



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

MONITORING VISIT

SKOLA ENGLISH IN EXETER

Full Name	Skola English in Exeter
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Website	www.skola.co.uk
Principal	Mr Andrew Darke
Proprietor	Mr Andrew Darke Mr Neils Toettcher
Age Range	16+
Total number of students	32
Numbers by age and type of study	16-17: 1 18+: 31 EFL only: 32
Inspection date	16 September 2014

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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	5
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	9

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Skola English in Exeter was established in the early 1970s and is located in the centre of Exeter. It is a private company limited by shares and is governed by its two directors. The school is part of Marble Arch International School Ltd. The schools mission is to equip students with the skills and knowledge to work towards their personal goals. It aims to promote a positive view of the UK and to foster respect and understanding.
- 1.2 The school offers general English language courses at elementary, pre-intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced levels, and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam preparation courses. Most students study the general English courses, a significant minority follow an IELTS exam preparation programme.
- 1.3 At the time of the monitoring visit there were 32 students, aged between 17 and 52. Most are aged between 23 and 25, with one student under 18. There are two students on Tier 4 visas. There are equal numbers of male and female students who come from a very wide range of countries. No students have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.4 The language school was previously inspected on 5 September 2013 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to meet expectations. The main action points and recommendations from the previous report are:
- Set specific and measurable targets for improvement in students' ILPs and monitor regularly their progress towards them.
 - Extend the arrangements for appraisals to provide all staff with clear targets for improvement, and monitor the impact of staff development.
 - Implement a process of self-evaluation which considers the views of all staff.
 - Establish action planning as an element in self-evaluation and following systematic analysis of feedback.
 - Establish a system for the analysis and monitoring of complaints across the school.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 05 September 2013 the language school was found to meet expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been improved.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The range of courses offered is good and designed well to meet the needs of students. Initial assessment is highly effective and ensures students are placed on appropriate courses which are well matched to their language capabilities. Teaching is outstanding. Student-centred lessons and a variety of teaching techniques encourage independent and creative learning. As a result, students enjoy their lessons, demonstrate good achievement and make excellent progress. Student progress data is appropriately analysed and used very effectively to measure individual student progress over time. Individual learning plans (ILPs) are in place, with specific and measurable targets set for each student. However, the monitoring of these targets is underdeveloped.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. An appropriate induction ensures students are familiar with all aspects of safety and are well prepared for their studies. Registration and attendance records are accurate and meticulously kept. Consequently attendance rates are very high. Pastoral support is outstanding and is highly effective in meeting Individual personal and academic needs. As a result, any student needs or concerns are swiftly identified and addressed. The school makes appropriate arrangements for the safeguarding of students under 18. An extensive social programme is in place, which effectively enhances the students' educational experience and effectively develops their cultural awareness. Students report that they are very happy with the programme.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Comprehensive oversight is combined with a high level of financial support so that the welfare, health and safety of students are secure. Clear educational direction is provided by leaders which effectively support the school's aims. Excellent communications with staff results in effective improvement planning and ensure all staff are kept fully informed of developments. Quality assurance is excellent and effectively makes use of feedback from both staff and students to drive improvement. An effective appraisal is in place. Appraisals are excellent in identifying the development needs of staff and effective in setting clear targets for staff development. The monitoring of set targets is less clear. An excellent complaints policy is in place and very effectively implemented. The policy includes comprehensive procedures for analysing and monitoring complaints and welfare issues. As a result, complaints and concerns of students are dealt with swiftly.

