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The post-16 subject guidance published in 2001 comprised: art and design; business education; classics; design and technology; drama and theatre studies; engineering and manufacturing; English; geography; government and politics; health and social care; history; information and communication technology; law; mathematics; media education; modern foreign languages; music; physical education; religious studies; science; sociology.

Further booklets published in 2002: agriculture; basic skills in literacy and numeracy; construction; dance; English as a second or other language; hairdressing and beauty therapy; hospitality and catering; leisure and tourism; psychology.

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## Introduction

This booklet aims to help inspectors and staff in schools and colleges to evaluate standards and quality in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English as an additional language (EAL) for students post-16. It complements the *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools* (1999), the supplement *Inspecting School Sixth Forms* (2001) and the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (May 2002). It replaces the earlier guidance *Inspecting Subjects and Aspects 11–18* (1999).

This guidance concentrates on issues specific to ESOL and EAL. General guidance is in the *Handbooks*. Use both to get a complete picture of the inspection or evaluation process.

This booklet focuses on evaluating standards and achievement, teaching and learning, and other factors that affect what is achieved. It outlines how to use students' work and question them, the subject-specific points to look for in lessons, and how to draw evaluations together to form a coherent view of the subject.

Examples are provided of evidence and evaluations from college and school sixth-form inspections, with commentaries to give further explanation. These examples are included without any reference to context, and will not necessarily illustrate all of the features that inspectors will need to consider. The booklets in the series show different ways of recording and reporting evidence and findings; they do not prescribe or endorse any particular method or approach.

Inspectors and senior staff in schools and colleges may need to evaluate several subjects and refer to more than one booklet. When evaluating the provision for ESOL and EAL, they may find some overlaps with evaluations of provision for literacy. There is a separate booklet in this series for literacy and numeracy. You can download any of the subject guidance booklets from OFSTED's web site ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

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OFSTED's remit for this sector is the inspection of education for students aged 16–19, other than work-based education. In schools, this is the sixth-form provision. In colleges, the 16–19 age group will not be so clearly identifiable; classes are likely to include older students and, in some cases, they will have a majority of older students. In practice, inspectors and college staff will evaluate the standards and quality in these classes regardless of the age of the students.

## Context of ESOL and EAL

In most colleges, the term 'ESOL' is used. It refers to the discrete courses and support for those students whose first language is not English. It is also often used in training in the workplace, for the unemployed, in prison education and on community-based and family learning programmes. ESOL students come from four main categories: settled communities, principally from the Asian subcontinent; refugees; migrant workers; and partners or spouses.

ESOL students differ in several ways from students of English as a foreign language (EFL). The latter come to the United Kingdom for a relatively short period with the primary goal of improving their English, often purely for academic purposes. They may be, for example, 'au pairs' or full-time students in another European country. ESOL students are resident or hope to be resident in the United Kingdom, and may have left their countries unwillingly. They often need to learn about systems here such as applying for jobs or immigration rules.

The attainment of students following ESOL courses or receiving additional help with their English is very diverse. Educational and employment backgrounds vary greatly. Some may have basic literacy needs, while others may be following an advanced mainstream course, but still need support with their English. Some may have no previous education or employment, while others may be doctors or university lecturers. Unlike many adult literacy students, they often speak and write more than one language, perceive themselves as successful students and are very keen to learn.



In colleges, more advanced bilingual students may also take mainstream courses, with additional support if needed. Very many whose language skills are less well developed follow discrete ESOL courses leading to a range of qualifications, for example:

- | Pitmans, English Speaking Board, Cambridge University and City and Guilds qualifications at various levels;
- | National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Language Skills Units;
- | Open College Network (OCN) qualifications.<sup>1</sup>

Many of these qualifications focus on the development and accreditation of the practical skills of speaking, understanding and writing.

The range of provision that you are most likely to see includes:

- | language support, including drop-in workshops, individual or small-group sessions, or timetabled classes;
- | in-class support, where specialist language tutors help students during their mainstream lessons, alongside subject-specialist tutors;
- | vocational courses specially designed for ESOL/EAL students and taught jointly by subject and language specialists;
- | discrete courses at various levels, which may or may not lead to a qualification.

In school sixth forms, the term 'English as an additional language' (EAL) is used. Many factors also affect the attainment of school pupils with EAL, for example, the length of time spent in the English education system, the languages pupils speak, whether they are literate in the first language, and whether other families locally share their culture and language.

In school sixth forms, pupils with EAL are far more likely to follow mainstream courses, with additional language support where needed. Language support staff often work in partnership with subject specialists, influencing mainstream teaching and learning strategies, providing additional resources and targeting individuals who need focused support.

This booklet concentrates on the most commonly found courses in or related to ESOL and EAL for students 16–19. However, the principles illustrated in this guidance can be applied more widely.

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<sup>1</sup> These qualifications are currently under review by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

## Common requirements

All inspectors share the responsibility for determining whether a school or college is effective for all its students, whatever their educational needs or personal circumstances. As an inspector, ensure that you have a good understanding of the key characteristics of the institution and its students. Evaluate the achievement of different groups of students and judge how effectively their needs and aspirations are met by any initiatives or courses aimed specifically at these groups of students. Take account of recruitment patterns, retention rates and attendance patterns for programmes and courses for different groups of students. Consider the individual goals and targets set for students within different groups and the progress they make towards achieving them.

You should be aware of the responsibilities and duties of schools and colleges regarding equal opportunities, in particular those defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These Acts and related codes of practice underpin national policies on inclusion, on raising achievement and on the important role schools and colleges have in fostering better personal, community and race relations, and in addressing and preventing racism.

Assess how well the curriculum and teaching in ESOL and EAL enable all students to develop key skills, and how successfully work contributes to the students' personal, social, health and citizenship education, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Judge how effectively work helps prepare students aged 16–19 for adult life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.





## 1 Standards and achievement

### 1.1 Evaluating standards and achievement

From the previous inspection report, find out what you can about standards and achievement at that time. This will give you a point of comparison with the latest position, but do not forget that there is a trail of performance data, year by year. Analyse and interpret the performance data available for students who have recently completed the course(s). Draw on the school's *Performance and Assessment* (PANDA) report or, in the case of a college, the *College Performance Report*. Also analyse the most recent results provided by the school or college and any value-added information available. When numbers are small, exercise caution in making comparisons with national data or, for example, evaluating trends. For further guidance on interpreting performance data and analysing value added, refer to *Inspecting School Sixth Forms*, the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* and the *National Summary Data Report for Secondary Schools*.

Where you can, form a view about the standards achieved by different groups of students. For example, there may be data that enable you to compare how male and female students or different ethnic groups are doing, or how well 16–19-year-old students achieve in relation to older students.

Make full use of other information that has a bearing on standards and achievement, including success in completing courses, targets and their achievement, and other measures of success.

