

**Institution: IH Newcastle**

**Inspectors: Lisa Phillips**  
**Binnie Hadjidimitrova (reporting)**

**Dates: 24 – 26 July 2019**



## Section One: Inspection Verdict

### Verdict statement:

Accredited membership of the institution can be reconfirmed, as all standards of the Equals Charters are fully met.

### Grades

Grade 2 = meets the high quality Standards required by the Equals Charters

Grade 2,5 = does not meet the Standards required by the Equals Charters with reference to one or more relatively minor indicators of compliance, which can easily and swiftly be rectified, and evidence, such as a document or photo, can be readily submitted

Grade 3 = does not meet the high quality Standards required by the Equals Charters

Grade 1 = exceeds the high quality Standards required by the Equals Charters and identifies a Category of consistent excellence in the institution

Grade 1,5 = meets the high quality Standards required by the Equals Charters and identifies a Category which, in some respects, exceeds Equals high Standards, exhibiting one or two indicators of excellence, while not achieving consistent excellence in this Category

CATEGORIES		Grade	CATEGORIES (CON'T)		Grade
1	Management and Administration	<b>1,5</b>	7	Client Services	<b>1</b>
2	Teaching and Learning	<b>2</b>	8	Quality Assurance	<b>2</b>
3	Course Design and Supporting Systems	<b>1.5</b>	9	Staff Profile and Development	<b>1.5</b>
4	Assessment and Certification	<b>2</b>	10	Staff Employment Terms	<b>1.5</b>
5	Academic Resources	<b>2</b>	11	Internal Communications	<b>2</b>
6	Learning Environment	<b>2</b>	12	External Communications	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL GRADE:</b>					<b>20</b>

### Executive Summary

IH Newcastle is managed by a team of Directors dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of every aspect of LEC operation. Many developments have taken place since the last Equals inspection, both in response to recommendations and own initiatives. The organisation has grown and diversified its products through identifying and responding to the market needs and economic environment. The supervisory and support roles of the Academic Director and her team of Teacher Trainers and Senior Teachers ensure that teachers receive regular and consistent academic support. Students enjoy a high level of personal attention throughout their stay, with all members of staff always available to give information and to deal with issues of personal, pastoral and educational nature.



## Section Two: Account of the Inspection

### Timetable

#### Inspection Timetable

<b>24 July 2019 Day 1</b>			
Time	Action	Staff involved (Job Title)	Inspectors [initials]
08.30-08:50	Arrival at school, tour of premises, greet staff		LP & BH
08:50-09:30	Initial meeting with Managing Director	Managing Director	LP & BH
09:30-10:00	Joint observation	Teachers	LP & BH
10:00-11:00	Observations	Teachers	LP & BH
11:00-11.45	Meeting with Academic Director	Academic Director	LP & BH
11.45 -13:00	Visit to Unite – Meeting Head of TT, observations, Unite accommodation	Head of TT and Teacher Trainers	LP & BH
13:00-13:30	Lunch		LP & BH
13:40-14:10	Meeting with Managing Director	Managing Director	LP & BH
14:10-14:40	Meeting with Accommodation and Enrolments	Accommodation and Enrolments	LP
14:10-14:40	Meeting with Operations & Compliance	Operations & Compliance	BH
14:40-15:10	Meeting with Enrolments and Marketing & Enrolments and Modern Languages	Enrolments and Marketing & Enrolments and Modern Languages	LP
14:40-15:10	Meeting with Senior Teacher PSP	Senior Teacher PSP	BH
15:10-15:40	Focus group students	Students	LP & BH
15:40 – 16:30	Observations	Teachers	LP
15:40 – 17:00	Observations	Teachers	BH
16:30-18.30	Visit to Host Families	Accommodation officer	LP



17:00 – 18:00	Visit to Newcastle 1	School Staff	BH
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<b>25 July 2019 Day 2</b>			
Time	Action	Staff involved (Job Title)	Inspectors [initials]
08:30 – 09:00	Inspection of documentation and resources	TBC	LP & BH
09.00-09:30	Meeting with Health & Safety, Premises and YL	Health & Safety, Premises and YL	LP
09:00-10:30	Observations	Teachers	BH
09:30-10:30	Observations	Teachers	LP
10:30-11:00	Meeting with Executive and Marketing Director	Executive and Marketing Director	LP & BH
11:00-11:45	Meeting with Academic Director and inspection of academic documentation	Academic Director	LP & BH
11:45-12:15	Meeting with Academic Management and Teacher Trainers	Academic Management and Teacher Trainers	LP
11:45-12:15	Meeting with Senior Teachers	Senior Teachers	BH
12:15- 13:00	Lunch		LP & BH
13:10 – 13:40	Teacher focus group	Teachers	LP & BH
13:40- 14:10	Meeting with Social Programme and Customer Service	Social Programme and Customer Service	BH
13:40- 14:10	Meeting with Head of Finance	Meeting with Head of Finance	LP
14:10 -15:00	Inspection of Documentation		LP & BH
15:00- 17:00	Observations	Teachers	LP & BH
17:00- 18:00	Feedback Preparation		LP & BH
18.10- 18:40	Class Observation	Teacher	BH

