



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

**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE (BRIGHTON) AND EASTBOURNE
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH**

(Company Registration Number - 01508550)

Full Name	The English Language Centre (Brighton) and Eastbourne School of English
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Email Address	info@elc-brighton.co.uk
Websites	www.elc-brighton.co.uk www.esoe.co.uk
Chief Executive	Mr Phil Hopkins
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Orpen
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	194
	16-18 24
	18+: 170
	EFL only: 170
Inspection dates	24 May 2016 to 26 May 2016

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 The English Language Centre Brighton and Eastbourne School of English is a not-for-profit charitable educational foundation founded in 1962. It is owned by The English Language Centre Ltd, a company limited by guarantee and based in Brighton. Following a merger in 2010, the charity owns and operates Eastbourne school of English. The primary aims of the charity are to promote the study, practice, knowledge and appreciation of the English language. The chief executive officer (CEO) is overall principal of the two schools. There is a shared senior leadership team, shared aims, policies and development plan. The two school centres have similar day-to-day management structures, led by an administrative and academic director.
- 1.2 The school offers a range of general and business English language courses, and executive and one-to-one business courses. In addition, Cambridge and IELTS examination courses, international teacher refresher courses in English and individually tailored courses for closed groups are offered. The length of course varies from one week to one year. New students enrol at both centres on a weekly basis. The vast majority of students are recruited through agents in students' home countries.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there are 194 students enrolled, of whom 120 are based in Brighton and 74 in Eastbourne. There are approximately equal numbers of male and female students. The vast majority of students come from Europe, South America, the Far East and the Middle East. Twenty-four students are under the age of 18. There are two closed groups of students from Norway and Switzerland. Students from outside the EU have Student Visitor visas and seven students hold Tier 4 visas. There are no students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 The school's previous monitoring visit took place on 12 May 2015 when it was judged to exceed expectations.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent and fully meets the aims of the school. Thorough assessment procedures together with clear guidance and advice ensure students are placed accurately for their level of English and for their course choice on arrival. The curriculum includes a wide range of carefully planned courses which meet the needs of students extremely well. Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teaching is of a very high calibre which enables students' enjoyment in learning and rapid progress. Teachers are highly skilled and qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. Planning for lessons is highly effective in engaging students through innovative and imaginative teaching. Progress is effectively monitored so that students make consistently good progress from their starting points. However, the inconsistencies in the tutorial system result in a small number of students not always having the most up to date information about their progress. Students on examination courses are well prepared for the IELTS and Cambridge examination and results are consistently above the national average. Students report that they are highly satisfied with the course provision and with their progress and overall achievement.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety is excellent. The premises are secure and well maintained and provide a safe and comfortable environment for staff and students. Students report that they feel safe in the school. An appropriate range of policies and procedures for managing all aspects of health and safety are effectively implemented and updated as required. Clear measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards and for first aid. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid and fire safety. Procedures for admissions and attendance are accurate and fully meet requirements for the Home Office. Pastoral support is excellent and provides an effective level of support and guidance to students. A full and varied social programme is well attended and enhances students overall learning experience. Regular meetings for the under 18's ensure that they are well looked after and given appropriate guidance for their safety and well-being. Relationships between staff and students and students themselves are excellent. This is a real strength of the school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are thorough and meet current national statutory guidance. All staff including the designated safeguarding lead's are appropriately trained. Homestay accommodation is carefully monitored and fully meets national regulatory requirements. Students report that they are pleased with their accommodation and are well looked after and cared for.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of governors are highly committed in their role and provide clear oversight and support to senior leaders. They discharge their responsibilities fully for financial

planning and the educational direction of the school so that the aims are consistently met. The leadership of the school is excellent. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Regular meetings of the board and senior managers from both sites ensure effective communication across the school. As a result, the high standards in the quality of provision are maintained which supports and develops the effective work of staff and students. The school promotes an open door policy which enables all staff to communicate effectively. The school is highly effective in securing and retaining high quality staff. Teaching staff are well supported with regular lesson observations but these do not always have targets set within a timescale. Student evaluations are carefully analysed to identify areas for development and to respond to any student concerns so that satisfaction remains high. Senior leaders ensure that staff have the appropriate training in safeguarding. All appropriate checks to ensure staff suitability to work with students are carried out and accurately recorded in a single central record. The school has a clear complaints and fee policy. The website provides all the required and relevant information for students and stakeholders. The school was willing in its response for requests for information from the inspection team.

