



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

LILA* LIVERPOOL

(Company registration no. – 08782216)

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Principal	Ms Leanne Linacre
Proprietors	Ms Leanne Linacre Ms Victoria Lee
Age Range	12+
Total number of students	73
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 5 16 – 18 13 18+: 55 EFL only: 59 EFL and FE: 14
Inspection dates	20 - 22 September 2022

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

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 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.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 LILA* Liverpool (LILA) is a private English language school situated in the centre of Liverpool. LILA aims to inspire students to develop a love of learning. The school was founded in 2004 and was initially known as the Liverpool International Language Academy.
- 1.2 LILA offers general English courses from elementary to advanced levels and examination preparation classes for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Cambridge suite of qualifications. These courses are offered throughout the year to students aged 16 and over. Students can enrol weekly for daytime classes, lasting from several weeks to eleven months.
- 1.3 The school also offers general English classes for closed groups of younger students and more specialist English courses for groups of adult students, such as business English. Students can enrol on these courses at any time by arrangement. In addition, training programmes for students completing the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages are offered. Enrolment on these courses is at set times throughout the year. This course was not running at the time of inspection.
- 1.4 LILA organises short-term high school placements for students wishing to improve their English skills whilst studying in a local Liverpool high school. Placements run from three weeks to three months. Students can enrol on these placements at any time by arrangement. Education provided by the high school placement was not inspected. The school works in partnership with David Game College (DGC) Liverpool. Parts of the school premises are subcontracted to DCG Liverpool to run a small number of A-level classes. The DCG Liverpool provision did not form part of this inspection.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection, 73 students were enrolled. No students were attending the school on a Student visa. All students are aged 13 or over and speak English as an additional language. There are slightly more male than female students. The nationalities most represented by the current students are Spain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Switzerland and Brazil. There were no students identified with learning difficulties or disabilities.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The language school meets expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Key Standards for Educational Oversight were met, and the quality is good.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. The assessment of students prior to, or on arrival, is good. Students complete highly suitable initial assessments to ensure their aptitudes and language capabilities are accurately identified. Teachers and academic managers use initial assessment information well to ensure students are placed on the most appropriate course to meet their language needs and abilities. A wide range of English language courses are offered that meet the needs of students well. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office Guidance. The quality of teaching is good. Students benefit from experienced and well-qualified English language teachers who plan effective lessons which meet their needs and language abilities. Lessons are well structured and help students to build new knowledge and apply this effectively to new contexts. Most students are highly motivated and participate fully in classes, practising and developing their language skills. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and learning activities which engage and interest students. In a few lessons, teachers' board work is not always easily legible. In most classes, teachers give clear instructions and use questioning techniques skilfully to challenge students and check their understanding. In a few classes, teachers do not routinely check on the progress and understanding of all students. Attainment and progress are good overall. Most students make good or excellent progress in developing their language skills, and most progress successfully to the next level of learning and competency.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. Highly effective policies and procedures reduce the risks from fire and other hazards and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. The school has a good level of fire safety, which conforms to legal requirements. The school premises are clean, modern and attractive. Classrooms are well equipped and furnished to a good standard. The school maintains highly accurate admissions and attendance reports. Student attendance and lateness are well managed and overall attendance rates are good. Pastoral support is good. Staff know their students well and ensure their pastoral needs are met effectively. Students benefit from a varied and comprehensive social programme. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Suitable safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date, reflect national guidance, and are effectively implemented. Staff at all levels complete appropriate safeguarding training and understand their roles and responsibilities to keep students safe. Appropriate safeguarding checks on subcontractors are completed but are not organised and recorded meticulously. Residence and homestay accommodation is well managed and appropriately monitored for safety, security and cleanliness.

- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. Directors have a very good insight into the working of the school and take a substantial role in its strategic and operational management. Directors meet their responsibilities for safeguarding and health and safety requirements well. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are well qualified and experienced to carry out their roles and are suitable to work with students. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Managers regularly collect, analyse and review feedback from students to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, they do not routinely review performance data related to overall levels of progress, examination outcomes, or attendance rates. This limits the extent to which managers can evaluate performance and further raise standards in specific areas. Staff recruitment arrangements are good. Leaders and managers ensure that all appropriate staff checks have been completed before their appointment, including relevant enhanced background checks. Provision of information is good.

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

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to or on arrival is good. Students receive good, accurate information and guidance before arrival, which prepares them well for their studies at LILA. The school has a clear and suitable statement of educational purpose, which is shared effectively with students.
- 3.2 Before and on arrival, students complete highly suitable initial assessments to ensure their aptitudes and language capabilities are accurately identified. A mixture of effective online and in-class assessments provide teachers and academic managers with useful data on students' existing language skills and competencies. Teachers and academic managers use assessment information well to ensure students are placed on the most appropriate course to meet their language needs and abilities.
- 3.3 Managers review course placements regularly to ensure students remain on the most appropriate course to meet their needs, interests and educational goals. Where students' capabilities change, they are supported effectively to move classes, so they continue to progress.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is good. LILA offers a good range of English language courses at different levels to ensure students of all abilities and ages receive a good standard of education that meets their personal and educational goals. As a result, most students successfully complete their studies.
- 3.5 Courses meet the needs of students well. General English classes help students to develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills well. Courses are well-planned and designed effectively to help students develop their understanding of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and use of phrases. Students can also attend a good range of supplementary classes to practice their applied language skills further in an interactive way.
- 3.6 Students preparing for formal language examinations benefit from specific classes, which support them well to improve their language proficiency and develop a sound understanding of exam techniques and academic style.
- 3.7 Courses match the details found on the school website and in promotional literature. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

- 3.8 The quality of teaching is good. Students benefit from experienced and well-qualified English language teachers who plan effective lessons which meet their

needs and language abilities. Lessons are well structured and help students to build new knowledge and apply this effectively to new contexts. Most students are highly motivated and participate fully in classes, practising and developing their language skills. As a result, most students make good or excellent progress in lessons and over the course.

- 3.9 Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and learning activities which engage and interest students. For example, teachers use pair work and group work to promote discussion and encourage learners to practise their speaking and listening skills frequently. Teachers regularly invite students to share their own experiences, traditions, and cultures to better understand and learn from each other.
- 3.10 Most teachers promote independent learning very well, encouraging students to check the accuracy of their own and their peers' responses to classroom tasks. This helps students to develop a good understanding of grammar and sentence structure. Where appropriate, teacher's signpost students effectively to an appropriate range of online learning resources, which helps them practise and consolidate their skills further. In most lessons, teachers effectively use a good range of classroom resources and coursebooks to support students' understanding and applied language skills. In a few lessons, teachers' board work is not always clear and easily legible.
- 3.11 In most classes, teachers give clear instructions and use questioning techniques skilfully to challenge students and check their understanding. Most lessons incorporate excellent opportunities for students to practise their pronunciation skills. Teachers respond well to students' questions and expertly adjust the content or timing of lessons to meet their needs. In a few classes, teachers do not routinely check on the progress and understanding of all students. As a result, a small number of students have a less secure grasp of the lesson content and make slower progress.
- 3.12 Teachers' ongoing assessment of student's progress is good. Students take regular progress tests, and the outcomes are used effectively by teachers to plan future lessons. Useful homework activities are set and completed regularly. Homework is marked promptly and accurately, and students value the detailed feedback they receive, which enables them to improve. Teachers set and promptly review individual learning goals with students each week. This helps to keep students motivated and focused on their aspirations and longer-term goals.
- 3.13 Teaching is proactive in promoting fundamental British values and principles of respect and tolerance. There is a good relationship and rapport between teachers and students themselves. Students are well supported by friendly, accessible tutors who treat them professionally and respectfully.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.14 Attainment and progress are good. Teachers and managers use very effective systems to monitor and review the progress of individual students regularly. When a student's performance is lower than expected, teachers take swift and effective

action to target any weaknesses, providing additional support and extra learning to help students to catch up quickly. As a result, most students make good or excellent progress in developing their language skills throughout their course, and most progress successfully to the next level of learning and competency. Achievement rates for students completing the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages are excellent.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises