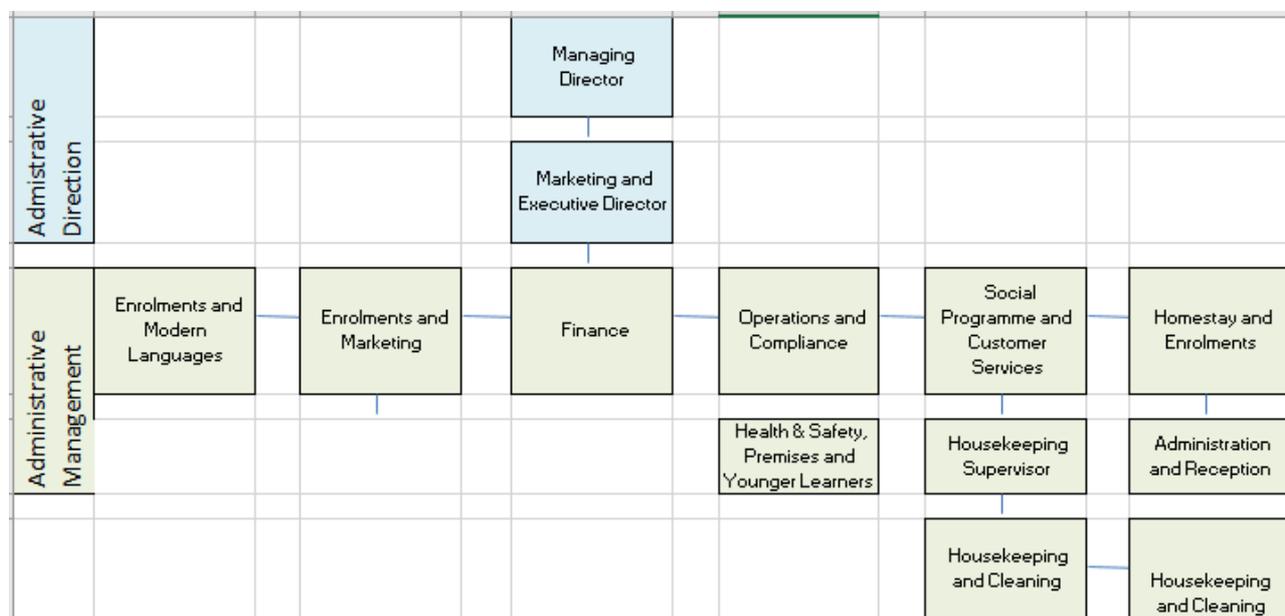


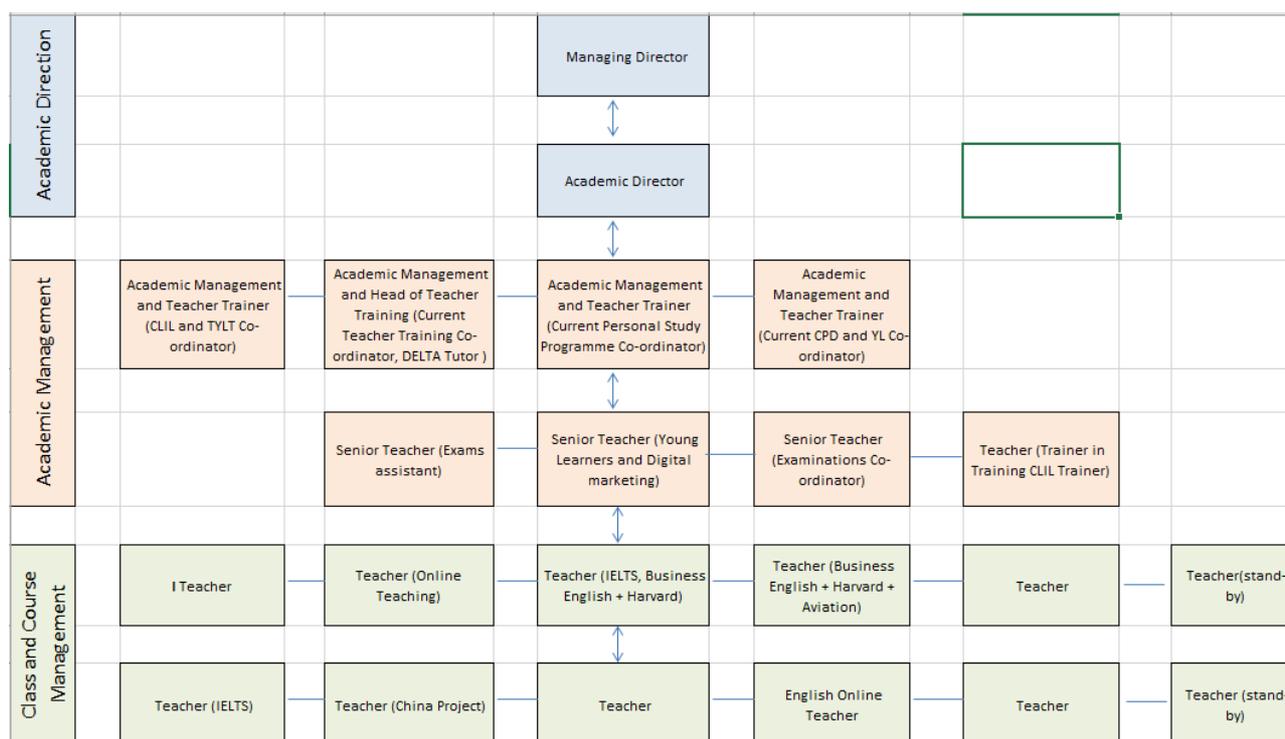
<b>26 July 2019 Day 3</b>			
Time	Action	Staff involved (Job Title)	Inspectors [initials]
09:30- 13.00	Visit to Durham YL – observations, inspection of premises and accommodation, Interview with YL Senior Teacher	Teachers, YL Senior Teacher	LP & BH
15:30 – 17:15	Feedback to Management	Directors and Operations Manager	LP & BH

### Staffing of the Language Education Centre

The management team at IH Newcastle consists of the Managing Director, Executive and Marketing Director and Academic Director. Enquiries, enrolments, accommodation and transfers are processed by the Enrolments team. The Administrative and Welfare team consists of Social Programme and Customer Service Staff, Health and Safety, the Premises and Administrative Support officer and the Finance Manager. The Operations and Compliance Manager is in charge of Visa regulations, General Compliance and the Administration Systems.

The Academic Director is supported by the Academic Management team of Teacher Trainers and Senior Teachers, who provide day-to-day help to a teaching staff of 42 at the time of the inspection. Senior Teachers responsibilities are rotated and cover observations, coordination of the CLIL, YL, Teacher Training and Personal Study Programmes, as well as exam preparation and registrations.





**Description of the Institution; provided by the Language Education Centre.**

Section E: Language Education Centre Background Information	
<b>History</b>	IH Newcastle was founded in 1978, became a CELTA teacher training centre in 1991 and a DELTA training centre in 1998. The current owners have run the company since 1998 and acquired ownership of the company in 2005. IH Newcastle relocated to its current premises in 2009.
<b>Accreditation</b>	IHWQ, IALC, English UK, Accreditation UK, ISI
<b>Methodological approach</b>	<p>We want IH Newcastle students to realise their full individual potential and believe this happens when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they are actively involved in their learning;</li> <li>• they are challenged by what they are asked to do;</li> <li>• they are motivated by their studies.</li> </ul> <p>IH Newcastle teachers are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hold appropriate professional qualifications;</li> </ul>



- engage in on-going professional development;
- respect their students as learners and as individuals;
- be interested in their students and care about their progress;
- encourage their students to participate in class and continue their studies outside class;
- take the opinions of their students seriously;
- know their subject and be able to clarify details for students;
- correct their students appropriately;
- be well-informed and sensitive to cultural issues;
- be able to use both modern and more traditional teaching methods effectively;
- make appropriate use of available technology;
- make every lesson a worthwhile learning experience for their students.

Our students can expect IH Newcastle teachers to:

- introduce them to new language;
- provide them with opportunities to practise new language;
- give them guidance on how to improve their language level;
- encourage them to participate in their language of study in the class;
- help them become more confident about using their language of study;
- develop their ability in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- assess their level, their progress and their language skills;
- use up-to-date material from a wide range of sources;
- use a wide range of activities and techniques to activate their language of study;
- manage their classes effectively and involve students fairly and equally.

We will encourage our students to:

- share responsibility for their own learning;
- show respect for each other, their teachers and their school;
- participate actively in class and respond positively to the challenges of language learning.

International House prepares students for the demands of travelling, working and studying in an English language environment, with a focus on real-life communication, especially with regards to skills, pronunciation, accuracy and fluency.



	<p>The traditional term-based approach to class progress has been adapted to offer an alternative progression through levels with regular tutorials and tests to determine when our students are able to ‘move up’.</p> <p>Our classes are linked to the Common European Framework, CEFR, and are designed to accommodate the needs of individual learners. Each level has a level descriptor based on the CEFR and a level outline (scheme of work) which details the level aims, the skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation and the activities in class. Large displays in the corridors make clear what will be studied at each level, from A1 to C1. These are then cross-referenced to the weekly work plans which are displayed in each classroom.</p>
<b>Premises</b>	<p>The school occupies a four-storey, Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed building in the centre of Newcastle. It has a large student common room on the first floor, and a large PSP suite on the top floor. In total there are 15 classrooms. The School is close to all major transport links and only 7 minutes' walk from the student apartments at Newcastle 1.</p>
<b>Facilities</b>	<p>At street level, a lobby gives access to the stairs and a central lift. On the first floor, there is a large, open-plan administrative and reception area and the student common room. Floors two and three accommodate the school's 15 classrooms. On the top floor, there is a large teachers' room that includes an office for the Academic Director, and a self-study room, which is mainly used for the delivery of the PSP. There are toilets on each floor.</p> <p>Free drinking water is available and there are free tea and coffee-making facilities in the student room.</p>
<b>Classroom equipment</b>	<p>All classrooms have data projectors and six have interactive whiteboards. Classrooms, the PSP room and the teachers' room are very well supplied with computers. All educational technology is well maintained and confidently used. Immediate technical support is provided.</p>
<b>Any other premises used by the Language Education Centre</b>	<p>For 2019. The Durham School residential summer camp is located about 30 minutes' drive from Newcastle.</p>
<b>Location of in-company courses</b>	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Section F: Courses Offered</b>			
	Approximate <b>percentage of total student hours</b> as calculated below (for an academic year)	Approximate <b>number of students</b> (for an academic year)	Approximate <b>number of teachers per language</b> taught (for an academic year)



<b>Language 1</b> (English) add further rows as needed	95%	1482	30
<b>Language 2</b> (Spanish) add further rows as needed	3%	105	3
<b>Language 3</b> (French) add further rows as needed	1%	32	2
<b>Language 4</b> (German) add further rows as needed	>1%	17	1
<b>Language 5</b> (Mandarin) add further rows as needed	>1%	10	2
	%		
	%		
Types of course, e.g. national and international exam courses, and blended/ on-line courses over the year (add rows as needed)			
<b>General Language</b>	General English	75% of all courses taught	
<b>Special purpose</b>	Academic English	6% of all courses taught	
<b>Special purpose</b>	Business English	3% of all courses taught	
<b>Any courses provided which are <u>not</u> language courses (e.g. teacher training).</b>			
<b>Name of course</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
CELTA	Teacher training	48	4
DELTA	Teacher training	4	3
DELTA exam prep	Teacher training	17	2
CLIL	Teacher training	58	4
Personal Methodology Programme	Teacher training	12	4
Teach in China	Teacher training	2	1
TYLT: Methods & Skills	Teacher training	4	2

<b>Technology enhanced learning</b>	
Are your <b>face-to-face courses supported by digital /online tools</b> and methodology? This may include the use of hardware and/or software both in and out of class during the period of the course.	
Yes, sometimes. If yes:	
• Is this a compulsory element of the course?	No
• Is it a fully integrated part of the course?	No
• Is it used for homework?	No, not usually.
• Is it used for assessment?	No
• Is it used in class?	Yes, sometimes.



