

Institution: Derzhavin Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia

**Inspectors: Dr. Galya Mateva (reporting)
Irena Ziger**

Dates: October 8th-9th 2014



Section One: Inspection Verdict

Verdict statement:

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

Grades

Grade 2 = meets the standards required by the Eaquals Charters

Grade 3 = does not meet the standards required by the Eaquals Charters

Grade 1 = identifies an area of excellence in the institution

	CATEGORIES	Grade		CATEGORIES (CON'T)	Grade
1	Management and Administration	2	7	Client Services	1
2	Teaching and Learning	2	8	Quality assurance	2
3	Course Design and Supporting Systems	2	9	Staff Profile and Development	2
4	Assessment and Certification	2	10	Staff Employment Terms	2
5	Academic Resources	2	11	Internal Communications	2
6	Learning Environment	2	12	External Communications	2
TOTAL GRADE: 23					

Executive Summary

Derzhavin Institute is a well managed Language Education Centre (LEC) with highly motivated and well qualified teaching and administrative staff. It offers Russian to foreigners and Italian, English, French and German to the local population (adult learners in both cases). Teaching demonstrates distinct communicative value and is in line with the institution's educational philosophy. Special attention is given to client services which is reflected in the high level of learners' satisfaction with learning, accommodation and social programme events. The aesthetics of the learning environment as well as the technological equipment are of very good standard.



Section Two: Account of the Inspection

Timetable

DERZHAVIN INSTITUTE, ST.PETERSBURG EAQUALS INSPECTION TIMETABLE

DAY ONE: OCTOBER 8TH WEDNESDAY

Time	Action	Staff involved	Inspector involved
09-09.30	Inspectors introduce themselves to managers and a group of teachers Tour of premises	Managers a group of teachers	Both inspectors
09.35-09.55	Lesson observation		Both inspectors
09.55-10.10	Standardisation		Both inspectors
10.15-11.00	Lesson observations		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes
11.10-11.45	Meeting with Rector	Rector of Derzhavin Institute	Both inspectors
11.50-12.50	Lesson observations		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes
13.00-13.20	Meeting with students	Focus group of students	Both inspectors
13.30-14.30	Lunch		
14.35-14.55	Lesson observations		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes
15.05-15.35	Meeting with teachers	Focus group of teachers	Both inspectors
15.40-16.25	Meeting with Academic Director and Methodologist (Russian)	Academic Director and methodologist of Russian	Both inspectors
16.30-17.15	Meeting with Head of Russian Language Department	Head of Russian Department	Both inspectors



17.20-18.00	Lesson observations (Fontanka)		G.M
18.00-19.20	Lesson observations (Fontanka-G.M and Izmaylovskii-I.Z.)		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes (in both locations)
19.30-20.50	Lesson observations (Fontanka and Izmaylovskii)		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes (in both locations)

DAY TWO: OCTOBER 9TH THURSDAY

Time	Action	Staff involved	Inspector involved
09.00-10.00	Review of documentation		Both inspectors
10.05-10.30	Lesson observation		G.M.
10.05-10.30	Meeting with Social Programme Manager	Social Programme Manager	I.Z.
10.55-11.35	Meeting with Head of FL Department	Head of FL Department	Both inspectors (Izmayilovskii)
11.40-12.10	Meeting with Academic Manager (French)	Academic Manager (French)	I.Z.
11.40-12.10	Meeting with Academic Manager (Italian)	Academic Manager (Italian)	G.M.
12.15-13.00	Lesson observations (Izmayilovskii)		G.M., I. Z. observing different classes
13.00-13.30 13.45-14.45	Inspection of premises at Izmayilovskii Lunch		
14.45-15.15	Meeting with Accommodation Manager	Accommodation Manager	I.Z.
14.45-15.15	Meeting with PR Manager and Maintenance Manager	PR Manager Maintenance Manager	G.M.
15.30-16.30	Student Accommodation Visits		I.Z.
15.20-15.40	Meeting with Study Abroad Advisor	Study Abroad Advisor	G.M.
15.45-16.30	Meeting with Senior Administrator and admin team	Senior Administrator Admin team	G.M.
16.30-17.15	Inspection of premises, resources and safety at Fontanka		Both inspectors
17.20-18.20	Preparation for feedback		Both inspectors
18.30-19.30	Feedback meeting with Managers		Both inspectors



Staffing of the Language Education Centre

The LEC is headed by its Rector and two Vice Rectors. The Administrative Department includes Head of Booking, book keepers, Accommodation Manager, Social Programme Manager, Study Abroad Programme Manager.

