



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

**MONITORING VISIT**

**A2Z SCHOOL OF ENGLISH**

A2Z School of English (07257121) ceased trading as at 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Full Name	<b>A2Z School of English</b>
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Email Address	james@a2z-english.com
Website	www.a2z-english.com
Managing Director	Mr James Taylor
Proprietor	Mr James Taylor
Age Range	12+
Total number of students	270
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 18: 26 18+: 244 EFL only: 270
Inspection dates	<b>5 to 6 August 2014</b>

## 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 The A2Z School of English comprises of two private English language institutions; one in Manchester and one in London. The Manchester school was founded in 2006 and the London school was opened in June 2012. The school is established as a limited company and has one director. Each school is led by its senior management team and governed by the director of the company who owns it. The head office, which co-ordinates registration and marketing, is located close to the Manchester school.
- 1.2 The school aims to establish itself as the leading chain of direct method schools. It seeks to provide high quality education in a safe and stimulating environment and actively contribute to the social and educational aspects of students' lives. The school offers a range of English language programmes including general English, preparation courses for the International Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the First Certificate in English (FCE) and the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) examinations, as well as individual tuition. The lengths of courses vary from one week to one year.
- 1.1 At the time of the inspection, there were 270 students attending the school, mostly male and the vast majority aged 18 years and over. Students come from many different countries and cultures. The largest groups by nationality are from Libya, Saudi Arabia and Spain. English is an additional language (EAL) for all students. No student currently has been assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.2 When an individual applies to join a course, the school checks their suitability through the use of an on-arrival online test and needs analysis.
- 1.3 The recommendations from the previous report are:
- Improve the formal induction process to ensure all students understand key health, safety and safeguarding policies and procedures.
  - Establish individual learning programmes for students so that progress can be measured against starting points and target outcomes and students know what they must do to make progress.
  - Provide more opportunities for staff development through further training.
  - Ensure that staff appraisals are regular and systematic.
  - Ensure that training is given to allow teachers to make full use of the available technology in classrooms.
  - Update the website and ensure it contains all the required information.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school meets expectations.** At the previous inspection of 10 September 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' achievement is good. An appropriate range of programmes ensures that students' different needs are well met. Initial assessment is satisfactory, and is used effectively to ensure that students' language skills are appropriate to meet the demands of the course. However, the results from initial assessment are not effectively shared with teachers to support lesson planning. Teaching is good and ensures that students make good progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Classes are well planned and make effective use of a range of quality resources to engage and maintain the interest of the students. Students are very satisfied with their course and with the progress they make.
- 2.3 Standards of welfare, health and safety are good. The school's premises are appropriately maintained and provide a satisfactory learning environment. Appropriate health and safety policies are in place and effectively implemented. Measures taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are good. Registration and attendance recording is accurate and appropriately managed. Appropriate procedures for complying with Home Office regulations are in place. The school's pastoral structure provides a good level of support and guidance for the students in accordance with the aims. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent. Students report that they are happy at the school and feel safe and secure.
- 2.4 Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective oversight is combined with an appropriate level of financial support so that the welfare, health and safety of students are secure. Managers are effective in exercising their roles and responsibilities and are active in identifying priorities for improvement. However, the monitoring of the school's performance is underdeveloped. Student progress data is not collated centrally or used by managers to bring about improvements in a timely manner. An appropriate self-assessment process is in place. However, the school's self-evaluation report is at times descriptive and does not always focus clearly the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school is successful in recruiting and developing high quality staff.