You should interpret, in particular:

- | trends in results;
- | comparisons with other subjects and courses, where appropriate;
- | distributions of grades, particularly the occurrence of high grades;
- | value-added information;
- | the relative performance of male and female students;
- | the performance of minorities and different ethnic groups;
- | trends in the popularity of courses;
- | drop-out or retention rates;
- | students' destinations, where data are available.

In all inspections, team inspectors should consider, where relevant, the extent to which students having English as an additional language are making good progress on their mainstream courses.

On the basis of the performance data and other pre-inspection evidence, form hypotheses about the standards achieved, whether they are as high as they should be, and possible explanations. Follow up your hypotheses through observation and analysis of students' work and talking with them. Direct inspection evidence tells you about the standards at which the current students are working, and whether they are being sufficiently stretched to achieve as well as they should. If the current standards are at odds with what the performance data suggest, you must find out why and explain the differences carefully.

As you observe students in lessons, look at their work and talk with them, consider the extent to which they:

- | are aware of what they have learnt in the lesson and on the course as a whole;
- | demonstrate an understanding of written and spoken English, appropriate to their level of study;
- | can participate fully and at an appropriate level in the courses they are following;
- | can write using an appropriate range of vocabulary, idiom and structures and, where necessary, specialist vocabulary;
- | are sufficiently accurate in writing and speech for the course they are studying;
- | use appropriate register, when writing and speaking.

Colleges and schools will often use initial and diagnostic assessment to ensure students follow a suitable course or take

up additional support where needed. Students may be taking a discrete ESOL course or they may be following a nationally accredited mainstream course. Progress is often monitored against learning goals jointly agreed by the student and tutor. In colleges, these goals are recorded in an individual learning plan (ILP). Refer to the ILP especially where students are following a non-accredited course. The ILP provides evidence of standards achieved and progress made.

In colleges, you may use the national standards in the ESOL core curriculum as a reference point in making judgements about students' attainment and in assessing to what extent appropriate progress has been made on discrete ESOL courses. In schools, students are more likely to take mainstream courses, such as General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A level). Here, your main task will be to evaluate how effectively the students are becoming proficient in their use of English as they study these courses.

## 1.2 Analysis of students' work

An analysis of the work of a sample of students is one of the most important activities for you to undertake in making judgements on standards and achievement. It is the primary source of evidence for identifying relative strengths and weaknesses in the quality and range of students' writing. In examining files of work, you can deduce the amount of progress the students make as they move through the course, the demands that the teaching places on them, and whether they achieve well enough. For students who are following academic or vocational courses, with support for their English, evaluate whether they have the writing skills needed to make at least satisfactory progress.

In addition, you will be able to form a judgement on: the content of the syllabus and the curriculum; the frequency, range and appropriateness of tasks; and the regularity, accuracy and helpfulness of marking and target-setting. This will add weight to your evaluation of attainment and the quality of the teaching. If possible, see samples of complete student files at a range of levels. They often contain very different amounts of work, according to the diligence with which students choose to organise them and the extent to which teachers give guidance on organisation. The amount of practice students get across the whole range of the syllabus is crucial. There may be additional evidence of standards, for example, tapes or videos of students speaking in English. The evidence you gather will also give you valuable insights in the departmental policy and implementation of a marking and assessment strategy for students' work.

### **Example 1: evidence from work of three students at entry level 3<sup>3</sup> at a college of further education (FE); two students are Vietnamese and work in the catering industry; the third is an Asian mother of young children**

*Students have written an article for the class magazine entitled 'A Day in the Life of ...', using biographical information on a favourite celebrity or someone they know well. All three students have also provided tapes of interviews. The best attaining student's portfolio also contains the tape of a live interview with a famous sports personality, which the student recorded from the radio as an extension exercise.*

- | *In all students' work, the quality of written English is very good. Writing is accurate, with few grammatical errors, particularly for the highest-attaining student, whose errors occur only when using complex linguistic expressions.*
- | *The lowest attaining of this talented group is accurate and precise in his use of well-known grammatical expressions and idiom, but makes some mistakes when using unfamiliar constructions which he may have looked up in a dictionary.*
- | *The highest-attaining student employs a very good range of vocabulary and expressions, containing topic-specific language and an appropriate register for the audience.*
- | *All have assimilated a wide range of vocabulary related to everyday activities, but the middle and lower attaining students do not show as much initiative in the use of sequencing text into paragraphs as the highest-attaining student.*
- | *All students demonstrate good previous knowledge of vocabulary and idiom from simplified readers. The highest-attaining student has constructed well-sequenced and logical texts both in his interview of the local personality and in his narrative based on the radio interview of the sports personality. This demonstrates the student's excellent listening skills and his ability to use extensive passive knowledge of English, organising it effectively into a lively and interesting narrative.*

<sup>3</sup> Levels used refer to the levels in the national ESOL curriculum.

- | *Other students have also presented well-structured texts showing awareness of the differences between spoken and written English, for example, longer and more complex sentences, fewer contractions and the effective use of sequencing devices.*
- | *A good range of language is used actively by most students in the recorded work, but there are some grammatical mistakes involving tenses.*
- | *Most students are very effective in conveying their views, with very good pronunciation. All students have a good grasp of the appropriate intonation to express positive and negative opinions.*
- | *Evidence from files shows very good progress through the ESOL course. The students have all worked well to extend their familiarity with written and spoken English and, where students have needed reinforcement or extension activities, they have undertaken these.*
- | *The standard of the highest-attaining student's work is clearly at the upper end of entry level 3 and his work shows robust evidence of ability to progress to level 1. All the other students are also doing extremely well, and working towards entry level 3. The lower level students have made considerable progress as they were assessed at entry levels 1 and 2 on starting the course, which suggests very good achievement.*

### **[Attainment very high (1)]**

#### **Commentary**

The students started the course with different levels of attainment. Their high motivation to succeed and their ability to incorporate their knowledge of everyday English into classwork has enabled them to make very good progress. They work collaboratively to share information and skills, learning from their own experience as well as from others in their group. They can work on their own and learn independently. They are all able to demonstrate varying levels of standards at entry level 3 in skills of listening and responding, speaking to communicate, engaging in discussion and writing. They communicate very effectively for the level of their course.

Their confidence in speaking and writing is matched by high levels of grammatical accuracy, given their level of study. They are able to organise their work coherently and to build on their use of language. The highest-attaining student performs very well in a structured discussion and in spontaneous conversation even though his spoken English and pronunciation are not entirely accurate. He is very good all round, being a confident and fluent speaker and writer. Through taking initiative, he benefits from opportunities to extend his own level of the language.

Overall, the standards of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by the students are excellent, given the level of course they are following and the stage in the college year. Furthermore, considering the students' starting-point, they appear to have made very good progress. Their achievement is very good indeed.