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

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to and on arrival is excellent. Clear entry criteria are set and managed effectively so that students receive accurate and appropriate advice and guidance on their chosen course. On arrival, thorough testing and individual interviews provide accurate information for staff to place students at the appropriate language level for their selected course of study. The process ensures that students are accurately placed to meet their learning objectives. Where students are identified with any learning or language difficulties, appropriate support is given. The weekly enrolment system is well managed and allows students to apply and begin a course at any time of year.
- 3.2 Teachers receive initial assessments for students at the start of their course. Excellent use is made of the information by teachers to plan for the students' course of study. There is flexibility for students to change course or level of English if required, following discussion and guidance from teachers and senior managers.
- 3.3 High quality advice and information is made available to students through the school's website and brochures. The website has detailed and accurate information regarding the course provision and other facilities on offer. Students confirm that they are highly satisfied with the advice they receive prior to and on arrival.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum are excellent. Students receive an excellent education in accordance with their objectives and the school's aim to promote the study, practice, knowledge and appreciation of the English language. A wide range of courses is offered which are well planned and meet the requirements fully for students' business or individual language learning needs for their future employment or university entry. The course provision for examinations is effectively tailored to students' academic needs and covers all the required skills and areas of study. A full and varied range of enrichment and social activities and outings effectively support students' learning. Retention on all courses is high and the overwhelming majority of students complete their course of study.
- 3.5 Courses on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance. Courses match those listed on the website and in school brochures.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

- 3.6 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Clear planning together with a careful analysis of students' requirements ensure that teaching meets the learning needs of students exceptionally well and effectively challenges them. Students make excellent progress in developing their knowledge, skills and

understanding for external examinations, on business courses and in general English courses. Any student with identified language or learning needs is given excellent support on an individual basis to meet their needs.

- 3.7 Teaching is consistently of a high calibre. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are highly skilled in planning and adapting lessons so that students develop their skills and acquire new language and learn well how to use it. Language is reinforced through a wide range of innovative techniques and activities so that students are engaged and participate fully with success. Teachers know their students well, consistently check their understanding through focused questioning so that students enjoy their lessons and are enabled to make rapid progress. Teachers use their own materials in conjunction with material selected from a wide range of course books. As a result, students who enrol at different stages of a course can readily access the well-planned curriculum.
- 3.8 The excellent rapport between teachers and students is a real strength of the school. This builds confidence in students' ability and encourages them to persevere to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills. Teachers have high expectations and offer individual support to students so that they consistently develop a secure understanding of the structures and vocabulary they are learning. In business and executive one-to-one courses teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and tailor courses from a careful needs analysis of each student. As a result, students make excellent progress. In examination classes teachers support students' learning extremely well by ensuring that all aspects of the course are covered and students have regular opportunities to practice their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Students are well prepared for the examination courses.
- 3.9 Assessment in lessons is thorough; it accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement in students' work. However, the inconsistencies in the timings of the tutorial system result in a small number of students not always having the most up-to-date information about their progress. Feedback to students in lessons is positive and helps students clearly identify strategies for improvement.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.10 Progress and attainment are excellent. Students make excellent progress which reflects the aims of the school.
- 3.11 In examination classes evidence from lesson observations and students' written work demonstrate that students know what is required of them and are given excellent support in preparation for the examinations. They make very good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Results from the last three years in the Cambridge and IELTS examinations have been consistently high.
- 3.12 Attendance levels are high and very few students withdraw from their chosen course. The small numbers of students who continue their studies at a UK university are given clear guidance and support and attain entry to their chosen university.

