

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

KING'S SCHOOL OXFORD

St Joseph's Hall
Temple Road
Oxford
OX4 2UJ

PRINCIPAL: Simon Fenn, BA DipRSA**Previous Dates of BAC Visits:**

Preliminary Visit	25 October 1994
Full Inspection	28 February 1995
Interim Visit:	14 May 1998
Preliminary Visit	1 November 1999
Full Inspection	8 -9 March 2000
Full Inspection	17-18 March 2004
Full Inspection:	12-13 February 2008

BAC Inspection Team:

Reporting Inspector: Robin Laidlaw, MA, FRSA

Accreditation Status:**Accredited until March 2009**

**DATE OF CONSIDERATION BY
THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

3 APRIL 2008

Institutional Report
King's School Oxford
St Joseph's Hall
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1. Introduction

1.1 King's School Oxford was first accredited by BAC in 1985, when it was known as St Joseph's Hall. It is now one of three King's Schools, the others being English language schools in Beckenham and Bournemouth. Although the three schools promote themselves as a group, the Oxford School is owned by Touchload Ltd, in which King's and one of the original founders of St Joseph's Hall hold 50% shares. The Oxford School operates both as an English language school and as an independent further education college, with numbers in the year-round English language programme being more or less balanced by those in the FE section. The Principal stressed that the School is a single entity, rather than two operations which share premises. King's Oxford is not registered with DCSF as a school, and the FE section has a minimum enrolment age of 16. The English language section is accredited by the British Council.

1.2 The School was most recently re-inspected by BAC in March 2004. In the normal course of events, it would not have been due for re-inspection until March 2009, but BAC agreed to the Principal's request for a repeat of the 2000 and 2004 procedures, when there were simultaneous inspections by BAC of the FE programmes and by the British Council (now Accreditation UK) of the English language programmes. Accordingly, the BAC inspection was brought forward by a year. A number of areas covered by the Accreditation UK inspectors were not duplicated and several of the interviews with key staff were held jointly.

1.3 The academic programmes offered within the FE section come under three headings:

The Pre-Foundation Year (currently seven students), taking students from 16 years upwards, with an entry requirement of IELTS 4.5. It is a one-year course, offering study in six subject areas, including English language, and may lead to entry into either the Foundation Year or the A-level programme.

The Foundation Year (currently 65 students), taking students from 17 years upwards, with an entry requirement of IELTS 5.5. It is a one-year course, with pathways in Humanities, Science and Arts, and compulsory core units in Communications and Study Skills (CSS) and Data Handling and Information Technology. There is one specific link with Aberdeen University enabling science students to enter the first or second year of a BEng programme linked to the Oil and Gas Industry, but otherwise there are no contractual agreements with universities. The programme is widely accepted for entry by UK universities.

The A-Level Programme (currently 26 students), a two-year course taking students from 16 years upwards, with an entry requirement of IELTS 5.5. Subjects are grouped in clusters designed to lead to entry to three degree areas: mathematics, computing and engineering; social science, humanities, business and finance; art and

design, architecture and design-related courses. Students have been able to enter highly competitive HE programmes, and current students have received offers from Cambridge, Imperial College and UCL.

- 1.4 All of the students were from overseas, with significant proportions from Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Korea, West Africa and the Balkans. The total of 98 is slightly more than double that recorded at the time of the last inspection, with the growth spread across both the Foundation and the A-level courses.
- 1.5 The inspection took place over two days, and involved a single BAC Reporting Inspector working in collaboration with two inspectors from Accreditation UK. Interviews were held with the Principal, Vice Principal, senior teachers, Welfare Officer, Information Officer, Librarian and the Bursar, and the Inspector met a representative group of students from the three FE programmes. Twelve classes were observed across all three programmes.