<p>Please describe the use of educational technology briefly.</p>	<p>All classrooms are equipped with data projectors and the internet is a rich source of authentic teaching material.</p> <p>In the Personal Study Programme room the computers have a range of software, including Sanako for pronunciation, IH Campus and Netlanguages for function based skills work, also Harvard Managementor. These are all designed to be used with teacher support. The use of mobile phones is also included in class activities for example for recording and for making use of the video function.</p>
<p><b>Blended Learning and e-learning courses</b>          Are any of the enrolled hours for any course(s) required to be completed online (either as asynchronous online learning or through synchronous interaction with a teacher online via a webinar or similar tool)?</p> <p>Are there any courses delivered exclusively online?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>If yes, please describe the course(s) briefly          N/A</p> <p>Only private 1:1 classes arranged online.</p>
<p>% of student hours spent online as part of the course</p>	<p>No specific percentage – PSP is the class where online materials are most likely to be used, but only if the student chooses to access these.</p>
<p>Number of teachers for both synchronous and asynchronous learning</p>	<p>All contracted teachers are involved in ‘asynchronous learning’ as part of the PSP programme.</p>
<p><b>Blended Learning / e-learning courses: timing</b></p>	
<p>Please give details of e-learning likely to be taking place during the period of 3 weeks before and 3 weeks after the inspection period, including where possible:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Number of levels / courses</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Number of hours, if synchronous</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Synchronous (teachers and students online together):</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Asynchronous (material available for students to use at their convenience):</p>	<p>N/A</p>



Section G: Staff and Student Numbers				
<b>Students</b>				
Approximate total of number of all <b>student hours</b> of tuition provided by the Language Education Centre <b>during the last 12 months</b> . Include course participants taught in-company and in other off-site locations			<b>Total Number:</b> c.84,000	
<b>Low and Peak Seasons</b> (Please tell us which are your busiest and quietest months)		Low Season (months): September - May		Peak season (months): Jun - August
<b>Numbers of sites</b>		One in 2018		
<b>Low Season:</b> 1		Peak season: 1		
Approximate total of number of students at different times of the year	Q1 Jan-March: 374	Q2 April-Jun: 543	Q3 July-Sept: 1125	Q4 Oct-Dec: 343
Approximate <b>numbers of full time</b> (15 or more hours per week) and <b>part-time</b> (under 15 hours per week) course participants <b>age 18+ over the year</b>		<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part time</b>	
	Number:	<b>1019</b>	<b>271</b>	
	Percentage:	79%	21%	
<b>Maximum size of classes taught:</b>	12			
Approximate <b>numbers of full time</b> (15 or more hours per week) and <b>part-time</b> (under 15 hours per week) course participants <b>age 16 – 17</b> .		<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part time</b>	
	Number:	255	3	
	Percentage:	99%	1%	
<b>Maximum size of classes taught:</b>	12			
Approximate <b>Numbers of Junior</b> (11-15) <b>Young Learners</b> (6-10) and <b>Very Young Learners</b> (6 and under) over the year		<b>Junior</b> (11-15)	<b>Young Learners</b> (6-10)	<b>Very Young Learners</b> (6 and under)
	Number:	170		
	Percentage:	100%	%	%
<b>Maximum size of classes taught:</b>	15			
<b>Staffing</b>				
<b>Number of Full Time Teaching Staff</b>	Q1 Jan-March:	Q2 April-Jun:	Q3 July-Sept:	Q4 Oct-Dec:
	21	30	30	21
<b>Number of Part Time/Freelance Teaching Staff</b>	Q1 Jan-March:	Q2 April-Jun:	Q3 July-Sept:	Q4 Oct-Dec:
	4	4	5	4
<b>Number of Full Time Administrative Staff</b>	Q1 Jan-March:	Q2 April-Jun:	Q3 July-Sept:	Q4 Oct-Dec:
	5	5	7	5
<b>Number of Part Time Administrative Staff</b>	Q1 Jan-March:	Q2 April-Jun:	Q3 July-Sept:	Q4 Oct-Dec:
	1	1	1	1



<b>Section H: Developments since your last Inspection</b>	
<b>Actions taken</b>	Based on Equals recommendations?
	Yes/No
<p><b><i>“Consider running a training session for teachers of languages other than English to encourage the use of the target language during pairwork.”</i></b></p> <p>Included in CPD programme.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider running a training session on the timing of lessons and lesson segments, including assessing time to be taken over a phase and ensuring that sessions do not overrun. Ensure teachers encourage correct use of classroom language from their students.”</i></b></p> <p>Included in CPD programme.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider running discussion training session on the point of error correction when related to lesson aims.”</i></b></p> <p>Included in CPD programme</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Encourage teachers to put lesson aims on the board at the start of the lesson.”</i></b></p> <p>Included in CPD programme, and weekly workplans are accessible to students via IH Hub for overview of each lesson.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider making the job description for the Academic Co-ordinator more detailed.”</i></b></p> <p>Irrelevant now as post no longer exists. Senior teachers take responsibility for certain ‘academic management’ tasks which are clearly delineated.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider developing end of level tests. This could be done with Macmillan Campus and be carried out in the Personal Study Programme centre.”</i></b></p> <p>This has been seriously contemplated, but the decision has been made that this is not something of general importance other than to long term students. There are tests available, for the rare occasions when it is determined that an end of level test is necessary and useful.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider developing a certificate of achievement.”</i></b></p> <p>This was already in place at the time of the last inspection. Course-end certificates are issued showing course dates, number of hours studied, level attained according the the</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation



CEFR system (and with a key to where the student is situated in the other major level description schemes.) A full report on the student's progress with suggestions for continued learning is provided. The weekly student progress updates can be clearly seen by students, teachers and academic director via IH Hub, so the course end certificate will be a reflection of the whole learning experience.	
<p><b><i>“Ensure that all in-house material uses the same format.”</i></b></p> <p>Addressed.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider having the toilets cleaned three times a day rather than twice.”</i></b></p> <p>Addressed.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider redesigning the social programme events to make them more appealing to long stay students.”</i></b></p> <p>Addressed. Social Programme organiser arranges this with specific reference to student requests.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Differentiate more clearly between drop in and full observations.”</i></b></p> <p>Addressed. There are clear descriptions of these observations in the Teachers' Handbook, and the proforma for the observation notes to be taken are different for each type of observation.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider involving the Academic Co-ordinator in carrying out appraisals with teaching staff.”</i></b></p> <p>Senior teachers are tasked with carrying out certain observations when asked to by the Academic Director.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Add information on the new pension scheme to the teachers' handbook”</i></b></p> <p>Done.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Consider changing the contract to reflect the IH Newcastle maximum teaching hours rather than the higher IH World limit”</i></b></p> <p>The fall back situation can give us greater flexibility in dealing with short term 'one-off' contracts and groups. It was decided to keep the IHWO limits but never to abuse them or treat them as standard practice.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b><i>“Include the Eaquals charters in staff/student handbooks.”</i></b></p> <p>Done.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation



<p><b>“Consider putting more information about Eaquals on the website.”</b></p> <p>Done.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p><b>“Consider promoting Eaquals more amongst the students.”</b></p> <p>Done.</p>	Yes – based on EAQUALS recommendation
<p>Improving students’ access to records of attendance, progress, workplans. Timetables, FAQs for students, curriculum information, level descriptors, Learning Strategies and social programme information are also being easily accessible.</p> <p>This has been achieved by using IH Hub, and encouraging students from Day One (and sometimes prior to arrival) to access their information easily from any mobile device.</p>	Not based on an EAQUALS recommendation
<p>GDPR considerations have been applied to the school’s processes.</p>	Not based on an EAQUALS recommendation
<p>Improvements to safeguarding procedures with more Risk Assessments carried out, and more measures being introduced for the benefit of junior students travelling back to homestay – checks on the journey home are done by our accommodation staff in advance.</p> <p>All household members are named in Enhanced DBS checks for the main designated homestay host.</p>	Not based on an EAQUALS recommendation
<p>Progress made on a shift to cloud-based systems for both school management and all administrative processes. (Office 365 will start in Spring and Infospeed Class systems in March 2019.)</p>	Not based on an EAQUALS recommendation
<p>Increased presence on social media has been used effectively as a part of the school’s marketing strategies, especially with new customer services role.</p>	Not based on an EAQUALS recommendation



## Section Three: Grading

### 1. Management and Administration (Eaquals General Charter: 1, 2, 3, 4)

#### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found some Points of Excellence in this category (Grade 1.5)

1.1 There is an institutional ethos which provides the foundation for the institution's activities.

1.2 The leadership and organisational structure of the Language Education Centre support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

A statutory declaration has been made by the Language Education Centre (LEC) that the institution has been established and operates in compliance with national and local legislation on insurance, employment, data protection, accounting and taxation. The Inspectors found all relevant documentation to be in order and saw no evidence to contradict this declaration.