Student report in discussion that they are highly satisfied with the support they receive from teachers, their course of study and overall achievements.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises

- 4.1 Arrangements for the health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. Appropriate policies are in place and are regularly reviewed and updated so that staff and students have clear guidance on all aspects of the school's health and safety procedures to minimise risk. Information for staff and students is effectively communicated through regular staff meetings and a thorough student induction on arrival. Teaching staff check regularly that students have a clear understanding of health and safety procedures. Regular investment in the premises ensures that the buildings are well maintained and suitably resourced. Classrooms are well maintained, light and suitably furnished. All electrical equipment is tested regularly with accurate records kept. Washroom facilities are more than adequate in number and regularly refurbished and maintained to a high level. Security arrangements are excellent and regularly checked. The premises are safe and secure and provide a comfortable teaching and learning environment for staff and students.
- 4.2 All necessary measures are implemented to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. The health and safety policy is carefully monitored by the appropriate buildings staff with clear guidance on staff responsibilities. Risk assessments for the premises and for fire are carried out annually and any follow-up actions are completed and recorded. Accurate risk assessments are carried out for outings and trips but these do not include details of any student health issues. Fire signage notices and fire exits are clearly displayed and fire exits are kept free of obstructions. Fire protection equipment is correctly positioned and regularly checked. Monthly fire drills are carried out and recorded with all the required information.
- 4.3 An appropriate number of staff are trained as fire marshals and in first aid procedures. First aid kits are kept fully stocked and are appropriately positioned together with the accident record book. There is appropriate provision for any student who is ill or injured. The school provides information for students with any disability on an individual basis. There is no wheelchair access to the buildings. This information is provided to students on the school website and/or on request. Staff and students receive appropriate on-going training and support for their health and safety.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Arrangements for student admissions, registration and recording of attendance are thorough and correctly followed. A centralised admissions register is accurately maintained with the necessary information of all students from the point of enrolment. All copies of required documents are appropriately verified by the school.
- 4.5 Attendance is accurately recorded and monitored with any absence followed up swiftly. Communication between teaching staff and academic leaders is excellent so

that any student who is late reports to the main office or who fails to attend is followed up. Senior managers ensure that students under 18 are carefully monitored.

