



Providing Inspection Services for

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EXCELLENCE



Education and Training Inspectorate

Educational Oversight Inspection (Home Office)

Annual Monitoring Review Inspection Report

International House Belfast

December 2015

Quantitative 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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on achievement and standards, on provision for learning, and on leadership and management:

Performance level ¹
Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness outcome

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

Overall effectiveness outcome - Annual Monitoring Review inspection
<Organisation> has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it continues to meet 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.
<Organisation> demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it continues to meet 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.
<Organisation> needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it no longer meets the requirements for Educational Oversight. The organisation should refer to the Home Office Guidelines for Educational Oversight ² .
<Organisation> needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interests of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it no longer meets the requirements for Educational Oversight. The organisation should refer to the Home Office Guidelines for Educational Oversight ² .

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of learners who complete their. English language course, out of the number of learners enrolled at the beginning of the course. Retention rate = Number Completed / Number Enrolled
Achievement	The percentage of learners who completed and achieved all, or partially achieved some, of the components of their English language course: Achievement Rate = (Full Achievement + Partial Achievement) / Number Completed.

¹ The ETI performance levels were revised with effect from 1 September 2015

² In the case where an organisation fails to maintain Educational Oversight, it should refer to the Home Office guidelines for Educational Oversight – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-4-student-guidance-for-educators>

A full Educational Oversight inspection was carried out in International House Belfast in October 2012 and the first Annual Monitoring Review inspection was carried out in December 2013. No Annual Monitoring Review inspection was carried out in 2014. The first Annual Monitoring Review inspection in December 2013 highlighted the most important developments that had taken place since the original inspection including:

- the greater involvement of teaching staff in the organisation's academic management system and learner induction process, which had resulted in improved channels of communication between staff and learners;
- the implementation of more effective systems to support learner progress including the introduction of an academic induction session for all learners on the first day of each course, the development of a learner folder to record learning goals and achievements, the implementation of a formal tutorial system, and improved opportunities for learners to review their progress and plan for future learning;
- the improved opportunities for staff to undertake continuous professional development through the use of action research projects;
- the development of a "knowledge-base" system which provided information on all of the organisations processes and allowed staff to manage and support the learners more effectively;
- the revised monthly review process which was aligned to self-evaluation and quality improvement planning;
- the effective use of mobile technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, which was good or better in the lessons observed; and
- the development of effective working relationships with a number of external agencies, through the English UK Northern Ireland group of accredited providers, which had resulted in successful participation in a number of European projects.

The inspection also identified the need for development in the following area:

- to further refine and develop the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes to review and monitor the overall quality of the provision, including the use of more evaluative language in the self-evaluation report and SMART targets in the quality improvement plan.

Inspection Overview

The second annual monitoring review inspection was carried out in December 2015. This involved a scrutiny of the inspection documentation submitted to the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) by International House Belfast prior to an inspection visit to the organisation by the reporting inspector.

During the visit, the reporting inspector spoke to the director, the deputy director of studies, the designated safeguarding officer, an office administrator with responsibility for safeguarding, and four members of the teaching staff; two lessons were observed; a focus group meeting was carried out with six learners; and other relevant documentation was scrutinised.

The reporting inspector evaluated the quality of the self-evaluation report which was submitted by International House Belfast prior to the annual monitoring review inspection, and reported to the organisation during the visit that the self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan were of an appropriate quality.

Changes to the provision

In the interval since the first annual monitoring review inspection, International House Belfast has taken the following actions, which affect its provision:

- Investors in People accreditation was successfully achieved in October 2015;
- a new intensive 25 hour per week course has been introduced to support learners in the development of their language skills;
- an application has been submitted to Cambridge English to become a DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) training and examination centre;
- an application has been submitted to National Computing Centre (NCC) Education to facilitate the delivery of its International Foundation Year programmes, starting from September 2016;
- additional hardware has been purchased to facilitate the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning and teaching;
- the academic manager has qualified as a DELTA teacher tutor; and
- a new marketing representative has been employed for Brazil and South America.

Main developments

The following are the most important developments that have taken place since the first annual monitoring review inspection:

- key actions to improve the quality of provision have continued to be implemented by management, including staff involvement in the organisation's academic management system, the ongoing development of a "knowledge-base" system, and the provision of relevant opportunities for continuous professional development for staff;
- a more effective flat management structure has been created that facilitates a collaborative and consultative approach to decision making across the organisation;
- good working relationships, clear channels of communication, and a high level of trust exists between management and staff at all levels; staff report that they feel valued in the organisation;

- management and staff have identified the need to review and revise the organisation's strategic vision to articulate more clearly the development of the learners' language skills and the need for improved communication with all key stakeholders, and work is currently ongoing to review the organisation's mission statement and core values;
- a new appraisal process is being introduced, incorporating a 360 degree feedback approach, to support staff to continue to raise quality through self-reflection and evaluation as part of management's vision of becoming a 'learning organisation';
- high levels of pastoral care and support are in place for the learners;
- the quality of the learning and teaching observed is good or better;
- the number of learners enrolled on English examination and non-examination courses has remained consistent and has increased slightly since the last annual monitoring review inspection; and
- outcomes on examination courses is high (100%).

Further improvement

To improve the quality of the provision further, International House Belfast needs to take action to address the following areas:

- while significant work has been done to develop and embed the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, more needs to be done to continue to refine and develop the processes, including the clearer articulation of key strengths and areas for development and a better linkage between the self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan, to allow a more insightful and holistic self-evaluation of the quality of the provision to be carried out to clearly identify and prioritise key actions to promote improvement across the organisation; and
- the number of learners completing their non-examination courses at the required level is high, however, there is a need to develop more effective processes to report on the development of the language skills and achievements of those learners who do not undertake formal English examinations.

Overall effectiveness outcome

International House Belfast demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the learners. The inspection confirms that it continues to meet 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.

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