



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

EF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY UK LTD

(Company registration no. - 05573713)

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Head of School	Mr Mark Fletcher-Single
Proprietor	EF Education First
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	117
Numbers by age and type of study	16-18: 101 18+: 16 FE Only: 117
Inspection dates	08 – 10 October 2024

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 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 EF International Academy UK LTD was founded in 2005 and is a private educational institution based on two sites, located very close together, just outside the centre of Oxford. The school is part of EF Education First group, a global consortium founded in 1965 in Lund, Sweden, and currently operating in 100+ countries with 646 offices and schools. However, the scope of the inspection is limited to the Oxford school. The institution is led by the head of school, who reports to EFs UK-based Vice President of Operations and thereby the board of directors who provide oversight of strategic direction and financial management. The head of school is supported by a small senior leadership team.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to foster an environment where young minds from diverse backgrounds can flourish. It aims to empower students to achieve their full potential, cultivate open-mindedness, and ultimately make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.
- 1.3 The school offers both the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and the United Kingdom's (UK) Advanced Level programmes. A wide range of subjects are offered as part of the delivery of these programmes and the five Pathways to University offered by the school. These include pathways to further study in Science, Technology and Engineering; Bio-Medical Sciences; International Relations, Economics, Law and Politics; Business, Finance and Management; and Arts, Media, and Cultural Studies.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection 117 students were enrolled. The majority are female and aged 16 to 17. The majority of students are from the Europe, with the others recruited from Asia, Africa and the USA and Latin America. The vast majority of students speak English as an additional language and 22 have identified learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 1.5 The school accepts applications throughout the year, with students commencing their studies in spring or autumn. On-site residential accommodation is offered and managed by the school.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The school exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Key Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Students receive an excellent education in accordance with their objectives and the school's aims. A wide and very well-designed curriculum is offered which meets the needs of students aspiring to progress into higher education. Courses are well managed and those courses that are offered to students on Student Visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is excellent. It is accurate and is highly effective in ensuring that students have the academic ability to successfully complete their course. The process is detailed and ensures that students will be studying an appropriate combination of subjects to meet their required progression route into higher education. Teaching is excellent. Teachers are very enthusiastic, have comprehensive subject knowledge and use a wide range of highly effective teaching methods to motivate and keep the students' interest. They are skilful in developing student's confidence, analytical and independent learning skills. Regular assessments are used effectively to check student progress and to provide teachers with up-to-date information to ensure that they effectively plan to meet students' needs. Overall, students' achievement, attendance and punctuality are excellent.
- 2.3 Arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of students are excellent. Highly effective arrangements are in place to ensure the health, safety and security of staff and students and to reduce the risk from fire. The school's buildings are very well maintained and provide high quality facilities that support effective learning. A comprehensive range of health and safety policies and procedures are implemented effectively. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken, recorded and are clearly understood by all students and staff. Student registration and attendance records are excellent. They are accurate, very well managed and are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure. Staff clearly understand Home Office requirements regarding enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student Visas. The school's pastoral structure provides excellent support and guidance for the students in accordance with its aims. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18, which reflect official guidance. Residential accommodation is excellent. Students benefit from high quality accommodation that is registered in accordance with national requirements.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of directors provides excellent oversight and clear educational direction in-line with the school's aims. They discharge their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future and ensure that students benefit from high standards of education, welfare and health and safety. Leadership and management are excellent.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, well-documented and appropriate given the number of students. There is highly effective communication between senior leaders, managers and other staff. Well-defined policies and procedures are in place at all levels, and implemented and monitored appropriately. Mechanisms to monitor quality are excellent. Self-evaluation is well developed and used effectively to accurately evaluate the school's strengths and identify realistic areas for further development. The school successfully attracts and retains well qualified and experienced teachers and managers. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent and in accordance with legal requirements.

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

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

- 3.1 Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. It is accurate and highly effective in ensuring that students have the academic ability to successfully complete their course. The process is detailed and ensures that students will be studying an appropriate combination of subjects to meet their required progression route into higher education.
- 3.2 Detailed entry criteria are set and used very effectively to provide accurate and appropriate advice and guidance to prospective students. A formal application process includes an interview and the submission of academic transcripts, personal/motivational statements, and references where required from teachers or mentors. These documents provide a comprehensive view of the student's academic history, work ethic, and ambitions and are effectively used to place students on either the A Level or IB Diploma pathway. On arrival, students are required to sit a series of baseline assessments to ensure that they are appropriately placed in their respective classes and that they receive any additional support needed for their studies. As a result, initial assessment is accurate and students are highly satisfied with their placements.
- 3.3 Regular detailed assessment identifies any issues that students may have with the demands of their chosen courses. Teachers make excellent use of this information to guide their lesson planning and provide any necessary support or guidance.
- 3.4 High quality information, advice and guidance are made available to students through the school's website. The website is detailed and includes accurate information about the school, its premises and the curriculum on offer. Students confirm that they are satisfied with the pre-enrolment advice they receive.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.5 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Students receive an excellent education in accordance with their objectives and the school's aims. A wide and very well-designed curriculum is offered which meets the needs of students aspiring to progress into higher education. Courses are well managed and those courses that are offered to students on Student Visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Students on Student Visas are studying at an appropriate level and on an approved full-time programme which includes at least 15 hours a week of classroom-based, weekday daytime study.
- 3.6 The school successfully delivers both the IB Diploma and the UK Advanced Level programmes. The course provision is clearly focused on preparing students for university, with a clear framework in place by which overall student performance can be evaluated by reference to norms derived from externally accredited examinations.

