



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

ABC SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Full Name	ABC School of English
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Website	www.abcschool.co.uk
Director of Studies	Ms Sue Rao
Proprietors	Ms Sue Rao and Ms Bozena Grzelak
Age Range	11-65
Total number of students	55
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 18: 8 18+: 47 EFL only: 55
Inspection date	08 July 2014

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.

An extended monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the quality 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. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

CONTENTS

	Page 1
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	6
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	7
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	9

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Founded in 2002, ABC School of English is a privately owned language school based in central London. Two proprietors adopt the roles of director of studies and marketing director respectively and are supported by a small team in the school's mission of delivering quality English language provision in a personal, friendly, caring and positive learning environment. The school offers weekly enrolments 48 weeks of the year for general English and English language classes taught through a direct method.
- 1.2 At the time of the monitoring visit there were 55 students enrolled in the language school, none of whom were on a Tier 4 visa. The majority of students come from Russia, Brazil or Italy with the remainder coming predominately from Japan, France, Colombia, Poland and Turkey. There are broadly equal numbers of male and female students. All courses are available to juniors as well as adults and these students are taught together in the same classes. There are no special arrangements for juniors in relation to course provision or social programme.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were no students enrolled with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The language school is not able to accept students with physical disabilities.
- 1.4 This monitoring visit has been extended due to a change of 20% or more of the permanent teaching staff. For this reason, Section 3 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail. At the previous inspection in September 2012 the language school was found to meet expectations and the quality of education was found to have been maintained at the subsequent monitoring visit in July 2013.
- 1.5 The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Collate information about progress and attainment for all students which can be used to inform tutorials and set targets for both long and short-term students.
 - Further develop the quality of education through the use of a systematic development plan, informed by data including student and staff feedback.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 23 July 2013 the language school was found to meet expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. Students are tested on arrival and placed accurately according to their level. The option to experience trial lessons contributes to students choosing the right method of learning for them. Teaching is good and meets students' needs. Students are highly motivated and participate well in class. Progress is assessed regularly through testing and tutorials, and success rates are very good. There is a social enrichment programme available to provide increased opportunities to practise English but options are very limited for juniors in this respect.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. The school discharges all its responsibilities accordingly in relation to health and safety, fire safety and first aid, providing a safe and comfortable environment for its students. Effective policies and risk assessments are carried out contributing to the students' well-being. The school enjoys a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and pastoral support for students is good. A dedicated welfare officer is available on request and all staff have positive, supportive relationships with students. Effective processes are in place for the accurate maintenance of admission and attendance records. Attendance rates are good and any absence is followed-up promptly. However, punctuality could be better. The school meets all its legal obligations in relation to the care of juniors.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. Responsibilities are clearly defined and management provides a friendly, supportive culture in which their teams operate effectively. Staff records are well maintained and staff receive feedback and development opportunities through both formal and informal channels. Thorough mechanisms for quality assurance are in place in the form of student questionnaires and lesson observations. Although a basic development plan has been produced it does not make systematic use of formalised feedback from staff and students and does not allow for structured future planning.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Collate information about progress and attainment for all students which can be used to inform tutorials and set targets for both long and short-term students.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made against this recommendation. Students enrolled for eight weeks or more receive an initial tutorial four weeks into their course and then every six to eight weeks thereafter. These tutorials include valuable feedback from their teachers and the results of any tests taken during that period. Progress across all four language skills is reviewed, suggestions for self-study provided and negotiated targets are set. This enables students to both understand the progress they have made and make best endeavours towards further progress. Short-term students have the opportunity to request tutorials but these are not routinely provided and therefore a minority of students still do not benefit from detailed analysis of their progress.
- 3.4 The school has a clear statement of its curriculum arrangements, and the courses offered are appropriate to the needs of the students attending. The majority of students are interested in developing their communication skills and the courses place particular emphasis on this. Initial assessment is good. The school uses a precisely calibrated oral entry test for the direct method so students' levels are accurately identified. Although the placement test is effective in placing students at the right level in the majority of instances, if a student is identified as needing to transfer between levels, this is easily done. General English students are accurately placed according to an assessment of grammar and reading skills into a level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Students who need support with their English receive appropriate support. Teachers use suitable methods to reinforce the use of English. Although there have never been any students with SEND enrolled at the school to date, it makes provision for this by a policy statement asking students to self-identify and then offering support accordingly.
- 3.5 Teaching is good. The increase in the number of teachers has had a positive impact on the progress made by the students. All Standards are met. In general English lessons teachers have appropriate knowledge of their subject, plan well and successfully combine pair work, whole class work and instruction. Lessons are well-balanced, students' interest is maintained and they concentrate well. Students respond correctly to directed questions and participate enthusiastically. In the direct method lessons, teachers are well-trained to deliver the method effectively to develop students' skills. Lessons are fast paced, and students are highly motivated

and involved, and as a result make good progress. Teachers are adept at encouraging students to participate with confidence. Errors are assiduously corrected and students are clear about how to rectify their mistakes. Teachers reinforce students' learning by effective and constant repetition of key phrases. This results in positive outcomes for the great majority of students. Success rates in the weekly tests and direct method stage tests are very high.