2. Detailed Observations

2.1 Premises and Health and Safety

- 2.1.1 The School's premises comprise a unification into a single building of the original St Joseph's Hall, an Edwardian building which was originally a seminary, and the relatively modern purpose-built former St John Bosco Middle School. The School is located in quiet back streets on the south-eastern outskirts of Oxford, and is very conveniently close to both a public library and a swimming pool. The building was clean and well-maintained, and appears to be a very pleasant place to study. Some students commented on overcrowding, but no evidence of this was seen during the inspection.
- 2.1.2 The FE programmes are mainly taught in a cluster of classrooms on the second and third floors of the premises. Classrooms vary in size, but were all more than adequate for the numbers observed: the largest groups observed comprised nine students, the smallest one or two, with an average around five to six. In each of the classes there was reasonable room to allow for circulation and for direct interchange between the teacher and individual students. Most rooms were dedicated to specific subjects, with appropriate posters and other information on the walls. Since the last inspection, nine of the School's classrooms have been equipped with ceiling-mounted data projectors and interactive whiteboards, and these were seen in good use in four of the FE classrooms. The standard whiteboards elsewhere have been improved both in size and quality, as recommended at the last inspection.
- 2.1.3 There is a science laboratory on the ground floor. This was originally a chemistry laboratory and caused some concern on health and safety grounds in an earlier inspection. However, it is now only used for Physics, with practical Chemistry classes taking place off-site when required. All hazardous materials have been removed and the fume cupboard is used solely for storage. It is a suitable teaching area for up to eight students.

- 2.1.4 An art room has been created in the basement and forms a reasonably spaced and flexible area for teaching and creative work. There was some uncertainty as to whether oil paints and solvents were still used (a teacher said that they were and the management said that they were not, and the inspector did not see any evidence of them), but, in any case, it is recommended that the School should produce health and safety guidelines for this area, covering solvents, spray materials, power tools and sharp blades.
- 2.1.5 There are two IT suites. One is used solely for teaching and the other for teaching and self-access study. The computers are well-spaced and work stations are equipped with height adjustable chairs. The School has a wireless network giving fast broadband access, something praised by the FE students, most of whom have their own laptops. PCs for personal e-mails or recreational use are available in the cafeteria/common room. The College has a full-time Computer Technician, and the inspector was impressed by the speed with which a problem with a classroom system was resolved.
- 2.1.6 There is a small library/study room, which is staffed by a librarian in the afternoons. It is open for study until 9 pm on three evenings per week, something students said that they would like to see extended in a larger area, although they confirmed that they made regular use of the neighbouring public library as well as the Oxford Central Library. There is a reasonable range of books, although these are in locked cupboards except for the hours when the librarian is present. There is an adjacent Listening Centre. Although the School has not pursued the recommendation of the last report that the Centre should include subject-specific FE material, the FE students said that they still found this a valuable resource for their language development.
- 2.1.7 The main social area is a good-sized open space in the centre of the School, which serves both as a cafeteria and as a common room. There are also two outside sitting areas, one of which provides the only place for smoking. The food appeared to be of a good standard, although the FE students complained about the length of queues and the fact that the EFL students (whose lunch hour begins half an hour before theirs) had first choice of the available food.
- 2.1.8 Toilets were of a good standard. There is separate staff provision.
- 2.1.9 There is a comfortable staff room, used by both EFL and FE staff, something which is seen as contributing valuably to an informal exchange of ideas and experience.
- 2.1.10 The reception area is part of an open-plan office where three administrative staff are based, with adjacent individual offices for the Registrar and Bursar. The Principal's office is directly opposite the Reception counter, and this proximity undoubtedly contributes considerably to the close liaison evident amongst the management and administrative staff. The Vice Principal and senior teachers have offices within the teaching areas.
- 2.1.11 The School commissioned a Fire Risk Assessment in 2006, and has met all of the 60 or so recommendations for upgrading. Fire drills are held twice annually, the most recent being ten days before the inspection, when the building was cleared in three minutes. Teachers are given instructions on evacuation procedures, including the

need for class registers to be taken out to enable roll calls to be undertaken. It was suggested that visitors should be required to sign in and out of the building. The Principal said that this had been considered but had proved impractical because of the large numbers who visited in connection with the IELTS tests (the School is the test centre for the Oxford region). Responsibility for ensuring that the building is empty is shared by the Bursar and the Principal. Given the fairly complex layout of the premises and the number of levels involved, it is suggested that fire marshals might be usefully appointed in specific areas, particularly since the Principal is at times absent on marketing trips. Fire signage and emergency lighting are generally good and there is ample provision of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. The management is aware of one possible chokepoint in the evacuation route (a double door which is only half openable at a point where two streams of evacuating students would meet), and is looking at solutions.

