

EF Academy Torbay

EF House, Castle Road, , Torquay, TQ1 3BG

Inspection dates

14 January 2014

Reason for inspection

The Department for Education commissioned this emergency inspection to consider a number of issues. Inspectors were asked to examine two issues relating to the school's last inspection on 8 March 2012. The first of these was to assess the school's progress towards implementing the material change agreed at the last inspection on 8 March 2012 to increase the number of pupils to 600. The second issue was to evaluate the school's progress towards implementing the action plan drawn up after the inspection to meet regulations regarding the provision of suitable accommodation for delivering lessons in art and access courses, and the availability of outdoor space for students' recreation.

In addition, the Department for Education requested that inspectors should consider information received in the form of complaints about the academy. This information alleged that some members of staff working at the academy had not undergone a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and this raised concerns that unsuitable adults might have contact with students. Further information related to concerns that arrangements for monitoring the welfare of students living with host families are not effective and an allegation was made by a third party. As the academy provides accommodation for its students through host families, the Department for Education asked inspectors to explore whether the national minimum standard (NMS) applicable to host family accommodation (NMS 20) is being met. Therefore, although the school is not currently registered for boarding, a social care Regulatory Inspector accompanied one of Her Majesty's Inspectors to conduct an integrated (education/social care) visit. The inspection was unannounced.

Conclusions

The large building project that was underway at the time of the last inspection has now been completed and the school has implemented its action plan well. The classroom used for 'preparation' (access) classes giving tuition in basic English is spacious and light. The newly completed art wing provides excellent facilities for students, with large rooms providing ample space. The outdoor area that was occupied by the building contractors at the time of the last inspection is now accessible to students and provides sufficient outdoor space for their recreation. The regulations for premises and accommodation of schools are now fully met.

At the last inspection, a material change to increase student numbers to 600 was recommended to the Department of Education. The school continues to grow in numbers since 2012, from 198 to 277 students.

Inspectors spoke with staff about safeguarding procedures, examined the school's policy on child protection and scrutinised the checks made on relevant adults recorded in the

single central register. The school's designated person for safeguarding has received relevant training and demonstrates a sound knowledge of child protection. These procedures are also outlined in the school's child protection policy which provides a solid framework for staff to follow when needed. It includes what action to take should an allegation be made against any adult who has contact with students. Therefore, in the event of concerns being raised, written procedures outline the appropriate path for action and referral to protect students' welfare.

The school's single central register does not show that all adults on the academy's payroll have their DBS checks completed, with several entries marked as 'pending' and dated several months ago. Some adults working directly with students have not had any checks made on their suitability, notably staff employed in the residences and some host families: this was explored further by the social care regulatory inspector during the inspection. During discussions with inspectors, the academy demonstrated a positive attitude concerning the need to update the register and expedite outstanding checks. However, at the time of this inspection, the academy was in breach of regulations.

The school liaises with social services about whether adults in host families are suitable to live with students. DBS checks are made on some but not all host families. Some staff working in the residences in a caring capacity have not been checked at all by the school. Vetting procedures for these adults are not thorough and do not protect young people well enough. This practice does not meet regulations or the national minimum standards for host family provision. Senior leaders demonstrated a positive attitude to addressing these failings urgently once highlighted by the inspection. One DBS check was submitted by a member of the residential staff before the inspection had been completed and plans to carry out DBS checks on all host families were also defined during the inspection. However, this emergency inspection has identified that the academy would not meet national minimum standard 20 - Lodgings (Long-Stay) – if it were to be registered. Not all host families are fully checked and no host family members have been provided with safeguarding training. Overall, this could compromise the safety and well-being of young people.

The academy has confirmed that in addition to host family accommodation it also arranges and provides accommodation to young people in two residences in the local community. Inspectors were advised that these premises consist of two former hotels which provide bedrooms with en-suite and communal social facilities. Young people are provided with meals, and are supported by houseparents who live on-site. There are catering and cleaning staff employed. Once again, the college has not ensured that DBS checks have been undertaken for all staff employed in the residences. Also, these staff have not been provided with safeguarding training, a shortcoming which may compromise the health, safety and well-being of young people. These arrangements constitute boarding and therefore the college must apply to the Department for Education to provide this service and be able to demonstrate that they can meet the Department for Education boarding schools national minimum standards.

The information received by the Department for Education concerning the welfare of students living with host families was explored at this emergency inspection. However, the academy was unaware of any untoward incident, and the allegation was not sufficiently detailed to identify a particular situation. Therefore, the relevant agencies have been contacted so the matter can be examined further.

It is considered that the academy must apply to the Department for Education without further delay if it wishes to continue with the accommodation arrangements as the Department for Education needs to be assured that the academy meets the required national minimum standards and that the safety, health and welfare of young people is promoted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The academy requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ("the independent school standards") and associated requirements.

Welfare, health and safety

- Arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the academy must be effective and have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Paragraph 7

Suitability of staff

- Ensure that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list) and that no member of staff carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the academy in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (a List 99 check).

Paragraph 19(2)(a)

- Carry out and complete appropriate checks for all appointments from 1 September 2003, to confirm each member of staff's: identity; medical fitness; and where appropriate, qualifications; for all appointments made from 1 May 2007, ensure the additional check of a staff member's right to work in the UK has been checked.

Paragraph 19(2)(b)

- For all appointments since 1 September 2003, ensure that an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) check/Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) is made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the college and the enhanced CRB certificate which is the subject of the application is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after the person's appointment.

Paragraph 19(2)(c)

- For all appointments from 1 September 2003, in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, in addition to the requirements of paragraphs 19(2)(a to d), ensure that a check has been made by the proprietor that Standard 14 of the national minimum standards

Paragraph 19(2)(e)

for boarding schools is complied with.

- Ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007, the single central register shows that the following checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
- of the person's identity
 - that the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
 - of whether an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) certificate/Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was obtained
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - of their right to work in the United Kingdom
 - in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, a check was made to ensure compliance with Standard 14 of the national minimum standard for boarding schools.

Paragraph 22

Inspection team

Susan Mann, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Kidner

Regulatory Inspection (Social Care)

Information about this school

- EF International Academy Torbay is located in the central area of Torquay. The premises consist of a large former villa and a newly constructed purpose-built building which occupy the same site. The academy provides exclusively for international students who wish to gain the International GCSE, A level and International Baccalaureate accreditation.
- There are currently 277 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. 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 apply successfully to courses in higher education within the United Kingdom or in other countries.
- The academy was last inspected on 8 March 2012.
- At the time of this inspection, the academy was in breach of regulations. In addition, it has opened two residences for students and has not applied to the Department for Education for registration.

School details

Unique reference number	136738
Inspection number	433711
DfE registration number	880/6006
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Independent academy
School status	Secondary day school for international students
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Number of boarders on roll	277
Proprietor	EF International Academy Ltd.
Director of operations	Anna Ireland
Headteacher	Trevor Spence
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,050
Annual fees (boarders)	£22,050
Telephone number	01803 202932
Email address	EFIA.Torbay@ef.com

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