



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

MONITORING VISIT

EC ENGLISH

Company registration no. – 03482623

Full Name	EC English
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Company name	EC English Holdings Ltd
Telephone Number	02072423787
Email Address	study@ecenglish.com
Website	www.ecenglish.com
Director of Operations	Ms Michelle Falzon
Proprietor	Mr Andrew Mangion
Age Range	13+
Total number of students	1126
Numbers by age and type of study	<p>Under 16: 0</p> <p>16 – 18 61</p> <p>18+: 1065</p> <p>EFL only: 1126</p>
Inspection dates	7 – 8 November 2018

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 EC English Holdings Ltd is a private, international provider of English language education and training. It was established in Malta in 1991 and has six schools in the UK, in Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, London, Manchester and Oxford. In addition, it has schools in Ireland, Malta, South Africa, the USA and Canada. The group's head office is located in Malta. The day-to-day running of the schools is the responsibility of the centre directors, who report to the director of operations for Europe and South Africa. The director in-turn reports to the chief operations officer who is based in London and is a member of the executive team of the group. The aim of the organisation is to help students to succeed in a global community.
- 1.2 The schools offer a wide range of English language courses (EFL), from beginners to advanced levels. Provision includes general English and examination preparation courses, and specialist programmes including English for work and one to one courses. These courses are offered throughout the year. In addition the group runs short summer programmes for young learners, organised by a unit which is separate from the schools. For the all year open courses students are aged 16 years or more. Schools run closed courses accompanied by group leaders for students aged 13 years plus, and on the young learner programmes students aged 13 years or more are accepted. Enrolment is on a continuous basis for the adult EFL courses.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 1126 students enrolled. They come from a wide range of countries. The vast majority of students are over 18 years. There are slightly more male than female students and all speak English as an additional language. Accommodation is offered through the provision of student residence and host family options.
- 1.4 The six schools were last inspected on the 6-8 December 2016 when they met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations. The main recommendations from the previous report are:
- Ensure that all schools consistently re-inspect those home-stays they manage themselves.
 - Implement the policy for annual staff appraisals and lesson observations in all schools.
 - Ensure that personal references are taken and recorded for all new staff appointments.
 - Build on the current work on measuring rates of student progress to provide detailed information on student achievement for use in self-evaluation.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 6–8 December 2016 the language 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. The schools have clear educational aims and objectives and offer a wide range of high quality courses that fully meet the needs and aspirations of the students. Course provision and the curriculum are very well organised, flexible and highly effective in supporting student language development. Those courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is accurate and is highly effective in ensuring that students are placed on the right of course in accordance with their language abilities. Teaching is excellent. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. Lessons are very well planned and use a wide range of teaching and learning methods to deliver engaging lessons which fully involve students in learning. The use of technology in the classrooms is well developed; this is effective in enhancing learning. Regular tests are used to check students' progress and to provide teachers with up-to-date progress results to ensure that they effectively plan to meet students' needs. Students make excellent progress.
- 2.3 Arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of students across all six schools are excellent. The schools' buildings are very well maintained and provide safe and comfortable environments which effectively support learning. Procedures for managing health and safety are excellent and are consistently implemented and updated. A high level of fire safety is maintained. Student registration and attendance recording is excellent. Records are accurate, very well managed and are used effectively in each school to monitor attendance and take any necessary action should a student fail to attend. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure. Pastoral support is excellent and provides a high level of support and guidance in accordance with the school's aims. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are highly secure and reflect official guidance. A secure system for the re-inspection of homestays which are managed by each school is in place. As a result, accommodation is consistently re-inspected by all schools to ensure that high standards are being maintained.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Comprehensive oversight ensures that high levels of education, welfare and health and safety are maintained, and that sufficient financial support is in place so that each school's development is well supported. The schools are very well managed. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is highly effective communication between the group's senior leaders and school managers. A comprehensive range of well-defined policies and procedures are introduced, implemented and monitored appropriately. Mechanisms to monitor quality and the tracking of student progress are excellent. Self-assessment is well-developed and

used effectively to ensure the necessary resources are in place to meet the needs of the schools. Achievement data is analyzed and use by managers to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and student progress. Student feedback is regularly sought, with trends analysed and used to effectively improve the quality of the student experience. Experienced and well-qualified teachers are recruited, with the schools undertaking all appropriate checks to confirm their identity and suitability. However, not all electronic references are verified for authenticity.

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 quality of course provision and the curriculum is excellent. The schools have clear educational aims and objectives and offer a wide range of high quality courses that fully meet the needs and aspirations of the students. The curriculum is based on a suitable policy statement and is very well planned. It provides a comprehensive range of courses to meet the different needs, aspirations and language capabilities of the variety of students who attend the school. Courses offer clear progression routes in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.3 Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is accurate and is highly effective in ensuring that students are placed on the right of course in accordance with their language abilities. As a result, students report that they are very satisfied with their courses.
- 3.4 Teaching is excellent and results in high levels of student progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and have extensive subject knowledge. Lessons are very well planned and a wide range of teaching and learning methods are used to deliver engaging lessons which fully involve students in their learning. Effective use of a range of resources and activities is supplemented by good quality explanation and effective questioning. Students work extremely well in groups, showing excellent co-operative learning and independence. The use of technology in the classrooms is well developed; this is effective in enhancing learning.
- 3.5 Arrangements for tracking students' progress are excellent. Regular tests are used to check students' progress and to provide teachers with up-to-date progress results to ensure that they effectively plan to meet students' needs. Students make excellent progress.