#### **Example 2: evidence from the files of eight 16–18-year-old students on a pre-foundation science course designed for ESOL students; this FE college was visited towards the end of the course**

- | *All students' files are well organised, containing sections for the different topics covered in science and separate sections for the language elements of their course.*
- | *Students clearly take pride in their work and files are substantial, indicating a methodical and industrious approach.*
- | *There are also up-to-date tracking sheets in the files, which identify work showing students' progress in developing their study skills.*
- | *All but two students employ a good range of specialised vocabulary and most use appropriate register in their written work.*
- | *There are many examples of work where students practise with reasonable success an English structure in a scientific context, for example, describing scientific processes using the present passive.*
- | *There is less evidence of students' ability to write in a more extended, less controlled way or to give personal responses.*

- | *Nevertheless, in accuracy, range, appropriate use of specialist vocabulary and register, most students' attainment is above average.*

### **[Attainment above average (3)]**

#### **Commentary**

The students are clearly highly motivated and have worked hard to produce their portfolios. Although several started the course with low levels of attainment, they appear to have made good progress throughout the course. The attainment at the end of the course is satisfactory to good and all but one student will progress to the mainstream science foundation General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). Most students' knowledge and understanding of specialist vocabulary is good. They are also able to use appropriate grammar in a controlled and accurate manner in a scientific context. Although the overall standard of students' work is above average, there is little evidence of their ability to use English in a more spontaneous way to express and justify their views.

### **1.3 Talking with students**

Talking with students is a primary source of evidence for judging their aural comprehension skills and evaluating their oral competence. It can also give you valuable insight into the content of the course, their enthusiasm for the subject, and the breadth and depth of their communicative skills. It is unlikely that you will be able to do this during lesson time, and therefore you should seek a time when a few willing students would be prepared to come and talk to you. Evaluate whether students with EAL have the oral and aural skills needed for their main course of study.

This is an opportunity for you to assess the extent to which students are independent learners, whether the curriculum is offering them opportunities to practise their skills outside the classroom, and how far they are aware of opportunities to progress to another course or employment. Students should be able to hold natural and interesting conversations at levels 1 and 2. They should demonstrate an appropriate range of vocabulary, be confident in presenting their views, and have pronunciation and intonation that do not impede communication.

Your judgements must be made in the light of the expectations for each course. Let the conversation develop naturally and allow students to express their views. You may wish to cover, where relevant:

- | time spent in Britain; differences and similarities with their own or former country;
- | what they consider easy and difficult in their studies;
- | how effective they find the support and teaching they have received;
- | their previous education, their attainment, their general and work experience, and their studies, hobbies and interests (you will need to judge the level of subject-specific vocabulary required and prompt the use of different tenses);
- | students' short-term aspirations and career aims;
- | how far they understand the aims set out in their individual learning plan, where appropriate;
- | how regularly their progress towards these goals is reviewed and monitored;
- | to what extent homework and study outside the classroom help them learn;
- | what they find interesting (or not) about their course;
- | whether they have opportunities to practise their skills in social, vocational or academic contexts, as appropriate;
- | whether teaching and the use of resources draw on and reflect students' backgrounds and educational experience.

When talking to students about their work, it is also useful to consider the following questions:

- | Do students have the grammatical control you would expect at this level and at this stage in the course or for the mainstream courses they are studying?
- | Are their aural comprehension and oral production of an appropriate standard?

- | How far are students able to express and justify their own views?
- | Do they show an appropriate understanding of register and idiom?
- | Do they have a good understanding of the aims and demands of their course?
- | Do they reflect regularly on their own goals and progress in English?
- | Do they show enthusiasm by selecting and reading appropriate texts outside lessons or by finding other ways to practise their English?
- | Are they aware of their own linguistic strengths and weaknesses?
- | If following a mainstream course, do students achieve standards in line with their peers for whom English is the first language?

**Example 3: evidence from discussion with four level 2 students (three are 16–18 and one is 25); in the final term of a full-time ESOL pre-GCSE course in an FE college**

After information has been elicited on students' age, cultural background and length of time in Britain, the discussion explores a recent topic covered in class on rising levels of street crime in Britain.

- | Three of the four students are quickly out of their depth on a topic covered recently in their course. Their lack of topic-related vocabulary, such as 'assault' and 'zero tolerance', restricts their ability to contribute a view.
- | Students clearly have strong views on the subject, but are unable to bring into the discussion their perceptions of the reasons why street crime is on the increase and the extent to which punishment fits the crimes.
- | Lack of appropriate grammatical control means students cannot express their opinions effectively. One student is slightly more proficient than the others. He expresses his views accurately and demonstrates a more reasonable grasp of the vocabulary relevant to this topic, but is still unable to use it confidently in discussion. His performance is barely up to average for this stage in the course.
- | Pronunciation and intonation sometimes impede communication and the students need considerable rephrasing and repetition.
- | None of the students is ready to move to a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English course.

**[Attainment below average (5)]**

**Commentary**

This is a pre-GCSE English course. None of the students has the skills, knowledge or understanding expected in the final term of this course. Their attainment is therefore below average. Their oral work is not as good as it should be for this stage. Their grasp of vocabulary and grammar is weak. They are hesitant, their pronunciation is poor, and their communicative competence at this stage is not compatible with their aspirations to progress to GCSE. They appear frustrated in their inability to express their views. Furthermore, work in their files and evidence from initial tests indicate that they have made little progress since the start of the course, and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

**Example 4: evidence from discussion with five 17-year-old students who are following a mainstream business course leading towards Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) in a school sixth form; they receive in-class and additional support through a language workshop**

After information has been elicited on students' age, cultural background and length of time in Britain, the discussion focuses on what they find easy and difficult in their studies and how useful support arrangements are. Work in files is also discussed.

- | Students have a fair understanding of questions relating to their course and their responses display a positive and mature attitude to their studies.
- | They praise the support they receive, particularly with structuring responses to assignments and in understanding the requirements of assignment briefs. They find work on tenses, punctuation and spelling helpful. Students also receive help planning and structuring their written work.



- | *Their language is fairly accurate and any errors do not impede comprehensibility. Errors are often attributable to interference from the students' first language. They centre around omission or misuse of articles, some poor control of tenses and use of prepositions and verbs.*
- | *Pronunciation and intonation are reasonably sound and students are able to use appropriate specialist vocabulary in explaining the elements of the 'marketing mix' that they have studied on their business course.*
- | *The students are able to hypothesize and explain what they would do to help businesses if elected to government, justifying their views in clear and appropriate English.*

**[Attainment average (4)]**

**Commentary**

The students' English is adequate to deal with the demands of the course, provided they have additional support in understanding some of the complex language used in assignment briefs. They also require help in organising their ideas and structuring a response. They have a fair grammatical control and reasonably sound pronunciation. Errors do not usually get in the way of understanding. They can understand and respond appropriately to questions relating to their main course of study, using specialist vocabulary where needed. They are able to explain the abstract concepts of the 'marketing mix', displaying good understanding of specialist terms. Their language is adequate to deal with the demands of their main course. On the basis of this discussion and the sound progress evident in their files, they are achieving satisfactorily.