- 3.6 Resources for learning are satisfactory, and are well suited to delivery of the direct method. Teachers are very competent in the delivery of this method and use the prompts provided by the course book effectively to ensure students are interested and engaged. Teachers in general English classes plan lessons to take account of different cultures and aptitudes and students report that they have the opportunity to both learn about British culture and share their own. However, although dedicated resource books for general English classes are available, a lack of resources in the classroom such as audio equipment, interactive whiteboards, and tablets limits learning activities for this group of students.
- 3.7 Assessment of students is good. Regular and frequent testing ensures students are well informed of their achievement. Students are provided with summary records of the results of both weekly and stage tests where relevant, further ensuring they are aware of progress throughout their entire course. Students are also given the opportunity to request detailed feedback based on these tests in the form of a written report. However, this opportunity is not consistently taken up and as a result all students do not benefit from this level of feedback. Trial lessons give students the opportunity to select the correct teaching method for them and students report that they feel they are on the right course and have been placed at an appropriate level. Progress test results confirm that the vast majority of students progress to the next level within the expected time frame.
- 3.8 Although there were no students on Tier 4 visas during the monitoring visit, the language school provides courses which lead to approved outcomes for any such students wishing to enrol.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 Effective measures are in place to ensure health and safety, fire safety and the provision of first aid. The policies meet requirements and their implementation is monitored carefully by the management. The school has a dedicated first aid person and conducts regular fire drills. The building is in a good state of repair and furniture is fit for purpose, although the majority of classrooms are small and limit the range of learning activity. There are sufficient washrooms for the number of students enrolled. The language school does not have an on-site cafeteria but there are many easily accessible outlets for food and drink in the immediate vicinity.
- 4.3 The school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers. Class registers contain useful information in relation to student age and visa status enabling administrative staff to quickly identify students in need of immediate action. They are completed promptly and reviewed by reception staff on the same day. Students' attendance is good and rigorous mechanisms are employed to address any matters arising. A lateness policy is detailed in the staff and student handbook but this is not consistently implemented, which results in disruption to a minority of lessons. The school discharges all its responsibilities in relation to reporting to the Home Office.
- 4.4 There is a popular social programme organised by the school in addition to day trips offered by an external provider. These complement the curriculum well and reinforce learning. Risk assessments are in place for all activities organised by the school to ensure the safety of students taking part.
- 4.5 A good level of pastoral support is provided. Relations between students and staff and among students themselves are excellent. A dedicated welfare officer combined with the benefit of a small school where staff know all their students by name, ensure that students always have a point of contact if they have any welfare concerns.
- 4.6 The school meets all its obligations in relation to safeguarding, particularly for those under the age of 18, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all staff. However, the activities programme is not designed to accommodate juniors and these students are only able to join activities if they are accompanied by an adult, which reduces their opportunity to practise English and interact with other students outside the classroom.
- 4.7 The school is not able to accept students with physical disabilities due to the physical nature of the building which includes narrow, steep staircases.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Further develop the quality of education through the use of a systematic development plan, informed by data including student and staff feedback.
- 5.3 Satisfactory progress has been made against this recommendation. The management team gather feedback from staff predominantly through informal communication but also through biannual whole-school meetings. Student feedback is sought through a range of methods, both formal and informal. This information contributes towards the development process managed by the two proprietors. There is a basic development plan in place, although this is predominantly a retrospective document reviewing actions completed as opposed to a plan with regular scheduled monitoring to drive action.
- 5.4 The proprietors have a positive working relationship and divide their responsibilities and staff reporting lines appropriately and clearly. One proprietor is director of studies and works closely with a part-time academic co-ordinator to provide guidance and support to teaching staff. This facilitates clear educational direction. The other proprietor takes responsibility for all non-academic matters and holds bi-weekly meetings with the administrative team to review and improve their work.
- 5.5 Quality assurance is measured formally through student entry and exit surveys and through student success in progress tests. This provides the proprietors with a good insight into student experience and outcomes. Initial findings are informally shared orally with staff and data is analysed and shared across the whole school in the form of charts to guide improvement. Teaching staff are observed regularly and are provided with constructive feedback to improve student achievement. Continuous professional development (CPD) is offered quarterly to all teaching staff through internal sessions delivered by the academic co-ordinator and director of studies. Topics for these sessions are identified from feedback from observations so they effectively cover any areas requiring improvement.
- 5.6 Staff records are well maintained and the management is effective in discharging their responsibilities in relation to recruitment of staff working with juniors. Staff receive a development interview at the end of their probationary period and are then provided with the opportunity for appraisal after one year's service.
- 5.7 There is a clear complaints policy with recourse to an external ombudsman and a fee protection scheme is available through a membership association. Publicity material is accurate and gives sufficient level of detail to allow students to make informed choices.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure that a development plan identifying future improvements flows from a self-evaluation process that involves all members of the school community.
- Provide age-appropriate social activities for junior students to enable them to benefit from opportunities to practise their English and socialise with other students outside the classroom.
- Consistently implement policies to ensure that students' learning is not negatively impacted by any lateness to class.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with students. They held discussions with senior members of staff, who are also the proprietors, and members of the team. The inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school.

Inspectors

Ms Sarah Williamson	Lead Inspector
Ms Jane Beeson	Team Inspector