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 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure that all schools consistently re-inspect those homestays they manage themselves.
- 4.3 Excellent progress has been made against the recommendation. A secure system for the re-inspection of homestays which are managed by each school is in place. As a result, accommodation is now consistently re-inspected by all schools to ensure that high standards are being maintained. Students report that they are very satisfied with the standard of their accommodation.
- 4.4 Premises are secure, fit-for-purpose, and very well maintained. As a result, each of the six schools provides a safe and comfortable environment which effectively supports learning. Comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures ensure that the health and safety of students and staff are effectively managed. All necessary measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards have been taken. The school has an appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid.
- 4.5 Systems for recording registration and attendance are excellent. Clear policies and procedures are in place for the timely and accurate registration of students, the monitoring of their attendance and reporting of absence. A central register is accurately maintained and individual student files contain all relevant information. Attendance records are accurate and daily attendance is closely monitored. Home Office monitoring and reporting procedures for Tier 4 visa students are well understood and adhered to rigorously.
- 4.6 Pastoral support is excellent. Each school provides a high level of support and guidance in accordance with the group's aims. Students are clear about who to see and where to go if they have a concern. They report that the schools are providing them with safe, supportive and comfortable environments which effectively meet their learning needs. Relationships between staff and students are excellent.
- 4.7 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of all strategies is frequently checked by senior managers. There is a designated child protection officer at each school who is appropriately trained. All staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to or on appointment, and an accurate central register is maintained of suitability checks on staff.

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:
- Implement the policy for annual staff appraisals and lesson observations in all schools.
 - Ensure that personal references are taken and recorded for all new staff appointments.
 - Build on the current work on measuring rates of student progress to provide detailed information on student achievement for use in self-evaluation.
- 5.3 Excellent progress has been made against the first recommendation. Clear guidance on the implementation of the policies has been provided by senior managers. Consequently, the policy for annual staff appraisals and lesson observations is now fully implemented by all six schools.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made against the second recommendation. Personal references are now consistently taken up prior to the appointment of all new staff and recorded in the single central register. However, not all electronic references are verified for authenticity.
- 5.5 Excellent progress has been made against the third recommendation. Individual student progress is measured by regular testing in lessons. Results for all students are collated and analysed. The data is reviewed by senior leaders and teachers to evaluate student progress and used effectively by managers to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and student progress.
- 5.6 The quality of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Senior leaders are highly successful in providing clear educational direction and discharging their responsibilities in accordance with the aims of the school. Financial management is excellent and effectively contributes to the success and development of the six schools. The focus of governance has a clear emphasis on supporting students and maintaining high standards. As a result, the high standards in the care of students have been maintained and the standard of the quality of teaching improved.
- 5.7 The six schools are very well managed. Well-defined policies and procedures are introduced at all levels, and implemented and monitored appropriately. Relationships and communication between the school's leadership team, the proprietor and the teaching staff are excellent. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meetings with staff show that they are extremely supportive of the school. A comprehensive range of policies is in place; policies are regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

- 5.8 Arrangements for quality assurance and the tracking of student progress are excellent. Managers are highly effective in monitoring procedures and evaluating outcomes to ensure high standards of academic and personal development continue. Achievement data is analyzed and use by managers to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and student progress. Student feedback is regularly sought, with trends analysed and used to effectively improve the quality of the student experience. Consequently, self-assessment is well developed and used effectively to ensure the necessary resources are in place to meet the needs of the schools.
- 5.9 Arrangements for staff recruitment are excellent. The schools are very successful in recruiting and developing high quality staff and ensuring their suitability to work with students, including those under the age of 18 and any vulnerable adults. There are well-maintained staff files for all members of staff, containing relevant personal details, certified copies of qualifications and proof of eligibility to work in the UK. Appropriate DBS checks, professional references and checks to confirm previous employment history have been taken up for all staff. Details of these checks are appropriately recorded in a single central register. A comprehensive system of staff review is in place and is used effectively to ensure staff are well trained for their roles and are appropriately supported by the management team.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The language 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 language school should:

- Ensure that all electronically obtained references are verified for authenticity.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and attended registration sessions. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school.

Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mrs Flora Bean	Team Inspector
Ms Jane Beeson	Team Inspector
Ms Kanwaljit Dhillon	Team Inspector
Ms Julie Griffiths	Team Inspector
Ms Mareve Kilbride-Newman	Team Inspector
Ms Janet King	Team Inspector
Mr Patrick Lawlor	Team Inspector
Mr Mark Dean Marr	Team Inspector
Ms Sheila Morris	Team Inspector
Ms Eileen O'Gara	Team Inspector
Ms Christine Powell	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector
Ms Janet Simms	Team Inspector