- 4.6 Senior leaders and teaching staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements for attendance and adhere to procedures rigorously for Tier 4 students. Students are given clear advice on attendance requirements and records of students' attendance are carefully monitored. Procedures for admissions and attendance fully meet Home Office requirements.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.7 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Effective communication between teaching and welfare staff ensure that students receive appropriate guidance and support. A thorough initial induction programme provides students with the necessary information for their well-being and safety. On arrival they meet welfare staff and know to whom they can turn if they have any concerns. Regular meetings for those under 18 ensure that they have appropriate guidance and support and are well cared for. The school's open door policy allows students the freedom to approach a number of staff if they wish to discuss any aspect of their time in the school or if they have a personal concern.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and students and students themselves are excellent. A culture of mutual respect and tolerance is strongly promoted by all staff and exemplified in staff conduct with one another. Students report in discussion that there are no instances of harassment or bad behaviour and that the positive and relaxed atmosphere of the school enhances their learning experience and motivation to succeed.
- 4.9 For students who require advice and guidance on higher education and university choices, the school organises appropriately qualified outside agency support.
- 4.10 The school provides a full and varied social and enrichment programme which is well attended by students. This enhances students overall learning experience.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.11 Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under 18 years are excellent and have due regard to current national statutory guidance. The policies for safeguarding are regularly reviewed and updated by senior leaders so that teaching and welfare staff have clear guidance on all aspects of safeguarding. All staff including the designated safeguarding lead staff are appropriately trained and regularly updated so that they are well informed and aware of their responsibilities.
- 4.12 All the required checks for staff including for the suitability to work with students under the age of 18 are carried out carefully including for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Details are recorded accurately in the single central record of appointments.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.13 The quality of homestay accommodation is excellent and meets current national statutory requirements. Homestay accommodation is carefully monitored so that students are well looked after and safe. All appropriate checks including DBS are carried out to meet current national requirements. Excellent detailed records are held by the school to ensure that homestay accommodation offered by the school is maintained to high standards. Students are regularly asked for their feedback on accommodation and the school responds swiftly to any concerns. In discussion, students report that they are highly satisfied with their accommodation and host families.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance and oversight are excellent. The governing body provide highly effective oversight and support senior leaders fully so that high standards are maintained in line with the aims of the charity. They are forward looking in their focus for the school and fully discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, premises and resources. They meet regularly with senior leaders which enables excellent communication and reflection and review of all aspects of the school's work. Financial and development planning are highly effective and ensure that excellent teaching and resources provide students with a stimulating learning experience. All necessary legal permissions are in place for the premises, including the appropriate insurances and licenses.
- 5.2 The clear oversight supports senior leaders effectively in their role to meet the required obligations for the health and safety and safeguarding of students including the school's statutory duties in caring for students under the age of 18. Policies and procedures are well implemented, reviewed regularly and support the academic and personal development of students. Relationships between the governing body and senior leaders are excellent.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Self-evaluation is well-developed and reflective and accurately identifies key strengths and areas for development. Leaders are highly successful in setting priorities and in sharing their development plans with staff. Appropriate targets are set for improvement and effectively monitored so that the work of the school develops further to improve the provision and meet the needs of the students fully.
- 5.4 Well established management structures ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Communication between the two sites and between all staff is excellent. The open door policy adopted by senior leaders ensure staff have excellent opportunities to discuss their work. Staff report that they have regular opportunities to express their views and that they are highly satisfied with their work in the school.
- 5.5 The school is very successful in securing and retaining highly qualified staff. Teaching staff have regular opportunities for professional development both in-house and externally to ensure that they remain highly trained for their work. Teaching staff are well supported by the school to develop and extend their training.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.6 Quality assurance arrangements are excellent. There is a strong focus on maintaining high standards. Quality arrangements are a major feature of the school's work in ensuring that areas for development are identified and improved. Teaching is regularly observed with constructive feedback given and targets identified but these do not always have a timescale. The school has begun to analyse data from examinations and use results to identify trends in students' results to bring about further improvements in the provision.
- 5.7 Student feedback is collated systematically from midway and end of course questionnaires and in discussion with students. The feedback is analysed by senior managers and shared with staff so that teacher development and training and accommodation matters are prioritised for any required improvements. In discussion, students report that they are highly satisfied with the school's response to any concerns they raise and with the quality of the provision.
- 5.8 The complaints procedure is clear and is made available to students on the website and in school. Complaints are rare and students acknowledged in meetings that they are aware of the policy.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

- 5.9 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. Highly qualified staff are recruited and retained through thorough staff recruitment procedures. All the required recruitment checks are carried out in line with legislative guidance. The process to validate references and qualifications is rigorous and is carried out in accordance with statutory requirements and official guidance. The single central record of staff appointments confirms that all suitability checks have been carried out by the school prior to staff appointments including for DBS checks.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.10 The provision of information is excellent. The website is clear and provides all the required information for students and interested stakeholders. Students are able to access accurate and relevant information to make informed choices for their course of study.
- 5.11 The school was willing in providing information for the inspection.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Clarify the tutorial provision to ensure that all students have up-to-date information on their progress.
- Develop the observation of teaching so that staff have timescales within which to work on targets set to raise the quality of the teaching even further.
- Ensure that risk assessments for outings include details of any students with health issues.

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 chair of governors and attended registration sessions. 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 college.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean	Lead Inspector
Ms Jane Beeson	Team Inspector
Mr Patrick Lawlor	Team Inspector
Mr Mike Ward	Team Inspector