Review of private Further Education colleges and English Language Schools

Leith School of Art

1 June 2016

The review process

This review report follows the quality framework for the *review arrangements for private further education colleges and English language Schools in Scotland*, *April 2012*. The review normally lasts for three days. Over the three-day period, the review team:

- engage with learners;
- observe episodes of learning and teaching and provide feedback to each member of teaching staff or other learning facilitator on strengths and areas for further development;
- conduct interviews and undertake other activity required to determine the extent of concordance between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluate evidence against the **11 reference quality indicators;** and
- identify key strengths and areas for further development for the organisation.

Education Scotland is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect private further education colleges and English language Schools in Scotland.

Reviews are arranged under **three high-level** questions which Education Scotland is adopting for evaluative purposes:

How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?
How effective are the organisation's learning and teaching processes?
How effective are the organisation's leadership and quality culture?

Education Scotland reviews are designed to:

- support and promote quality enhancement in organisations to provide the best possible experience for the learner;
- provide information to the Home Office, when required, on the quality of organisations and the learning experience they provide;
- provide an independent evaluation to assist organisations in informing prospective and current learners of the quality of the organisation's and services;
- evaluate organisations against the *Education Scotland quality framework, March 2012;* and
- complement organisation-led internal review and self-evaluation.

Review provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of education provision in Schools and colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to learners, Government and the wider community. Review takes account of the context of each individual School or college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The review of the School or college is from an educational perspective and provides limited review of other aspects; though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on learners. The review does not include:

(i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
(ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the School or college estate, its services or other physical features;
(iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the School or college or its accounting procedures; and
(iv) an in-depth investigation of the School's or college's compliance with employment law.

This report contains effectiveness statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of *learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes* and *leadership and quality culture*.

The report also uses the following terms to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
Majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
Few	up to 15%

Grades are awarded in THREE areas:

- *Learner progress and outcomes*
- *Learning and teaching processes*
- *Leadership and quality culture*

Inspectors use a 4-point grading scale:

- *Very good – major strengths*
- *Good – strengths outweigh areas for further development*
- *Weak – some important areas for further development*
- *Unsatisfactory - major areas for further development*

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1. Introduction

The organisation and its context

In carrying out the review of Leith School of Art, Education Scotland took the following context fully into account.

Leith School of Art is situated in Edinburgh, in the oldest Norwegian Lutheran church outside of Norway. The church is still consecrated and continues to be used by the Norwegian community for special services and events. The setting is important historically and culturally. The School operates from a second site also based in another church in - Leith. There are several studios, staff rooms and resource bases on both sites with - access to Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and library facilities.

The School of Art is a specialist and inclusive community for visual art learners. It is a Limited Company with charitable status and is managed by a Board of Directors. The School is applying for Tier 4 status to develop its international links and offer opportunities for learners to study. The School Principal and Business Manager are responsible for the strategic planning and School operations. They are supported by administrative staff who have responsibility for learner support marketing and funding.

The School offers a range of fee-paid programmes from beginner to degree-level. Current provision includes assisted places, and low cost community programmes. It has developed a partnership arrangement with a local school to offer opportunities to study art as part of the *Senior Phase* of learning. The School has links with UK-based universities and the full-time programme has articulation arrangements to access these at year two of the degree programme. The School has analumni society and past learners regularly showcase their work in galleries around the world.

Leith School of Art currently has around 200 part-time learners and 120 full-year learners originating from within the European Economic Community (EEC) and the UK. The majority of learners attend the School to develop their own practice, for recreational reasons, with around 20% of full-year learners attending to gain access to further or higher education provision. There are currently no learners from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

The review

The review by Education Scotland took place during the week beginning 18 April 2016

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the learner experience. We evaluated these against *learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes* and *leadership and quality culture* using the 11 reference quality indicators outlined in *Inspection arrangements for private further education colleges and English language Schools in Scotland, April 2012.* We used information submitted in advance by the organisation to decide the scope of the inspection. The inspection team talked with learners and staff at all levels in the organisation.

2. Effectiveness of the organisation

The following are holistic judgements made by Education Scotland on the basis of the review activities which took place in April 2016. These judgements relate to learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes and *leadership and quality culture.*

Leith School of Art is effective:

- **learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes;**
- **the School has in place high quality learning and teaching processes; and**
- **the School has in place effective leadership for learning and teaching and quality culture.**

Standards	**Grade awarded**
Learner progress and outcomes	very good
Learning and teaching processes	good
Leadership and quality culture	good

3. Executive summary

Strengths.

- Retention rates for learners are very high on all programmes.
- The School offers a range of programmes to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.
- The School has developed a school-links programme with Craigroyston High School to offer 12 learners an art-related study experience.
- High numbers of learners access a range of universities throughout the United Kingdom and abroad to undertake degree-level programmes.
- A successful alumni promotes the School through patronage, exhibitions and funding and with visiting tutors, which enhances the reputation of the school.
- Learners are developing a wide range of skills to support their development as artists.
- The School ethos supports independence, within a structured framework, that encourages personal development.
- Teaching staff promote high standards and achievement.
- Relationships are mutually respectful creating a positive environment for learning, balancing constructive criticism with care and encouragement.
- Managers are highly committed to a culture of quality improvement and regularly seek feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders.
- The School has a well-embedded culture of quality improvement which is demonstrated through the quality of delivery and high reputation.

