



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Tier 4 Educational Oversight
Inspection

Foyle International Ltd

Report of an Inspection
May 2014



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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1. Context

Foyle International was established as a private limited company in 1990 and is a private language school based in Derry, Northern Ireland. The school has been operating out of its current premises, in Derry city centre, since May 2012. Foyle International has been accredited since 2004 by the British Council, under the Accreditation UK scheme. The school is a member of English UK, the representative body of English language schools across the United Kingdom, and a member of its sub-group English UK Northern Ireland (NI).

Foyle International offers educational services in English language and vocational training as well as Teacher Training in English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The school's offer is aligned to the Common European Framework (CEF), providing year-round general English programmes and summer schools, including English Plus courses for a range of clients. In addition, the school offers the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam preparation courses for those preparing to progress to university and for those entering the Overseas Nurses Programme (ONP). The school acts as an advisory body to European vocational colleges regarding the transfer of vocational credits when learners study and work in different European Union (EU) countries through the European Credit System for Vocational Transfer (ECVET) provision. The school is an Edexcel (Pearson) approved training centre, an approved University of Cambridge teacher training centre for the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) qualification and is approved to run Trinity College and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) examinations.

All of the learners enrolled on English language courses in Foyle International are fee paying and are either privately funded or funded through an EU project such as the Leonardo or Erasmus+ programmes. At the time of the inspection, most (77%) of the current learners were participants on European funded projects. Foyle International offers learners a range of attendance options including; attending as a language only learner, as a language and work-placement learner or as a work-placement only learner. The school organises work - placement opportunities where appropriate, and works to arrange these for all learners who require a placement experience as part of their European project and for individuals who request a placement as part of their privately funded programme of study. Most (86%) of the learners who enrol on courses in Foyle International are adults from a range of European and non-European countries.

During the period from January 2010 to December 2013, 2691 learners completed in-house certified courses; of these, nearly all (96%) completed a general English course. Over the same period, 28 learners completed the CELTA courses and 73 learners completed the IELTS examination preparation courses.

At the time of the inspection, 94 learners were undertaking a range of courses, including 22 learners who were taking general English courses at various levels. Most (79%) of the learners were adults and the remainder were under 18 years of age, and there was a balanced gender mix.

2. Overall finding

Overall, the quality of education provided by Foyle International is satisfactory and meets the necessary standards for Tier 4 Educational Oversight inspections.

Overall effectiveness	Satisfactory
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Satisfactory
Leadership and management	Satisfactory

What does Foyle International need to do to improve?

1. To embed further the implementation of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes across the organisation..
2. To better use the management information system to monitor the tracking of learner progress, and inform strategic and operational planning.

3. Key findings of the inspection

Achievements and standards

The learners are progressing well in developing their English language skills; they are developing their confidence in communicating and conducting discussions with a range of audiences. Learners are provided with a suitable range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to develop their conversational and writing skills through active learning activities, group work, tutorial reflection logs, and, on occasion, peer learning. Most of them are acquiring an appropriate level of language development and spoken English, in line with the requirements of their course. Almost all of the learners display motivation and enthusiasm for their programme.

Over the past four years, all of the learners who enrolled on General English courses were retained (100%) and most of the learners who enrolled on the CELTA courses were retained (89%); and, of these, all achieved their target qualification. Over the same period almost all of the learners who enrolled on the ILETS (examination preparation courses) were retained (99%) and, of these, all achieved their target qualification.

Provision

Foyle International provides a well-planned and inclusive curriculum for the learners, which includes a broad learner experience linked to social and cultural development. The school provides an extensive calendar of social and cultural events and visits, which reflects well the local area and the region.

In all of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good or better. The best practice was characterised by effective planning, building on prior learning, an appropriate pace and an opportunity for the learners to reflect on their learning. In these lessons, the tutors make use of a broad range of teaching and learning strategies including the effective use of active learning strategies. The learners' listening, speaking and writing skills were promoted well through the use of relevant contexts linked appropriately to the cultural programme. The learners participated very well in the lessons and there is a supportive and inclusive ethos which is characterised by the very effective working relationships observed.

The school have processes in place to monitor learner progress and achievement, however, these need to be more formalised and structured to allow them to record and report more effectively on the overall progress made by the learners during their courses.

The processes for learner induction are very well established and include a 'meet and greet' provision for all learners, a presentation which provides key details about the school and information on the learning facilities, personal advice and guidance and safety tips. All learners are given a student handbook and an orientation tour of the city, including travel routes. The school also engages with a range of employers, across various occupational areas, to provide work-placement opportunities for the learners.

There is an inclusive and caring ethos in the school and mutually respectful working relationships between all of the staff and learners. The pastoral care, including reception and support arrangements, are a key strength of the school and the learners are provided with a range of support services throughout the duration of their studies. The feedback from the learner pastoral care questionnaires and the learner focus group meeting further emphasises that the learners are very positive about the quality of the provision and the supportive staff and are aware of the range of pastoral services available to them.

