



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

MONITORING VISIT

ENGLISH IN CHESTER

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Principal	Mr Nigel Paramor
Proprietor	Mr Richard Day
Age Range	10+
Total number of students	138
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 16 16-17: 28 18+: 94 EFL only: 138
Inspection date	28 Apr 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 English in Chester is a private language school in the centre of Chester. It was established in 1976 by its owner who also acts as marketing director. The school is a private company limited by guarantee. The school is run by the principal supported by a management team. The school's aim is to help students and partners to develop the English language and communication skills they need as part of the learning community and to help them operate more effectively and independently in a global environment.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has leased an adjoining building which offers five additional classrooms as well as staff and student common areas.
- 1.3 The school offers all levels of General English and externally certified examination courses which operate on a continuous enrolment basis. Courses for young and older learners, business and professional people, as well as specific programmes for closed groups, are also available.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 138 students on roll which included classes for students aged above 18 and closed groups of Mexican Young Learners and Swiss High School students aged under 16. Students come from a wide range of countries with the large majority from Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Approximately 60 per cent of students are male with one-third being under 18. No student has been identified as having special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four students were studying on Tier 4 visas at the time of inspection.
- 1.5 The school was last inspected on 23 April 2013 when it met all the key standards and the quality of education exceeded expectations.
- 1.6 The recommendation from the previous report is:
 - Increase the use of appropriate technologies in class-based lessons to enhance and enrich learning.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 23 April 2013 the language school was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Initial diagnostic assessment and needs' analyses are used very effectively to place students in appropriate classes. Programmes and activities are carefully matched to students' needs and meet Home Office requirements for Tier 4 students. Teaching is excellent and staff are sensitive to the individual needs of students. New technologies are used effectively in class to enrich learning; activities are varied and students are engaged and motivated. Progress is carefully monitored throughout the course and students are supported through regular and effective tutorials. Marking of student work is generally good though some work lacks comments on how to improve. Results of external examinations and overall progress are excellent. Students express a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of their course and their outcomes.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The school has highly effective arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. The school buildings are well-maintained and comprehensive measures are taken in regard to fire safety and first aid. Registration and attendance records are very well managed and procedures are in place for reporting Tier 4 absences to the Home Office if required. Pastoral care is a strength of the school and students report feeling very well supported. Safeguarding measures are meticulous and the school fulfils its duty to a very high standard. All staff understand their obligations in regard to keeping students safe.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Management is successful in securing well-qualified and experienced staff. High-quality and regular self-assessment identifies areas for improvement, which, together with sound financial input and regular staff training, ensure that the school's aims and ethos are met to a very high standard. Relationships throughout the school are harmonious.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Increase the use of appropriate technologies in class-based lessons to enrich learning.
- 3.3 Excellent progress has been made against this recommendation. The school has invested heavily in carefully-selected, up-to-date technologies and educational software and increased the use of technology in class-based lessons to enrich learning. All staff have received professional training and the majority are now taking advantage of the new technology when planning and delivering lessons. As a result teachers have use of a wider range of resources to meet the needs of their learners.
- 3.4 There is a suitable curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. Initial assessment and course provision is excellent. Initial diagnostic assessments and needs' analyses are specific to the well-structured and flexible courses, ensuring that students are placed in appropriate classes. The school's e-learning platform, afternoon options and activities ensure that individual needs are very well-catered for. Support and outcomes for students are excellent with the result that student satisfaction is very high and withdrawals are very low. Courses and qualifications on offer to Tier 4 students meet Home Office requirements.
- 3.5 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Tutors demonstrate very good understanding of the subject matter being taught. They make excellent use of assessments and needs analyses in their planning and are sensitive to individual student needs. The teaching of functional skills is consistently good. Activities are varied and new technology is appropriately used to enhance learning and engage students. Lessons are well-paced and interesting; students are engaged and eager to participate. Oral feedback in class is constructive and offers support as well as suggestions for improvement. The marking of student work is good but does not always include constructive comments on how to improve. Assessments make use of appropriate external references of attainment. In interviews students expressed a very high level of satisfaction with their teachers and feel that they are not only improving their language skills but are also gaining confidence to put these skills into practice outside the classroom. Hence outcomes for students are excellent.
- 3.6 Student progress is excellent. Results of external examinations show a very high success rate at all levels in relation to starting points. Regular tutorials monitor the outcomes of assessments throughout the students' course of study and offer ways to

improve. Suggestions are given for further targeted practice using the e-learning platform which encourages students to become independent learners. Learning goals are reached or exceeded in the agreed timescales. In questionnaires and interviews, students expressed a very high level of satisfaction with their progress. The inspection process supports this view.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The school has highly effective arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students and to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Nine fire marshals and five first aiders have received appropriate training. External activities are supported by detailed risk assessments.
- 4.3 School buildings, including residential accommodation, are well-maintained, fit for purpose and maintained with careful regard to cleanliness and health and safety.
- 4.4 Admission and attendance registers are meticulously kept and special regard is paid to under-18 and Tier 4 students, who are highlighted on registers. Any absences are immediately followed up. The school has a very high attendance rate. A clear system is in place for reporting absences by Tier 4 students in line with Home Office policy.
- 4.5 Pastoral support is excellent and a real strength of the school. Students report that the school offers a very supportive and safe environment and that all staff are friendly and approachable. Induction programmes, including student handbooks, are tailored to the requirements of individual courses and students receive comprehensive information to enable them to settle quickly into their programmes of study. There is an imaginative and extensive social programme which has a high uptake. Students feel their pastoral needs are very well met and inspectors support this view.
- 4.6 Safeguarding procedures are excellent. The school has covered all aspects of the new safeguarding requirements in great detail, fulfilling its duty to a very high standard. Arrangements have regard to official guidance. All staff have at least level 1 safeguard training and two senior members are trained to level 3. Training is ongoing through regular staff meetings. All staff understand their obligations and responsibilities, ensuring that the school is a safe environment for all students, particularly those under the age of 18. The school has very good links with the Local Safeguarding Board.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The school benefits from a very supportive, strong and cohesive leadership and management team. The principal provides appropriate policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Relationships between the principal and senior staff are excellent. Regular management and staff meetings ensure staff are well-informed on all matters. Self-evaluation is used effectively to evaluate strengths as well as priorities for the future. A quality improvement plan, which reflects and drives a culture of continuous improvement, is regularly updated. There is a clear educational direction and high standards are maintained in all areas of the school's operation. Judicious financial input into facilities and resources provides high quality education and a harmonious working environment.
- 5.3 The principal is successful in securing and supporting highly qualified and experienced teachers. Appraisals, lesson and peer observations take place regularly and the school is generous in funding any training needed to ensure that the very high standards in the school continue to be met. All staff have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the results are recorded accurately.
- 5.4 Quality assurance arrangements are excellent. Analysis of regular student questionnaires and academic progress feed into action plans which result in securing appropriate improvements in the quality of the provision. Self-evaluation is a strength and makes an important contribution to improving student outcomes. The complaints procedure is clear and is supported by independent adjudication if required.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The language school has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendation for further improvement

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the language school should:

- Ensure that the marking of student work includes helpful comments to guide improvement.

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. 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 language school.

Inspectors

Mrs. Lynne Heath	Lead Inspector
Ms Valerie Craven	Team Inspector
Mr Martin Eays	Team Inspector