IH Newcastle sets out its mission and vision in its Staff Handbook. It aims :

- To be a pioneer in teacher training and teacher development
- To be a leader in language education and quality standards
- To build the business through diversification, consultancy and partnerships
- To develop new sources of income for the future and bring their expertise to bear on other areas of language education and training where it could make a contribution.
- To perpetually create new and innovative learning experiences for their customers.
- To develop their people: "the success of IH Newcastle depends on its people, and IH Newcastle is committed to supporting its educational and administrative staff in terms of personal and professional development."

The Inspectors saw this mission and ethos borne out in practice in the LEC's operations, with all staff cooperating effectively to deliver a language learning experience of high quality. The mission and vision are 'living documents' and regularly updated. However, inspectors noticed that the latest version of the Mission Statement is not published on the website nor in the Admin Staff Handbook yet.

The vision goes beyond being just a statement. It further evolves into Principled Actions for IH Newcastle and then concrete Action Plans for each year. The management has developed an Organisational 'personality' to describe its qualities and values and they work on the penetration of this organisational culture and values throughout the whole institution and thus reaching the clients.

Strategic and operational objectives are defined on the basis of professional SWOT and PEST analyses and the use of the 7S Model. Currency trends in the main markets are observed to plan for compensating geographically focused recessions. In order to beat the competition, IH Newcastle has developed unique products such as the Personal Study Programme (PSP), the Harvard Business courses (leading to a Harvard branded certificate), the Personal Methodology Course (PMC) and others. In line with the huge increase in interest in YL and Teachers Training courses, a new, very successful Residential Centre has been opened and it operates under the name of IH Durham. The plans are courses for teachers to be provided there in addition to the present YL courses.

In order to join IALC and thus further develop its marketing outreach, the LEC needed another brand as well as IH and a new 'holding' company NE14Languages was introduced (to be read as 'Anyone for Languages').



The management and administrative structures are well-adapted to the needs and size of the LEC. Staff are appropriately managed and supported, with clear lines of accountability. There is an emphasis on shared and delegated responsibility, close and respectful teamwork and regular formal and informal communication.

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IH Newcastle makes good use of IT systems to support effective communication, information sharing, data storage and administration. The Class System is used by administrative staff to record and process both direct and agent enrolments, accommodation information and payments. The new IH Hub software provides for managing the social programme, timetables, classing, registers, academic programmes and materials, attendance and progress, feedback, and making announcements to staff and students. The Operations and Compliance Manager transfers information between the main software systems every Wednesday and also on Fridays, if needed.

Data protection is respected and GDPR considerations have been applied to all processes.

Points of excellence:

- 1.1. is excellent because there is clear evidence of
  - a strategic approach to management and an awareness of the economic environment, with proven ability to adapt to changing internal and external situations
  - leadership, combined with a readiness to delegate and involve staff in the development of the institution.
- 1.2. is excellent because as a result of adopting an open, transparent, inclusive and reflective style of management, the LEC has become a successful example of a learning organisation.

#### Recommendations

- Explore ways to develop software components (plug- ins) which will automatically transfer data between the Class System and IH Hub
- Update the Mission Statement on the website and in the Admin Staff Handbook

#### Requirements

None



## **2. Teaching and Learning (Eaquals General Charter, 1.2; Charter For Course Participants 1,2, 3)**

### **Verdict statement:**

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eaquals criteria for this category (Grade 2)

- 2.1 The pedagogical approach and methods reflect the institution's educational philosophy.
- 2.2 The quality of course delivery consistently provides opportunities for effective learning.
- 2.3 Lessons are planned with reference to the course programme and the learning and motivational needs of individuals and the group; specified learning outcomes are shared with learners.
- 2.4 The opportunities offered for learning are varied, making use of available technology and resources.
- 2.5 Learners have the opportunity to develop their study skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

The Inspectors observed 42 lesson segments. Observations included all course types (General English, Business English, Cambridge Exams preparation, IELTS, Teacher Training), all age groups (adults, young learners and teenagers), all teachers and all languages taught on the inspection days (Spanish and English). The first observation was conducted by both Inspectors together for standardisation purposes. Samples observed covered both language and skills focus, as well as elements of exam practice. In terms of language work the Inspectors saw some presentation and mainly practice of new language. Practice of all four skills was evident either in the observed extracts or in the lesson plans provided.

The pedagogical approach is set out in detail in the curriculum document: broadly communicative, encompassing all four skills, and suitably adapted to the learners' needs and interests

The Inspectors witnessed this approach being applied in all the lessons and there was clear evidence of a good rapport between teachers and course participants. The atmosphere was relaxed yet purposeful in most classes and there was evidence of effective learning taking place and the principle of using the target language throughout the lesson was observed by all teachers. Fun activities were part of many adult classes and lessons were dynamic. However, there were cases where it was evident that the pace of the lesson could have been increased through e.g. change of focus / change of activity or interaction pattern.

Inspectors were impressed by the discipline in Young Learner and Teens classes, along with student participation and motivation.

Students interviewed in the focus group were very satisfied with their progress. They appreciated the active methodology and the personal attention from teachers.

In terms of materials used, although the LEC policy is not to teach from coursebooks, the Inspectors noted that mainly photocopied parts of coursebooks were used, rather than authentic or own materials. There were a number of instances in which technology, such as image projection, audio and video was used, although the overall impression was that this could be more widely employed. The school has interactive whiteboards which were not much used during the visit, and there were occasions when resources such as PowerPoint presentations could easily have substituted photocopied handouts to save paper and produce a more professional delivery. These are areas on which the school may wish to focus attention.

Lesson plans were provided in every case except for one or two occasions. A standardised template was used and the lesson plans were detailed and professionally written. They reflected the weekly plans and the syllabus documents and it was apparent that teachers were using the course syllabi to plan their courses. In almost all cases lesson aims were clearly formulated in line with the CEFR documents, but they were not written on the board and not referred to during the lessons, nor discussed with students. Although students have access to lesson aims on IH Hub, Inspectors believe that they should be made an integral part of the learning process.



All teachers provided class profiles describing their students' strengths and weaknesses. The rubric 'Anticipated problems' in the lesson plan also demonstrated that teachers consider carefully what difficulties some students may encounter during the lesson and prepare remedial work beforehand.

Teachers were aware of the importance of error correction, but there was a limited variety of correction techniques and only a few samples of pronunciation work were observed, even when the lack of it interfered with understanding. This is an area which would benefit from in-service training.

Taken overall, the teaching in the lesson segments observed was of a good standard, with a number being excellent.

#### Recommendations

- Continue encouraging teachers to incorporate pronunciation work at sound, word, sentence and text level in their teaching
- **Ensure more direct and immediate reference to learning outcomes within lessons whether through student reflection or teacher signposting to make these more tangible, relevant and transparent.**
- Consider providing further training to teaching staff in the area of
  - applying different approaches to error correction
  - more creative exploitation of authentic and own materials
  - increasing the pace of the lesson through e.g. change of focus / change of activity or interaction pattern
- **Put into practice the in-service training carried out on using technology in the classroom by utilising the availability of such technology to a greater extent to enhance the quality of delivery in the classroom and reduce the use of photocopied materials**

#### Requirements

None

### **3. Course Design and Supporting System (Eaquals General Charter 1.2; Charter for Course Participants 2.2, 2.4, 2.6,)**

#### **Verdict statement:**

The Inspectors found some Points of Excellence in this category (Grade 1.5 )

3.1 There is a statement of the institution's educational philosophy and written descriptions of its learning programmes, including course objectives and content.

3.2 All language course programmes are specified by levels which refer to the CEFR, and learning objectives are related to the global descriptors of CEFR levels.



3.3 There is an academic management and coordination structure, with supporting systems, which ensure the implementation of the institution's educational philosophy.