**1.4 Lesson observation**

Observing lessons is essential for judging the quality of the teaching and learning, but it will also give indications of standards and achievement. In arriving at judgements about standards achieved, visit lessons at a range of levels. This will enable you to judge the students':

- | comprehension skills;
- | depth of understanding of the vocational or academic context of the topic being studied;
- | ability to communicate appropriately;
- | accuracy and fluency;
- | range of vocabulary and syntax;
- | pronunciation and intonation;
- | confidence in speaking and familiarity with language functions and idiom;
- | spontaneity and their ability to interact with others using the appropriate register.

If the session observed is language support for a vocational subject, assess how well the students are able to transfer their communication skills to a vocational context. Evaluate their familiarity with subject-specialist vocabulary and expressions.

Keep in mind the extent to which gender or other inclusion issues affect classroom performance, for example, in the level of participation. Ask whether the additional support needs of students with hearing or visual difficulties are properly met. Where students work as a group, try to identify the standards at which individual students are working. On mainstream courses, where bilingual and non-bilingual students are in the same class, do all students participate and contribute equally? In discrete ESOL classes where students have diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, do all students take part at an appropriate level?

**Example 5: evidence from entry level 2 ESOL full-time group (16–18) in a sixth-form college at end of the second term; 15 students present (9 female and 6 male); all but four have relatively low previous attainment; the course comprises ESOL, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and vocational 'taster courses' such as business and care**

*In small groups, students discuss a topic that has recently been in the news, 'genetically modified'(GM) foods*

*They list ten key words they associate with the topic and, after listening to a radio discussion about it, they tick any of the ten words they heard. In small groups they make notes of two arguments for and two against GM foods. They listen again and note which of their points were mentioned. They are then required in pairs to present their findings to the class.*

- | *The highest attainers (20%) participate readily, and are confident in using the vocabulary and grammar they have acquired from the previous exercises, thus demonstrating good transferable skills. They use them confidently to convey their views in fairly accurate English. They react appropriately to others' opinions and can support their argument well.*
- | *The majority (60%) have opinions on the issues and can explain their thoughts, albeit somewhat hesitantly. They have mastered most of the topic vocabulary well, but their use of language still demonstrates a lack of confidence in pronunciation of the new terms and vocabulary. There is some inaccurate use of grammar, particularly in the use of tenses.*
- | *Students of below average attainment contribute little, despite the teacher's attempts to involve them. They are motivated and interested in the topic, but are frustrated by their own lack of confidence in conveying their views. Their written work shows understanding of the vocabulary, but inaccurate sentence construction. They show evidence in their work of using bilingual and monolingual dictionaries effectively.*
- | *Intonation of most students is reasonably accurate and has clearly benefited from the teacher's use of listening exercises and from meeting (in the ICT part of the course) sixth-form students whose first language is English.*
- | *Most students have made steady progress since the start of the year and have some views which they are willing to share. They are still hesitant in oral work, but have learnt an appropriate range of vocabulary and expressions to cover this topic. However, considering their previous attainment, this would indicate good achievement for most of the students. In written and oral work, they are mostly on course for English Speaking Board (ESB) 'pass', with some students on track for 'merit' and two for 'distinction'.*

**[Attainment average (4)]**

### Commentary

The students are most of the way through their ESOL course and the majority will progress to GNVQ in 'business' and 'health and social care' courses next year. They have mastered the requisite range of vocabulary and expressions for this topic. Most of them can express their views intelligibly, although not always accurately. They react appropriately to each other's views. The minority of higher-attaining students speak with conviction and enthusiasm. They are persuasive and construct their arguments well. The large majority are more hesitant, but nonetheless most try to contribute. The attainment of students in this lesson is average.





## 2 Teaching and learning

### 2.1 Evaluating teaching and learning

Interpret the Handbook criteria with specific reference to ESOL in a college environment, and keep in mind the characteristics of effective teaching and learning in which:

- | fired by the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm, students see the practical relevance of English as a gateway to a fulfilled life in Britain, to successful communication in everyday life and to further education, training and employment (*subject knowledge, expectations, methodology, students'interest*);
- | teachers refer, where appropriate, to the ESOL core curriculum and the national standards within it (*planning, methodology*);
- | through native or near native competence in English, a good theoretical and practical understanding of how to teach English to students whose first language is not English, and through good understanding of the problems encountered by ESOLstudents, the teacher enables the students to develop fluent, accurate and confident language skills and communicative competence (*subject knowledge, methodology, students' acquisition of knowledge and skills*);
- | the range, breadth and challenge of carefully selected vocationally or academically relevant information, tasks, materials and topics allow all students to develop their knowledge and understanding (*expectations, planning*);
- | the teacher uses carefully pitched questions and sensitive discussion techniques to draw out the reticent student who lacks confidence in speaking the language, while valuing the contribution of more voluble students but not allowing them to dominate (*methodology, expectations*);
- | by observing individuals' strengths, weaknesses and interests, the teacher carefully selects tasks and projects which challenge all members of the group and enable them to learn from their mistakes and give of their very best (*assessment, planning, expectations, students'effort*);
- | by choosing tasks carefully and practising skills and techniques frequently, the teacher enables students to read or listen for the gist and meaning of a text and to transfer information to appropriate context and function (*planning, methodology*);
- | through patient explanation and guidance from the teacher and creation of opportunities, students develop a sound foundation for engaging effectively in everyday tasks and acquisition of good techniques for organising their ideas coherently and logically, whether in speech or writing (*methodology*);
- | through the teacher's high expectations, clear explanations and appropriate correction of errors, the students learn to appreciate and demonstrate competent use of grammar, syntax, pronunciation, vocabulary and idiom to communicate successfully (*expectations, assessment*);
- | by adapting tasks and materials, the teacher enables students with physical disabilities or visual or hearing difficulties to participate fully in learning (*learning support*);
- | by using a wide range of engaging resources, such as Internet, television and video, cassettes, books, maps, newspapers and magazines and through access to visiting speakers, external visits, work experience, and experience on mainstream or supported courses, students become familiar with British culture and have the skills to access resources independently (*resources*);
- | students are exposed to unpredictable situations and trained to adapt the language they know to the unfamiliar context, by reacting spontaneously and 'thinking on their feet' (*methodology, students'thinking*);
- | the curriculum provides for students to spend time productively in other curriculum areas in the school or college, in order to improve and practise the whole range of their language skills and to gain experience of mainstream courses (*methodology, resources*);
- | progression to mainstream courses, employment or training is promoted actively and monitored closely (*planning, methodology*);
- | the students contribute effectively to their own progress by showing initiative, determination, perseverance, good organisation (look at their files of work or the way they organise and learn vocabulary) and enquiry; they do independent research and reading, using referencing, dictionary and note-taking skills and ensure language practice for themselves (*methodology, students'intellectual effort and thinking for themselves*).

Be alert to lessons which may have superficially positive features but which lack the rigour, depth, insight and command of good subject teaching. Examples might be in teaching where:

- | the worksheets are well produced and taken from a communicative context, for instance, giving directions using local maps; however, students are not given opportunities to practise what they know from everyday situations or challenged to learn a greater range of idiomatic responses that they might meet in everyday situations (*planning, methodology, expectations*);
- | the curriculum emphasises the vocabulary areas and content of the topics to be covered, but provides insufficient explanation or practice of the grammar needed for effective communication (*planning, methodology*);
- | the teacher talks a lot, but does not encourage the students to speak the language enough; nor are there opportunities within the class activities for students to consolidate language structures, vocabulary and new skills (*methodology, expectations*);
- | the pace of teaching is brisk, and all students contribute actively, but the level of language they are encouraged to use is pedestrian and the nature of the activity is undemanding (*time, expectations*);
- | time is spent productively in reading, or making notes on a text, but there is too little time for students to express their views on it or to develop oral skills (*time, expectations, students'creative effort*);
- | students participate readily in oral work and their contributions are praised, irrespective of mistakes, and no use is made of error analysis or feedback to students (*assessment, methodology*).

Interpret the Handbook criteria with specific reference to EAL in a school sixth form, and keep in mind the characteristics of effective teaching and learning on mainstream courses in which:

- | EAL students have enhanced opportunities for purposeful and focused speaking and listening;
- | lessons provide effective models of spoken and written language;
- | the environment is welcoming and bilingual students feel confident to contribute;
- | there is a recognition that the use of the first language will enhance understanding and support the development of English;
- | teachers recognise that more advanced bilingual students need continuing support;
- | grouping strategies allow EAL students to work at their own intellectual level even though their English is not yet proficient.

When assessing the effectiveness of teaching and learning, evaluate the extent to which courses and language support arrangements take account of the following:

- | students' educational and employment aspirations, short-term goals and the contexts in which they will need to use English; students' immediate and longer-term communication needs;
- | students' wider needs for skills, such as information technology, study skills, problem solving, job search or specific subject skills;
- | the local community context with regard to social inclusion;
- | different levels of attainment within a group and disparate levels in the four language skills;
- | meeting individuals' needs where groups of students may have very different backgrounds, levels of attainment and aspirations;
- | students' ability to work independently and to evaluate their own learning and progress;
- | appropriate ways of working with students who do not share a language with the teacher;
- | approaches which draw on the students' knowledge of other languages and cultures;
- | problems encountered by different nationalities in learning English and interference students experience from their first language;
- | strategies for tackling specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

## 2.2 Lesson observation

**Example 6: evidence from a level 1 ESOL course in an FE college; 13 students: 7F, 6M (five are 16–18 and eight are 19+)**

**The lesson revises vocabulary and structures associated with the topic of marriage and weddings**

*It develops speaking, reading and writing skills. Grammar points include discourse markers for expressing addition, cause and effect, contrast, sequence and time. There is use of a range of adverbial phrases and conjunctions for expressing contrast, reason, purpose and consequence. Other features include use of the conditional, past perfect, 'used to' and simple past in comparing previous and current wedding practices.*

*The teacher is confident and competent: her approach to the subject is lively and she uses an excellent range of magazines and articles which contrast writing styles and registers including an Asian equivalent of 'Bride' magazine. This appeals to the many Asian students in the class. She has created an atmosphere of good social interaction in the classroom, which is respectful of cultural differences but still allows students to comment robustly on their own cultures.*

*She revises with students the concept of comparison and contrast through the use of marker sentences and is able to elicit from them some clear and well-chosen examples. The session has been well prepared. It moves from whole-class presentation and discussion, supported by good use of overhead projector to individual work, group work and reinforcement, allowing students to use OHP themselves to present bullet points on marriage customs in their original countries. The lesson is conducted at a good pace; students' interest is sustained by the variety of activity. The teacher uses group and individual error analysis effectively after students have finished their presentations on overhead projector.*

*Humour is used to good effect to engage the interest of the group. The lesson is successful in developing students' grammatical awareness and accuracy. A good attempt is made at the end of the lesson to recapitulate and check on what has been learnt. The teacher makes sure that the students have all grasped the lesson's objectives and all know their personal targets for improvement.*

*Students respond well to the teacher's skilled, sympathetic prompting. They are eager to answer the questions and do not fear making mistakes, although their linguistic ability varies considerably. Nonetheless, over the course of the lesson, each student demonstrates a growing mastery of grammatical structures, and all are able to improve their spoken and written accuracy. They are given many opportunities to consolidate the aspects of grammar which they have personally found difficult. These are well linked to a range of individual tasks set for homework to encourage independent learning methods such as research on the Internet and asking others for their opinions.*

*The highest-attaining students are given an extension exercise to prepare and present to the class on why so many marriages in the West end in divorce, and whether arranged marriages are likely to last longer. One student shows initiative and asks the teacher if she can write her views of the Asian film 'Monsoon Wedding' to present to the class at the next lesson. They work with enthusiasm and those at the lower attaining levels ask the teacher or other students in English or in their own language for support. This lesson is clearly typical of the course, with its emphasis on developing communicative competence and grammatical accuracy through the use of an interesting and lively topic. This has had a positive impact on the students' confidence and fluency.*

**[Teaching and learning very good (2)]**

### Commentary

This lesson is very successful, partly because the groundwork has been laid in previous lessons and there is an overall continuity which reinforces and consolidates learning. The teacher uses the topic successfully to practise some difficult grammar through a clear, lively and humorous approach. She makes very good use of students' cultural backgrounds and experience. The lesson also allows students to take the initiative and builds on personal interest. It helps to develop ICT key skills by using the Internet. Students sustain their

motivation and feel that they are making progress, whatever their previous attainment, in the areas they have personally found difficult. This is because the teacher has carefully planned their individual tasks.

The use of everyday magazines, especially ones familiar to students, helps memory and increases the impact of the points being made. The students have the opportunity for individual practice of language skills. All students communicate in English. The teacher shows good judgement in encouraging students to make efficient use of time and develop independent learning approaches through clarifying points that are proving to be troublesome, and occasionally checking out difficulties in their first language with their peers. The planning of the lesson is detailed, but it does not preclude spontaneous digressions from the established plan which draw on students' experiences. The summary at the end of the lesson and the analysis of what students have learnt, and what they now need to do, contribute to the success of the session.