- 4.1 Health, safety and security of the premises are good. Managers have implemented highly effective policies and procedures which reduce the risks from fire and other hazards and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Students receive clear and helpful health and safety information and training to ensure they know what to do in an emergency. Directors work effectively with building managers to ensure that all the necessary health and safety checks are completed regularly. Safety records very well maintained.
- 4.2 The school has a good level of fire safety which confirms to legal requirements. Firefighting and first aid equipment are regularly serviced, checked and maintained. The first aid policy is implemented effectively. A suitable number of staff have been appropriately trained in first aid and as fire marshals and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Activities completed outside the school, for example, external trips and visits undertaken as part of the social programme, are risk assessed and appropriate actions taken to reduce possible hazards.
- 4.3 The school premises are clean, modern and attractive. Students benefit from spacious social areas and a high standard of decoration, which reflects the history and culture of the Liverpool city region. Classrooms are well equipped and furnished to a good standard. The premises have adequate heating, lighting and ventilation and provide an attractive environment for work and study. Free drinking water is available. Washrooms are clean, accessible, and sufficient for the current number of students. Security arrangements are adequate to ensure the safety of students in the school building. The premises are accessible to staff and students, including those with special needs and disabilities.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records are good. The school maintains highly accurate admissions and attendance reports. Student attendance and lateness are managed well. Where students do not attend, absences are followed up routinely. Managers have effective additional attendance and punctuality monitoring systems in place for younger learners to ensure that any non-attendance is followed up immediately. Overall attendance rates are good.
- 4.5 At the time of inspection, the school was not recruiting students studying on Student visas. However, leaders and managers have a very secure understanding of Home Office requirements for attendance, and there are effective processes and procedures in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office if and when required.
- 4.6 Fair and clear procedures are in place for collecting and refunding fees. Students are clear about the procedures and feel them to be fair.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.7 Pastoral support is good. Staff provide students with effective pastoral support and guidance in line with the school's aim and vision. On arrival, students receive a very clear and effective induction that builds on the useful pre-arrival information they receive. This helps student understand the good range of facilities and welfare support that they can access whilst studying at the school. As a result, students settle quickly into their course and life in Liverpool.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Staff know their students well and ensure their pastoral needs are met effectively. Students feel that staff are approachable and deal very well with any welfare or personal issues they may have. Inspection findings confirm this view. Students benefit from a varied and comprehensive social programme. A broad range of activities, such as trips to museums, sporting events, and leisure facilities, are offered throughout the week and at weekends. These activities enhance students' learning experience and provide excellent opportunities to practice their English language skills in different contexts.
- 4.9 Students are encouraged to set and review their own personal targets and goals regularly. Staff support students well to review their progress against these goals periodically and provide practical advice and guidance to deal with any barriers or setbacks. Students receive very effective advice and guidance on their possible next steps and progression options, such as higher-level study. This meets the needs of current students well.
- 4.10 Suitable policies to promote tolerance and respect, and effective measures to guard against and deal with any abusive behaviours, bullying or discrimination are in place and effectively communicated. Managers have implemented appropriate policies and risk assessments to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.11 Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Directors ensure that suitable safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date, reflect national guidance, and are effectively implemented. A suitable designated safeguarding lead is in place, and they have undertaken recent and relevant training. Staff at all levels complete appropriate safeguarding awareness training and understand their roles and responsibilities to keep students safe. Processes for recording and monitoring any safeguarding concerns and actions are clear and fully understood by staff. Students feel safe at the school and when completing off-site activities. Leaders and managers have effective relationships with local safeguarding agencies.