There is a detailed curriculum document in the Teachers' Handbook describing the school's educational philosophy and pedagogic approach, along with a syllabus for each level, linked to the can-do statements and information on grammar and functions. Each point on the syllabus has an identification code and this is reflected in the weekly schemes of work so that students can see how what they do in the classroom relates to the syllabus. The frame of the weekly schemes of work are published on IH Hub by Tuesday every week and full details completed by Friday. This is checked by the Academic Director. The link between the syllabus and the schemes of work is very clear and Inspectors were also able to see this reflected in the lesson plans and in what took place in the classroom. CEFR levels are used for the syllabuses of all courses - A1 to C2. Level A2 is broken down into 2 (i.e. A2, A2+) and there are separate syllabuses at levels B1 – C1 for General English, Cambridge Exam Preparation, IELTS and Business English classes. These are also displayed on colourful posters around the school. Learning strategies are an important part of the curriculum at International House Newcastle and they are included in the syllabus for each level. The teachers receive guidance on how to implement them as part of the CPD programme and they must be included on the work plan. For the students there are references to LS – Learning Strategies on the syllabus documents and students are encouraged to check these LS references on the IH Hub weekly work plans.

Academic management is led by the Academic Director, who is very well-qualified and experienced to provide suitable leadership in this area. She is supported by a very competent and motivated team of Teacher Trainers and Senior Teachers. They work in close cooperation, contributing to the school culture of support and sharing best practices. Together, the Academic Management team covers observations, mentoring, daily support to teachers with lesson planning and student report writing, CPD seminars delivery and placement testing. Each one of the Senior Teachers have their own main area of responsibility, such as coordinating the CPD, Personal Study Programme, Exams, Teacher Training or YL Courses.

There are clear orientation and induction procedures for new staff, a mentoring system and a comprehensive Teachers' Handbook.

All academic administration is conducted efficiently, through the online management system IH Hub. Student attendance, records of lessons delivered, lesson content and materials are all entered into the online system and can be accessed by school management and all teachers, enabling effective tracking of individual attendance and cover for absent teachers. However, inspectors noticed that teachers' records of work were of variable quality and differing degrees of detail. In most cases, main aims were well-written but there was at times confusion between aims and procedure.

Points of Excellence

3.2. is excellent because the overall design of syllabuses and learning programmes is exceptionally clear and Learning Strategies are an important part of the curriculum.

### Recommendations

- Devise a proper support system to standardise teachers' interpretation of the syllabus and to guarantee consistent quality throughout the school.

### Requirements

None



## 4. Assessment and Certification (Eaquals General Charter 1.2; Charter for Course Participants 1.2, 1.3, 2.10, 3.1)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eaquals criteria for this category (Grade 2)

- 4.1 Assessment procedures are compatible with the institution's educational philosophy and course objectives.
- 4.2 Placement procedures are appropriate to the learning context and to learners' needs.
- 4.3 Systems for assessing language competence provide reliable, valid and fair means of evaluating progress and achievement in a way that is appropriate for the course and the learners.
- 4.4 Reports and certificates issued to learners indicate their achievements in terms of the course objectives and content. They provide a reliable statement of the level achieved.
- 4.5 Where information on public examinations is provided, relevant advice and support is given to learners.

Assessment procedures are compatible with the school's educational approach and course aims and suit learners' needs.

Learners take a placement test on Monday morning of the week their course starts. The written part takes 40 minutes and consists of 4 sections: Tense review, Functional language, Vocabulary and Writing. There is also an accompanying oral test, based on standardised questions and conducted by a Senior Teacher or the Academic Director. The two tests together allow the student to be placed in an appropriate class, at an appropriate level.

Part of the placement procedure is also initial analysis of the student's language needs and enrolment information, the results of which are recorded on the 'Day One Sheet'. One copy of this sheet is passed on to the teacher, the other two to the Personal Study and the Social Programme Coordinators.

In the course of classroom observations the Inspectors noted that groups were relatively homogenous in terms of level. There are effective procedures for dealing with misplaced learners. As the school uses rolling enrolment, the effectiveness and accuracy of placement testing is an issue all staff are aware of.

Due to the nature of continuous enrolment, there are no timetabled mid-course or exit tests. Students' progress is assessed on a weekly basis across nine categories: the 4 skills, functions, grammar, pronunciation, PSP and motivation. Grades are logged onto the IH Hub at the end of each week and could be: Below Standard (BS), Standard (S), Above Standard (AS), Excellent (E). Students achieving 'Excellent' or 'Above Standard' in most areas are eligible for moving up, whereas repeated Below Standard (BS) grades result in the student moving down a level.

Assessment is based on informal continuous assessment and also by matching students' performance to the Weekly Work Plan outcomes and the descriptors in the Syllabus. There are no specified marking criteria to ensure that students are accurately assessed.

There are Exit Tests, designed for each level and they are voluntary for those who wish to take them.

Longer-term students, enrolled for 12 weeks or longer are also given tutorial time with the Academic Director to talk about their course, accommodation, Social Programme, etc.

Students receive a Certificate of Attendance rather than Achievement at the end of their stay. They include the grades given for the last week, as well as a comments section for further clarification of progress made and/or advice. Report comments are informed by the teacher regarding student's entire length of stay and based on student's in-class performance and Personal Study Programme.

The Certificates of Attendance also contain the numbers of hours, dates attended and level studied, and are signed by the teacher and Academic Director.



The school is a Cambridge Assessment English open centre and students are informed of the various possibilities for sitting these exams. There is a senior teacher who is the Exams Coordinator and part of her role is to visit classes at the relevant levels to inform students of the Cambridge exams. There are also exam preparation classes for Cambridge Upper Main Suite exams and for IELTS.

Young Learners assessment is entirely based on Continuous Assessment in the classroom.

#### Recommendations

- **Specify marking criteria and introduce regular CEFR level standardisation tasks for teachers to ensure that they accurately assess students' language skills. The Equals' website has useful standardisation resources.**
- **Explore ways to introduce assessment tasks that are more closely aligned to the IH Newcastle level syllabi descriptors and the full range of learning outcomes.**

#### Requirements

None

## 5. Academic Resources (Eaquals General Charter 1.2, 1.3; Charter for Course Participants 2.5)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eaquals criteria for this category (Grade 2)

5.1 The coursebooks or other core course materials, online learning platforms and resources, and reference materials reflect course objectives and the methodology used.

5.2 There is a system for monitoring learning material developed in-house.

5.3 All equipment and electronic connectivity is accessible and well maintained.

All teaching and learning resources used by the teaching staff are appropriate to learners' level, age and needs and provide support in achieving the general aims of the teaching/learning process as outlined in school documents. The LEC has a teachers' resource library of supplementary materials, methodology, resource books and journals. It is kept in the staffroom, and its size is appropriate to the size of the operation. The server contains a wealth of digitally stored and well-organised materials. These are a combination of both published and in-house produced materials. The school has online subscriptions and has provided teachers with passwords to sites such as ELT Journal, Onestop English, ELT Professional, The Teacher Trainer, English Teaching Professional and Teach This. In-house produced material is also stored digitally and is monitored for quality by the Academic Director.

The school has made a principled choice not to use coursebooks. This is essential as each student's course can be made up of several different classes depending on their progress. To fulfil syllabus aims and learner interests and in line with the weekly plan, teachers choose materials from the available supplementary materials, coursebooks, in-house produced materials or sometimes they create their own material. The teaching staff have access to a sufficient number of computer stations as well as printing and copying facilities to enable effective lesson planning and preparation. There is a culture of sharing materials among teachers who clearly enjoy this creative aspect of their work. Students are provided with a ring bound folder on the first day of their stay to store handouts and there is a hole punch in each classroom. There was some difference in the presentation of handouts so consider consistently using a standard template for all materials.



The Teacher Focus Group liked the idea that they are trusted to choose materials and are not tied down to coursebooks. They were satisfied with the amount of resources available and highly appreciated the fact that the school is very ready to respond to their requests for new resources and the budget is flexible.

The IH Hub provides self-study resources that complement learning. A lending library of books and films for course participants is located on the top floor in the PSP centre. These can all be accessed during Personalised Study Programme (PSP) sessions along with resources on the computers such as Net Languages, Macmillan Campus, graded readers and the Harvard Business Course.

There are data projectors in all classrooms and Smartboards are also available in some classrooms. All members of staff are trained to use these but inspectors didn't see them widely used (see Section 2). Most materials used in the observed lessons were photocopies. The LEC pays for copyright licensing through CLA and the source of copyright material was acknowledged on all copies made.

The teaching materials used at the Young Learner centre are a combination of published and self-made materials, many of which have been designed specifically by teachers in previous years. There is adequate stationery, and there was a projector and laptop in each classroom to allow for the use of audio and video.