Areas for further development.

- The School should embed further the development of core and employability skills within programme design.
- The School should consider levelling the foundation course against a recognised framework and standardise the criteria for assessment.
- The School should put in place processes to ensure feedback to learners, on actions taken, is communicated sufficiently.
- The School should further develop its staff development strategy.
- The School should enhance its quality criteria and procedures for internal review and self-evaluation.

4. How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?

How effective is the organisation at achieving and maintaining high levels of retention, attainment and achievement for all learners?

Retention rates, at all levels, are very high on all programmes. They are generally at or around 100%, and have been maintained this way over a number of years. The School prepares full-year learners well for internal assessment and completed successful outcome rates for these learners are consistently high. Learners make good progress during their studies and learners on the Foundation Course develop a high quality art portfolio. On completion of the Foundation Course, successful learners receive a School certificate recording their achievements. Certification is validated through a contracted external verification - from Duncan of Jordanstone. The School tracks and monitors learner attainment systematically and records success over an extended time period. Of the 113 learners attending full-time, (18+ hours per week) year-long programmes, 24 progressed onto university or college. The remaining learners attend for recreational experiences and to develop their own practice and careers, with high numbers attending over a number of years.

How well do programmes meet the needs of learners?

The School offers an appropriate range of programmes to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. These are structured from beginner level through to degree-level provision. Full-year programmes contain a wide range of study opportunities across a range of subject media, including graphic design, fine art and drawing techniques, to widen the experience of learners as artists. As a registered charity, the School offers a number of assisted places and low cost part-time community programmes. The School has developed a School links programme with Craigroyston High School and deliver an art-related study experience to 12 learners. The School's *Leith in Further Education (LIFE)* project supports learners in developing their progression within the school and in some circumstances into further education (FE). The School also offers short-term *vacation* programmes which provide useful opportunities for learners to receive tuition from practicing artists.

Programmes support progression options effectively within the various levels of study. Approximately 20% of learners on year-long courses progress annually to a range of universities throughout the United Kingdom and abroad to undertake degree-level study experiences. A successful alumni promotes the School well, through patronage, exhibitions and fund raising initiatives, which enhances the reputation of learners from the School.

The School embeds equality and diversity well and supports open discussions around a range of cultural and diversity influencers, relevant to artistic study. Sustainability is a key feature of curriculum delivery with high levels of awareness demonstrated by learners of recycling and up-cycling of resource practices. Learners provide helpful feedback and learner satisfaction with educational experiences is high.

How well do learners make progress, attain qualifications and awards and achieve more widely?

Year-long learners' access programmes through a comprehensive portfolio-based interview process. They develop and build upon a broad range of skills to support the development of their portfolio throughout the programme. Learners on the full-time Foundation programmes attain a School certificate awarded at distinction, merit, pass or fail level. The programme includes the development of some core, essential and employability skills. However, these are not always explicit and learners are not always aware of the development of these skills.

Learners participate in two exhibitions held in the school in the summer and at Christmas to display their work at private and public viewings. This experience develops effectively the skills required to exhibit and sell their work. The School enjoys positive relationships with a large number of prestigious societies, organisations, colleges and universities, which include: The *New York Academy of figurative art*; The Society of Scottish Artists; Visual Arts Scotland and Dumfries House – *Prince Charles Royal Drawing School.*

5. How effective are the organisation's learning and teaching processes?

How well do learners learn?

Learners are developing a wide range of skills which supports their development as artists. They work cooperatively and enthusiastically when completing tasks and demonstrate high levels of concentration and subject application. Learners use a wide range of art media confidently to inspire and develop their portfolios. The School ethos supports independence, within a structured framework, and this encourages and supports personal development. However, on occasions, a few learners are over reliant on tutor input towards the end of their programmes to fully prepare them for further study. Learners are supported well to reflect on their learning experiences through a range of personal, peer, group and tutor-led reflective practice. All learners make significant progress in the development of their skills as artists.

How well does teaching and the use of resources ensure effective learning?

All teaching staff are established artists and demonstrate high levels of professional knowledge which they apply appropriately in their interaction with learners. They plan lessons well and pace the challenge appropriately at individual level. They use a wide range of teaching methods and approaches effectively to support and challenge individual learner needs. Teaching staff identify an appropriate range of resources to stimulate and inspire learners. They reflect effectively on their delivery through a range of personal, peer, group, and team teaching activities and interaction with learners. They give high quality written and verbal feedback and challenge and direct learners to promote high levels of personal achievement. Teaching staff promote high standards and encourage high levels of achievement.

How effective is the context and planning for learning and teaching?

The School promotes an inclusive community for learners in visual arts with high staff to learner ratios. Relationships are mutually respectful creating a positive environment for learning, where teaching staff balance constructive criticism with care and encouragement. Learning activities are planned well to support the gradual development of artistic skills through theme-based learning activities. These themes provide a useful link between the history and traditions of art and design and contemporary practice. Briefing sheets are used well and are prominently displayed in studio spaces.