### **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:
- Establish individual learning programmes for students so that progress can be measured against starting points and target outcomes, and so students know what they must do to make progress.
- 3.3 Satisfactory progress has been made in relation to this recommendation. Tutorial records now include initial student assessment, details of ongoing teacher assessment, as well as agreed progress targets. However, the recording of student assessment is underdeveloped and the progress against set targets is not always effectively monitored.
- 3.4 The range of courses offered is accurately advertised on the school website and is effective in meeting the needs of students. Qualifications meet the requirements of the Home Office and offer suitable progression routes in line with the Common European Framework for the testing of English (CEF).
- 3.5 Appropriate processes are in place to assess each student on arrival through formal testing of English language skills. The process is accurate and ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate course and can make good progress. However, the results from initial assessment are not effectively shared with teachers to support lesson planning.
- 3.6 Teaching is good and is characterised by well-planned lessons, which use a wide range of high quality resources to effectively support learning. The lessons are delivered at a lively pace and include a wide variety of teaching methods to suit different learning styles and to foster interest. Teachers are enthusiastic and motivate their students to enjoy and engage with their learning. They have a clear knowledge of students' previous learning and are able to extend their vocabulary quickly. Students of all abilities, including the most able, are effectively challenged. The evidence from lesson observation shows that the overall standards being reached are good, and that outcomes are high in relation to the students' starting points.
- 3.7 Assessment is regular and effectively identifies strengths and weaknesses in the students' progress and highlights areas for improvement. Teachers make good use of assessment outcomes to inform their planning. The results for the small number of students who sit examinations are good.

#### **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 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Improve the formal induction process to ensure all students understand key health, safety and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 4.3 Good progress has been made against this recommendation. A new formal induction process has been introduced that ensures that all students either attend a group induction session or receive an individual induction provided by reception staff. The process is robust, well-monitored and ensures that all students are fully informed about health, safety and safeguarding.
- 4.4 The school has clear policies in place for health and safety which are consistently implemented and updated. Both premises are fit-for-purpose and appropriately maintained. The buildings are clean and classrooms are of an appropriate size, light and well furnished. All necessary measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards have been taken. The school has an appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid.
- 4.5 Systems for recording registration and attendance are well managed. Admission procedures are detailed and appropriately observed. A central register is accurately maintained. Attendance records are accurate and attendance is effectively monitored. Appropriate procedures for complying with Home Office regulations are in place, well understood by staff and strictly adhered to.
- 4.6 Pastoral support for students is good. The school has successfully created a caring culture where all staff feel it is part of their role to support students. Students are very clear about who to see and where to go if they have a concern. They report that the school is providing them with a very safe, supportive and comfortable environment which effectively meets their learning needs. Inspectors agree with this view.



## 5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is satisfactory. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Provide more opportunities for staff development through further training.
  - Ensure that staff appraisals are regular and systematic.
  - Ensure that training is given to allow teachers to make full use of the available technology in classrooms.
  - Up-date the website and ensure it contains all the required information.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. Staff undertake a good range of training appropriate to their responsibilities; including a wide range of internal development opportunities and a small number of external seminars and conferences relevant to teachers of English as a foreign language.
- 5.4 Satisfactory progress has been made against the second recommendation. An appropriate staff appraisal system is now in place and the majority of staff have been appraised. However, the system is not systematic or consistently applied at the Manchester and London sites. Consequently, the appraisal process is not yet fully embedded in the school's quality processes.
- 5.5 Good progress has been made against the third recommendation. Staff have undertaken appropriate training in the use of the available technology in the school's classrooms. As a result, in the vast majority of lessons observed by inspectors, technology was used very effectively to support learning.
- 5.6 Satisfactory progress has been made against the fourth recommendation. The vast majority of the required information is now on the website. However, the school's complaints policy is not available there.
- 5.7 The school is appropriately managed. Leaders are successful in providing clear educational direction and discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the aims of the school. The school's work is supported financially by well-developed structures that provide the resources necessary to make its aims realistically achievable. As a result, appropriate action is taken with regard to course development, maintenance of the school's premises and student welfare.
- 5.8 Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Academic progress is appropriately monitored by teachers and managers are active in trying to identify priorities for improvement. However, student progress data is not collated or analysed centrally to identify strengths and weakness in overall school performance. Consequently, appropriate actions are not always initiated in a timely manner to

bring about effective change. An appropriate self-assessment process is in place. However, the school's self-evaluation report is at times descriptive and does not always focus clearly on the identification of key strengths and areas for development.

5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and developing high quality staff.

## 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 the self-evaluation plan focuses on identifying the key strengths and areas for development.
- Collate and analyse progress data centrally to identify strengths and weakness in overall school performance.
- Analyse data from initial assessment results and share this information with tutors.
- Include the school's complaints policy on the website.

## 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 sessions. 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

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mrs Suzanne Bell	Team Inspector
Miss Valerie Craven	Team Inspector
Ms Janet King	Team Inspector
Ms Sharon Weston	Team Inspector