



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

EF LANGUAGE SCHOOLS LTD

(1043158)

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Website	www.ef.com	
Accreditation and Compliance Director	Ms Ruth Chambers	
Proprietor	EF Language Schools Ltd	
Age Range	12+	
Total number of students	1419	
Numbers by age and type of study	16-18:	185
	18+:	1234
	EFL only:	1355
	FE only:	64
Inspection date	03 December 2024	

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 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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 EF Education was founded in 1965 by Bertil Hult and is still privately owned by the Hult family. EF Language Schools was founded in 1977 and currently consists of ten schools in the UK and Ireland. This inspection of EF Language Schools involved the four private English Language schools located in Cambridge, London, Oxford and Manchester. The UK schools are accredited by the British Council and are members of English UK. Each school is managed by a school director who reports to a manager who is part of the Central Operations Team. Support for the school directors is provided by senior leaders within the parent company in key areas, including academic, accreditation and compliance and this operations team reports to the vice president (UK and Ireland), who is based in the UK and Zurich.
- 1.2 The organisation's aim is opening the world through education and is committed to providing a supportive, friendly and nurturing environment where students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds are able to learn in the most effective way. EF Language Schools offer general English language courses and exam preparation for the Cambridge suite of examinations, running from 1 to 52 weeks in duration. Two schools, Manchester and Oxford, offer a range of university preparation courses.
- 1.3 EF language schools offer general English courses linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) from foundation to proficiency levels, examination courses from intermediate to proficiency levels and junior courses. Further education provision includes English language teacher training, academic subjects and university pathways programme.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection the number of students registered at the four schools was 1419. The majority are female and come from a very wide range of countries. English is an additional language for all students. No students under 16 were enrolled at the time of the inspection. There were 49 students enrolled who were studying on Student visas.
- 1.5 Application is either direct to a school, through the group's global network of recruitment offices or by approved agents. The application process confirms the candidate's suitability and places them on the most appropriate level of the course. Students are able to enrol at any point of the year. Students following further education courses join termly and are accepted following confirmation of their qualifications and English language checks. There is a broad range of accommodation in school residences and with host families.
- 1.6 This monitoring visit has been extended due to a change of principal at the Manchester School. For this reason, Section 5 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.
- 1.7 The school was previously inspected on 6-8 December 2022 when it was judged to exceed expectations and the quality was excellent. The recommendation from the previous report is:

- Ensure that teachers start classes at the scheduled time.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of the 6-8 December 2022, the 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 learners' achievements is excellent. Clear educational aims and objectives and a wide range of high-quality courses ensures that the schools meet their stated aims and objectives. Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. It is accurate, and effectively ensures that students are placed on the right of course in accordance with their language and/ or academic abilities. The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Courses are very well organized, flexible and highly effective in supporting students in developing the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their educational goals. Language courses are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent. Students benefit from highly qualified and experienced teachers who use their subject expertise to plan and deliver stimulating and challenging lessons. As a result, students develop their knowledge and use of their new English language well and are able apply it to new contexts. Students are highly motivated, focused and enthusiastic and make excellent progress in class. Overall, achievement rates are high and nearly all students complete the qualification for which they registered.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Each of the four schools successfully implements excellent arrangements to ensure the health and safety and security of their students and staff. Arrangements are very well managed and monitored and ensure that any issues are addressed in a timely manner. The buildings are fit-for-purpose, well maintained and provide high quality facilities that effectively support learning. Classrooms are well equipped and furnished to a high standard. Detailed policies and procedures effectively reduce the risks from fire and other hazards and ensure high levels of health and safety are maintained. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken, ensuring that students and staff have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency. Student registration and attendance records are accurate. They are well managed, and staff are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking any necessary action. Staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment, attendance and reporting arrangements relating to students on Student visas. Overall attendance rates are high. Pastoral support and guidance for the students is excellent and in accordance with the schools aims. Students are highly supportive of their school and report that they are very well supported. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 years are excellent, fully implemented and reflect official guidance.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The Group provides comprehensive oversight and very effective support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that high standards are maintained. As a result, senior leaders are

highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for educational standards, safeguarding, health and safety, and financial planning. A clear vision for the school is shared by all staff, who work well together to ensure the best possible learning experience for the students. A comprehensive and detailed management structure ensures that leaders and managers understand their roles and responsibilities and provide very clear educational direction. Highly effective communication within each of the schools ensures that staff are well informed of any issues or changes. A detailed range of well-defined policies and procedures are introduced, implemented and monitored appropriately. As a result, the schools are well run and meet all their legal obligations. Quality assurance is excellent. Leaders are very effective in self-evaluation. They understand the strengths of the school and have clear and ambitious plans to develop further. The schools are highly successful in attracting and retaining well-qualified and experienced teachers. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent and in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure that teachers start classes at the scheduled time.
- 3.3 Excellent progress has been made against the recommendation. The schools have ensured that their teachers understand the need for classes to start on time to maximize the learning opportunities available to the students. Students confirm that most teachers arrive early to the classroom and that lessons start at the scheduled time. Inspector's lesson observations support this view.
- 3.4 Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. It is detailed, accurate and effectively ensures that students are placed on the right course in accordance with their language and academic abilities. As a result, students report that they are highly satisfied with their course and the provision offered by the schools.
- 3.5 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Students are well educated in accordance with each of the school's aims and their objectives. The curriculum is based on a clear policy statement. Courses are very well organized, flexible and highly effective in supporting students in developing the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their educational goals. Language courses are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Students on university preparation courses have clear progression routes into higher education. Programmes of study on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. The schools ensure that students enrolled on Student visas are studying at an appropriate level on an approved full-time programme which includes at least 15 hours a week of classroom-based, weekday daytime study.
- 3.6 Teaching is excellent. Students benefit from highly qualified and experienced teachers who use their subject expertise and knowledge to plan and deliver stimulating and challenging lessons. As a result, students develop their knowledge and use of the new language well and are able to apply it to new contexts. Students are highly motivated, focused and enthusiastic. They work well individually and in small groups, showing good co-operative learning and independence. However, in a very small proportion of classes, a few students do not return from their breaks at the scheduled time, which reduces the learning opportunities available to the students. Classroom resources are of a good quality, quantity and range and are used effectively by teachers to support learning. As a result, students make excellent progress in class and achievement rates are high.
- 3.7 Teaching is inclusive and 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 encourages respect for other people including the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

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 Each of the four schools implements excellent arrangements to ensure the health and safety and security of their students and staff. Arrangements are very well managed and monitored and ensure that any issues are addressed in a timely manner. The buildings are fit-for-purpose, well maintained and provide high quality facilities that effectively support learning. Classrooms are well equipped and furnished to a high standard. Detailed policies and procedures are effectively implemented and successfully reduce the risks from fire and other hazards and ensure high levels of health and safety are maintained. An appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid are in place, with full details available on noticeboards throughout the schools, including in each classroom. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken, ensuring that students and staff have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency. Free drinking water is readily available throughout the schools.
- 4.3 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. Detailed admission procedures are strictly followed, which ensure that accurate admission registers and records are maintained. Electronic student files are accurately maintained and provide a clear record of checks on identification, previous academic experience, and visa status. Attendance records are accurate and daily attendance is closely monitored. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure and fully understood by relevant staff. Overall, student attendance is high. Attendance for students on a Student visa is high and exceeds Home Office requirements.
- 4.4 Pastoral support and guidance for the students is excellent and a key priority for the schools. Highly effective policies and procedures are in place for monitoring student wellbeing and providing prompt, personalised support when required. On arrival students receive a comprehensive induction which is effective in helping them settle quickly into their course, their school and the local area. Relationships between staff and students, and amongst the students themselves, are excellent. In meetings with students and responses to questionnaires they report that they feel safe and very well supported.
- 4.5 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of safeguarding and recruitment strategies are appropriately checked and regularly reviewed by senior managers. There is an appropriately trained designated safeguarding lead (DSL) at each school. All staff are subject to an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) suitability check prior to or on appointment and receive relevant training in preventing radicalisation and extremism.

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 Group provides comprehensive oversight and very effective support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that high standards are maintained. As a result, senior leaders are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for educational standards, safeguarding, health and safety, and financial planning. A clear vision for the school is shared by all staff, who work together to ensure the best possible learning experience for the students. Relationships between senior leaders within the Group, managers and staff are excellent.
- 5.3 Leadership and management are excellent. A comprehensive and detailed management structure ensures that leaders and managers understand their roles and responsibilities and provide very clear educational direction. Highly effective communication within each of the schools ensures that staff are well informed of any issues or changes. A detailed range of well-defined policies and procedures are introduced, implemented and monitored appropriately. As a result, the schools are well run and meet all their legal obligations.
- 5.4 Quality assurance is excellent. Leaders are very effective in self-evaluation. They understand the strengths of the schools and have clear and ambitious plans to develop them further. Performance data is used effectively to evaluate the provision and to highlight key issues for leaders and managers. A wide range of effective mechanisms are in place to collect, evaluate and respond to students' views covering the breadth of their student experience. As a result, leaders and managers have a clear overview of the performance of the school and can take timely action to rectify any issues if required. The schools have a clear and appropriate complaints procedure, and complaints are handled and reported effectively. There are appropriate systems for independent adjudication of complaints.
- 5.5 Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent and in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks completed on staff before their employment is confirmed. A detailed and accurate single central register of appointments is monitored systematically for compliance by senior leaders. Safer recruitment practices are followed very well, including the taking up of verified references. The school is highly successful in attracting and retaining highly qualified and experienced teachers and other staff.
- 5.6 The provision of information is excellent. The Groups website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and relevant information to inform their study choices. The schools were highly responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

5. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 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 school should:

- Ensure that all students return from their break at the scheduled time.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with staff and students. They held discussions with the heads of centre, 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
Ms Jane Beeson	Team Inspector
Mr Simon Bellamy	Team Inspector
Ms Sarah Colmar	Team Inspector
Ms Kanwaljit Dhillon	Team Inspector
Mr Duncan Gregory	Team Inspector
Mr Patrick Lawlor	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector