

Review of private further education colleges and English language schools

The Chippendale School of Furniture

November 2021

The review process

Education Scotland is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the Home Office to review private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland. This report summarises the findings of the educational oversight review of **Chippendale School of Furniture** and follows the quality arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, September 2016. The review was carried out by a team of HM Inspectors during October 2021. Reviews normally lasts for three days. Over the three-day period, the review team:

- engaged with learners;
- observed episodes of learning and teaching and provided feedback to each member of teaching staff or other learning facilitator on strengths and areas for further development;
- conducted interviews and undertook other activity required to determine the extent of concordance between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluated evidence against the **14 reference quality indicators**; and
- identified key strengths and areas for further development for the organisation.

Reviews are organised under **three high-level principles**:

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 judgement of the centre's **Capacity for improvement**.

Education Scotland educational oversight reviews are designed to:

- support and promote quality enhancement in an organisation's ability 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 using the Education Scotland quality framework, November 2018; and
- complement organisation-led internal review and self-evaluation.

Educational oversight review supports objective and reliable reporting on the quality of education provision in English Language schools and private colleges for stakeholders, learners, Government and the wider community. Review takes account of the context of each individual establishment, how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its own success.

The review of the establishment focusses on the quality of learning and teaching and the learner experience. HM 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 statements that express an overall evaluation of learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes and leadership and quality culture.

The report may use 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

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The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

1. Introduction

The organisation and its context

In carrying out the review of The Chippendale School of Furniture, Education Scotland HM Inspectors took the following context fully into account.

The Chippendale School of Furniture was established in 1985 and is dedicated to teaching the skills and business acumen involved in designing and making bespoke furniture and antique restoration. It is located close to the village of Gifford in East Lothian. Most learning takes place in a workshop which accommodates around 25 learners. Separate machining, wood turning and sanding rooms are located adjacent to the workshop. Further rooms are available for exhibitions and learner functions. There is also a library with a range of reference books. There are commercial bench spaces for graduates who want to start up their own business in the incubation workshops, adjacent to the school. The workshop area uses wood and sawdust waste to generate heat through a sustainable heating system. The Chippendale School of Furniture is an independent, non-profit making institution which is managed by the family-run business. The school is run alongside a furniture making and restoration business and learners benefit from opportunities to observe commercial activities and commissions. The school's aim is to provide an intensive programme of study that encourages creativity and entrepreneurial skills. The school is a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) approved centre and offers two Higher National (HN) units as part of the school's full-time award in Furniture Design, Making and Restoration programme.

At the time of the review, 27 learners were studying on the programme, with 15 of those learners coming from countries outside the UK. The school employs six teaching staff and a number of visiting experts. A Student Welfare Officer provides support for learners with accommodation, transport, health and well-being.

The last full inspection took place in November 2016. Since Education Scotland's Annual Engagement Visit in April 2018, a new Principal has been appointed to the school.

The review

The review took place during the week beginning 25 October, 2021.

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the learner experience. We evaluated these using the 14 reference quality indicators outlined in inspection arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, November 2018. The review team talked with learners and staff at all levels in the school. We used information submitted in advance by the school to decide on the scope of the review.

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	very good
Leadership and quality culture	very good

As a result of these grades, The Chippendale School of Furniture is found to be **EFFECTIVE**.

3. Outcomes and impact

Learner progression and achievement

How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

Areas of positive practice

- Retention rates for learners were high (100%) in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Two learners left the programme in 2020-21 due to Covid-19 and as a result the retention rate fell to 88%.
- Levels of attainment over the last three years are very high. All learners who complete the programme achieve a school certificate and two associated SQA units at SCQF level 8.
- The school meets the requirements of appropriate directives and regulations. They have in place comprehensive policies and procedures in relation to health and safety.
- Day to day running of the workshop is underpinned effectively by robust attention to health and safety and safe working practices.
- The school is an approved SQA centre and complies with all associated requirements of the awarding body.
- The school has carried out a Covid-19 risk assessment to take account of public health requirements. The mitigations in place have been actioned to good effect recently.
- An appropriate Safeguarding of Young People and Vulnerable Groups policy has been updated during 2021.
- The school has also updated their Equality and Diversity policy during 2021.

