18.1 | There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.2 | Students receive appropriate advice before arrival. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.3 | Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.4 | Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.5 | The institution has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Relevant material was straightforward and transparent, with strict compliance to rules - eg: attendance and punctuality. Each SCO residential accommodation building has a resident House Manager.

19. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 19.1 | International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.2 | International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.3 | Information and advice specific to international students continues to be available throughout the course of study. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.4 | Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

All students are Skype interviewed as part of the selection procedure. Great care is taken to clarify queries via further telephone and e-mails.

20. **The fair treatment of students is ensured**

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 20.1 | Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 20.2 | Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 20.3 | Students are advised of BAC's own complaints procedure. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There was evidence of the great care taken to counsel, at an early stage, student applicants about the most appropriate programme and constituent course elements for their particular skills, experience and aspirations.

21. **Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised**

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 21.1 | Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 21.2 | Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where students under 18 are accommodated. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 21.3 | Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of students and their property. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 21.4 | A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 21.5 | Separate accommodation blocks are provided for students under 18. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Residential accommodation comprises SCO's own provision, for which there is a range of options and facilities, and local Oxford home-stay. All accommodation is in Oxford and within walking distance, or a bus ride, from the SCO International College premises.

The International College students, staff, and tutors have access to the well equipped kitchen and canteen at 3 Bardwell Road, which is immediately opposite their teaching premises. This results in these three groups mixing and socialising in the relaxed environment.

22. **Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of students is ensured and the institution's relationship with hosts is properly managed**

- 22.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to the institution and back. Yes No
- 22.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution. Yes No
- 22.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. Yes No
- 22.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and students before and during the placement. Yes No
- 22.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Rigorous, regular inspections of home-stay accommodation are made according to clear guidelines. There is spare capacity for students to make free choices, and changes if necessary.

23. **The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on leisure activities in the area**

- 23.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. Yes No
- 23.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students. Yes No NA
- 23.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of students. Yes No NA
- 23.4 Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

The representative group of students were unanimous in universal praise for SCO's overall provision. Students would welcome opportunities to visit the Oxford Colleges and for interaction with those students. The SCO intra-net provides a valuable Student Calendar that identifies all social and academic events and deadlines.

INSPECTION AREA - PREMISES AND FACILITIES

24. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

24.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

24.2 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

SCO owns outright all but three of its 17 premises.

The leases on these three properties were seen, and the renewal dates are 2015, 2017 and 2021.

An additional large Edwardian building is currently undergoing considerable adaptation and is compliant to the local Oxford conservation area requirements.

There is some spare capacity within the existing provision, but Oxford is a plentiful source should there be an urgent need.

25. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

25.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. Yes No

25.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Yes No

25.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No NA

25.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No

25.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. Yes No

25.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. Yes No

25.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. Yes No

25.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The International College students have no access to the science laboratories used by IB students.

They do have a well equipped IT study suite which is safe and well maintained.

The buildings are in an excellent state of repair, fit for purpose, and with an ongoing programme of up-dating and refurbishment.

Several staff, tutors and students reported that the SCO permanent team of nine buildings and maintenance staff were most responsive to their needs.

There is a generous provision of notice boards that are well positioned, and with appropriate notices tidily displayed.

Some south-facing classrooms have blinds, and tutors and staff made use of sash-windows for ventilation.

SCO might consider laminating some south-facing window glass with anti-solar-gain film.

26. **Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered**

- 26.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. Yes No
- 26.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course. Yes No
- 26.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Converted Victorian and Edwardian buildings inevitably result in considerable variation in room size. With classes of 12 students, some rooms allowed little space for white board use, or free movement around the class. This issue might be alleviated with greater use of digital projectors, or installation of electronic blackboards.
All buildings are equipped with WiFi and with access to SCO's intra-net.

27. **There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff**

- 27.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. Yes No
- 27.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. Yes No
- 27.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.4 Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. Yes No
- 27.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

All the facilities are excellent, but especially the Library.
Library staff have dedicated office space, but it is small for this major resource.
The SCO International College have their own kitchen and canteen at 3 Bardwell Road. This provides an excellent range of high quality meals and drinks, with provision for special dietary needs.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Institution's strengths

The SCO ethos and its ongoing implementation, in spite of incurring timetabling challenges.
Governors that meet frequently, and provide an informed long-term reference source.
Regular, frequent meeting opportunities across all staff levels.
Highly qualified, experienced, and enthusiastic staff.
Common elements of all handbooks up-dated from single sources.
Low staff turn-over, providing excellent continuity for tutors and students.
Policy of long term investment, especially with respect to capital items and their maintenance.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
3.2 Initiate regular updating of staff and tutor CVs - perhaps at each annual review.	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input checked="" type="radio"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Institution's strengths

SCO's high reputation within the UK and overseas, especially the relationships with an increasing number of universities.
Continuity of available tutors, sourced from Oxford University and those part-time who otherwise practise commercially.
Excellent Library, IT and their staffing.
Considerable expertise, resource and extent of academic and employment advice and support.
Attractive, comfortable, well resourced teaching accommodation.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
10.1 Check WiFi signal strength in all classrooms, especially for streaming video material.	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input checked="" type="radio"/> Low

STUDENT WELFARE

Institution's strengths

Significant support in the continuity and care in all aspects of study, welfare and leisure activities.
Straightforward, transparent guidance and rules effectively implemented.
Quality and choice within SCO's residential provision and home-stay accommodation.
Student opportunities to mix socially and at work with their peers from a broad range of cultures and experiences.
Strong emphasis on health and safety, first-aid training, and a programme of updating staff and tutors.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Institution's strengths

Policy of long-term investment in extent and quality of provision.
In-house team of nine staff for management of buildings and maintenance.
Awareness of need for high quality environment, and sensitivity to conservation area requirements.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Staff to develop and extend documentation of procedures towards flow-charts for quick and easy reference.
Timetable larger classes to bigger rooms when available.
Tutors to increase use of IT audio-visual facilities.
Increase class observation of younger and less experienced tutors.
Explore ways and means to increase responses of student feedback.
Apply anti solar-gain film to some south-facing windows.
Increase Librarians' office space.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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