### Recommendations

- Continue to develop the bank with digital resources and encourage teachers to use them, rather than photocopied handouts
- Consider consistently using a standard template for all materials presented to students

### Requirements

None

## 6. Learning Environment (Eaquals General Charter 1, Charter for Course Participants 2.3; Staff Charter 2)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eaquals criteria for this category (Grade 2)

- 6.1 The teaching and study environment meets the requirements of course programmes and learners.
- 6.2 Any non-pedagogical facilities and/or spaces required for the services offered are fit for purpose and well maintained.
- 6.3 Arrangements are made to protect the health and ensure the safety of learners and staff.

The External sign to the main school building in Newcastle is clear and very attractive. The premises benefit from a daily cleaning service and all areas, toilets and bathrooms included, were found to be clean and in good repair. All the classrooms are large enough to accommodate school maximum class sizes, which is 12. They are well-furnished with chairs, tables and data projectors/Smartboards. There was some useful information on notice boards in classrooms, but Inspectors felt that teachers could keep them tidier and display more learning aids, posters and student work on them. Classrooms are safe, very well lit - nearly all have external light and ventilation. Acoustics are good and when windows are closed, there is no noise disturbance from external sources. There was a heat wave during the days of the inspection and the school had provided ventilators and portable air-conditioning units in the classrooms.

The school building is listed and it is not possible for arrangements for disabled access to be made. The staff room is extremely spacious, properly furnished and equipped and it also accommodates the open-door office of the Academic Director.



There is a large room on the first floor, where an original section of the 13<sup>th</sup> century town wall is part of the interior. There are plenty of round tables and chairs, free tea and coffee facilities and it is used as a communal space for course participants or for administering the first day placement tests, various school events, farewell parties, etc.

The PSP centre is on the fourth floor in an open office space of original design with visible ceiling beams. It is equipped with many computers and tables for students to work on. The desk of the PSP coordinator is there, as well as the course participants' lending library, hard copies of various study materials and resources.

There is free and reliable Wi-Fi, accessible all around the school.

Admin staff desks are in the spacious and welcoming reception area, which also provides direct access to the offices of the Managing Director and the Executive and Marketing Director. The whole space is attractively decorated with large colourful branded posters, other promotional materials, the school membership and accreditation certificates, the Equals' Charters, Social Programme information, etc.

The Teacher Training CLIL courses were taking place in a modern, nearby building, which also provided residential accommodation for the participants. Teaching rooms there were of high quality - spacious and adequately adapted for class use. The whole building is accessible for disabled learners.

The YLs residential courses take place in Durham School, which is a traditional British boarding school with excellent facilities and grounds. All classrooms are very spacious and properly equipped.

Each venue has an adequate number of fire extinguishers which are properly maintained and fire drills are regularly carried out. Emergency evacuation notices are displayed on the door in each classroom. The Staff Handbook contains instructions on emergency evacuation procedures. There are correctly-stocked first aid boxes readily accessible at each teaching site. Around the main school premises, there are clearly marked posters with the names of the Fire marshals and the First aiders.

To sum up health and safety meets all local regulations and official certificates were made available for inspection.

#### Recommendations

- If and when finances allow, consider installing air conditioning
- Consider making teachers responsible for keeping the notice boards of classrooms in which they regularly teach in good condition and properly decorated.

#### Requirements

None

## **7. Client Services (Equals General Charter 2.3;, 3.1; Charter For Course Participants 2.8)**

### **Verdict statement:**

The Inspectors found standards in this category to be a Point of Excellence for the Language Education Centre. (Grade 1)



7.1 Advice and support is available to learners and sponsors throughout the course, including welfare arrangements, where appropriate.

7.2 There are systems for monitoring and administering the provision of any leisure programme and/or accommodation. Any social programme takes account of learners' interests.

IH Newcastle prides itself on its level of service in attending to learner queries and requests. The team of enrolments, accommodation and social programme speaks six languages and so is able to assist students of most nationalities at the school who need to communicate an issue in their own language; they are all available during the school opening hours to fully assist with queries.

The impressive Student Guide clearly states classroom regulations, complaints and disciplinary procedures and among many other issues, the LEC policy on bullying, harassment or other forms of distress. There is a clear attendance and lateness policy, especially for Tier 4 visa students. All classes observed were well attended. If an under 18 student is more than 10 minutes late for a class without explanation, the IH Hub automatically sends an alert to several members of staff, who have to start looking for them. There is an adequate system of cover for absent teachers.

The issue of supervision of young students is taken very seriously by the school management. At the Durham Residential YL Campus all teaching staff and group leaders live on-site for the duration of the programme and take turns to supervise activities. Parental consent forms are signed and all teachers are appropriately vetted. All aspects of Health and Safety fully meet requirements.

The comprehensive Student Guide also offers useful and very clear and detailed information about bank accounts, insurance, healthcare issues, hospitals and walk-in centres, emergency services, emergency school number, local customs and culture, airport transfers, public transport and interesting sights in Newcastle.

The Personal Study Programme gives students the opportunity to receive highly individualised advice on what they need to do to improve their English. Students can use computer-based or paper-based materials and a teacher is there to direct and monitor progress. It is highly flexible to each student's needs, learning style and speed. One-to-one speaking sessions and tutorials are also offered. Students keep a record of what they have done in the sessions in a personal file on the computer and this can be accessed by teachers and commented on and can also be used for communication between the teacher and the student.

IH Newcastle is a Cambridge Assessment English centre and students at appropriate levels are offered the possibility to prepare for and sit the exams.

The IH Hub is another unique IH Newcastle software product, which provides effective online communication between students, the school and their teachers. On it students can find information about their language level and the level syllabus, their class timetable and the weekly lesson plans, homework and homework deadlines, attendance, progress, social programme schedule, ideas for other activities, general school information, important information for living in Newcastle, FAQs, etc.

Four interns were assisting the Social and Leisure Programme staff at the time of the inspection. During the placement test interview, information about students' interests and hobbies is recorded and then passed on to the Social Programme Coordinator, who takes this into consideration when designing the programme. He also writes personal letters and messages to students to suggest appropriate events and activities and to collect feedback. Information about the social programme is also published on the IH Hub. Three to four activities are organised during the summer months, appropriate for the different age groups in the school and for a range of interests. The school has arranged special discounts for their students from local businesses. During the winter months the events are suitable for smaller groups, whereas in the busy summer months up to 200 people can attend events. The leisure programme was praised by the student focus group. Risk Assessment reports are produced for each Social Programme activity.

At the Durham Residential YL Campus students have access to the School's extensive grounds, the swimming pool, the all-weather pitch, the Budworth Sports' Centre and music practice rooms. Every week,



half-day and full-day excursions are organised. Very popular and highly enjoyed are the days at Alnwick Castle, where the Harry Potter movies were filmed.

The school carefully regulates host families and they are provided with a clear set of requirements. The two host families visited by Inspectors offered a high standard of accommodation and were very positive about the professional manner in which they were treated. Any complaints about accommodation from students are taken seriously and dealt with efficiently and promptly. All information relating to accommodation is clearly stated on the website, in the Students Guide and in the Homestay Guides for Students and Hosts available for download on the website. There is also clear guidance on standards of behaviour expected from students staying in host accommodation. The school also operates a curfew time for younger students.

IH Newcastle also offers students a number of high-quality self-catering apartments in two local residencies: Newcastle 1 and Unite, both of them within easy walking distance of the school. The premises are of modern decoration, spotlessly clean and provide a high level of service. Students in the focus group were very positive about the standard offered. In addition, the school recommends a number of trusted websites and useful advice to students who wish to arrange accommodation themselves.

The school arranges both individual and group airport transfers.

#### Points of Excellence

7.1. is excellent because the Personal Study Programme and the IH Hub software provide a high quality range of personal advice and information. Exceptional attention is paid to learners' safety and welfare to ensure they are safeguarded at all times

7.2 is excellent because the school offers an exceptional level of social activities and sports opportunities. The accommodation on offer is also of a very high standard, both in the form of homestay and residential accommodation

#### Recommendations

- Consider linking part of lesson content to any relevant sights of interest included in the Social Programme

#### Requirements

None

## **8. Quality Assurance (EAQUALS General Charter 1.3; Charter For Course Participants 2.2, 2.7, 3.2; Staff Charter 4, 6)**

### **Verdict statement:**

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eequal criteria for this category (Grade 2)

8.1 There are systems to foster a culture of quality through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.



8.2 The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems (including regular classroom observations) which are used to improve the quality of all services.