- 4.12 Leaders ensure that enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed for all staff. Leaders carry out relevant checks on the subcontractors they work with to ensure they have implemented their own appropriate safeguarding policies and staff background checks. However, these checks are not always meticulously organised and recorded.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.13 Residential accommodation is good. The school contracts externally managed student residences that provide good quality, centrally located accommodation for adult students. Effective homestay arrangements are available for younger students. Residence and homestay accommodation is well managed and appropriately monitored for safety, security and cleanliness.
- 4.14 Leaders and managers ensure that relevant DBS checks are regularly completed for homestay families. Where students under 16 are accommodated in host families for more than 28 days, leaders and managers ensure that the local authority is alerted. Managers liaise closely with local authority officers to ensure relevant checks are completed and relevant reports shared and recorded.
- 4.15 Students staying in residential accommodation can access the school's comprehensive social programme, which is suitably risk assessed. Leaders and managers regularly seek feedback from students on the quality of their accommodation to identify strengths and areas for development. Most students speak well of their accommodation.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are good. Directors have a very good insight into the working of the school and take a substantial role in its strategic and operational management. Directors have a clear vision for the school's future, supported by realistic development plans and appropriate financial management.
- 5.2 Directors provide effective overall oversight of the school in line with its core aim to inspire students to develop a love of learning. Directors ensure there is suitable and sufficient investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They meet their responsibilities for safeguarding and health and safety requirements. All relevant legal permissions are in place. Directors have effective working relationships with all staff. They effectively delegate oversight of academic matters to the experienced director of students.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are good. LILA has an appropriate management structure and sufficient staff and other resources to meet the needs of its students. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are well qualified and experienced to carry out their roles and are suitable to work with students. Leaders and managers ensure that policies and procedures are clear and regularly updated. They are effectively shared with staff and students.
- 5.4 Staff are encouraged and well supported to complete regular professional development and training. For example, teachers meet regularly to share lesson ideas and best practices in error correction, goal setting, and enhancing students' listening skills. This helps to ensure that students receive a consistently good standard of education.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance is satisfactory. Managers regularly collect, analyse and review feedback from students to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Feedback is effectively gathered from the leaders of closed groups of younger students to help managers evaluate and improve the quality of the student experience. Managers complete regular performance reviews and observe teaching to provide teachers with specific and useful feedback to help them improve their professional practice.
- 5.6 The formal self-evaluation process identifies a range of appropriate strengths and relevant targets for development. Academic managers systematically review progress information for individual students to ensure they make good or better progress throughout their course. However, managers do not routinely review performance data related to overall levels of student progress, the outcomes of

external examinations, or attendance rates. This limits the extent to which managers can evaluate performance and further raise standards in specific areas.

- 5.7 The school has a very clear and appropriate complaints procedure in place. Managers ensure complaints are handled, reported and monitored effectively.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

- 5.8 Staff recruitment arrangements are good. Leaders and managers ensure that all appropriate staff checks have been completed before their appointment, including relevant enhanced DBS background checks. Leaders ensure that appropriate references are systematically taken up and verified. Leaders maintain and monitor a clear and accurate single central record of checks undertaken, in line with the school's safeguarding and recruitment policies.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 Provision of information is good. The school website contains a good range of accurate information for prospective students. This helps them to make informed decisions about their studies. Leaders and managers provided all the information required by inspectors to enable them to carry out the inspection effectively.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure the safeguarding checks on subcontractors are meticulously organised, recorded and monitored.
- Consistently check for student understanding in all lessons.
- Analyse examination, attendance and performance data to inform improvement planning and further raise the standard of education.
- Ensure teachers' board work is consistently clear and legible.

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 directors, and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Steve Ingle	Lead Inspector
Ms Sheila Morris	Team Inspector