



Education and Training
Inspectorate

(Tier4) Educational Oversight
Inspection

Foyle International

Report of an Inspection
in May 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
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1. Context

Foyle International was established as a private limited company in 1990 and is a private English language school based in Londonderry (Derry), Northern Ireland (NI). The school has been operating out of its current premises, in Derry city centre, since 2011. It has been accredited by the British Council, under the Accreditation UK scheme, since 2004. It is a member of English UK, the representative body of English language schools across the United Kingdom, and also a member of its sub-group English UK Northern Ireland.

Foyle International offers a range of programmes, including general English language courses aligned to the Common European Framework (CEF), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam preparation courses, vocational training, English Plus courses for a range of clients and a number of teacher training programmes. The programmes are offered on a year-round basis, including a number of summer schools for adults and young people. Foyle International provides a range of educational services, for example, acting as an advisory body to European vocational colleges through the European Credit System for Vocational Transfer (ECVET) provision. It 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, a Trinity College London English language test centre, an approved test centre for LanguageCert International English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for adults and young learners, and an approved centre for Open College Network (OCN). Since 1996, Foyle International has also successfully delivered the European funded Erasmus+ programmes, hosting on average 400 learners per year on English and work placement programmes. Since 2016 the school has established strong working partnerships with the local further education college and the university in order to widen further its range of provision; for example, to provide the Academic English module of the International Foundation Year (IFY), which is a programme overseen by the Northern Consortium of the United Kingdom (NCUK) and dedicated to giving international students guaranteed access to universities and support them when they progress to higher education programmes.

At the time of the inspection, 98 learners were undertaking a range of courses, including general English language courses at various levels and language and work placement programmes. Three of the learners were registered under the Home Office Tier 4 point system.

2. Views of learners

A focus group meeting was carried out with a group of eleven learners as part of the arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people and adults at risk. The learners report that their experiences in the school are highly positive and include opportunities to engage in a range of social and cultural activities. They appreciate the high levels of support provided by the staff and feel safe and well cared for in the school. All of the learners demonstrated a clear rationale for being on their programme and were aware of further higher-level English language courses available to them when they complete.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths

- The good or better standards of spoken and written English demonstrated by almost all of the learners and the high outcomes across the provision that are underpinned by the effective arrangements in place to monitor and review the learners' progress.
- The well-planned curriculum offer, elements of which are delivered remotely through online learning and teaching, which effectively supports the development of the learners' English language and social and cultural awareness through a broad range of well-planned project-based learning and social enrichment activities.
- The good or better quality of the learning and teaching observed, including the effective use of information and learning technology to enhance further the learning experiences.
- The socially inclusive and supportive ethos of the school and the strong focus on the care and welfare of the learners.
- The outstanding strategic leadership demonstrated by the senior management team, articulated through its clear focus and vision to become an international 'Information Technology hub' through effective quality and performance management, and innovative and collaborative working.
- The highly qualified and experienced staff, who are provided with excellent opportunities to undertake a broad range of relevant continuing professional development that is matched well to their job roles and responsibilities.

- The very good quality of the learning resources and accommodation provided for the learners, which enhance their learning experiences.
- The extensive links and collaborative working relationships developed with a broad range of stakeholders, including employers and the local further education college and university.

Area for improvement

- Refine further the quality improvement planning process, particularly the use of key stakeholder feedback to inform the evaluation of the quality of the provision, and to more clearly articulate the impact the actions taken to address areas for improvement have had on the work of the school and the learners.

5. Outcomes for learners

Almost all of the learners demonstrate good or better standards of work, engage well and enjoy their learning. They participate to good effect in English language development activities, including discussions and debates. The standard of their spoken English is mostly very good and their independent writing is of a good or better quality.

The learners are making good or better progress in the development of their English language skills. They are enhancing their confidence in communicating through active participation in a range of activities, including role play, small group and paired work. Almost all of them are acquiring an appropriate level of spoken English in line with the requirements of their learning programme.

Over the past three years, outcomes attained by the learners across the non-examination, examination preparation and examination courses offered are very high; all those who remain and complete their programmes achieve at least their initial targeted qualification.

The school provides an extensive calendar of well-planned social and cultural events and visits, which reflects well the local area and the region and supports the development of the learners' wider skills and capabilities. The learners develop well their critical thinking and research skills along with a greater cultural and social awareness through undertaking a range of themed projects related to culture, communication and continents. Through their engagement with these activities, they demonstrate improved wider skills and dispositions, greater confidence and enhanced communication skills.

6. Quality of provision

Foyle International provides a well-planned and inclusive curriculum, which ensures a broad and balanced range of appropriate experiences for the learners. The curriculum supports very well the learners' social and cultural understanding alongside their English language development. It includes a wide range of English language courses, including a small number of courses delivered through on-line learning and teaching, and an innovative range of project-based learning activities.