The Russian Department consists of Director, Academic Director, Methodologist and a team of 12 full-time and 5 part-time teachers of Russian as a foreign language.

The Foreign Language Department also consists of Director, Academic Manager (Italian), 7 full-time and 6 part-time Italian teachers, Academic Manager (French and English), 1 full-time and 3 part-time French teachers, 1 full-time and 4 part-time English teachers and 1 part-time German teacher.

Description of the Institution; provided by the Language Education Centre

Derzhavin Institute was founded in 2003 with the purpose of teaching Russian to foreigners. The Italian Language Department together with the Foreign Language Department were established in 2005. Derzhavin Institute is a private educational establishment of further professional education owned by its Rector and the National Pushkin Museum.

It has 21 classrooms, a self-study area, a library/computer room, common area, a concert hall, 3 tea/coffee areas, 2 rooms for the administrative staff, two teachers` rooms, 5 bathrooms (Fontanka and Izmajlovskij location). There is a cafe where lunch, drinks and snacks are served.

In each of the two locations all classrooms are equipped with a TV, DVD and CD player. There are 4 notebooks for use by the teachers in each of the locations as well as an OHP, and a photocopier.

All students of Italian are allowed free access to the Italian Mediateca of the Italian Consulate.

The Institution offers the following courses:

Russian 34% of all courses:

Standard course (20 lessons per week) – 50%, Intensive course (30 lessons per week)- 28.5%, Individual tuition- 10%, Evening course – 3% , Business Russian – 0.5%, Exam-preparation (TRKI) – 2%, Russian literature – 0.5%, Russian for Tourism – 0.5%, Skype tuition – 5%.

Italian 50% of all courses:

Standard course – 48 academic hours , 4 or 3 academic hours every week

Saturday course – – 32 or 48 academic hours, depending on the level, 4 academic hours once a week

Foreign Languages (English-12%, French-3%, German-1%):

Standard course – 64 academic hours (3 academic hours twice a week)

Standard course for beginners of English - 80 academic hours (3 academic hours twice a week).

Total number of student hours: 143008

Full-time students: 402 (18%)

Part time students : 1834 (82%)



Section Three: Grading

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

Verdict statement:

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

- 1.1 There is an institutional ethos which provides the foundation for the institution's activities.
- 1.2 The leadership and organisational structure of the Language Education Centre support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

The Institution provided a statutory declaration to prove its adherence to local regulations regarding its legal status, safety and security of premises, copyright law, National Employment Law and qualifications for professional employment.

The Institution clearly states its educational mission aimed at enhancing students' communicative competence through various audiovisual and situational methods which create real life situations in the classroom. It has a clear vision about the long-term development of its Russian, Italian and Foreign Language Departments.

The organisational structure of the LEC is built in a way to support the achievement of the pedagogical targets through well divided responsibilities at administrative, academic and teaching level. The communication and coordination links between these levels are well established but would function even more effectively if the Rector was supported by a Vice Rector competent in the activities of the three language departments and able to handle the increasing load of work.

The review of documentation and the meetings with the managers showed that all administration procedures, course enrolment and course data management are transparent and effective. Overall, this is a very well managed Institution with clear goals and strategy for development.

Recommendations:

To consider the financial possibility of appointing a Vice Rector who will be responsible for the optimal coordination and growth of the three language departments in the Institution.

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

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

The Institution consistently applies communicative methodology in the classroom by strongly involving learners in communicative acts from the very start of their course (including A1.1 level). The lesson content and applied techniques correspond to the course syllabus and the needs of the learners as evidenced in the conversations with them and the review of documentation.

Lesson planning was based on a template (recently created) with clear aims, topic, CEFR level, profile of the group, very detailed stage description and timing of the teaching agenda. In most of the cases the lesson aims were sufficiently clear and specific but there were a few plans with very general aims which did not correspond to the specific character of the lesson procedure. It would be beneficial to also provide the rationale for the main stages of the lesson, the expected learning difficulties and forms of interaction (pair work, small group work, etc. .) rather than planning just a list of activities, which happened in some cases.