- 2.1.12 There are three trained first-aiders with current certification. Their names and locations are advertised throughout the School. First aid boxes are kept in the kitchen and the Registrar's office and an accident/incident book is held at reception. A written Health and Safety Policy is issued to staff.
- 2.1.13 The kitchens are regularly inspected by the local Environmental Health Department, and staff have appropriate food handling certification.
- 2.1.14 There is an effective system to inform the Bursar of necessary maintenance, and PAT testing is regularly undertaken. However, the School has not undertaken a general risk assessment, and it is strongly recommended that this should be done promptly.
- 2.1.15 Overall, the premises were considered to be of a good standard, with the introduction of classroom IT representing a significant upgrading of the provision since the last inspection. There are excellent aspects of the health and safety provision, but the lack of a general risk assessment is a significant omission.

2.2 Management and Staffing

- 2.2.1 Although the Oxford School is part of the King's group, it operates primarily as an independent entity, with the Principal responsible to the Board of Touchload Ltd. The main collaborative area is that of marketing, particularly of English language programmes and courses for English language teachers, although there is a group prospectus which promotes the University Business Access programme at Bournemouth alongside the FE programmes in Oxford.
- 2.2.2 Within the School there is a fairly flat structure of academic management, with the Principal supported by a single Vice Principal/Director of Studies who covers both the FE and EFL components. Given the size and complexity of the operation and the regular absences of both the Principal and the Vice Principal on marketing trips, there would appear to be a danger of overload, particularly on the Vice-Principal who acts effectively as a personal tutor to all of the FE students, and is generally the one that students and staff turn to if a problem develops. At the same time, the Inspector recognised that all the evidence pointed to a well-managed and effective operation. The Principal acknowledged that the very considerable growth in student numbers in

the FE section imposed significant additional burdens, and that there was a need to keep the structure under review.

- 2.2.3 The Vice-Principal is supported in the FE programmes by two senior teachers, who have well-defined administrative roles, and can provide a degree of cover when the Vice Principal is absent. They certainly provide a potentially excellent resource if the School decides to increase the delegation of the Vice Principal's responsibilities.
- 2.2.4 There are 21 teaching staff in the FE section of the School. All have first degrees, and nine have post-graduate degrees. Two thirds of them, an unusually high proportion in a college of this kind, have Qualified Teacher Status and six have EFL teaching qualifications. None of them have permanent full-time contracts, but are appointed on an annual basis to teach on average something in excess of twenty hours per week. Nevertheless, allowing for recent appointments which reflect the expansion in student numbers, it is a very stable staff, with almost half of them having been in the College for five years or more, and a core of teachers whose appointments date back into the early or mid 1990s. The combination of a high level of academic and professional qualifications with experience, and the very evident commitment of the staff, amounts to a very strong foundation for the quality of teaching in the School and, to a large extent, counterbalances any concerns about the flat management structure.
- 2.2.5 Communication between management and the teaching staff and within the teaching staff is very good at both formal and informal levels. There are regular staff meetings, which are minuted and which staff are paid to attend. Lead tutors for each subject coordinate teaching across the programmes and student cohorts.
- 2.2.6 Staff qualifications are authenticated at the time of appointment, and signed copies of certificates are kept in staff files.
- 2.2.7 Timetabling and room allocation are well-managed, with classes allocated to rooms of appropriate size and with appropriate technology. Students attend for 30 x 40 minute classes each week (20 hours), and a 90% attendance level is required. Class registers are completed and were available for scrutiny. A senior teacher visits classrooms during the first period, and absences are then followed up by telephone. There is a seven stage disciplinary procedure for students who are not attending without permission or acceptable cause, progressing from a "friendly chat" with the Vice-Principal up to final warnings and possible exclusion by the Principal. There is good liaison with BIA through the Registrar.
- 2.2.8 The administrative team work closely and efficiently. There is a particular emphasis upon a prompt and well-informed response to enquiries whether by telephone, e-mail or (particularly in relation to the IELTS programmes) by visitors to the School. Student records are maintained by the use of CLASS software.
- 2.2.9 Staff have detailed and fully legal contracts, although the disciplinary and grievance procedures are set out in a separate document, *Particulars of Employment*, which is only available on application to the Principal. As this may, in itself, act as a deterrent to those considering whether to take up a grievance, it is suggested that it should be more generally available. PAYE deductions are made in accordance with statutory

requirements. A current Employer's Liability Insurance certificate was on display in the Reception area.

