



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT**

**SEVERNVALE ACADEMY LTD**

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Website	Severnvale.co.uk
Principal	Mrs Caroline Browne
Proprietors	Edward Browne, Caroline Browne, Nicholas Browne
Age Range	18+
Total number of students	24
Numbers by age and type of study:	18+: 24 EFL only 24
Inspection date	<b>27 Jan 2015</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

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

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

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

An extended monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the quality Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Severnvale Academy was established over 30 years ago and is a small private language college offering adult and junior English tuition in the centre of Shrewsbury, Shropshire. On 1 September 2014, there was a change of control with the sale of the entire shareholding of Severnvale Academy Ltd to Lintonite Limited, with the new directors taking full control of the academy. The Academy's aim is to maintain its reputation for academic and professional excellence by placing particular emphasis on care for the individual.
- 1.2 English is an additional language for all students. Presently there are 24 students with an even split between male and female attendees from European, Far East and Middle Eastern countries. Courses are offered, both on a short and long term basis, in General English, intensive grammar development and practice, exam courses and language for business. One-to-one tuition is also provided on request. Severnvale is an examining centre for a range of Cambridge English Language examinations. The school operates on a continual enrolment basis for all of its main courses. Junior programmes are taught off-site during July and August.
- 1.3 Students are recruited by independent application and through agents. At present there are no students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but the school welcomes applications from such students. Home stay accommodation is arranged by the school.

This monitoring visit has been extended owing to a change of proprietors and principal. For this reason, Section 5 of the Educational Oversight Framework will be looked at in detail.

- 1.4 The school was last inspected on 11 February 2014 when it met all key standards and was judged to exceed expectations.
- 1.5 The recommendation from the previous report is:
- Ensure the self-evaluation plan focuses on identifying the key strengths and areas for development.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 11 February 2014 the language school was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. There is a good relationship between students and staff which enables students to make good progress. Assessment of progress is made by staff during the courses but this data is not recorded to inform overall school performance. In the majority of lessons, the content is challenging and opportunities are given for all students to contribute to spoken activities. Course provision is good and all courses on offer meet Home Office requirements for Tier 4 students.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The premises are very well maintained and provide an extremely welcoming and attractive environment for teaching and learning. The school has effective policies in place to ensure the well being of students. The induction process and pastoral support system are comprehensive which means students feel safe, well supported and able to settle quickly into school life. Registration and attendance are accurate and well documented. There is a well balanced social programme with risk assessments carried out for each activity. Home stay provision is excellent.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The transition to the new management has been effectively carried out. The management has a clear strategic vision and provides effective oversight. Very good progress has been made in response to the recommendation from the last inspection. There are good systems in place to identify priorities and planning for further improvement. The management and staff work constructively together. The management is successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff to ensure a positive and purposeful working atmosphere for students and staff.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 Courses on offer are appropriate for students' ages and capabilities. Although there are presently no Tier 4 students in attendance, all courses on offer lead to qualifications and outcomes which meet Home Office requirements.
- 3.3 The quality of teaching is good. There is good rapport between the teachers and the students and a lively supportive atmosphere in classes. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. As a result of these factors, the majority of students make good progress. In the better lessons, there is a variety of activities, errors are corrected, checks for understanding are made, pair work is used to good effect and explanations are clearly given. In a minority of lessons, there is too much input by the teacher and less participation by students in spoken activities. This makes it difficult for all students to be actively engaged and for their progress to be assessed. In these lessons, there is insufficient challenge in the lesson content.
- 3.4 Students' abilities are assessed on arrival which enables them to be placed on the most appropriate level of study. Progress is then measured through assessed work during the course and discussion during regular staff meetings. Students feel they make good progress but results are not recorded in order to measure individual progress of students and to inform overall school performance. Tutorials take place regularly for longer term students and the information gained is conveyed to staff in order to inform their teaching. Students take a range of external examinations and achieve good results.

#### **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 All requirements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff are complied with and the school has effective policies and procedures in place to mitigate risks. Appropriate fire safety procedures are in place. At present, there are no trained fire marshals but the school has plans to arrange for training to take place. The premises provide an attractive and suitable environment for teaching and learning. Risk assessments are carried out and recorded for the building and all activities which take place outside the school.
- 4.3 The premises are secure and provide an attractive and suitable environment for teaching and learning. The school is well equipped for the courses offered and the sizes of the classes timetabled. Classrooms are furnished to a very high standard and suitable for adult learners. The school is able to cater for the needs of students with mobility problems.
- 4.4 Student admission procedures are thorough, register and attendance records are accurate and well maintained. Although there are presently no Tier 4 students, the school has clear procedures for reporting their absence to the Home Office, should this be required. Attendance for all students is closely monitored and absences are rigorously followed up. Attendance levels are high for all courses.
- 4.5 Pastoral care is very good. Students are extremely well supported and students spoke highly to inspectors of the efforts made by the school to respond to their needs. The induction process is very effectively carried out. Students value the social programme provided which enhances their stay by providing a good balance between social and cultural activities.
- 4.6 Home stay provision is extremely well managed. Appropriate checks are carried out on families, visits made once a year and spot checks take place if concerns are reported. Students report favourably on their experience with host families. Visits to two families were made during the inspection which confirmed the high quality of the provision.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure the self-evaluation plan focuses on identifying the key strengths and areas for development.
- 5.3 Progress on this recommendation has been excellent. The school's self-evaluation report is thorough, identifies areas for development with timescales and evaluation of targets achieved. Staff have been involved in devising the development plan and their views taken note of, where possible. The plan is reviewed regularly by senior management.
- 5.4 The school leadership provides clear educational direction as reflected in the quality of education, care of students and fulfilment of the school's aims. The school is very well managed and the transition to the new ownership and management has been smoothly carried out.
- 5.5 The proprietors and key managers work well together as a team and staff speak positively about the new regime. The school has been successful in retaining suitably qualified staff and implementing appropriate procedures to ensure a safe and secure learning environment.
- 5.6 Appropriate policies, including legal permissions, are in place. These are reviewed regularly for relevance. Sufficient resources are available to enable teachers to carry out their work.
- 5.7 Quality assurance and self-evaluation are very effectively carried out and contribute significantly to improving outcomes for students. The new team has put in place a very good system for the observation of teaching and learning which enables observation records to inform staff appraisal. Staff development is given a high priority and regular training sessions take place.
- 5.8 The school actively seeks students' views through questionnaires at three opportunities during their course; issued in the first week, during their course and together with exit questionnaires which are all analysed and considered carefully.
- 5.9 There is a clear recruitment policy in place for staff. All requisite checks on staff appointed are carried out thoroughly, including the suitability of those working with students under the age of 18 and any vulnerable adults.
- 5.10 The school web-site provides comprehensive, accurate and detailed information which is helpful to students and prospective students. The complaints policy makes provision for consideration of an unresolved complaint by an independent external adjudicator.

5.11 Information provided for inspectors was of a high quality, well organised and readily accessible.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The language school has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

### **Recommendations for further improvement.**

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the language school should:

- Insist that all lesson planning includes challenging content matched to the needs and abilities of students.
- Introduce strategies to enable all students to contribute in lessons in order to maximise their learning.
- Collate and analyse student progress data to inform overall school performance.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietors. Inspectors visited home stay accommodation. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the language school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Suzanne Bell	Lead Inspector
Mr Tim Miller	Team Inspector