



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

MONITORING VISIT

EC BRISTOL

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Principal	Mr Tony Watt
Proprietor	Mr Andrew Mangion
Age Range	12+
Total number of students	160
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 0 16-17: 2 18+: 158 EFL only: 160
Inspection date	24 February 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 EC Bristol is a private English language school situated in Queen's Square in the centre of Bristol. The school is part of the international EC group which operates 17 schools in five countries worldwide. EC Bristol was established in 2010 and opened for teaching in February 2011. The school is led and managed by the principal. He has full responsibility for reporting to the regional director of operations who in turn reports to the group's board of directors.
- 1.2 The group aims to help students succeed in a global community by immersing students fully in the English language and in the culture of an English speaking country. Courses include general and academic English, specialist English for business and examination preparation.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 160 students attending the school with equal numbers of male and female students. Almost one third of students are from the European Union (EU), mainly Spain, Italy and Switzerland. The remainder originate from a wide range of countries including, Libya, Turkey, Korea and Colombia. English is an additional language for all students. With the exception of a summer junior programme for age 12 and over, students join the school from age 16, with the vast majority aged 18 and over. No students have been assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Students can join the school throughout the year as there is a continuous enrolment programme. The majority of students are recruited overseas through agents. Their suitability is checked through a centralised pre-course application process, interview and test on arrival.
- 1.4 This inspection took the form of a monitoring visit. The previous monitoring visit took place in April 2013 when the school was found to exceed expectations.
- 1.5 The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Develop and implement a strategy for identifying and supporting students with additional learning needs.
 - Improve the consistency of feedback on students' written work, providing students with constructive information on the progress they need to make.
 - Ensure that tutorial records are fully and consistently completed, and identify specific learning targets for students.
 - Strengthen self-evaluation and the monitoring of student progress by analysing and making more effective use of student performance data.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection 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 learning is good. The initial interview and pre-course test ensure students are accurately placed for their level and choice of course. Students make good progress. Courses meet Home Office requirements. Almost all teaching is of a high calibre with well-planned lessons which promote effective learning. Good progress has been made against the recommendation in developing strategies for identifying and supporting students' additional learning needs. Satisfactory progress has been made against the recommendation regarding the marking of written work, with some work well marked with helpful comments. Good progress has been made towards the recommendation to ensure that tutorial records are consistently completed, with most identifying specific learning targets for students. Students reach good levels of attainment from their starting points. Results in examinations are good and are comparable with national and international standards.
- 2.3 Student welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are implemented effectively and comply with current regulatory requirements. The school is required to update the safeguarding policy and the single central register to meet the regulatory requirements for April 2015. The induction procedures for students are excellent and ensure that students are fully aware of all health and safety matters, with due care and attention for those under 18. Admissions, attendance and registration procedures are meticulous and meet Home Office requirements. The school has a lead designated member of staff for safeguarding. All staff have been trained in basic safeguarding matters. The pastoral care of students is excellent. They enjoy the convivial atmosphere and help they receive from staff which supports their learning well. Trips and events organised by the school are well attended by students, which enhances their overall experience of living and learning in the UK.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The school's senior leaders are well supported by the EC board of directors and the regional director to fulfil the school's aims. The principal leads the school effectively with clear oversight and vision. Senior leaders work well together in supporting staff to sustain high quality teaching and pastoral care of students. Highly effective systems and procedures ensure the school runs smoothly. Regular meetings enable staff at all levels to communicate well. Staff appraisals and in-house training provide teaching staff with good development opportunities. The school has made good progress in strengthening self-evaluation by the effective use of student progress and feedback.

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 recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Develop and implement a strategy for identifying and supporting students with additional learning needs.
 - Improve the consistency of feedback on students' written work, providing students with constructive information on the progress they need to make.
 - Ensure that tutorial records are fully and consistently completed, and identify specific learning targets for students.
- 3.3 The school has made good progress in response to the first recommendation. Students have a specific opportunity to declare any special learning needs on their application form. A brief strategy which outlines provision and support for identified individual needs in lessons has been developed. Any identified needs are recorded and discussed with teaching staff to ensure that student needs are well catered for within the course provision. Additional individual tutorials and time in examinations are provided if required.
- 3.4 The school has made limited but satisfactory progress in response to the second recommendation with evidence of some well-marked written work with constructive feedback. This is not yet fully standardised across all non-examination classes.
- 3.5 Good progress has been made towards the recommendation to ensure that tutorial records are consistently completed. Most records identify specific learning targets to promote students' learning.
- 3.6 On arrival, following a pre-course test and interview, students are accurately placed for their level and course choice. Courses are generally well planned to meet students' needs. In addition to general English and examination classes, students choose from a range of course electives which enhances their learning and good progress. Course materials are well planned but in a minority of lessons the learning opportunities offered by the curriculum are limited. Courses meet Home Office requirements. Students are able to move to higher level courses and careful preparation ensures that students are ready to join examination classes.
- 3.7 The quality of teaching is good and often excellent. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They plan carefully to engage students fully in their learning in a variety of imaginative activities. Students respond well and make good progress in acquiring new language so that their levels of fluency develop well from their starting points. Excellent use is made of the interactive whiteboards to extend