- 2.2.10 As noted above (2.2.8), there is a very thorough and efficient response to enquiries and applications for enrolment. Entry requirements are clearly stated in pre-enrolment material, and teachers confirmed that the English language requirements are now very rigorously applied. A deposit of £175 is required on enrolment, and a refund of £125 is made if a student provides evidence that he/she has been unable to get a visa.
- 2.2.11 The School produces its own prospectuses which are complemented by those put out by the King's group. The School's academic courses prospectus gives a very fair and informative introduction to the programmes and the physical environment, and avoids giving any misleading impression of a relationship with better known Oxford institutions. An "exploded" image of the buildings is particularly helpful in ensuring that students know what sort of institution to expect. None of those questioned felt that they had gained a false impression or were disappointed to find that they were not in a college of the University. There is also an attractive website, with easily accessible information.
- 2.2.12 The School holds licences from CLA, NLA, ERA and the Performing Rights Society. It is registered with the Information Commissioners Office.
- 2.2.13 The Inspector considered the quality of management and staffing to be excellent.

2.3 Student Welfare

- 2.3.1 The School has recently appointed a Welfare Officer. She is a qualified nurse, although she is at pains to emphasise that she is not employed in this role. Nevertheless, one of her valuable talents is undoubtedly the ability to advise on the need for medical attention where it is required, and is available to accompany students to a hospital or medical centre. The level of liaison between her and the academic staff, in particular, is impressive; where a student is underperforming, she is likely to be involved in at least the preliminary stages of any corrective or disciplinary procedures, and sees herself very much as a facilitator in enabling issues to be resolved. She is available to see students on a 1:1 basis every Monday, and expects to arrange to see every student individually during the course of a semester.
- 2.3.2 She is also assembling a bank of advisory materials for students, covering areas such as coping with the stress of study and revision or life in Oxford, as well as making available health-related materials produced by NHS Direct ("Managing a Cold", for instance). There is good liaison with relevant local bodies, notably the Crime Reduction and Accident Prevention sections of Thames Valley Police. The School participates in an Oxford-wide forum of those concerned with overseas students, which is now focussing on the development of a "Safe Haven" in Borders bookshop in the centre of the city, which will provide support and refuge for any student in difficulties.

- 2.3.3. Newly arrived students have a two-day induction period, covering both academic and non-academic issues, as well as an introduction to Oxford. Students commented that they felt that they were overloaded with information at a time when they were primarily anxious to focus on the academic aspects, and suggested that a guide to the social and cultural life of Oxford could be more usefully provided (or repeated) at a slightly later date.
- 2.3.4 The School produces a Sixth Form Student Guide. Although it describes the School (justifiably) as “an informal, warm and friendly college”, the Guide itself does not particularly give this impression, with not a great deal to counterbalance the essential information and regulatory content. In addition, it does not always reflect the nature of the student body; for instance, the section dealing with “Breaks and Bank Holidays” (1c) only mentions Christian holidays, which could be seen as discriminatory. The document was probably reasonably adequate when student numbers were smaller and personal contact with staff easier, but it is suggested that a ‘warmer and friendlier’ document would now be more appropriate.
- 2.3.5 All staff have completed CRB enhanced disclosure.
- 2.3.6 The School does not have its own residential accommodation, and the majority of students are in homestay accommodation arranged by the School. A sample was inspected by an Accreditation UK Inspector, and found to be of a variable but never less than satisfactory standard. One issue raised by an FE student related to the level of advice given to those moving into flats or shared houses, particularly on issues such as Council Tax or television licences (and, one would imagine, security deposits). It is recommended that the School should produce an advisory leaflet to ensure that students understand the full cost (both in time and money) of moving into self-catering accommodation.
- 2.3.7 The School organises a social programme, although the FE students complained that this was repetitive and aimed primarily at the EFL students. The School has an agreement to allow students to make use of the extensive sports facilities at Oxford Brookes University.
- 2.3.8 The School has fully considered its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act. While the nature of the premises means that it would be impractical to attempt to provide full access for those with severely limited mobility, there are clear guidelines to staff to ensure that those with disabilities are given support and are protected from discrimination. It includes excellent common sense advice (such as coming from behind the reception counter when dealing with someone of restricted growth or in a wheelchair, or finding a quiet place to talk to someone with hearing difficulties) and more generally places a responsibility upon staff “to do our best to ensure that we offer the same level of service to all people”.
- 2.3.9 Overall, the Inspector considered the student welfare provision to be excellent.

