

EF International Academy Torbay

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

EF International Academy is located in the central area of Torquay. The premises consist of a large former villa that has been converted to its present use. The academy provides exclusively for international students who wish to gain the International GCSE, A level and International Baccalaureate accreditation.

There are currently 198 students on roll aged from 14 to 19 years and these are of mixed gender. The academy has no particular religious affiliation and it accepts students from a wide range of religious beliefs and ethnic backgrounds. There are currently students from 23 countries studying at the academy. The academy also provides support in English, though most students are already proficient in the language. No students have a statement of special educational needs.

Courses are taught in English. The academy aims to prepare students to successfully apply to courses in higher education within the United Kingdom or in other countries. This is the academy's first inspection following its registration in May 2011.

The proprietors requested a material change to stage an increase in numbers to 600 students by September 2014. This inspection considered this request.

Evaluation of the school

The academy provides a good quality of education and fully meets its stated aims. Within a satisfactory curriculum, there are strong elements which result in good personal development. Teaching and assessment and the rate at which students make academic progress are good. The students are well cared for, and behaviour is outstanding; safeguarding arrangements are good. Most of the regulatory requirements for independent schools are met. Approval is recommended for a phased increase in registration to 600 students, as requested by the academy.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. Post-16, there is a good curriculum policy in place, together with schemes of work which detail the courses that are available, along with

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

descriptions of how these will be taught and assessed. Most courses lead to accreditation in International GCSE, A level or the International Baccalaureate. The academy also provides an access course, designed for those students whose use of English needs further support. All courses are based on the requirements of their respective syllabus. The planning for these is secure and is supported further by detailed lesson plans.

The curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds is satisfactory. The curriculum policy is satisfactory and there are clear schemes of work. The balance of the curriculum is heavily weighted towards English language, with adequate time for mathematics and science and a satisfactory range of other subjects. Humanities knowledge, skills and understanding are taught as part of the business studies course but there is very limited design and technology or drama on the timetable, largely because of the current restricted accommodation. The academy provides physical education, dance, aerobic lessons and adventurous activities off site.

The academy provides good support and learning for the personal, social and health education of students. This is achieved through dedicated group tutorial lessons and sessions provided at an individual level. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities at the end of the day and at weekends. These include competitive sports such as golf and tennis as well as dance. Sixth form students run clubs as part of their International Baccalaureate programme.

Students are prepared very well for their transfer to universities within the United Kingdom or international destinations. Information published by the academy shows that most students are successful with their applications to their chosen university.

Teaching and assessment are good; as a result, all students make good progress. In all lessons, the strong relationships combined with good subject knowledge encourage effective learning. Lessons are well organised and make good use of assessment information, including homework, to set objectives for different abilities. A good variety of practical and engaging activities helps to motivate learners. Students told inspectors how much they enjoyed learning and were unanimous that teachers gave them good advice and guidance when marking their work. Students receive good quality feedback, with time set aside in the day for them to revisit and attend to corrections with help.

In most lessons, teachers provide an effective mix of explanation, questioning, and group and paired work. Students are always keen to contribute and most lessons provide good opportunity for them to work collaboratively on tasks. Literacy skills are taught in all lessons and tackled best when the supporting vocabulary is woven into the discussions. Good quality questioning, particularly in mathematics, media and physics lessons, inspires and encourages ideas and thinking. However, in a few of the lessons, teachers provide too much explanation that diminished students' involvement in developing reasoning and thinking skills. In these lessons, pace slackens. Clear introductions to the lessons are a consistent feature in which the purpose of learning is made clear. However, in a few lessons, opportunities were missed to assess students' learning at the end of the lesson.

Academy leaders and tutors have a good secure overview of each student's relative strengths and areas for improvement. Assessment information is used particularly effectively to help students make the right choices for their post-18 education. All students are involved in their own assessment and are encouraged to reflect on where they are achieving well and where they require extra support. Additional lessons or alterations to provision are made to ensure all students make good progress.

Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Students have ready access to a wide range of information and communication technology, either in furtherance of their individual courses or for use in their personal research and study. Students report that access to the internet is too slow, but they make alternative arrangements to support their studies. Other resources are plentiful in both range and quality.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is good. The vast majority of students say they really enjoy coming to the academy, and attend well. There are a few students who arrive late to lessons at the start of the day.

Provision is very good at boosting students' self-esteem and self-confidence. The academy is a socially cohesive community, with agreed systems for managing behaviour which ensure each student is respected and valued. A strong feature is the way the whole academy comes together to observe international festivals and world faith days and celebrate individual talents. Such activity contributes to the further development of the academy and has a positive impact on improving students' attitudes to learning, behaviour and self-esteem.