3.7 Courses match those listed on the website and in other marketing materials.

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

3.8 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Teachers plan their lessons well and use their extensive understanding of the progress of their students to adapt lessons successfully to meet individual learning needs and challenge students effectively. Teachers are very enthusiastic, have comprehensive subject knowledge and use a range of highly effective teaching methods to motivate and keep the students' interest. Teachers are well-qualified, have extensive teaching experience and are skilful in developing student's confidence, analytical and independent learning skills. As a result, students make high levels of progress in class in relation to their ability and starting points.

3.9 Relationships at all levels are outstanding. They are extremely productive, with teachers and students working collaboratively to enhance learning and progress. Lessons are well paced and provide excellent opportunities for students to participate and develop their knowledge and practical skills.

3.10 Teachers readily offer individual help and support to ensure high levels of knowledge and understanding are developed. Students benefit greatly from small class sizes. Lessons address the needs of students through tasks designed to meet their varying abilities and meet the assessment requirements of their course and programme of study. The high expectations of teachers ensure that all students are consistently challenged and well supported to meet their learning goals.

3.11 Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It does not discriminate against students, including those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

3.12 Assessment is regular and thorough, accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in students' progress and highlights areas for improvement. Feedback to students is positive, encouraging and accurate and is clearly linked to the syllabi of the relevant exams. It clearly identifies areas for improvement and details how to improve their practical skills. As a result, students effectively develop their confidence and independence.

3.13 Arrangements for tracking students' progress are excellent. The progress of each student is carefully tracked and allows students and instructors to effectively monitor their progress. Students meet with their teachers regularly to review their progress and report that they know how they are progressing.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

3.14 Progress and attainment are excellent. Students receive an excellent education which reflects their and the school's aims. They are well supported in their learning and quickly master and develop their knowledge and understanding of the subjects that

they study. Regular progress tests are conducted throughout the course to assess subject skills development and understanding of the course content. On-track grades are used effectively to track student performance and provide targeted support interventions if needed, such as Pathway Support sessions and faculty-led extension activities. As a result, exam results, evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of work shows that the overall standards being reached are excellent and that outcomes are high in relation to the students' starting points. Most students successfully progress onto higher education courses at their chosen university. Students report that they are very happy with their progress.

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. The school's buildings are fit-for-purpose, well maintained and provide a well-resourced learning environment which enhances the students' education. Classrooms are light, spacious, well-equipped and suitably furnished for the age of the students enrolled and the courses that they study. All areas of the school are very clean, well-decorated and well-maintained. All electrical equipment is tested regularly as required. Toilet facilities are well maintained and adequate in number. Security arrangements are effective. However, there is not a clear policy on the validation of visitor's passes issued by each site to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to visitors moving between the two. A wide range of detailed policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. As a result, the premises provide students with a safe, high-quality and comfortable learning environment.
- 4.2 Measures taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are excellent and conform to legal requirements. An appropriate health and safety policy clearly allocates responsibilities in case of emergencies. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments are carried out with clear follow-up actions which are regularly reviewed. Detailed individual risk assessments are carried out for organised off-site activities. An appropriate number of trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place as well as first aid kits and accident books. Fire action notices are clearly displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Regular fire drills are carried out which are well recorded. Staff and students report that they are aware of their responsibilities and have received appropriate health and safety training.
- 4.3 Proper provision is made for students who are ill or injured, with a full-time nurse available on-site. The school is accessible by wheelchair users or students with mobility difficulties. Free drinking water is readily available.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Arrangements for student registration and the recording of attendance are excellent. Clear admission procedures are in place and are properly observed. A central register is accurately maintained and individual student files contain all required information.
- 4.5 Daily attendance is accurately recorded and appropriately monitored. Managers have very high expectations regarding both student attendance and punctuality and staff make excellent use of electronic systems to monitor individual student attendance and promptly follow-up any absences or lateness. Teachers record attendance at the beginning of each class session allowing administrators to address any concerns or issues related to attendance very promptly. As a result, staff are aware of the

whereabouts of all students and promptly contact any who are absent. Overall, student attendance is very high.