2.4 Quality Management

- 2.4.1 As already noted, there are specific and clearly stated entry requirements in the pre-enrolment material supplied to potential students. Teachers confirmed that these were rigorously applied, including the English language requirements. Nevertheless, students are tested in both English language and numeracy during the induction period and could, potentially, be required to transfer to the Pre-Foundation programme or to take a pre-sessional English language course.
- 2.4.2 Students on the A-level programme are normally restricted to a choice of three subjects from a relatively restricted total offering of eight, which are, in turn, clustered around three broad pathways to HE entrance. Unusually, the School states clearly that it does not prepare students for entry to medical degrees. While it is not the practice of most independent sixth form colleges, the restriction in the number of A-level subjects on offer has the considerable benefit of ensuring numbers which allow more than one teacher to be employed in each subject area, so avoiding the isolation of “one teacher subjects” which frequently slip through quality management structures elsewhere. It also emphasises that A-level is not an end in itself but a pathway into higher education. All students take six “tester” programmes in the first three weeks of enrolment before settling on their final choices.
- 2.4.3 Both A-level and Foundation students take a core programme in Communication and Study Skills (CSS), as well as IELTS preparation. To a considerable extent, the CSS classes replace much of what otherwise would be expected from a personal tutor system, with students in relatively small groups (typically six to eight) discussing areas such as study techniques or the development of personal statements for UCAS submissions. They are also encouraged to be aware of the range of academic and personal skills required for success in higher education. The Vice Principal sees each student individually during each semester, and is available to meet students at need. However, there is considerable pressure on her time, and it is suggested that consideration should be given to the appointment of a personal tutor to each of the ten cohorts which make up the FE enrolment. Apart from easing the burden on the Vice Principal (admittedly, one which she appears to bear very willingly, cheerfully and effectively), such a system would provide a very useful channel for student feedback (see 2.4.10 below).
- 2.4.4 Progress testing of students takes place in accordance with a schedule established at the start of the academic year. Students in the A-level programme undertake weekly progress tests under examination conditions, with the marks and grades submitted to the Vice Principal for evaluation of progress. Foundation students undertake regular assignments and have an end of semester examination. Assignments and examinations are double marked to ensure fairness and consistency.
- 2.4.5 Tutors complete at least two sets of reports on students during the academic year, and these are sent to parents and agents. Apart from textual comment and test or examination results, they cover areas such as attendance, effort, punctuality, use of English and give a grade on a scale of A to E. While these grades are explained on the back of the report, it is odd that this scale does not relate to the grading system used in the Foundation course (no award, pass, merit pass and starred merit pass), and

it is suggested that the School should consider using one set of grades for reports and final awards. It is also recommended that at least where students have received provisional offers from universities, the grades should be compared with the final targets set for entrance.

- 2.4.6 The School provides a range of measures to support students who are failing to achieve the required standards. These can be “disciplinary”, including a requirement for supervised homework, but are more likely to involve 1:1 counselling and support. Very usefully, the Librarian was an FE lecturer of considerable experience, and is available to provide help with essay writing and research.
- 2.4.7 Results in A-level subjects show a marked contrast between the two major subject science areas, Maths and Physics, where 75% of the students gained A grades, and some of the smaller subject areas: the results in Politics, Geography and Computer Studies included no A or B grades, for instance. Results in the other large subject area, Economics, were very respectable, with 50% A-B grades, and just under 90% gaining A-C.
- 2.4.8 Foundation Year results were at a level where most of the students gained entrance to very well-established universities. During the visit, the School received an e-mail from the Admissions Selector for the BEng programme at Aberdeen, identifying students who had gone on from last year’s Foundation programme as potential “firsts”, and adding that “if you have more students like these we would be delighted to try and look after them”.
- 2.4.9 There is an excellent Foundation Year Handbook, which sets out learning outcomes both in terms of subject-specific knowledge and skills and “intellectual skills and expectations”. It is accompanied by an equally well-written Assessment Handbook, giving guidance to teachers and markers on criteria and grading, as well as emphasising the need for teachers to ensure that students understand the concept and unacceptability of plagiarism. The School has developed a particularly useful technique to identify plagiarised work, by requiring each extended assignment to be accompanied by a 250-word summary, something which would be difficult to achieve without an understanding of what went before. The final gradings on the course are subject to moderation by the School’s Foundation Course Advisory Board, which consists of two former HE staff, one in Communications and one in Business Studies, and a retired Head of Sixth Form with an IT specialisation.
- 2.4.10 The School has discontinued its practice of issuing end of course questionnaires to Sixth Form students, taking the view that by this stage in their course staff should be well-aware of student opinion. Given the growth in numbers, it is suggested that the School would find it valuable to meet students on a more formal and regular basis to elicit opinion at intervals during their period of study. This could be fairly easily done by setting aside a half hour in the timetable once or twice a term, when a tutor or senior manager could meet them in their separate cohorts to discuss general matters.
- 2.4.11 As already noted at (2.2.5), there are regular staff meetings. Agendas include discussions of individual students as well as more general course matters. Normally one of the meetings leads to a recorded “Annual Reflection”, which reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the previous year and sets out targets for the following