Classroom management in practically all classes was competent and effective. The stages of the lessons followed in a logical order, the instructions, modelling of tasks, monitoring and feedback were clear and supportive. Each student was given a lot of attention and praise and the atmosphere in class was distinctly positive and stimulating. Error correction was done on the spot in a tactful and competent way. There were no instances of delayed error correction after dialogues performed in pairs which would have helped to further improve the quality of speech. The lexical and grammatical explanations of the teachers were integrated into natural situations and showed a high level of language awareness. The explanations were generally understood and well received by the learners. A variety of techniques was used in this respect, namely definitions, gestures, visualization, imitation, etc.. Inspectors felt that students might benefit more from a greater use of realia, pictures and other available resources especially in the lower level classes, in order to improve the student understanding of new vocabulary and concepts. In some cases teacher talking time was very high and had to be reduced. Since the target language was the only language of instruction some of the lexical items were not sufficiently clarified and in such cases the meaning of words had to be double checked before the next step of the lesson procedure.

In terms of the four language skills speaking was treated with priority as rightly stated in the Institution's academic documents. However, more attention could have been given to the development of reading and listening comprehension skills. Specific skills were needed by teachers for pre-teaching the key vocabulary, for organising tasks for extracting general and specific information. Also, although there were excellent examples of pronunciation work (stress, intonation), even more work could be devoted to pronunciation drilling of individual sounds, especially in Russian and English.

The teachers used well selected course books, their own course book in Russian, as well as a variety of additional hand-outs and materials (on-line materials designed by teachers themselves as well)

They also appropriately applied technology (recordings, video films, etc.). The way most of them presented the learning information on the whiteboard was also commendable (ordering, colour markers, graphs and tables, etc.). Learners were given the opportunity to do a variety of exercises, to keep written record of the lesson highlights and practise their study skills. They could have been given more opportunities for peer



checking and peer support in order to develop their learning independence.

Overall, teaching was of a very solid standard, structured and purposeful, flexible and creative at the same time. All teachers demonstrated dedication to teaching, were patient and attentive to all learners and their professionalism was, no doubt, appreciated by them.

Recommendations :

- Further improve the skill of lesson planning by adding the rationale for each of the main stages of the lesson and by adding the expected patterns of interaction for each stage (individual, pair or group work), and by anticipating grammatical, lexical or management problem areas with suggestions for solving them.
- **When organising fluency based speaking practice silently note down the most typical errors and at the end of the activity discuss these with learners in a delayed error correction stage.**
- Check and crosscheck in several ways whether learners understand the meaning of more challenging lexical items.
- Consider using more realia and visual materials to clarify meaning, especially with lower level learners.
- Further reduce the amount of teacher talking time when giving grammatical or lexical explanations.
- **Consider improving the handling of reading and listening comprehension tasks for general and specific information.**
- Increase the amount of pronunciation practice (individual and choral drilling of sounds and patterns)
- **Create more opportunities for self- and peer correction; involve learners in peer checking their tasks, peer and self correcting their written work.**

Requirements : None



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

Verdict statement:

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

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

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

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

All major components of the academic system are to be found in the Manual for Teachers recently published by the Institution and the accompanying documents. It describes the institutional philosophy of communicatively oriented teaching and learning, the aims of the educational process. There are syllabi for each language course stating the final outcomes aligned with the CEFR, defining the number of lessons for a level and breaking down the educational content into thematic blocks, conversational topics, communicative tasks, linguistic material (grammar), written practice, and recommended materials. The Italian and English syllabi add to the above components by recommending reading and listening texts and tasks. The communicative tasks section clearly points to functional language and the communicative competences to be built. The level system generally consists of 10 levels, A1-B2 being subdivided into two sublevels. Exceptionally, the Italian courses apply 3 sublevels for all levels. The amount of teaching hours prescribed to each **sublevel** is well thought out to match students' needs (80 lessons for beginners and 64 lessons for the rest of sub levels in English, 48 for Italian, 160 for Russian for the sublevels at B1 and B2). The syllabi do not present sufficient information on lexis (individual items and collocations/phrases), and also the receptive skills are missing in the Russian language syllabi. Extracts from syllabi and the level system need to be displayed in all classrooms so that students are better acquainted with these.