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:
- Set specific and measurable targets for improvement in students' ILPs and monitor regularly their progress towards them.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. Targets for improvement are clear and specific and individual targets are discussed in regular tutorials. As a result students are aware of the progress they make against their targets. The development of an online ILP is beginning to provide greater scope for the monitoring of individual student targets, progress and achievement. However, the overall monitoring of set targets is underdeveloped.
- 3.4 The school has a clear statement of educational policy which is relevant to its aims and effectively implemented. The range of courses offered is good and is appropriate for the ages and language capabilities of students, enabling all students to learn and make progress. On arrival, initial assessment is very thorough and is effective in identifying individual student needs and in placing them in appropriate classes. Regular testing and consultation with teachers allows students to move classes at any time. Courses offered to Tier 4 students lead to qualifications which meet the Home Office requirements.
- 3.5 Teaching is excellent and results in the vast majority of students making consistent and rapid progress. Lessons are well planned, and focus on meeting individual students' needs. Teachers encourage students to be creative and independent learners. As a result they are highly motivated, confident and fully engaged in their learning. Assessment of written work is consistent and meaningful in informing students about how to improve. Monthly test results are aligned to the Common European Framework.
- 3.6 Students make very good progress against their starting points. Weekly progress tests scores are recorded in the student ILPs and outcomes are discussed in regular tutorials. As a result students are very clear about their progress.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Student welfare, including health and safety is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 Health and safety and welfare of students and staff is outstanding. Appropriate and thorough risk assessments for all activities inside and outside of the school are in place and kept up to date. The building is fit for purpose and very well maintained with regard to the health and safety of students. Fire drills take place regularly and clear signs ensure that staff and students know what to do in the case of an emergency. All staff are informed and up to date on all aspects of safety and safeguarding. Student views on health and safety are sought in questionnaires and action is taken where appropriate.
- 4.3 The school maintains accurate admissions and attendance records. Registers are monitored on a daily basis and procedures for contacting those who miss a class are highly effective. Consequently, attendance is excellent. The school fulfils home office requirements for Tier 4 students and has appropriate procedures in place to contact the Home Office should a student fail to enrol or discontinues their studies. Appropriate guidelines are stated on the student registration form. Consequently, students are clear about the procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits.
- 4.4 Pastoral support for students is outstanding. All staff members provide effective support and guidance in accordance with the needs of the students and the school's aims. Students report that they receive high levels of support from their teachers and managers. An appropriate induction is undertaken on the first day and is highly effective in ensuring students settle quickly into their studies. Under 18s are highlighted on the register on arrival to ensure their particular care needs are effectively met. Staff ensure that all students are familiar with health and safety, fire precautions, and emergency phone numbers immediately on arrival. As a result, students report that they are fully informed and feel safe in the school. An extensive social programme is in place which effectively enhances the students learning experience. Students report that they are very happy with the programme. Comprehensive information and advice on further study is provided by a senior manager, which enables students to make informed choices.

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 recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Extend the arrangements for appraisals to provide all staff with clear targets for improvement, and monitor the impact of staff development.
 - Implement a process of self-evaluation which considers the views of all staff.
 - Establish action planning as an element in self-evaluation and following systematic analysis of feedback.
 - Establish a system for the analysis and monitoring of complaints across the school.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. Clear records of staff development show evidence of links to development needs, which were identified in appraisal. A new appraisal document, negotiated and agreed with teachers, shows clear targets for improvement and professional development arising from appraisal and confirmed in CPD records. However the process of monitoring the impact of targets is not yet fully developed
- 5.4 Excellent progress has been made against the second recommendation. Anonymous staff questionnaires effectively analyse suggestions or comments from staff. These are addressed and staff receive written responses to any concerns they raise. All staff meetings have resulted in improved communications between managers and teaching staff and provide an excellent forum for the views of all staff to be presented.
- 5.5 Excellent progress has been made against the third recommendation. Analysis of questionnaires which address specific issues, and feedback from weekly class tutorials, form a detailed action plan which results in clear recommendations. These are reported back to staff and students ensuring all are kept informed of how actions have been addressed.
- 5.6 Excellent progress has been in relation to the fourth recommendation. A new complaints procedure clearly outlines how complaints are to be dealt with and recorded. All welfare issues and complaints are recorded in one document and issues raised are addressed in weekly management meetings and in staff meetings. As a result, any concerns of students are quickly identified and appropriate action taken.
- 5.7 The proprietors have a clear oversight of the school's operation, strategic direction, management and financial needs. Leaders provide clear educational direction which effectively supports the aims of the school. Quality assurance is excellent of a very

high standard and effective use is made of feedback from both staff and students to drive improvements. The school's self-evaluation and development plan is highly successful in identifying priorities for improvement and implementing these. Excellent communications with staff and regular whole school meetings ensure all staff are kept fully informed of developments. Teaching staff confirm that communications at the school is good and has greatly improved. Their views are sought and they are regularly consulted and involved in developments.

5.8 A comprehensive appraisal system is in place and includes detailed lesson observations and professional development reviews., As a result, teaching staff enjoy good support to further develop their skills in meeting the needs of students.

5.9 .

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The language school has improved the good quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure that the specific targets for improvement in ILPs are continually monitored.
- Collate the development needs of teachers as identified in appraisals to identify the training needs of staff.

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 proprietor. 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

Ms Christine Powell	Lead Inspector
Ms Lynne Heath	Team Inspector