year. This did not take place in 2007 for a number of reasons, but it is strongly recommended that the practice should be reinstated in the future.

- 2.4.12 Newly appointed teachers are given a great deal of support, both from other teachers in the subject area and from the Vice Principal, who undertakes class observation. However, the Vice Principal accepts that, though it is desirable, she simply does not have time to undertake regular observation of established teaching staff or to hold formal development meetings with them. Given the growth in staff numbers, it is recommended that this should be reviewed.
- 2.4.13 The School makes a reasonably generous allocation of funds for staff development and training, having developed a draft policy on payments for trial implementation in the current year. This applies to both teachers and non-teaching staff.
- 2.4.14 There are many excellent aspects of quality management in the School, notably the excellent assessment and moderation procedures in the Foundation programme. However, there are matters which the School is recommended to address, including student feedback and the observation and annual review of established teaching staff.

2.5 Teaching and Learning: Delivery and Resources

- 2.5.1 Twelve classes were observed during the inspection. These were across all three programmes and eight subjects. There was an impressively consistent high level of teaching and learning throughout.
- 2.5.2 The School is very clear in its documentation as to what sort of learning and teaching it expects, for instance, active learner participation, an emphasis on the skills to underpin independent study, the ability to research and produce extensive pieces of academic writing, to make coherent oral presentations and to approach material from a critical viewpoint. It would be true to say that there was evidence that these aims underlay the approach of teachers in every class observed. It is therefore perhaps unnecessarily harsh to point out that the schemes of work and the lesson plans which were prepared by each subject teacher did not make explicit reference to learning outcomes, but rather focussed on covering the syllabus. It may well be that the desired approach is so embedded in the ethos of the School that these things can be left unstated, but it might be worth considering whether they should be made more explicit in course planning.
- 2.5.3 In addition to a high degree of competence in their subject areas, there were specific examples of good practice shown widely by teachers in the classroom:
- consistent sensitivity to the language limitations of students; teachers checked on understanding and were at pains to explain any relevant idiomatic phrase or new item of vocabulary;
 - well-directed questioning and use of students to make short presentations, ensuring that there were no inactive participants;
 - meticulous use of the standard whiteboards – well-written and well-planned presentations, and a listing of new items of vocabulary;