The academic management system, the way it is functioning at present, is well organised and effective. The Institution managed to find an excellent way, which suits its specific context of teachers with high academic qualification, by appointing teams of two managers dividing the responsibility for administrative/organisational work (academic director) and purely academic/teaching oriented work (methodologist). The methodologists for all languages are highly qualified practitioners and thus well accepted by the teachers. They provide support to teachers on a continuous basis by observing and discussing lessons, by providing additional materials and on-line support, and by organising training events. There is a solid induction system in place giving opportunity to new teachers to get acquainted with the relevant documents and procedures, to observe lessons of experienced colleagues, to teach, be observed and supported frequently. However, the procedure is not described in the Manual for teachers.

The academic administration systems are in place as evidenced in the documentation. The class registers contain timetables, attendance lists, record of material taught, tests administered and homework tasks assigned on a regular basis. All these have been recently made fully operational and teachers find them useful and helpful.

On the whole great progress has been made by the Institution since the time of the Advisory Visit in providing the basic ingredients of the academic management system required by Eaquals.

Recommendations

- **Include the lexical element in the course syllabi, highlighting key vocabulary taught at each level**
- **Add to the syllabi the basic reading and listening competences to be developed at all**



levels by students of Russian

- Display a copy of the syllabus and timetable for students to consult in all classrooms
- Include the induction system of new teachers in the Teacher Manual to make it more explicit and transparent.

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

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

In the conversation with the academic managers, as well as in the review of documentation it became clear that assessment procedures are done on a regular basis and are in line with the objectives of the course syllabi. Placement procedures take place every Monday for the Russian courses and at the beginning of each course for the other languages. Placement testing is thorough and includes multiple choice items testing grammar and lexis followed by a written task and an oral interview. Its effectiveness was seen in the homogeneous classes observed in the Institution.

Progress tests are conducted every Friday for the Russian courses and at the end of each course which covers a sublevel for the other languages, all of which was confirmed in document form and in the conversation with students. The progress tests in Russian include grammatical, lexical components and a written task. The speaking and receptive skills are not tested, **the only exception being the end-of-level tests when in order to pass to a higher level all long-term learners do a multiple choice test, a written task and an oral test.** The tests in the other classes of foreign languages include the same components but in addition check the receptive skills of learners. Post-test feedback is provided to learners. All test results are recorded and filed. Apart from the communicative written task all learners would benefit from a speaking task to better meet their needs for oral communication.

All certificates issued by the Institution display information on the CEFR level and the number of lessons taught. The certificates for Russian indicate on the reverse side the CEFR level system and descriptors. It would be advisable for the other languages to include the same information on the certificate form.

Sufficient information and support is provided for the Russian course participants on how to prepare and sit an international exam in Russian as a foreign language.

Overall, the category meets Eaquals standards.

Recommendations

- Consider the appropriateness of including receptive skills components in the tests for Russian learners.
- Consider the possibilities for including a speaking skill component in the final testing procedure (discussion, project presentations, etc.) to reinforce the communicative orientation of all courses.
- **Display information on the CEFR level system on the certificates of English, French and German.**

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

- 5.1 The coursebooks or other core course materials, online learning platforms and resources, and reference materials reflect course objectives and the methodology used.
- 5.2 There is a system for monitoring learning material developed in-house.
- 5.3 All equipment and electronic connectivity is accessible and well maintained.

The Institution has a well functioning system for evaluating and selecting appropriate teaching materials. The methodologists together with teachers decide on the choice of materials which are in line with the communicative methodology applied in class. The class observation showed that the selected materials correspond to the level and interests of the learners.

At the same time the Institution has a strategy for writing their own materials, e.g. the course book for A1 Russian learners written by a team of their teachers. The coursebook for the next level is in the planning stage. Also, the methodologists in Russian and Italian are in charge of preparing on-line materials which supplement the main coursebooks and which already are widely used by the teachers. The in-house produced materials are developed by the methodologists and senior teachers and the authors obtain feedback from the teachers on a continuous basis. The teachers expressed their satisfaction with the on-line materials during the focus group meeting. The materials have just started being used and will go through an experimental phase.