Studios are equipped well and facilitate individual work space and full class activity. The church building has been adapted over the years to accommodate exhibition space, studios, student common and staff room areas. Learners have access to computers and a well-stocked library - and make very good use of the student common room, encouraging socialisation and sharing of experiences. All core learning materials are supplied by the School. Learners are actively encouraged to plan their learning within a supportive framework to achieve the aims and objectives of the programme.

How well does the organisation use assessment to promote effective learning?

Assessment is planned well and learners are prepared appropriately for assessment. Teaching staff review progress made with learners regularly, making good use of face-to-face tutorials to reflect on achievements and provide direction for further learning. Learners benefit from constructive written and oral feedback regarding their progress.

Formative assessment is used effectively in class to support learning and teaching approaches. Staff make very good use of questioning technique to enhance comprehension.

Full-time programme learners undertake formal assessments scheduled throughout the year. Assessment scores are aggregated and graded at the end of the academic session and validated by an external examiner. Learners with additional support needs, who require additional support, benefit from effective one-to-one support delivered by their tutor. However, assessment arrangements are not yet fully robust, as - assessment criteria is insufficiently defined. As a result, learners are not routinely aware of the standards required to achieve levels or how they can improve on these.

How well does the organisation provide potential learners and learners with relevant information, guidance and support to enhance access, retention and learning?

Staff provide helpful information about the School to learners prior to application to support informed study choices. This is reinforced through a comprehensive induction, and through *Learner Handbooks* containing clear standards of expectation for staff and learners. The School has in place an effective interview process to identify the support requirements of learners with additional support needs. This enables adaptations and enhancements to be made to teaching materials and approaches. Successful applicants are required to undertake a summer art-based project in preparation for the commencement of study. The School has a fully accessible studio and classrooms on the ground floor of the *North Junction Street campus* and the *St James' campus* to accommodate learners with restricted mobility. Staff provide a good level of pastoral support and have a high regard to learner welfare needs. Teaching staff hold regular, highly effective, one-to-one tutorials and individual work reviews, to identify goals and reflect on progress made.

How well does the organisation sustain continuous improvement and enhancement through self-evaluation and internal review activities?

The School is highly committed to a culture of quality improvement and managers regularly seek feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders, through completed questionnaires, face-to-face meetings and focus group discussions. The School analyses feedback during regular meetings and use this to review the effectiveness of action taken. Staff are responsive to resolving actions identified by learners and implementing change where appropriate. However, feedback to learners on actions taken as a result of their submitted views is not always communicated effectively and as a result learners are not always clear about how things will improve. Staff provide curriculum delivery adjustments based on the feedback received from learners. There are a number of examples of enhancement actions being taken including a programme of visiting speakers, live art models, external visits to relevant places of artistic interest and changes to curriculum. Teaching staff regularly reflect on their classroom practice through team teaching approaches and peer support discussions.

6. How effective are the organisation's leadership and quality culture?

How effective is the leadership for learning and teaching?

The Principal has a strong vision for the School and communicates clearly, to all staff, the direction for the curriculum and the ethos of the School. The School promotes a culture of quality improvement effectively and staff are motivated and committed for the School to succeed. The Board of Directors offers a wide range of skills which support the day-to-day operation of the School and provides strategic direction in line with the School's vision. The Business Manager provides strong leadership in developing policies and processes to support the strategic direction of the School and steer the organisation in its preparations for the introduction of Tier 4 learners. The School recruits practicing artists with good teaching ability and supports new staff well through team teaching approaches conducted with experienced teachers. Course Leaders demonstrate effective leadership for teaching and actively encourage sharing of best practice approaches and promote improvement discussions to enhance delivery. However, the staff development strategy is under-developed. As a result, opportunities to further develop a broader range of teaching skills and curriculum content are limiting the wider experience of learners.

How effective is the organisation in developing and maintaining a quality culture?

The School has a well-embedded culture of quality improvement which is demonstrated effectively through the quality of its programmes. Almost all staff regularly reflect on their professional practice and they encourage learners to express their views to inform actions for improvement. Staff meet formally during scheduled meetings throughout the year and hold informal discussions to evaluate a range of data and identify actions required for improvement. However, the quality criteria and procedures for internal review and self-evaluation are not always conducted systematically and rigorously across all School programmes. Currently, managers and staff do not document well programme self-evaluation reporting and resulting action plans. This limits the effectiveness of long-term planning. The School has recently introduced a class representative role. However, at this stage it is too early to evaluate its impact.

7. What happens next?

This review report is valid for four years.

Education Scotland may engage at regular intervals to monitor progress, if invited by the organisation.

Any significant material change within the organisation should be reported to Education Scotland immediately.

Barbara Nelson
HM Inspector
Education Scotland

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

ICT	Information Communication and Technology
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
LIFE	Leith into Further Education
FE	Further Education

Appendix 2

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12	Some SQA qualifications are changing between 2013-2016. See www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner			Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5 Intermediate 2				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ 1
3	National 3 Access 3				
2	National 2 Access 2				
1	National 1 Access 1				

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