Review of private further education colleges and English language schools

TLI School of English

10 May 2017

Transforming lives through learning

The review process

This review report follows the quality framework for the *review arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, September 2016.* The review normally lasts for three days. Over the three-day period, the review team:

- engage with learners;
- observe episodes of learning and teaching and provide feedback to each member of teaching staff or other learning facilitator on strengths and areas for further development;
- conduct interviews and undertake other activity required to determine the extent of concordance between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluate evidence against the **14 reference quality indicators;** and
- identify key strengths and areas for further development for the organisation.

Education Scotland is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland.

Reviews are arranged under **three high-level principles** which Education Scotland is adopting for evaluative purposes:

Outcomes and Impact:
How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?
How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Service Delivery:
How good is the delivery of our learning and teaching?
How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Leaderships and quality culture:
How good is our strategic management?

These are underpinned by a wider principle on the centre's **Capacity for improvement** and the question, *How good is our capacity to improve?*

Education Scotland reviews are designed to:

- support and promote quality enhancement in organisations to provide the best possible experience for the learner;
- provide information to the Home Office, when required, on the quality of organisations and the learning experience they provide;
- provide an independent evaluation to assist organisations in informing prospective and current learners of the quality of the organisation's programmes and services;
- evaluate organisations against the *Education Scotland quality framework, September 2016;* and
- complement organisation-led internal review and self-evaluation.

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

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

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

This report contains effectiveness statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of *learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes* and *leadership and quality culture*.

The report also uses the following terms to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

Grades are awarded in THREE areas:

- *Outcomes and Impact*
- *Service Delivery*
- *Leadership and quality culture*

Inspectors use a SIX-point grading scale:

- *excellent - outstanding and sector leading*
- *very good - Major Strengths*
- *good - Important strengths with some areas for improvement*
- *satisfactory – Strengths just outweigh weaknesses*
- *weak - Important weaknesses*
- *unsatisfactory - Major weaknesses*

Contents

1. Introduction

The organisation and its context

In carrying out the review of TLI School of English, Education Scotland took the following context fully into account.

TLI Ltd is a private, family run, English language school located in premises in the west end of Edinburgh. Learning takes place within the school's nine large classrooms. Learners have access to a computer suite located within the student common room to support their studies. The accommodation also includes a small kitchen for use by learners. The premises are Wi-Fi enabled and learners are able to access the internet with their own laptops and computers.

The school offers a range of general English language programmes at different levels from beginner to proficient, tailored to the requirements of individual learners. It also offers specialist programmes for preparation for external examinations such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS). School programmes are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). The school also offers certificate and diploma programmes in Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

The Directors are responsible for all school operations. They are supported by a General Manager who oversees all of the school activities. The post of Director of Studies with responsibility for all academic matters has been recently reinstated. A Welfare Officer has responsibility for learner support, including health and wellbeing and accommodation.

At the time of the inspection, there were 28 learners in the school. It currently has one learner from outwith the European Economic Area who is studying under a Home Office Tier 4 licence.

The review

The review by Education Scotland took place during the week beginning 10 April 2017.

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the learner experience. We evaluated these against *outcomes and impact, service delivery and leadership and quality culture* using the 14 reference quality indicators outlined in *Inspection arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, September 2016*. We used information submitted in advance by the organisation to decide on the scope of the inspection. The inspection team talked with learners and staff at all levels in the organisation.

2. Outcomes of external review

Judgement of Grades

The review team awarded grades for each of the three key themes based on the following criteria.

excellent:	**outstanding and sector leading**
very good:	**major strengths**
good:	**important strengths with some areas for improvement**
satisfactory:	**strengths just outweigh weaknesses**
weak:	**important weaknesses**
unsatisfactory:	**major weaknesses**

Key Theme	Grade awarded
Outcomes and Impact	very good
Service delivery	good
Leadership and quality culture	good

3. Outcomes and Impact

Learner progression and achievement:

How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

Areas of positive practice

- Retention rates are very high with all learners completing their programme of study and 7% of learners are extending their period of study to develop further their language skills.
- Most learners who sit external examinations successfully achieve their awards. In 2016, around 89% of learners who were presented were successful.
- Almost all learners gain confidence through a *communicative approach* to develop their English language skills. Through their wider engagement with other learners and school staff they further broaden their development of speaking, listening and writing skills.
- The school has a strategy in place for promoting equality and diversity arrangements and for the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable groups. They deliver a range of courses for under 18s and have in place recently introduced enhanced policies and procedures to support these learners in both accommodation and educational settings. All staff have current Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme membership.
- All management and staff have undertaken training and workshops to raise awareness of the PREVENT agenda. The school has comprehensive policies and procedures in place to support this.

Areas for development

- The school maintains records of learner outcomes on proficiency tests. However, these are not used systematically to ascertain learner progress and trends for self-evaluation purposes.

Meeting the needs of stakeholders

How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?

Areas of positive practice

- The school offers an appropriate range of courses from beginner to advanced level that meets the needs of their learners well. The courses are leveled against the CEFR and validated by a range of awarding bodies including Trinity and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).
- The school offers a range of preparation courses which effectively prepares candidates for IELTS examinations.
- Learners are supported well through classroom activity and engagement with the welfare officer to enhance their prospects of employability, for example, CV writing and job interview skills. They use a range of communicative methodologies well to support learners in role playing scenarios to effectively build their confidence.
- A well-considered social programme is in place which supports cultural and linguistic immersive activities to enhance learning and language acquisition.
- The school uses exit questionnaires from external agencies and internally to measure levels of learner satisfaction. Overall, learners are satisfied and would recommend TLI School of English.