learning. Teachers ensure that students are able to practice all their skills and give opportunities for reading, writing, listening and speaking practice. As a result students make good progress in general English classes and those who opt for examination classes are well prepared and successful in their examinations. In a small minority of lessons teaching is too teacher directed, students have too few opportunities to participate and their progress is limited.

- 3.8 Students' progress and attainment is good. Regular progress tests provide an additional focus for students' learning. The majority of students make good progress. Students reach good levels of attainment from their starting points. Results in examinations are good and are comparable with national and international standards.

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 Health and safety policies are rigorous and procedures are implemented meticulously. Arrangements to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are clear and checked regularly. The school has appropriate procedures for first aid. Several members of staff are trained in first aid. Risk assessments are detailed and completed carefully for all activities and outings with due concern for those under 18.
- 4.3 The school provides a safe, secure and convivial learning environment for students which meet their needs well. The premises are well maintained and provide suitable accommodation for staff and students. Students report that the residential accommodation is comfortable and well maintained. Should they have any concerns, they can readily speak to the welfare officer or to any member of the senior team. Concerns are resolved swiftly to ensure student satisfaction.
- 4.4 Procedures for student admissions, registration and attendance are rigorously followed with meticulous attention to record-keeping. Any absenteeism is swiftly followed up. Procedures fully meet Home Office requirements.
- 4.5 The pastoral care of students is excellent. Induction procedures on arrival are thorough and ensure that students are made aware of all health and safety issues. In addition they receive a handbook to refer to at any time. Those aged under 18 have an additional induction and regular weekly meetings with senior leaders to monitor their well-being and safety. Well organised activities, both in and out of school, are well attended and enjoyed, enhancing students' learning experiences well.
- 4.6 Procedures for safeguarding meet current requirements. The school is required to update the safeguarding policy and to complete the single central register with all required checks to meet the statutory requirements for April 2015. All staff have completed basic safeguarding awareness training. The designated safeguarding lead has booked to do further training to meet requirements fully. Suitability checks for safe recruitment are carried out and most are recorded on the single central register. The school has contact with the local safeguarding board and the local authority safeguarding officer (LADO). There are clear procedures for e-safety both for staff and students, and in particular for those under 18. Students were unable to explain e-safety but report that they feel safe in school and in their accommodation. They are confident that any problems they may have will be listened to by staff. They know whom to turn to for any pastoral or safeguarding concerns.

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 recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Strengthen self-evaluation and the monitoring of student progress by analysing and making more effective use of student performance data.
- 5.3 The school has made good progress towards the recommendation. Self-evaluation has been strengthened through the development of reporting mechanisms from the tutorial system. This helps the school identify trends and contributes to mid and long term planning to improve the quality of provision.
- 5.4 Oversight of the school is strong. As part of the EC group, the positive relationship between the school and the board of directors supports effective leadership and future planning well. Senior managers meet board representatives regularly, including the chief executive officer (CEO) and the regional director, to share good practice between senior leaders in different centres.
- 5.5 The principal leads the school effectively, providing clear educational direction and care for students to fulfil the school's aims. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The school is successful in securing high quality staff. Senior leaders work well together in supporting staff to sustain high quality teaching and pastoral care of students including for those under 18. Highly effective systems and procedures ensure the school runs smoothly.
- 5.6 Quality assurance procedures are effective in sustaining high levels of student satisfaction. Staff appraisals and in-house training provide teaching staff with good development opportunities. The system for collating and analysing student feedback is thorough. This allows the school to analyse detail in feedback, understand trends and improve the quality of provision.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Strengthen curriculum planning in order to ensure that all lessons provide opportunities for students to make appropriate progress.
- Develop further guidelines to standardise the marking of students' work in non-examination classes.

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 attended registration in lessons. The responses of staff to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school. There were no responses to the student pre-inspection questionnaires.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean	Lead Inspector
Ms Christine Powell	Team Inspector
Mrs Sue Arnold	Team Inspector
Mr Ray Parker	Team Inspector