Foyle International promotes effectively the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.

Leadership and management

The Director and senior managers provide highly effective strategic planning and operational management for the school. The lines of communication between staff at all levels are effective and they work hard to continually review and improve all aspects of the provision. An appropriate management and staffing structure is in place and the roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly articulated and matched well to job roles. The school has developed a robust and up-to-date range of policies and procedures to guide and support both staff and learners.

The academic staff are well qualified and have extensive experience. All of the staff are provided with opportunities to identify and undertake an appropriate range of continuous professional development, which is matched well to individual roles and responsibilities.

The accommodation and physical resources to support the teaching and learning is of a high standard. All of the classrooms are bright, spacious and well-equipped. The learners have access to suitable social areas provided with internet connected computers, and notably the provision of a quiet room for contemplation and prayer. Foyle International has identified appropriately the need to invest further in the provision of information learning technology equipment to support and enhance further the teaching and learning.

The school has a wide range of high quality learner accommodation available to suit their individual needs. The learners report that the accommodation is of a very good standard and if there are any issues the school addresses these promptly. In particular, the learners report that the home stay accommodation provides them with a supportive environment in which they can gain an insight into home life and enable them to improve their English language skills.

The school has developed a wide range of collaborative partnerships with other English language schools, local, national and international schools, colleges, businesses, the regional economic development agency, and other organisations. These links and partnerships are used effectively: to identify and extend the provision into developed and emerging markets; to foster collaborative working relationships; to develop and provide bespoke training programmes; and to share good practice.

The school has effective arrangements in place for the admission and enrolment of the learners, and to manage the programmes. While the management information systems are effective staff would benefit from additional training in using the system to its full capabilities to inform better the tracking, monitoring and improvement planning processes.

Foyle International are introducing processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning and a thorough and detailed self-evaluation report has been produced. The self-evaluation report accurately identifies the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision and is linked closely with the emerging quality improvement plan. There are clear links within the self-evaluation report to the school's strategic and operational plans and targets. Performance indicators have been identified for both the short and long-term monitoring of achievement and progress across the organisation. It is important that the management now put in place systems to effectively monitor the implementation of the quality improvement processes.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the quality of education provided by Foyle International is satisfactory and meets the necessary standards for Tier 4 Educational Oversight inspections. Strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The Education and Training Inspectorate will continue to monitor the quality of the provision in Foyle International through the annual health check process.

5. Inspection method and evidence base

The Education and Training Inspectorate (the ETI) is the approved Educational Oversight body in Northern Ireland authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education providers and private language schools, which offer provision up to and including level 3 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The ETI carried out a two-phase inspection of the provision for English language courses in Foyle International in March 2014 and May 2014. The inspection focused on:

- the quality of the leadership and management of the organisation;
- the achievements and standards; and
- the quality of the provision for learning.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection in these three aspects of privately funded further education providers and private language schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available on the ETI website <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/tier-4-educational-oversight-2011/tier-4-educational-oversight-inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework.pdf>

A team of two inspectors observed a total of 5 General English sessions and visited the range of accommodation options. The inspectors met with managers and school staff and observed the administrative systems in place to manage learner enrolments and work placements, scrutinised key planning and monitoring documentation including company policies, looked at paper-based and electronic learning resources, and evaluated the organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation.

The inspection also focused on the arrangements for care, guidance and support and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the learners to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. The inspectors also held a focus group meeting with a group of learners during the inspection.

Pastoral Care and Safeguarding

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	33	13	39%	3

6. Information about Foyle International Ltd

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Type of attendance	Enrolments	
		Private learners	Learners on EU funded projects
General English (in-house certified)	Language only	22	0
	Language and work placement (in class)	0	11
English and Internship Programme (LDV)	Language and on work placement	0	60
	Work placement only	0	1
Total		22	72
Overall		94	

5

Overall summary table of performance (over the past 4 years) ¹

Programme	Number enrolled	Retention	Achievement (inc partial achievements)
General English	2590	2590 (100%)	2590 (100%)
CELTA / BTEC qualification	28	25 (89%)	25 (100%)
Total			
IELTS (examination preparation courses)	73	72 (99%)	72 (100%)

¹ All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by Foyle International

Qualitative terms used by the ETI

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more General quantitative terms. Where more General terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance Levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels for (Tier 4) Educational Oversight inspections:

Performance Level
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	<p>The percentage of learners who complete their English language course, out of the number of learners enrolled at the beginning of the course.</p> <p>Retention Rate = $\frac{\text{Number Completed}}{\text{Number Enrolled}}$</p>
Achievement	<p>The percentage of learners who completed and achieved all, or partially achieved some, of the components of their English language course.</p> <p>Achievement Rate = $\frac{(\text{Full Achievement} + \text{Partial Achievement})}{\text{Number Complete}}$</p>

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