**Example 7: evidence from a level 1 ESOL class in an FE college mid-year; 12 students (8F, 4M, NoR 12); the class includes five 19+ female students, one of them with a hearing difficulty**

**The theme of the lesson is medicine**

*The students discuss reading labels on medicines to develop their understanding of the language of dosage. They practise the associated vocabulary and make use of the imperative.*

*The teacher is competent and trained in basic skills but not in ESOL. Materials from newspapers and magazines have been well prepared for language content, but are chosen without thought for the range of students' levels in the group, which vary from entry level 1 to entry level 3. Insufficient time is spent ascertaining the students' knowledge of the topic. Given that some students have lived in the country for 12 years or more with small children, it seems likely that they would have gained some familiarity with administering medicine and visits to the doctor during this time.*

*A lively pace at the outset although slower later. There is insufficient variety of activity to encourage the development of all the skills. For most of the hour-long lesson, students are given a range of worksheets to use on their own or in pairs. During question and answer exercises, the teacher encourages the more extrovert students to give responses. However, she does not persevere in drawing into the discussion the less confident students, who carry on writing on the worksheets. The teacher has not identified these students' needs effectively. The student with the hearing difficulty cannot follow the questions and answers as the teacher speaks too quickly and moves around the classroom too much. The grammar work is clear, although the explanations are over-simplified and gloss over difficulties students might encounter. Attempts to use pair work are not fully effective, since weaker students are unable to contribute fully. Some students are over-reliant on the dictionary and copy the meanings of words into their books, with little opportunity to check out the validity of the context. They also rely heavily on using their first language with peers for translation of entire sentences.*

*The response of the students shows that they are willing, but that some are frustrated by their inability to speak accurate and fluent sentences. Four of the older, more confident students have information which they are able to share with the group, but are not given the opportunity. They are ready to answer direct questions from the teacher, but activities in the lesson do not allow students to take the initiative or ask questions themselves. The younger female students are not confident enough to express their ideas. The student with a hearing difficulty cannot follow the discussion and is not clear what is required for the written task. One male student and an older female are not given worksheets appropriate to their relatively low level of attainment. They do not have sufficient time and support to practise and consolidate their vocabulary and structures. There have been reasonable gains in learning vocabulary on the topic for some students, although progress is limited in developing the speaking skills of lowest-attaining students by the end of the session. The higher-attaining students have not been able to demonstrate their knowledge of the language. For instance, one student wishing to progress to GNVQ health and social care at the end of the ESOL course has only succeeded in revising vocabulary and structures, but not extending her knowledge at the end of this lesson.*

**[Teaching and learning unsatisfactory (5)]**

### Commentary

This is a lesson in which both teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. There is a clear plan and scheme of work. The materials chosen are interesting and pertinent to the topic, but they are not used to full effect to accommodate the varied levels of the group. There is insufficient variety of activity to sustain students' interest. The teacher offers individual help to students whilst they are engaged on worksheets, but there is no systematic correction of students' written or spoken errors. The majority of the students make some progress, but they are hampered by a lack of opportunities to practise the structures, grammar and vocabulary learnt. The teacher does not do enough to engage and stimulate all the students. She does not adapt her teaching sufficiently to take account of the needs of the student with a hearing difficulty, who is not able to take a full part in the lesson. In the end, the teaching helps the average attaining students to learn but not the higher or lower attaining students. These make little contribution to the session and appear to gain little from it.

**Example 8: evidence from an ESOL 16–18 foundation course; 15 students (8F, 7M, NoR 18); six students are 19+; mid-year in sixth-form college**

**The aims of the lesson are to 1) revise orally the present perfect with 'for', 'since', 'ever' and 'never'; the present continuous; 'used to'; and the use of 'some' and 'any' and 2) work on a word-processed draft of a chronological account of a personal experience on their journey to Britain**

*The revision of the oral work is only partially successful, as the teacher has not gained everyone's attention at the start of the lesson. Some students are distracted and have logged on to the system, eager to work on their drafts. Not all students are responding to the teacher's initial question and answer activity. Nevertheless, responses overall are adequate. The second activity involves all students using a list of questions to role-play an interview to gain biographical information on each other. Some of the students have learnt the range of vocabulary and expressions in the task and are using them fluently if not accurately. Others have an insufficiently sound grasp of the vocabulary and as a result find it hard to complete the activity.*

*The teacher is able to move to the next activity once all students have logged on and sets up a well-structured exercise which involves students working on their own drafts and then working in pairs, proofreading one another's work. The students are attentive, but have to be reminded to work on each other's and not just their own. The teacher supports the students by visiting them at their workstations and responding to their queries.*

**[Teaching and learning satisfactory (4)]**

### Commentary

The students make sufficient progress over the course of the lesson, but are hindered by some missed opportunities to reinforce learning. The teacher does not ensure that all students are able to use the vocabulary and expressions needed for the activity. The teaching is enthusiastic and activities are lively and relevant, using students' own experience as a basis for learning. Some students are not sufficiently well prepared for the lesson. Consequently, they learn less.

**Example 9: evidence from a beginners' part-time group: 11 present (7F, 4M, NoR 17)**

**The aims of the lesson are to consolidate the use of the present simple; to introduce adjectives of frequency; to practise questions and answers, using the short answer form, 'Yes, I do' and 'No, I don't.'**

*The teacher uses the board to recall clearly the structure of the present simple and to summarise effectively short answer forms. The models on the board allow unconfident students to feel more secure. Grammar practice is contextualised well and students then have opportunity to practise in a meaningful and communicative way, exchanging basic personal details in an information gap exercise. The students quickly grasp the tasks they are to do, thanks to clear demonstration by the teacher. Written dialogues are used successfully to extend the practice and the teacher provides ample opportunity to consolidate the use of short answers. The meaning, use and word order of adjectives of frequency are presented clearly and controlled practice helps students grow in confidence.*



*Students work in a focused manner. The classroom is separated from another room by sliding doors. The class on the other side of the doors is viewing a video. The noise from the neighbouring room at times makes it hard for students to hear the teacher and each other. Pronunciation errors go unnoticed as a result, for example, students confuse the stressed and unstressed pronunciation of 'does' and 'do', but the teacher cannot hear this. Errors in word order are also hard for the teacher to spot. The teacher makes every effort to adapt activities to take account of the noise – for example, making an activity intended as an oral task written instead. However, the noise is intermittent and unpredictable.*

**[Teaching good (3); learning satisfactory (4)]**

### Commentary

The teacher has planned the lesson well. She has carefully prepared materials and activities that, under normal circumstances, would have helped the students learn more than they did. She makes valiant attempts to adapt activities when it becomes clear that the noise is presenting a problem. Nevertheless, it has a significant impact on the students' learning. The teacher cannot hear the students sufficiently well to identify repeated pronunciation and word-order errors. Similarly, students cannot understand their peers. Sometimes, they cannot hear the model presented by their teacher well enough. As a result, although the teaching is essentially good, the learning can only be judged satisfactory overall.