The processes for pre-entry advice, guidance and induction are well established and include: an appropriate 'pre-test' assessment of the learners' level of English language to ensure they undertake a course at the most appropriate level of English; information on the learning facilities; and personal advice, guidance and safety tips. To further encourage the learners' language development, the school actively encourages a mix of nationalities within their self-catering accommodation. The school also engages with a range of employers, across various occupational areas, to provide supportive and appropriate work placement opportunities for the learners, where they can apply their language skills in real-life contexts.

In all of the lessons observed, the quality of the learning and teaching was good or better, supported well by the effective use of information and learning technology. The quality of the learning resources was very good and used to good effect to support meaningful learning. The tutors make effective use of a broad range of learning and teaching strategies, including active learning, to encourage and support effective learning. The school has clear arrangements in place to monitor and review the learners' progress and provide them with informed feedback on how to improve further.

Care and welfare impacts positively on the learners. Foyle International provides an inclusive learning environment where the learners are very well supported by all staff. Learners staying in residential accommodation or with host families report that they are supported well on a personal level to ensure their safety and welfare throughout their stay.

7. Leadership and management

The director and senior managers provide outstanding strategic leadership, with a clear focus on effective quality, performance management and collaborative working to underpin the organisation's vision to become an international 'Information Technology hub.' The lines of communication between staff at all levels are effective. The staff work hard to continually reflect on, review and improve the quality of the provision. The appointment of a software developer has underpinned the priority given by management to the development of information technology to support all aspects of the school's provision. The school has effective arrangements and management information systems in place for the admission and enrolment of the learners, to manage the programmes and to monitor and review the progress made by the learners.

The academic staff are very well qualified and have extensive experience in planning and delivering English language programmes. All of the staff are provided with opportunities to identify and undertake an appropriate range of continuous professional development, which is matched well to their individual roles and responsibilities. The accommodation, physical and learning resources are of a very high standard and there has been significant ongoing investment in information technology to support and enrich learning and teaching.

The school has developed an extensive range of links and collaborative partnerships with other English language schools at local, national and international level, along with the local further education college and university, employers and other organisations. These links and partnerships are used effectively to improve and develop the provision to meet well the needs of the learners and other stakeholders, and to support appropriate work placement experiences for the learners.

While the processes for self-evaluation are effective, with clear links within the self-evaluation report to the school's strategic and operational plans and targets, the quality improvement planning process could be further refined, particularly the use of key stakeholder feedback, to better inform the evaluation of the quality of the provision and to more clearly articulate the impact the actions taken to address areas for improvement have had on the work of the school and the learners.

8. Safeguarding

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, Foyle International has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and adults at risk.

9. Overall effectiveness

Foyle International demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners.

The inspection confirms that it meets the requirements for Educational Oversight. The ETI will continue to monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any areas for improvement through the Annual Monitoring Review inspection process.

PROGRAMME REGISTRATIONS

INFORMATION ABOUT FOYLE INTERNATIONAL

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Type of attendance	Enrolments	
		Private learners	Learners on EU funded projects
General English (in-house certified)	Language only	12	0
English and Internship Programme (LDV)	Language and work placement (in class)	0	0
	Language and on work placement	0	2
	Work placement only	0	84
Total		12	86
Overall		98	

Total Number of learners enrolled over the past three years¹

Learners	2015	2016	2017
Learners registered under the Home Office Tier 4 points system	0	0	1
EU Learners	536	458	445
Non-EU Learners (Excl. Tier 4 learners)	42	41	22
Other (Excl. Tier 4 learners)			
Total	578	499	468

Overall summary table of performance (over the past 4 years)²

Programme	Number enrolled	Retention	Achievement (inc partial achievements)
General English	235	235	100%
CELTA / BTEC qualification	109	109	100%
Total			
IELTS (examination preparation courses)	25	25	100%

¹ Calendar year from January to December² All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by Foyle International

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

The Education and Training Inspectorate (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's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

Two ETI inspectors observed eleven learners in four lesson observations and interviewed eleven learners in a focus group meeting. Discussions were held with the institute director, the sales and marketing director, the academic manager, the quality manager, the managers and school staff. Samples of the learners' work (including project work), tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined. The organisation's online learning platform was observed and the self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were scrutinised.

C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and on leadership and management:

Performance level
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

Overall effectiveness outcome - Full Educational Oversight inspection

The organisation has a **high level of capacity for sustained improvement** in the interest of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it meets the requirements for Educational Oversight. The ETI will continue to monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any area(s) for improvement through the Annual Monitoring Review inspection processes.

The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it meets the requirements for Educational Oversight. The ETI will continue to monitor the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement through the Annual Monitoring Review inspection process.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it does not meet the requirements for Educational Oversight. The organisation should refer to the Home Office Guidelines for Educational Oversight ³ .
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interests of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it does not meet the requirements for Educational Oversight. The organisation should refer to the Home Office Guidelines for Educational Oversight.

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 = Number Completed / 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 = (Full Achievement + Partial Achievement) / Number Completed.</p>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-4-student-guidance-for-educators>

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