- skilful use of the interactive whiteboards, particularly for flow charts and theoretical modelling;
 - lesson planning which allowed adequate time for revision without ever becoming tedious.
- 2.5.4 Students praised the detailed feedback which they received on their written work. However, from the majority of the samples seen during the visit, there was no evidence that the marks awarded were related either to the assessment objectives of the examination boards or the learning outcomes listed in the Foundation Course Handbook. There was an excellent example of how this could be done in the marking of the CSS formative essay which students undertake early in their programmes. It is recommended that the approach to marking and written feedback should be reviewed to give greater guidance on and analysis of student strengths and weaknesses in the context of the criteria by which they will ultimately be evaluated. It is also recommended that there should be a School-wide policy on the correction of spelling, grammar and choice of vocabulary when marking written work.
- 2.5.5 The planning of the Foundation programme to produce a coherent and workable whole is particularly impressive. There is an excellent balance between course content and skills – very wisely, the course is planned to cover a restricted number of elements of A-level syllabuses in depth rather than attempting to rush through the whole thing at a superficial level. One change which has occurred since the last inspection is that students now take the IELTS test at an early stage in their course, after a relatively short intensive period of preparation. This not only raises their ability to perform in the classroom but also ensures that they have the safety net of retaking it within a reasonable period if necessary; apparently one student last year was unable to take up an offered place at LSE after failing to get the necessary IELTS score.
- 2.5.6 The Library holds class sets of coursebooks, which students borrow (against a deposit of £20). Accordingly most students had the required books with them in the classes observed. There appeared to be some variation in the discipline with which students took notes, some having well-ordered files and others writing on loose sheets of paper.
- 2.5.7 The Library holds a well-organised basic stock of material related to the FE courses, as well as material suited to EFL students. The Librarian is able to supplement the holdings when teachers inform her of an imminent assignment topic, and students make good use of the internet access in the adjoining IT suite. Students are introduced to the local libraries, and confirmed that they made good use of them.
- 2.5.8 General advice and information on university applications is given in the CSS classes. Those observed during the inspection were at a stage where students were considering personal statements. It was impressive that they were being encouraged to reflect on the skills acquired during their study in the School as suitable elements for inclusion in the statements. Individual help on the choice of HE programmes and institutions is given by the Vice Principal and subject teachers. The process was very warmly praised by students, and the results in terms of the universities which have accepted the School's students from both programmes testifies to its effectiveness.

2.5.9 Overall, the teaching and learning provision was considered to be excellent.

3. Requirements and Recommendations to the College

3.1 Requirements before accreditation can be recommended

3.1.1 There were no such requirements.

3.2 Requirements to be met before the next inspection

3.2.1 A general risk assessment should be undertaken. (2.1.14)

3.3 Recommendations for consideration by the institution

3.3.1 Develop health and safety guidelines for the art room. (2.1.4)

3.3.2 Train fire marshals to assist in ensuring that the premises are cleared. (2.1.11)

3.3.3 Make details of the disciplinary and grievance procedures more readily available to staff. (2.2.9)

3.3.4 Revise the Sixth Form Student Guide. (2.3.4)

3.3.5 Produce an advisory leaflet for students considering moving into self-catering accommodation. (2.3.6)

3.3.6 Consider the development of wider staff involvement in personal tutoring. (2.4.3)

3.3.7 Use a standard set of grades for reports and final awards in the Foundation programme. (2.4.5)

3.3.8 Use the requirements set by universities in provisional offers as targets in reports. (2.4.5)

3.3.9 Develop a means of eliciting student opinion on a regular basis. (2.4.10)

3.3.10 Reinstate the “Annual Reflection”. (2.4.11)

3.3.11 Develop procedures for teaching observation and annual review of teachers. (2.4.12)

3.3.12 Consider including explicit reference to learning outcomes in schemes of work (2.5.2)

3.3.13 Review the procedures for written feedback on assignments. (2.5.4)

4. Recommendation to the Accreditation Committee

4.1 The further education section of King’s School Oxford has more than doubled in size since the last inspection. It has been very successful in enabling its students to fulfil

their ambitions to enter British higher education in highly competitive areas. The School is well-managed and has very considerable strengths in both its academic and administrative staff.

- 4.2 The Accreditation Committee agreed that King's School Oxford should be awarded re-accreditation for four years, with an interim mid-way through the accreditation period. It will be expected that the College will work towards meeting the requirement listed in section 3.2 and consider the recommendations in section 3.3, and confirmatory evidence will be required at the time of the interim visit, as well as considering the College's compliance with statutory requirements and assessing any major changes that have occurred.

APPROVED FOR ISSUE TO THE PRINCIPAL OF

KING'S SCHOOL OXFORD

3 APRIL 2008

Please note: this summary may be published *as a whole* separately from the full Institutional Report.

King's School Oxford was first accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education in 1985. It was most recently re-inspected in February 2008.

The School was considered overall to offer an excellent standard of provision. It is well-managed and has very considerable strengths in both its academic and administrative staff. The premises were considered to be of a good standard, with the introduction of classroom IT representing a significant upgrading of the provision. There was an impressively consistent high level of teaching and learning throughout. Students appreciated the assistance they received in achieving entry to HE institutions; the School has been very successful in enabling its students to fulfil their ambitions to enter British higher education in highly competitive areas.

King's School Oxford was awarded continuing accreditation in April 2008.