- 4.6 Procedures for reporting to the Home Office, as well as the enrolment and attendance requirements for students are highly secure and fully understood by relevant staff. Attendance for students on a Student Visas is very high and exceeds Home Office requirements.
- 4.7 Clear policies and procedures are in place for the collection and refund of student fees and deposits. The policy is fair and applied consistently.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.8 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Student well-being is a key priority for the school and staff are highly effective in providing personal support and guidance in accordance with the students' needs. A clear structure of roles and responsibilities designed to support the diverse welfare needs of the school's students is in place and detailed in the student handbook. A comprehensive induction, provision of health services, counselling, and school monitoring effectively ensures that students' physical, emotional, and academic needs are met comprehensively. As a result, students settle into their course quickly, know who to go to if they have a personal problem and feel confident to approach members of staff for help.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and students and amongst the students themselves are excellent, with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and underpins the expectations of behaviour and conduct. The school has clear anti-bullying and harassment policies and procedures, and students report no instances of such behaviour. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and meetings with students, show that they feel that the school is providing them with a safe and comfortable environment which is highly effective in meeting their learning needs. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and form an important part of the students experience at the school.
- 4.10 Comprehensive careers advice ensures that students are very well prepared for further study choices and life beyond the school. Students value and regularly participate in a wide range of high-quality enrichment and social activities which effectively enhances their learning.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.11 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. The school is highly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults. This commitment is shared by senior leaders, managers and staff who work closely together to ensure the safety of students. The arrangements follow the current national statutory guidance for the safe recruitment of staff and maintenance of associated records. A comprehensive safeguarding policy is in place and effectively implemented. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) suitability checks have been completed and recorded for all relevant staff. The central record of safeguarding

checks is accurate and complete. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, including annual training on how to handle disclosures of abuse. An appropriately trained board-level member with safeguarding responsibility is in place and guidance on e-safety and measures to prevent extremism and radicalisation are well considered and addressed. The school maintains a strong working relationship with local safeguarding agencies.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 2.5 The quality of residential accommodation is excellent. Facilities are managed by the school and registered in accordance with national requirements and are of a high standard. Detailed risk assessments of residential accommodation are regularly carried out, and students are frequently asked for feedback. A wide range of appropriate evening activities are arranged and students appreciate this greatly. One of three members of the school's boarding leadership team is always on duty to monitor the day-to-day operation of the residence and deal with any student issues or concerns. As a result, all students report high levels of satisfaction with their accommodation and its management.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance and oversight are excellent. The board of directors provides excellent oversight and clear educational direction in-line with the school's aims. They discharge their responsibilities well and ensure that students benefit from high standards of education, welfare and health and safety. A strong commitment to continuous improvement ensures that challenging targets for staff, including student achievement, are set and met.
- 5.2 Financial management is excellent. Detailed financial planning, and excellent investment in staff, premises and resources, effectively contributes to the success of the school and its provision. All necessary legal permissions are in place for the use of the premises, including relevant insurances and licences.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. A detailed and well-established management structure ensures that the school operates effectively. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, well-documented and appropriate given the number of students. There is highly effective communication between senior leaders, managers and other staff. Well-defined policies and procedures are introduced at all levels, and implemented and monitored appropriately, effectively contributing to the quality of education and the care of students.
- 5.4 The school is highly successful in securing and retaining well-qualified staff. A comprehensive system of staff review ensures that staff are well qualified for the work they do, and appropriately supported by the management team. An excellent programme of staff development ensures that staff are appropriately trained for their roles.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance including student feedback is excellent and shows a clear commitment to continuous improvement throughout the school. Self-assessment and evaluation are well-developed and used effectively to inform improvement planning and ensure that the necessary resources are in place to meet the needs of the school. Student feedback is regularly and systematically collected. This feedback is effectively analysed, shared with staff, managers and directors, and used regularly to inform academic action planning and the identification of school priorities. Student performance data is available and effectively reviewed by senior leaders.
- 5.6 The complaints procedure is clear and appropriate. Students confirmed that they are aware of the policy.

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

- 5.7 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. An appropriate recruitment policy ensures that suitably qualified and experienced staff are recruited. All required recruitment checks have been carried out in a timely manner and appropriately recorded. The process to validate previous applicants work history and qualifications is excellent, with due regard to statutory requirements concerning the identity of staff. A system to verify references is in place and ensures that the reference has originated from an appropriate source. A detailed central record is maintained and monitored by senior staff.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.8 The provision of information is excellent. The website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and highly relevant information to inform their study choices.
- 5.9 The school was very responsive in providing information during the inspection in a timely manner.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Review arrangements of the validation of visitor's passes issued by each site to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to visitors moving between the two.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with staff and 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 school.

Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mr Simon Bellamy	Team Inspector
Mrs Pat Clayfield	Team Inspector