Students are particularly aware of the needs arising from living and studying away from their home. They share and shoulder each other's needs and aspirations and build lifelong friendships. The students are very skilled at understanding and assimilating other people's points of view. Regular discussions during tutorials about academy matters and world-wide events engage students' interest, and help them acquire a sense of fairness in a way that promotes equality, harmony and tolerance. The regular personal, social and health education lessons encourage students to reflect on life, particularly their own feelings and values.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. This has a positive impact on their academic progress and personal development. The principles of right and wrong are often debated and are well understood.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for welfare, health and safety is good. The academy has been thorough in ensuring that all regulations for this standard are fully met. All staff have undertaken the required child protection training to ensure students are safe and are well cared for. Supervision is good, thus ensuring the safety of students while on the academy site, residing with their host families and when undertaking visits off site. Supervision

of students at break times is now satisfactory. Appropriate safer recruitment procedures are in place as are the policies for fire and first aid, health and safety, behaviour and anti-bullying. Procedures are implemented effectively, as are risk assessments. Students say that they are free from harassment and are well cared for. This was summed up in the words of a student: 'The academy is like one big happy family – everyone cares about each other and the teachers really care for us.'

Attendance and admission registers are kept in accordance with requirements. The recently appointed attendance officer has established robust systems for monitoring daily attendance. Tutors are taking the required action to tackle the few students who do not arrive promptly for lessons. The academy fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The academy carries out appropriate checks on all staff prior to their appointment. There is a satisfactory policy in place to guide the practice of safe recruitment. The results of checks relating to staff and others are correctly recorded on a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The redevelopment of the whole site is progressing well and the new building is scheduled to open at the start of September 2012. The new building will provide 24 classrooms and five specialist rooms. Plans have been approved to refurbish the current accommodation by February 2013. This will provide additional classrooms, recreation space and a new canteen providing freshly prepared food.

Currently, the building provides adequate provision for learning and teaching. Specialist facilities exist, such as the science laboratory and suites for information and communication technology. However, the rooms for teaching art and access courses are too cramped for the numbers using them. Externally there is no outdoor recreation space, because the small amount available is being used by building contractors. The site is secure and safe from vehicle movements during the construction. There are appropriate facilities for the medical treatment of students who require first aid or who may become ill during the course of the working day.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. Through a secure website, parents and carers can gain access to information and weekly reports that are written about their children. This is in response to the wish of parents to be kept more regularly in touch about their children's academic progress and attendance. Not all subject teachers identify clearly in their reports what students are required to learn next to meet their agreed targets.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the academy meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The academy does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow for effective teaching (paragraph 23(i))
- ensure there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for students to play safely (paragraph 23(s)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the academy might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Provide more opportunity for 14 to 16 year olds to study humanities and, when additional accommodation becomes available, more opportunity to study design and technology, and drama.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons by providing more opportunity for students to take more responsibility for their learning by having more involvement.
- Continue to raise the profile and stress the importance of prompt attendance.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent academy		
Type of school	Secondary day school for international students		
Date school opened	September 2005		
Age range of pupils	14–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 107	Girls: 91	Total: 198
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,950		
Address of school	EF House Castle Road Torbay Devon TQ1 3BG		
Telephone number	01803 202932		
Email address	EFIA.Torbay@ef.com		
Headteacher	David Davies		
Proprietor	EF International Academy Ltd		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of EF Academy, Torquay, TQ1 3BG

Thank you for welcoming me to your academy. I enjoyed meeting you. I appreciated that you were prepared to talk with me and tell me what you thought about academy life. I found the academy to be providing you with a good education, with some aspects being particularly strong. I have listed my findings below.

- The opportunities you all get, no matter what your age, to share in experiences and activities together are impressive. This leads to you all developing and demonstrating outstanding consideration and tolerance of others.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and provision for your personal development is good. These features contribute well to ensuring you make good progress.
- You have formed good relationships with the staff and they do all they can to ensure you are kept safe.
- Some aspects of your curriculum are particularly good, especially in preparing you to enter university. The academy agrees with me that it needs to ensure that those of you in Key Stage 4 have a better balance of experiences.
- I have also asked staff to make better use of questions during and at the end of lessons to probe your thinking and understanding and to provide you with more opportunities to improve the breadth of your English vocabulary.

You enjoy your time at EF Torquay; this was evident during my visit and from the answers you gave to the questionnaire. I noticed that some of you are sometimes late for classes. This is something I think you should improve, to stop you from falling behind in your studies.

I wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector