



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**LEITHS SCHOOL OF FOOD AND WINE**

**(Company Registration No. – 02922474)**

Full Name	<b>Leiths School of Food and Wine</b>
Address	16 - 20 Wendell Road, London W12 9RT
Parent\Company name	Leiths School of Food and Wine Limited
Telephone Number	020 8749 6400
Email Address	jenny.stringer@leiths.com
Website	www.leiths.com
Principal	Ms Jenny Stringer
Proprietor	Jennie Bland
Age Range	11+
Total number of students	143
Numbers by age and type of study	
	18+: <b>143</b>
	FE only: <b>143</b>
Inspection dates	<b>24 – 26 November 2021</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

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

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

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

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Leiths School of Food and Wine is a privately owned, limited company located in West London offering professional and amateur cooking courses. It is owned by a sole proprietor and overseen by a board of six directors, including the principal. The principal undertakes the day-to-day management of the school supported by a management committee.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to provide the skills, knowledge and confidence to embark on a life-long love of food through delivering excellent culinary education. It offers the Leiths Diploma in Food and Wine full-time course, run over three terms from September each year. Students with sufficient prior experience and skills may also join in January. Other shorter professional courses offered are the Essential Cooking Certificate, Plant-based Essential Cooking Certificate, Chef Skills Certificate, Chef Skills Patisserie and Nutrition in Practice. Amateur courses ranging from one-day to one-week also run throughout the year. Leiths also runs courses for children 11 years and over during school holidays, however these were not running at the time of inspection. In addition, Leiths have an Academy that provides cookery courses in schools and offers online cookery courses, which did not form part of this inspection.
- 1.3 Recruitment onto the diploma course is through a face-to-face and/or telephone interview. There are no formal entry qualifications for the course. Course suitability is assessed at the pre-enrolment interview. International students are required to have achieved an overall International Language Testing Score (IELTS) of 6.5. Any particular individual needs or requirements are assessed at interview. At the time of the inspection 10 students were identified as having additional learning needs.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 143 students enrolled. All the current students are aged 18. The gender ratio varies from course to course but at the time of the inspection, the majority of students were female. The large majority of students are British and the rest come from the United States of America and a wide variety of European and non-European countries. Currently, 8 students are studying under student visa arrangements. The very large majority of students speak English as a first language.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The school meets expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Key Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is good.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Assessment of students prior to and on arrival is highly effective. Courses are very well matched to students' needs, aptitudes and capabilities. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent. Teachers are well qualified, experienced teachers and enable students to make rapid progress during lessons. Teachers foster and develop students' confidence and practical skills extremely well. Students use the excellent online resources provided to learn independently. Teachers provide fair and constructive feedback following formal and continuous assessment so that students know how to improve. Students' progress and attainment is excellent. They achieve above national averages in accredited qualifications and meet their personal and career goals.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Highly effective arrangements exist to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. Students and staff are well-informed and trained in all aspects of health and safety. Students demonstrate safe working practices in the kitchens. School buildings are fit for purpose, well maintained and decorated. Security arrangements are effective and students feel safe. Student registration and attendance records are accurate, well-kept and absences followed up promptly. Reports are made to the Home Office where appropriate. Pastoral and personal support for students is excellent. Arrangements to safeguard students under 18 are good. A designated safeguarding lead is in place who is appropriately trained. They ensure that an accurate single central record is kept and all staff receive appropriate guidance and training in child protection.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The board of directors provides good oversight of the school and ensures effective financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. All legal permissions are met. Communication at all levels is highly effective. Shared aims and high ambitions for the school are reflected in the high standard of education provided. Leaders and managers ensure that effective policies are implemented to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and staff and safeguarding of students under 18. Managers are successful in recruiting high calibre staff and developing them well. Self-evaluation is detailed and accurately identifies areas for improvement but lacks specific, time constrained targets so that impact can be accurately measured. Quality assurance is excellent. Staff recruitment and suitability checks are unsatisfactory. Appropriate DBS and identity checks are made. However, references are not always taken up formally and do not always cover full employment history. Provision of information is excellent.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival**

- 3.1 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival to the college is excellent. Comprehensive information, advice and guidance is provided to all potential applicants through a professional and informative website, online virtual resources, detailed course materials and efficient communications with experienced staff.
- 3.2 There are no formal academic entry requirements for the courses. Students are carefully assessed based upon their interests, ambitions, prior experience and, where relevant, their English language capabilities.
- 3.3 Prospective students receive very helpful guidance during individual meetings with senior staff so that they can make an informed choice. The school places a high priority on meeting students' additional learning or medical needs. These are identified prior to, or as soon after, arrival as possible and incorporated within individual learning plans. Consequently, programmes are very effectively matched to students' ages, aptitudes and language capabilities.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.4 Course provision is excellent. Students are well educated in line with their personal and career goals and the stated aims of the school. A wide range of short, evening, weekend and full-time programmes are very well matched to students' needs and those of the industry. Programmes are continuously reviewed and adjusted so that they prepare students well for a real work environment. Full time programmes include an accredited qualification with an established awarding body.
- 3.5 Courses offered match those detailed on the website and in marketing materials. The vast majority of students complete the course for which they enrolled and withdrawals are low. The vast majority of students confirmed that their learning experience at the college has met or exceeded their expectations.
- 3.6 All courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.

#### **3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning**

- 3.7 The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers work closely together to plan and deliver excellent lessons. The course content is constantly evolving to ensure that it meets the needs of individual students and changes within the industry. Students appreciate the high quality support they receive in and outside of lessons from well qualified, experienced and extremely approachable staff. Teachers give individuals excellent support and advice in order to help them to catch up anything they missed or are unsure about. Individual medical, language and

learning needs are well met through meticulous planning and by adjustments in the classroom so that students make good or excellent progress.

- 3.8 The very large majority of lessons are practical classes in well-equipped kitchens, using high quality ingredients. Teachers build upon previously learned skills and knowledge so that students develop to the standards needed for employment in the industry. Students are confident, well organised and work well both independently and collaboratively in order to practice and hone their skills. For example, by planning, creating and serving a buffet lunch as a team, within which, each individual has specific responsibilities. Class time is very well managed and students make very significant progress in lessons towards their personal and career goals. Students also benefit from daily demonstrations by their teachers and visiting chefs covering a wide variety of techniques, food styles and cultures.
- 3.9 Students are strongly encouraged to study independently. They have access to excellent online resources such as recorded demonstrations and tutorials covering a very wide range of skills to support their learning, personal development and progression to employment in the catering and related industries. Teaching, and the use of multi-cultural resources, promotes respect and understanding of other people and cultures extremely well and supports students' understanding of British values.
- 3.10 Teachers assess students' work continuously in the kitchens and through theory and practical exams. Students are encouraged to assess their own skills and areas for improvement. Fair and constructive feedback from teachers helps students to know what they need to do to further improve their work. Students are kept informed of their progress regularly through informal feedback and in formal termly progress reviews. Consequently, the very large majority of students achieve the qualification that they registered for and very few leave early.

### **3.(d) Attainment and progress**

- 3.11 Students' progress and attainment is excellent. Students make very good progress in lessons and develop excellent skills over time. Students achieve at least in line with, and the large majority above, national averages for the externally accredited qualifications they take. Students achieve their personal and career goals and progress to employment in a wide variety of positions, often in highly prestigious organisations.

## **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises**

- 4.1 Health, safety and security of premises is excellent. There are highly effective arrangements to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. Staff and students receive advice and guidance on health and safety through induction and regular training. The school maintains a good level of fire safety. Signage is very clear and there is effective provision for emergency evacuation of the building, including for those with special needs and disabilities. A suitable policy for first aid is implemented effectively. Sufficient, trained first aiders are available to assist students who are ill or injured.
- 4.2 The school buildings are fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately decorated. Heating, lighting, sound insulation and ventilation are adequate. Sufficient washrooms are provided, including for those with special needs and disabilities. Free drinking water is provided. Food hygiene training is mandatory for all staff and students and is practiced carefully in the kitchens. All parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state.
- 4.3 Security arrangements are effective to ensure the safety of students and staff. Good working practices are implemented in the kitchens and throughout the school. Students feel safe. They are consulted about health and safety, which has a high priority in the school, and feel any concerns they have are addressed.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. The school keeps accurate records of student registrations and enrolments. Attendance is monitored closely and students are expected to have high attendance or it will affect their ability to successfully pass the course. Absences are collated weekly and contact made with students who give cause for concern. Attendance rates are high for the large majority of students.
- 4.5 Students studying under Student visa arrangements are monitored regularly and any attendance issues addressed promptly. All necessary reports are made to the Home Office.
- 4.6 The school has effective extra procedures in place when students under the age of 18 are taking part in an adult class. Staff monitor the attendance of these students very carefully and follow up any absences immediately to ensure their welfare and safety.
- 4.7 There are clear and fair procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits.

#### **4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.8 Pastoral and personal support for students is excellent. The school has a consistent and highly effective approach towards supporting students' wellbeing and achievement. The relationships between staff and students, and between students themselves, are friendly, respectful, and professional. The school has high expectations of behaviour and attitude in areas of its operation. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to prevent bullying, harassment and protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- 4.9 A comprehensive induction ensures that students are welcomed to the school and feel valued. This ethos is clearly communicated on a daily basis and this is demonstrated in a productive and rewarding learning environment. The school implements an open-door policy for students who are aware that they can approach any member of staff for academic or pastoral support. All students feel that staff show concern for them as individuals and that they know who to go to for help with personal issues.
- 4.10 Full time students have a class tutor who supports them throughout their programme. They provide daily one-to-one support as well as termly progress reviews. These include opportunities to discuss personal issues. Staff have received training in mental health awareness so that they can identify problems early on and offer appropriate support.
- 4.11 Comprehensive career guidance is provided by tutors and through an arm of the organisation called Leiths List. Students can, and do, access careers advice and support during and after their course finishes.
- 4.12 The school does not provide an official social programme for students.