8.3 There are procedures which enable learners and sponsors to give regular feedback relating to the academic and other services provided.

There is a very strong culture of quality and a willingness to reflect on and continuously improve day-to-day practice, led by the Management team, but evident at all levels of the school. The performance of all aspects of the operation is continuously assessed and improvements are regularly made.

International House Newcastle is a member of IHWO and Eaquals and is also externally assessed by Accreditation UK and ISI (Independent School Inspectorate), which allows them to apply for a Tier 4 licence to sponsor international students under the Points Based System.

Observation of teaching staff takes place in a number of different formats and with different aims, as follows:

- Quality control scheduled observations are carried out twice a year by Teacher Trainers or the Academic Director and are designed to assess a teacher's competence. They last for the full duration of the class and an Observation Form is completed and signed. Teaching strengths can be identified as well as areas in need of improvement and these can form the basis for continuing teacher development. The final page of the observation template forms the basis of staff appraisals.
- Academic Director Pop- in observations – these are carried out every Thursday morning, except for the busiest summer weeks. There is usually a specific focus for each round of observations and they are considered as developmental as the results are fed into the CPD programme. This is also an opportunity for the Academic Director to check homogeneity of classes.
- Peer observation – during the quiet winter months, when timetables permit
- CELTA and DELTA Trainee Observations

All types of observation, along with their rationale and procedures, are clearly described in the Teachers' Handbook. Inspectors saw examples of completed Observation Sheets as well as the Academic Director personal notes, kept separately.

Feedback is gathered from clients on a regular basis. During the placement interview, students are asked about the first days of their stay, in which they report on the procedures they have experienced within the school and on the standard of their accommodation. All students complete end of first week and end-of-course questionnaires. On-line feedback is also conducted with specific focus. Results are collated automatically and analysed by the management.

In case of issues arising, appropriate action is taken immediately. The Academic Director keeps all student complaints in a separate confidential folder on her computer, as content could be sensitive. She also keeps a log to make sure that everything has been addressed.

Feedback is also gathered from agents and host families.

## Recommendations

none

## Requirements

None



## 9. Staff Profile and Development (Charter for Course Participants 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.7 ; Staff Charter 5, 6, 8,)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found some Points of Excellence in this category (Grade 1.5)

9.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, teachers and administrative staff are relevant and adequate for each area of responsibility.

9.2 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.

9.3 There is a formal framework to assure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

The school Directors all have a wide range of appropriate qualifications and experience and they show high levels of dedication, commitment and competence in the work they do. Administrative staff are well qualified and fully capable of fulfilling their roles. They are experienced in data management and customer service and between them speak a wide range of languages. Several administrative staff members have also done the CELTA or additional qualifications in book keeping, safeguarding levels 1 to 3, First Aid or Business Administration.

All Teacher Trainers and almost all Senior Teachers are DELTA qualified. They are personable and dedicated to their roles. All teachers have TEFL qualifications, 7 have DELTA qualifications and some have qualifications and experience with IH Newcastle or abroad in teaching young learners. The management policy is to employ a core of long-term permanent teachers alongside more recently recruited staff from the CELTA courses and to maintain a good mix of teaching experience and expertise.

A great deal of importance is placed on the provision of day-to-day support for teaching staff through the mentoring system and the availability of a full-time, experienced academic management team. Each teacher has open and continued access to senior teaching staff and this was highly appreciated by teachers at the focus group interview. There is an in-house CPD programme organised for teaching staff, designed by the CPD Coordinator and the Academic Director. Topics are based on the general needs and interests of the teaching staff and on observation outcomes. Seminars are delivered by the Teacher Trainers, the Senior Teachers or external speakers. Teachers are encouraged to lead workshops themselves. Attendance at in-house training events is not paid, but teachers' feedback in the focus group was very positive. An induction process is in place for all new staff. Teachers also have individual CPD programmes and they have regular individual meetings with the Academic Director. These are dedicated to discussion of issues connected to classroom work, training needs, other kind of support, etc., and Inspectors saw the Academic Director records of these. Each year the school aims to train at least one of the teachers on the DELTA courses they run.

Professional performance reviews are carried out on a yearly basis for all teachers and admin staff by the Managing Director, the Academic Manager and the Teacher Trainers. Performance review interviews are documented, action points are set and reflected upon the following year. Both sides sign the appraisal form. Full observations are carried out before the performance review interview of teachers. There is no information about the Professional Performance reviews scheme of the LEC in the Staff Handbooks.

### Points of Excellence

9.1 is excellent because there is a good mix of highly motivated newly qualified teachers and a high number of very experienced DELTA-qualified staff

9.2. is excellent because staff is well supported on a daily basis by a dedicated Academic Management team and both the personal CPD programme and the school year –round training scheme provide plenty of Professional Development opportunities for teaching staff



#### Recommendations

- Consider including information about the Professional Performance Review Scheme in the Teachers' and Staff Handbooks

#### Recommendations

None

## 10. Staff Employment Terms (Staff Charter 1,2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8 9.10)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found some Points of Excellence in this category (Grade 1.5)

10.1 All staff hold current employment contracts; these conform to local requirements, as confirmed by the statutory declaration of the institution.

10.2 The terms and conditions of employment offered to staff are fair and comply with all statutory requirements as stated in a statutory declaration made by the LEC.

Relevant documentation was all in order. All full-time and part-time staff have written contracts and detailed job descriptions. A large proportion of the teaching staff hold permanent full-time contracts, which stipulate the norm of 100 class hours per 4-week period. Part-time teachers are paid on a pro rata basis based on the hours they work. Both types of contract entitle the teacher to the same rights in terms of sick leave and holiday. Administrative staff work 40 hours a week, including their lunch break.

Terms and conditions of employment offered by the school are fair and comply with the relevant legal requirements. Pay scales have a clear rationale and are applied fairly. Staff retention is very high and most high season teachers return every summer.

All IH Newcastle personnel are enrolled onto the NEST pension scheme. It is clearly explained in the Teachers' Handbook as recommended in the previous Equals report.

#### Points of Excellence

- There are opportunities for permanent employment for a significant proportion of staff, which is not typical in the intensive schools context. Staff retention and number of returning summer teachers are very high.

#### Recommendations

None

#### Requirements

None



## **11. Internal Communications (Eaquals General Charter 1.1, 2.3; Staff Charter 1, 4, 8, 10)**

### **Verdict statement:**

The Inspectors found that the Language Education Centre meets Eaquals criteria for this category (Grade 2)

- 11.1 The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication among members of management and/or staff are clearly defined and documented.
- 11.2 There is formal, documented, communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.
- 11.3 Information is available to staff about the institution, its mission and any planned developments.
- 11.4 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place for staff and are known to them.
- 11.5 Information about Eaquals and its resources is available to staff and learners.

Overall, the Inspectors found evidence of a very positive atmosphere, strong mutual respect, and a good mix of formal and informal communication, all contributing to efficient teamwork and delegation of responsibility, and very high levels of commitment and motivation across the LEC. Management puts a great deal of well-placed trust in the staff and this was highly appreciated at the meetings during the days of the inspection.

All staff have clear job descriptions and are fully aware of their scope of responsibilities, as well as of the responsibilities of other staff members and the possible overlap between them. The organisational charts reflect accurately the real structure and division of roles in the organisation.

Informal day-to-day communication takes place within the administrative team and with managers, achieved through the open – door management style. Scheduled weekly admin meetings take place, where administrative processes, compliance and customer service are discussed. The weekly meetings for teachers are held twice on Fridays, at different times, so that teachers with different schedules can attend and Senior Teachers meet monthly. All meetings are minuted.

At the focus group meeting, teachers commented that sometimes students are registered for courses that are not appropriate for their level. Another issue raised was that when asked, teachers are not always sure who to send students to when they have problems. Teachers felt that more could be done to provide for better communication between the first floor (where admin staff are) and the top floor (where the teachers' staff room is).

All staff are updated on the school performance and new developments/plans at the quarterly staff meetings. These meetings are also used to identify areas for improvement and to track progress.

The school has very comprehensive Teachers and Staff Handbooks. They cover information about the institution, its mission, vision, membership, contractual obligations and responsibilities, codes of behaviour, instructions for handling disputes and complaints and job descriptions of Senior Teachers.

IH Hub is another excellent aid to internal communication and it can be accessed from anywhere.