Areas for development

- Learners do not yet receive formal certification of the enterprise and entrepreneurship skills they develop throughout their programme.
- Staff are not yet fully aware of the key elements within the equality and diversity and the safeguarding policies.

Meeting the needs of stakeholders

How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?

Areas of positive practice

- The school offers highly relevant programmes in furniture design, making and restoration which include short introductory courses and a full-time, 30-week programme. These programmes are promoted well to international learners.
- All learners are well supported and are highly satisfied with their experience at the school. They are included and engaged in decision making about their programme and welcome the ongoing opportunities to discuss issues with their programme tutor or directly with the Principal.
- All learners gain high level skills which equip them well for future self-employment. They gain confidence in their own career prospects with some considering a career change as a result.
- All learners gain a broad range of practical skills in design, manufacture and restoration of furniture. They also gain valuable skills, such as problem solving and working in teams to peer review and critique their work.

- Learners' work is celebrated through an end-of-year exhibition of their work, a graduation ceremony and pieces of work are regularly sold commercially by learners.
- Most learners who achieve success on the programme progress to employment, with a high number entering self-employment.

Area for development

- As the school further develops their plans to digitise resources, it will be important to further embed digital skills within the full time programme to ensure accessibility for all learners.

4. Service delivery

Delivery of learning and teaching:

How good is our delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- The curriculum is appropriate and well-planned by staff. The inclusion and strengthening of the entrepreneurial element helps to support learners on their employment journey.
- The pre-entry process provides an effective opportunity for learners to identify additional support needs. Where these are identified, learners' needs are addressed promptly.
- Tutors support and motivate learners well. Learners engage well in small group and individual work.
- Learners have access to very good workshop resources and use them well. Additionally, library materials, some online resources and additional workshop space, for independent study in evenings and at weekends, are readily available.
- Staff ensure that learning delivery is well designed and promotes independent learning and skills development. Learners are encouraged and supported by staff to reach the highest standards.
- Learners are supported well to reflect on their skills and understanding through constructive feedback. They keep a reflective log and create a portfolio of evidence which is in turn monitored through a high level of tailored support by tutors.
- Staff use their professional skills and subject knowledge well. They are well respected by learners and, throughout the programme, they are able to highlight to learners how the skills they acquire can be used in a working environment.
- A wide range of successful teaching approaches are used by staff. Class groups, demonstrations, discussions, small group activity, individual tasks, site visits and visiting experts all combine well to offer a range of effective learning opportunities.
- Staff use resources well, incorporating online information to supplement live teaching. Good quality equipment and workshops are available to ensure learners have access to a variety of appropriate workshop practices. Online teaching approaches were developed quickly and effectively to ensure the continued delivery of learning during periods of school closure as a result of Covid-19.
- Staff encourage learners to ensure they produce the best quality of work that they can, and use staff and peer feedback alongside displays and events to encourage both pride in their achievements and high standards of work.

Area for development

- Staff do not always use questioning techniques effectively to ensure all learners understand the concepts and aims of each lesson.