- Learner progress is measured through *can do* statements closely aligned to the CEFR framework. These have been recently reintroduced and are supporting better understanding by learners of their individual progress and expected outcomes. Follow-up tutorials support learners to set learning targets and actions for improvement.
- All learners who complete the course receive a school *Certificate of Attainment* which identifies their English language skill level against the CEFR.

Areas for development

- None identified.

4. Service delivery

Delivery of learning and teaching:

How good is our delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- All teaching staff use a scenario based approach to delivering learning. This builds on experiences with which learners are familiar and develops effectively their *language in use* skills. Teachers use reinforcement techniques effectively to encourage all learners to contribute to pronunciation sessions.
- Teaching staff take good account of the mix of multi-linguistic and multi-cultural influences to support well collaborative learning opportunities.
- Almost all learners are highly motivated and participate actively and enthusiastically in a range of learning activities. They regularly engage in peer support activities with learners from other countries to encourage and assist each other in developing their English language skills.
- Learners use an online collaborative writing tool to support them in their exam preparation. These are accessible through mobile devices and at a time to suit the learner.
- Teaching staff are very well qualified and use their professional and subject knowledge well to make lessons interesting and stimulating for learners. The teacher-led approach is highly effective to demonstrate and drill *language in use*.
- Teaching staff provide all learners with sufficient challenge which helps them achieve their goals. Mutually respectful relationships exist between staff and learners.

Areas for development

- Teaching staff use a narrow range of resources to support learners. This is limiting the scope of opportunities to engage learners in the development of knowledge and skills.
- Teaching staff use a limited range of methodologies to systematically develop learners' reflective practice. This leads to an over reliance on teacher-led learning.

Management of learning and teaching

How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- All learners receive comprehensive and useful information from TLI's website, recruitment staff and agencies. This prepares them well for entry to the school prior to the commencement of their course.
- All learners are very well supported by the Student Welfare Officer throughout their pre-entry and induction period and throughout their programme of study.
- Placement tests are effective in ensuring learners are placed on the right level of course to enable them to progress in their learning.
- Teaching staff work well with learners to identify goals based on *can do* statements. They hold regular, highly effective tutorials which assist learners to reflect on their progress and set goals for further learning.
- All staff provide a high level of pastoral support and have a high regard for students' welfare.
- Teaching staff regularly evaluate provision and identify actions to improve delivery. They discuss on-going issues informally with other staff and share practice to enhance learning and teaching.

Areas for development

- Teaching staff do not engage sufficiently in systematic evaluation of programmes to effectively inform actions for improvements.

How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

5. Leadership and quality culture

Strategic leadership:

How good is our strategic leadership?

Areas of positive practice

- The Directors of TLI School of English communicate a clear vision for the school's curriculum. This is communicated effectively to the recently reinstated Director of Studies who works closely with the General Manager and the Administrator and Student Welfare Officer to develop and implement appropriate strategies, policies and processes.
- The Director of Studies is successfully reintroducing and enhancing strategies and arrangements to enhance learning and teaching and staff are responding well to these developments.
- A programme of monthly continuous professional development (CPD) workshops supports the development of knowledge and skills of teaching staff well. They share practice and address legislative and professional development including the attainment of language teaching qualifications to further enhance delivery.
- All staff work well as a team at an operational level and are committed in their curriculum delivery to a culture of quality improvement and ongoing development of the school's programmes and activities.
- Weekly staff meetings are effective and they support the planning of scenarios for classroom delivery. Staff identify ongoing operational issues and agree potential solutions for implementation.

Areas for development

- School strategies and arrangements for self-evaluation are not rigorous or systematic in their approach. The school has in place a range of activities that are insufficiently coordinated in their approach to effectively identify actions for improvement. Processes are over-reliant on senior management taking responsibility for identifying and implementing actions.
- The CPD programme does not always sufficiently focus on the outcomes of reflective practice to better inform development opportunities for staff.

6. Capacity for Improvement

Capacity for improvement:

How good is our capacity for improvement?

Learners at TLI School of English are making good progress on their programmes, and are gaining confidence through a communicative approach to develop their English language skills.

TLI School of English is a family run school and benefits from the commitment of strong family management. The Directors have a strong vision for the school. They are supported by a General Manager who oversees all of the school activities. The role of Director of Studies, with responsibility for all academic matters, has recently been re-established. This has led to the recent reinstatement of highly effective strategies and processes that give an increased confidence in the schools' capacity to improve.

The strength and commitment of the Student Welfare Officer leads to learners being supported well in their studies and in the enhancement of their employability prospects.

The General Manager and Director of Studies are committed to the development of short, medium and long term strategies for the implementation of a self-assessment process with a supporting enhancement plan for its implementation. This evidence and the evidence evaluated during the inspection would indicate a continued confidence in the organisation's capacity to continue to improve.

7. What happens next?

This review report is valid for four years.

Education Scotland may engage at regular intervals to monitor progress, if invited by the organisation.

Any significant material change within the organisation should be reported to Education Scotland immediately.

Margaret Rose Livingstone
HM Inspector
Education Scotland

8. Further information

This review and judgements relate to the service area as a whole. For further information about Education Scotland, the external review methodologies, or other information about reviews, see www.education.gov.scot

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

CEFR   Common European Framework of Reference for languages
CPD   Continuous Professional Development
IELTS   International English Language Testing System

Appendix 2

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.

scqf
scottish credit and
qualifications framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications				Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12	Some SQA qualifications are changing between 2013-2016. See www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11					Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10					Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award		Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma			Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate			Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher					Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5 Intermediate 2					Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate	National Progression Award			SVQ 1
3	National 3 Access 3					
2	National 2 Access 2					
1	National 1 Access 1					

Education Scotland
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T   +44 (0)131 244 4330
E   enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba

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