**Example 10: evidence from an elementary evening class, eight present (3F, 5M, NoR 18). The group is made up mainly of false beginners**

**The aims of the lesson are to present and practise comparative adjectives**

*There are many weaknesses in the learning because of poor teaching. The teacher has no specific training in teaching ESOL. Students who understand comparative adjectives already are confused and those who do not end up none the wiser. The warm-up about holidays, though stilted, allows students arriving late from work to be quickly integrated. The room is cramped and restricts the flexibility of the teacher to do group work or to get around the room to monitor students. The whiteboard is hard to see and the reflection from the overhead projector makes the already barely legible slides even harder to see. One student, whose first language uses another script, has considerable difficulty understanding the teacher's handwriting.*

*The teacher spends much of the lesson talking about comparative adjectives, using meta-language which is completely inappropriate for a class at this level. For example: 'What's the adjective doing to the noun?' or 'The comparative form bears no resemblance to the adjective.' or 'What do you understand by 'compare'?' The language used by the teacher is far more complicated than the comparative adjectives the students are trying to learn. The teacher uses complex explanation to introduce activities, for example, 'Match the adjective with its opposite' (rather than simple demonstration) and students do not know what they are supposed to do. The teacher's presentation is confused and confusing and she has trouble coping with basic questions from the students (for example, 'Why has "bigger" got two 'g's' or 'Why can't you say "intelligenter"?') The lesson plan allots long time-scales to short and often undemanding activities (more time is spent attempting to communicate what is to be done, than on completing the task). Relationships are good and the students are forgiving and clearly like their teacher.*

**[Teaching and learning poor (6)]**

### Commentary

The teacher has not planned the lesson well. She does not have a clear understanding of how comparative adjectives work in English, nor of the difficulties her students may experience with learning them. She has copied exercises from various sources, but has not considered carefully enough how she is going to exploit them. Furthermore, she has not clearly thought how she is going to present and practise the new language and thus resorts to grammatical description, which the students cannot understand. The teacher is clearly inexperienced in the teaching of her own language and does not understand the problems ESOL students might have with learning English. Her lack of formal training in ESOL teaching is clear throughout the lesson.



**Example 11: evidence from a pre-foundation science class in a school sixth form: 7M, 6F, NoR 17**

**The course is designed as an access route for EAL students on to a mainstream GNVQ science course. It is partly taught by the science department and partly by EAL specialists. The English element of the course has a strong scientific focus**

Students do a reading exercise in which they have to scan and then select appropriate detail from texts in response to prompt comprehension questions. The texts focus on astronomy and build on recent work done in the science part of the course.

Students quickly get to grips with the texts, coping very well with demanding specialised vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. The texts are not adapted but the students are able to scan quickly to find the relevant sections to answer their questions. They cope well also with deducing meaning from context and most are able to answer their particular questions. Questions are graded, moving from closed, requiring one-word answers, to more demanding questions, requiring students to infer meaning, evaluate and offer views. Students are allotted tasks according to attainment and all students work on their own texts in a focused manner. In a few cases, the later questions are too demanding or students do not reach them. In files, it is clear that texts have been selected to progress from simplified, adapted texts to authentic materials used as students grow in confidence.

The teacher helps ably where students cannot deduce meaning from context or find words in the dictionary or from peers. However, she remains demanding and has high expectations – students ask as a last resort, after struggling themselves.

The next stage is less successful. Students report back on what they have learnt from their reading. This loses some pace and several students start to drift. It does not contribute significantly to students' learning – those reporting merely read their answers, and those supposed to listen often do not.

Nevertheless, on balance, students work hard, demonstrate good skills and benefit from the carefully structured reading tasks, which are matched to their individual levels of attainment.

Attainment is generally good. Students have sound control of structures, have acquired appropriate scientific vocabulary such as 'elliptical' and are fairly confident dealing with demanding texts.

**[Teaching and learning good (3)]****Commentary**

The lesson serves two purposes effectively. Firstly, it reinforces students' language learning in a context which is relevant to their main course. Secondly, it helps consolidate and extend the students' scientific knowledge. The lesson cannot be judged very good since, in the part where students report their findings, fellow students have no reason to listen to their peers and many do not. The teacher has planned tasks with individuals' strengths and weaknesses in mind. She has high expectations of all the students and, in turn, they respond to the challenge.

**Example 12: evidence from in-class support provided to a group of newly arrived refugees in a school sixth form: aged 16–19 (6M, 3F; NoR 11)**

**The 'Connexions' personal adviser (PA) and EAL teacher work jointly to introduce the 'Connexions' service and help students reflect on future careers and the help available to them. Observed as part of a 'Connexions' inspection**

Very well planned indeed. An effective introduction to careers advice and guidance and the broader service offered by 'Connexions'. The PA and EAL staff have jointly planned the session and specially adapted resources are used very effectively. A range of practical activities pitched at a level that the young people, mainly of Kosovan-Albanian origin, can understand. This allows for individual reflection and productive small-group and whole-class discussion. The session also helps to extend the young people's English: they learn basic and essential English vocabulary relating to

*the world of work, while learning how young people can get the careers help they need. The EAL teacher regularly checks the young people's understanding and is able to rephrase and explain where necessary.*

*Interest is quickly established, as are good relationships. The young people are attentive and all contribute actively. The card game, using different careers and matching them to qualities, promotes genuine reflection, personal involvement and a desire to communicate. It also helps students to form, structure, express and justify their views about career types and personal preferences.*

*Students all work in a focused manner, showing genuine interest. The two staff work well together and this helps them cope with the wide range of attainment in the class.*

**[Teaching and learning very good (2)]**

### Commentary

The teaching and learning are very effective. The in-class support means that potential linguistic barriers are overcome. The young people learn English through careers education and training: this creates a meaningful context which relates to their own immediate situation. As a result, the students are highly motivated. They also learn how they can get further help and advice and what next steps they should take. They also develop the skills needed to express and justify their views and do this in a meaningful, realistic manner.

### 2.3 Other evidence on teaching and learning

Lesson observation is usually the most important source of evidence on the quality of teaching and learning, but the analysis of work and discussions with students can also yield valuable information. This is particularly important where the students are also following a vocational or academic course. Under these circumstances, the observation of individual lessons may give a very partial picture of the students' learning experience and of the support provided by teachers.

The work analysis and evaluation, where appropriate, of individual learning plans will give you a good feel for the overall rate of progress, and therefore the pace of the teaching and learning. It will show the range and depth of the work which the students are required to do. For example, it will indicate whether students have sufficient opportunities to develop their communicative competence in the four skills in contexts which best respond to their present needs and future vocational aspirations.

Discussions with students will give you a sense of their motivation and the range of their experiences. You can ask questions to see whether they understand clearly how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

### 3 Other factors affecting quality

You should report other factors only in so far as they affect the standards and achievement of the students and the quality of teaching and learning. Note and evaluate any significant features of the curriculum, leadership, management, staffing, accommodation or resources.

#### 3.1 Resources, accommodation and staffing

You may need to consider the following questions when evaluating ESOL and EAL:

- | Can students see visual aids clearly and hear without distractions from noise?
- | Are acoustic conditions good?
- | Are the additional support needs of students with physical disabilities or hearing or visual difficulties met properly?
- | Are rooms and the way furniture is arranged conducive to mixed level teaching, with students of different ages and from diverse cultures, allowing a variety of activities?
- | Are students and teachers able to make easy use of a wide range of suitable materials?
- | Are support materials set in appropriate vocational and academic contexts?
- | Can students use resources outside lessons to learn independently and improve their English?
- | Do staff have the necessary skills to teach English to students whose first language is not English?
- | Are staff appropriately qualified and experienced?
- | Is effective use made of bilingual teachers and volunteers, where appropriate?