Eaquals Charters were displayed in the teachers' room and in the reception area, but they are not published in any Handbooks yet, although it was recommended at the previous Eaquals Inspection. In many classrooms there were Eaquals posters and information about Eaquals webinars was displayed at the notice board next to the staff room. There is also some information in the handbooks, but the charters are not included. Teachers did not know much about Eaquals and the resources available on the Members



Area on the website. Inspectors felt that more could be made of the school's membership of Eaqals – to highlight its relevance to both teachers staff and students and its high international standards.

### Recommendations

- Develop ways of ensuring more effective lines of communication between teachers and admin staff
- Devise a poster for the staff room with updated responsibilities of admin staff so that teachers know who to send students to in case of problems
- Make sure that admin staff have a clear understanding about the entry requirements for each course
- Ensure that teachers are aware of academic resources in the Members Area on the Eaqals website, including training webinars
- Include the Eaqals charters in the staff/student handbooks

### Requirements

None

## 12. External Communications (Information Charter 1-7)

### Verdict statement:

The Inspectors found standards in this category to be a Point of Excellence for the Language Education Centre. (Grade 1)

12.1 All promotional materials accurately describe the institution's learning services: the range and functionality of resources and/or online tools offered, and other services and facilities.

12.2 Contractual information provided to learners and sponsors is accurate and complete, and expressed in easily understood language.

12.3 Accredited members make information about Eaqals publicly available; they display the Eaqals Charters publicly, and use the Eaqals logo correctly.

All promotional and information materials, both printed and electronic, are complete and accurate, with a very attractive design. The website is comprehensive and easy to navigate. Brochures are published in English and Portuguese and flyers are translated in 9 languages: Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Thai and Russian.

To attract different target age groups via social media, stories showcasing students' activities are posted daily on Instagram and Facebook.

Various strategies with a focus on digital marketing are used to generate direct bookings such as:

- SEO upgrade, which led to better ranking on Google search engines
- synchronising social media posts on Instagram and Facebook to reach certain target markets at appropriate times



- creating videos for the main school, IH Durham, PSP and Business English
- creating blogs, linked to the website to update and engage students
- a Brazilian influencer was employed and brought thousands of inquiries

The Marketing Director travels extensively and organises workshops, fairs, publicity and agent initiatives. The team who support her speak the languages of the target markets and one is also a graphic designer. Together with a small group of other IH schools representatives based in South Korea, Brazil and other Latin American countries were employed. The school aims to maintain a good mix of nationalities and ages. There are special promotions for soft-currency countries and long-term study destinations. Excellent communication with agents is a priority. They are encouraged to follow the school on Facebook and are sent quarterly- issued newsletters with information about updates and promotions.

Visits to target regions have led to substantial increases in student numbers. Partnerships with schools in China have been built to a very positive effect. A recent contract with the Valencian government has brought 180 Spanish teachers to the summer CLIL courses. There are plans for further development of the teacher training market and the top priority countries for the purpose are Argentina and Mexico. The Saudi market has also opened due to direct contact with different sources such as embassies.

Attractive IH Newcastle branded merchandise is produced and distributed.

Contractual information for students includes all the necessary information and procedures. The student Focus group were extremely satisfied with the amount and quality of the information they had received from the school before arrival. The Student Handbook and IH Hub are excellent tools for keeping students well informed and updated.

Information about Equals is available on the school's website as well as wall displays in the school. Equals logo is used in compliance with the guidelines for members.

#### Points of Excellence

- Information and publicity materials are of exceptionally high quality, well-designed and attractive.
- The Student Handbook and IH Hub gives outstandingly clear advice and information to potential students
- The school website is extremely accessible and 'user-friendly' and allows potential and actual learners to get information in an interactive way
- There is creative use of digital media and this leads to many direct bookings
- There are opportunities for participants to contribute to newsletters, magazines and online social media

#### Recommendations

None

#### Requirements

None



## Section Four: Summary

### Summary of Points of Excellence.

1	Management and Administration
	<p>1.1 is excellent because there is clear evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a strategic approach to management and an awareness of the economic environment, with proven ability to adapt to changing internal and external situations</li> <li>• leadership, combined with a readiness to delegate and involve staff in the development of the institution.</li> </ul> <p>1.2 is excellent because as a result of adopting an open, transparent, inclusive and reflective style of management, the LEC has become a successful example of a learning organisation.</p>
3	Course Design and Supporting Systems
	3.2. is excellent because the overall design of syllabuses and learning programmes is exceptionally clear and Learning Strategies are an important part of the curriculum.
7	Client Services
	<p>7.1. is excellent because the Personal Study Programme and the IH Hub software provide a high quality range of personal advice and information. Exceptional attention is paid to learners' safety and welfare to ensure they are safeguarded at all times</p> <p>7.2 is excellent because the school offers an exceptional level of social activities and sports opportunities. The accommodation on offer is also of a very high standard, both in the form of homestay and residential accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
9	Staff Profile and Development
	<p>9.1 is excellent because there is a good mix of highly motivated newly qualified teachers and a high number of very experienced DELTA-qualified staff</p> <p>9.2. is excellent because staff is well supported on a daily basis by a dedicated Academic Management team and both the personal CPD programme and the school year –round training scheme provide plenty of Professional Development opportunities for teaching staff</p>
10	Staff Employment Terms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are opportunities for permanent employment for a significant proportion of staff, which is not typical in the intensive schools context. Staff retention and number of returning summer teachers are very high.</li> </ul>



12	External Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information and publicity materials are of exceptionally high quality, well-designed and attractive.</li><li>• The Student Handbook and IH Hub gives outstandingly clear advice and information to potential students</li><li>• The school website is extremely accessible and ‘user-friendly’ and allows potential and actual learners to get information in an interactive way</li><li>• There is creative use of digital media and this leads to many direct bookings</li><li>• There are opportunities for participants to contribute to newsletters, magazines and online social media</li></ul>



## Summary of recommendations

1	Management and Administration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore ways to develop software components (plug-ins) which will automatically transfer data between the Class System and IH Hub</li><li>• Update the Mission Statement on the website and in the Admin Staff Handbook</li></ul>
2	Teaching and Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue encouraging teachers to incorporate pronunciation work at sound, word, sentence and text level in their teaching</li><li>• <b>Ensure more direct and immediate reference to learning outcomes within lessons, whether through student reflection or teacher signposting to make these more tangible, relevant and transparent</b></li><li>• Consider providing further training to teaching staff in the area of<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- applying different approaches to error correction</li><li>- more creative exploitation of authentic and own materials</li><li>- increasing the pace of the lesson through e.g. change of focus / change of activity or interaction pattern</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Put into practice the in-service training carried out on using technology in the classroom by utilising the availability of such technology to a greater extent to enhance the quality of delivery in the classroom and reduce the use of photocopied materials</b></li></ul>
3	Course Design and Supporting Systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devise a proper support system to standardise teachers' interpretation of the syllabus and to guarantee consistent quality throughout the school.</li></ul>
4	Assessment and Certification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Specify marking criteria and introduce regular CEFR level standardisation tasks for teachers to ensure that they accurately assess students' language skills. The Equals' website has useful standardisation resources.</b></li><li>• <b>Explore ways to introduce assessment tasks that are more closely aligned to the IH Newcastle level syllabi descriptors and the full range of learning outcomes.</b></li></ul>
5	Academic Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to develop the bank with digital resources and encourage teachers to use them, rather than photocopied handouts</li><li>• Consider consistently using a standard template for all materials presented to students</li></ul>
6	Learning Environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If and when finances allow, consider installing air conditioning</li><li>• Consider making teachers responsible for keeping the notice boards of classrooms in which they regularly teach in good condition and properly decorated.</li></ul>



7	Client Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider linking part of lesson content to any relevant sights of interest included in the Social Programme</li></ul>
9	Staff Profile and Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider including information about the Professional Performance Review Scheme in the Teachers' and Staff Handbooks</li></ul>
11	Internal Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop ways of ensuring more effective lines of communication between teachers and admin staff</li><li>• Devise a poster for the staff room with updated responsibilities of admin staff so that teachers know who to send students to in case of problems</li><li>• Make sure that admin staff have a clear understanding about the entry requirements for each course</li><li>• Ensure that teachers are aware of academic resources in the Members Area on the Equals website, including training webinars</li><li>• Include the Equals charters in the staff/student handbooks</li></ul>



We confirm that this report is based on evidence found at the time of the Inspection and that our opinion is based on our professional judgement.

DATE

14 August 2019

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Hadjidakis', is written in a cursive style.

Reporting inspector

*Lisa J. Phillips*

Co-inspector

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ludka Kotarska', is written in a cursive style.

Ludka Kotarska

Director of Accreditation