#### **4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s**

- 4.13 Safeguarding arrangements are good. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all students safe. The school has a clear policy for safeguarding students under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults and this is frequently checked by managers and regularly communicated to all staff. The school prioritises a culture where staff work together to ensure students feel safe and students know how to access support or complain if they do not feel safe.
- 4.14 There are a range of policies and procedures in place to ensure all staff who have contact with students under the age of 18 understand their obligations and responsibilities, including codes of conduct and safe use of the internet and social media. There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead, supported by other managers, who are trained to the appropriate level. All staff who have contact with students under the age of 18 have at least basic awareness training in child protection and safeguarding.

- 4.15 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are made on all staff who will have access to the building prior to, or as soon as is practicable after commencing employment. Effective risk assessments are carried out and staff do not work with students under the age of 18 until clearance is received.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight of the school are good. The board of directors provide effective oversight of the school and fully discharge their responsibilities to ensure that there is effective financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They ensure high educational standards are maintained. They ensure that a high level of welfare, health and safety is maintained throughout the school and that their statutory duties to safeguard students under the age of 18 are fulfilled. They have not maintained effective oversight of staff recruitment processes, which are unsatisfactory. There is a very effective relationship between the proprietor, board of directors and senior managers so that a genuine two-way flow of information is maintained. There are shared aims and high ambitions for the school; everyone is invested in, and passionate about, its success.
- 5.2 The board of directors monitors the effectiveness of the school carefully, taking into account the views of students and staff, and uses this information to make improvements. It has clear strategic objectives and translates these into ambitious plans for development. Responsibility for ensuring legal permissions, health and safety and safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are delegated to senior managers and overseen by the board. All legal permissions are met.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are good. Leaders and managers provide clear educational direction which is reflected in the high quality of education provided. They ensure that effective policies are in place and implemented. This ensures the health, safety and welfare of students and staff and safeguarding of students under the age of 18. Communication is thorough, regular and effective so that key messages are passed down to staff at all levels. Managers are successful in recruiting staff of very high calibre and develop them well through on-going training and support.
- 5.4 Self-evaluation is detailed and accurately identifies areas for improvement. Leaders and managers set goals and priorities for improvement. However, specific targets and time constrained actions are not always clearly defined so that progress and impact can be measured against them.

### **5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.5 Quality assurance is excellent. All levels of staff are actively involved in the evaluation and improvement of the curriculum provision and this is managed highly effectively by the senior team.
- 5.6 Lesson observations and staff appraisals are carefully planned to ensure both are purposeful and developmental. Although separate processes, both contribute to the

effective performance monitoring of staff and support on-going development. Peer observation and sharing of good practice is also highly encouraged and this effectively develops staff skills and confidence.

- 5.7 The school has comprehensive arrangements in place to canvas the views of all students, through regular surveys and liaison with student representatives for full-time programmes. The school handles the concerns of students and, where applicable, parents with care and follows its published procedures.
- 5.8 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure which is clear and transparent. Complaints are handled and reported effectively. There is appropriate provision for the independent adjudication of complaints. The school does not operate a fee protection scheme.
- 5.9 All students surveyed would recommend the school to a friend.

#### **5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks**

- 5.10 Staff recruitment and suitability checks are unsatisfactory. All necessary checks on identity and right to work are made prior to appointment of all staff. The school goes over and above minimum requirements to DBS check staff, by including all staff in the building not just those in regulated activity. Whilst waiting for DBS clearance, appropriate risk assessments are carried out and those staff will not work with students under the age of 18 until clearance is received. However, safer recruitment processes are not fully implemented. For example, references are not always taken up formally or verified and do not always cover full employment history. Consequently, the school does not ensure that employment gaps are checked and satisfactorily explained.

#### **5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.11 Provision of information is excellent. The school website contains comprehensive, detailed and accurate information that is useful to both present and prospective students. All the required information was provided to the inspectors to enable the inspection to be carried out effectively.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

In order to further improve the good quality provided, the school should:

- Ensure that the impact of meetings and action plans is monitored and evaluated by measuring against specific and time constrained targets.
- Improve recruitment processes and procedures to ensure that all safer recruitment practices are followed.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of the board of directors and the proprietor. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

### Inspectors

Ms Angela Moir	Lead Inspector
Mr David Gutmann	Team Inspector
Ms Lesley Davis	Team Inspector