Management of learning and teaching

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

Areas of positive practice

- International learners are particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity to achieve the qualifications offered by the school and confirm the very strong reputation the school has developed globally.
- Learners find it easy to get useful and clear information on the programme in advance, and are provided with helpful further information once they enroll on the programme. They confirm that the information received prior to the programme reflects their experience when they join the programme.
- Relationships are respectful and purposeful between staff and learners which helps to ensure an aspirational approach to learning and skills development.
- The wider curriculum and programme are well designed to meet the overall needs of the learners, and include an appropriate range of technical skills, creativity and business skills.
- The school demonstrates and promotes sustainability actively through its use of resources and recycling of raw materials.
- Learners value the influence they have over the planning of programme content and topics to be explored. Tutor discussions and structured meetings between learners and the Principal are used well and have led to improvements in programme design.
- There is a constructive and purposeful climate for learning, where learners are focused well on their skills development and tutors support and encourage high levels of performance.
- Learners are given appropriate feedback on their skills development with the level of individual tuition supporting this well.
- Learners can set individual goals and are supported in their work toward these goals. Tutor support, log books and portfolio construction all support this well.
- Effective arrangements are in place for curricular, vocational and personal guidance. Tutors and the Principal meet regularly with learners and the Student Welfare Officer provides more individualised pastoral support when this is required.
- External speakers and other agencies are used well to enhance the learning experience. This supports the entrepreneurial element particularly well and allows specialist topics such as social media marketing to reflect current practice.
- Regular learner and staff meetings or lunches with the Principal have been used well to identify changes and enhancements which are implemented promptly. Recent improvements have included the enhancement of important policies, strengthening of the entrepreneurial element of the programme and improved marketing.

Area for development

- There is insufficient detailed planning of individual lessons. There is a lack of clarity around the detailed objectives or specific purpose of the sessions.

5. Leadership and quality culture

Strategic leadership:

How good is our strategic leadership?

Areas of positive practice

- Since the Annual Engagement Visit in 2018, a new Principal has been appointed as part of the overall succession planning of the business.
- The new Principal has a strong vision and is ambitious for the school. He communicates clearly to all staff the direction for the business and the ethos of the school. He influences teaching staff daily by taking a lead role in the delivery of learning and teaching.
- The senior management team work well together to promote the vision and direction of the school. They share a clear understanding of the culture and ethos and work well with staff to shape the vocational curriculum delivery.
- Staff are proud to work in the school and enjoy the work that they do. They are highly motivated and committed to the vision and aims of the school and work well together to deliver and develop a high quality learning experience.
- The school has a comprehensive Quality Management Policy which helpfully outlines how the school quality systems operate. The school has a well-embedded culture of quality improvement which is demonstrated through the quality of delivery and endorsed by the school's very positive global reputation.
- Learner engagement is strong and embedded well in the culture of the school. Learners are actively encouraged to suggest ideas for improvement and development through their project work.
- The school uses specialist tutors regularly to enhance the experience for learners through exposure to experts in specialist areas across the programme. This collaboration also encourages school staff to reflect on their own practice, to good effect.
- All staff are committed to a culture of quality improvement and regularly engage in a range of meetings and tutor sessions to identify areas for improvement and enhancement. Where the need for change or improvement is identified, practical improvements are implemented timeously.

Areas for development

- The staff development strategy remains under-developed. There are few opportunities for staff to further develop professional teaching skills in a structured way, although staff share their practice effectively in informal ways. Staff do not yet benefit from regular updating and development of their skills and knowledge about important areas such as equality and diversity, PREVENT and digital approaches to learning and teaching.

6. Capacity for improvement

Capacity for improvement:

How good is our capacity for improvement?

There is continued confidence in the organisation's capacity to improve.

The appointment of the new Principal has been a welcome development and has helped to promote further the vision and direction of the school. The Chippendale Furniture School continues to sustain its very positive global reputation and attracts learners from a broad range of countries internationally as well as learners from the UK. Learners experience very good quality training and skills development and they consistently achieve high levels of success. However, the staff development strategy remains under-developed. There are few opportunities for staff to further develop professional teaching skills. Regular CPD in areas such as equality and diversity, PREVENT and digital skills are not yet available to staff. Going forward, teaching staff will benefit from ongoing, regular updating of their individual skills.

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 HM Inspectors immediately.

Janet P Campbell
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

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority

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 Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs
12				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher				Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3				
2	National 2, Awards				
1	National 1, Awards				