#### 3.2 Curriculum and management

The appropriateness of the ESOL curriculum and of EAL curricular support, the way they are managed, how they are taught and how language support is arranged depend on the community in which the school or college is located. No one model fits all contexts. It may be useful to ask some of the following questions:

- | Does the ESOL or EAL curriculum respond to the needs of the local community?
- | Can students get ESOL or EAL support in places and at times which suit them, for example, in the community or workplace or starting at various points in the academic year?
- | Can ESOL or EAL students on mainstream courses also get language support in regular classes, in workshops, in additional classes or through a drop-in facility? Are these arrangements effective and managed sensitively?
- | Is support for those ESOL or EAL students on mainstream courses firmly rooted in the vocational or academic context, rather than consisting of decontextualised language activities?
- | Are there appropriate vocational and academic courses for ESOL or EAL students? Is joint teaching well planned and collaboration between subject and ESOL or EAL staff effective?
- | Is initial and diagnostic testing well used to draw up individual learning plans or to ensure ESOL or EAL students are on appropriate vocational/academic courses, with additional support if necessary? Is progress well monitored and reported on? Are students aware of their progress towards short-term targets and long-term goals?
- | How effective are managers in evaluating the success of their ESOL provision and EAL language support?
- | Do students have the opportunity to develop and, where appropriate, obtain accreditation for other skills, such as key skills, study and revision skills, and careers education and guidance?
- | Does the management of ESOL courses and EAL language support help students to progress from one level to another and from discrete language provision on to mainstream courses, training and employment? How well is students' progression monitored?
- | Is there close collaboration between ESOL/EAL, literacy and numeracy, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learning support, if these are not managed together?



## 4 Writing the report

The following is an example of a subject section from an inspection report on an FE college. It does not necessarily reflect the judgements in any or all of the examples given elsewhere in this booklet. The summative judgements in college reports use the five-point scale: *outstanding; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; very weak*. Where EAL is reported on in school sixth-form inspections, the summative judgements use a seven-point scale: *excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor*. The summative judgements *excellent/very good* used in school reports correspond to *outstanding* in colleges; *poor/very poor* used in schools correspond to *very weak* in colleges.

### English for speakers of other languages

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

#### Strengths

- | The provision is well led.
- | Pass rates are high.
- | There have been good responses to the growing demands of the local community.
- | Teaching is good overall, with some being very effective.
- | Guidance and support are strong.
- | Students' experience and opportunities for personal development are broad.

#### Areas for improvement

- | There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
- | Retention rates are low on some courses.
- | There is poor or erratic attendance on many courses.

### Scope of provision

There has been considerable expansion in this area recently and the college has responded well to community needs. Students can gain accreditation at seven levels. There are 15 full-time, three part-time day and three evening courses. Some students follow mixed National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and ESOL courses. The area runs an 'education otherwise' class for those 14–16-year-olds with no school place. There are also summer schools and information and communication technology (ICT) courses for mainstream students. All students can gain accreditation through a college certificate or external examination. Mainstream students also benefit from courses in first aid and job search. Courses are now offered at a new venue near the town centre.

### Achievement and standards

There is good achievement for most students over the duration of the courses and standards attained in external and college certificate examinations are good. Male and female students perform equally well. Students join in classroom activities, work in a focused manner and usually make good progress. More advanced students have a sound grasp of language structures and a wide vocabulary and they use idiom well. In one higher level class, students had to speak for at least one minute on a topic chosen at random. Other students then offered advice on how the speakers could improve their accuracy and range of expression. In a beginners' class, students described a person, combining various adjectives in the right order and their partner guessed who it was. In another lesson, students enjoyed discussing what they did now that their mothers never did, while practising the structure 'used to'. The good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. However, attendance is poor or erratic on many courses and this adversely affects some students' progress.

In a few instances, written work varies greatly in quality, teachers are not always successful in fostering good study skills, nor are there attempts to develop these systematically on all courses. Opportunities for students to organise their own learning or to work on their own are also underdeveloped.

The pass rate for external examinations is high. Many students, from a wide range of backgrounds, are also successful

in gaining college certification. Those students who finish their courses do well and often progress to other courses or to employment. However, last year, retention rates on advanced courses were low.

### Quality of education and training

Teaching is good overall and in some lessons it is very good. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of lessons observed were only satisfactory and a little teaching was judged unsatisfactory. The better lessons in all courses are well planned. Activities are varied, imaginative and enjoyable, while the lesson remains clearly focused on learning. Teachers are demanding of their students and succeed in inspiring them. Most are sensitive to the wide range of attainment in their classes. One teacher held students' interest at the end of the day by using 'bingo' to revise vocabulary. Another used a rap song to practise the rhythm of English speech, and 'snakes and ladders' to consolidate a reading activity. In one lesson, the teacher used a tactile children's book to teach adjectives of texture. Mainstream English as a second language students also study for a qualification in ICT. The relationship between students and teachers is always good and this helps to promote a purposeful atmosphere in lessons.

In some of the weaker lessons, teachers of more elementary classes spent too much time talking about the language in abstract terms. Presentations were not clear and there was not enough time for students themselves to generate language and practise using it. Students did not benefit from lengthy explanations, because they could not understand them. In other lessons, teachers followed the course book too closely, where alternative activities would have helped students learn more effectively.

Teachers mark students' work in a helpful way and students find the feedback useful. Lesson time is sometimes productively devoted to the correction of common errors found in students' work. Frequent formal tests, and the targets set by tutors, mean that students have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. When students apply to the college, their level of attainment is carefully assessed to ensure they join an appropriate class and their progress is monitored closely. Induction programmes for all courses and leaflets, which are often in the students' own language, help them to understand the college. Students have extensive and comprehensive support with learning and with personal, and even financial, difficulties. Students with physical disabilities benefit from the successful efforts made by their teachers to include them fully in lessons. The imaginative mentor scheme also provides effective help for students.

### Leadership and management

English for speakers of other languages is taught mainly by part-time staff and is well led. There are frequent informal discussions, good communications and regular formal meetings. Meetings, however, tend to focus on the dissemination of information rather than on planning, evaluation and the sharing of good practice. The introduction of regular assessment and target setting has been managed well and the new procedures are proving highly effective. Staff regularly produce new teaching resources and these are shared. Information from staff who have been involved in staff development activities, however, is not being disseminated effectively. Schemes of work are in the process of development, but students' views are not systematically analysed to help in planning and evaluating provision. Efforts have been made to remove financial barriers to gaining qualifications – such as examination entry charges. There is good collaboration with support services for students with physical disabilities.