The staff room and the library offer a range of additional materials - fiction, course books, graded reading materials, DVDs, newspapers and magazines, and methodology books which can be borrowed. Learners can also buy in the school recently published coursebooks and reference materials in Italian.

All classrooms are well equipped with a TV, DVD and a CD player. The equipment is well maintained and actively used by the teachers. The computers in the computer/library room are Internet enabled. There is free Wi-Fi access in the school building. Both teachers and students are allowed to use the laptops in the school. Students can also rent a portable internet modem to use in their place of residence.

Overall, the Institution meets all the criteria in this category.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

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

The learning environment is overall welcoming, friendly with an elegant interior inside the historical building of Derzhavin. The classrooms are clean, spacious with large windows, some of them overlooking the beautiful garden at the back of the Museum building. Students take their breaks in the garden in the summer. The classrooms in the other location are also spacious, well lit, quiet and ventilated. All rooms in both locations have been recently refurbished and redecorated. There is a sufficient number of toilets and they are in good condition.

There are whiteboards in each classroom and very few posters and visual materials on the walls at Fontanka but a sufficient number of these at Izmayilovsky. Also, emergency exit signs and safety equipment are to be seen only at *Izmayilovskii* (the Museum building is under the protection of the Russian state and they have their own requirements and procedures for the safety and conservation of historical buildings). There are regular fire drills and the maintenance manager is responsible for the safety procedures at *Izmayilovskii*. Although the Fontanka premises need to comply with the rules of the National Pushkin Museum, the managers could think how to sign clearly the way to the different rooms in the different wings and floors of the building and also to indicate the exit door better. As regards first aid, there is a first aid box in both locations supplied with medicines according to a list provided by the local authorities. According to the national regulations there are employees trained to provide first aid.

The staff rooms in both locations are comfortable but too small for the number of teachers in the Institution. However, in the conversation with the managers and teachers it was explained that there were no other possibilities for the time being and teachers didn't find it an obstacle to their every day work. For the same reason there is no separate room for the Rector of the Institution so he shares a room with the Director of Bookings.

The self-study area is well equipped and comfortable enough for the learners. The communal space for learners and teachers in both locations is also very cosy with facilities for water and tea with cookies. The cafe of the school provides cooked meals and snacks during the day.

Overall, the Institution meets Eaquals criteria for this category.

Recommendations:

- Find ways for clearer signposting of the exit, as well as of the number and location (Western/Central Wing) of the different classrooms at Fontanka.
- In the future consider possibilities for providing a larger room for the teachers at both locations, place where they can work on their own with the books and computers needed.
- Think of providing separate rooms for the Rector and the senior managers which will also contribute to the increased effectiveness of work.

Requirements: None



7. Client Services (Eaquals General Charter 2.3; 3.1; Charter for Course Participants 2.8)

Verdict statement:

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

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

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

The Institution tries its best to provide learners with quality guidance and support regarding all aspects of their travel, stay and study programme in Russia.

All foreign learners attend an induction programme every Monday before their placement test. They are given a pack of information and teaching materials as well as a copy of the Guidance for Students. During each course attendance is checked on a regular basis and support for missed lessons is duly provided. Teachers' absence is easily handled by the administrators because of the numerous team of full and part-timers. Learners' progress is monitored on a weekly basis through achievement tests and also their attitude to all aspects of their stay is checked through regularly administered feedback questionnaires. The test results and feedback outcomes are discussed by the managers and corrective action is taken in due course. The conversation with the focus group of learners confirmed the above procedures together with the high level of their satisfaction with the course, accommodation and social activities.

A team of administrators led by the Director of Bookings helps each course participant with the visa, airport transfer, as well as the choice of accommodation. All the information on those can be found in the attractive brochure of the Institution.

Regarding accommodation learners can choose between homestay, guest houses, shared flats or the Derzhavin hotel. The Institution's accommodation staff regularly checks on accommodation conditions and also monitors the feedback from students. The questionnaires contain a wide range of questions referring to the specific location and transport, the host family and food, facilities in the room, regular cleaning of the room, etc with ample space for critical comments and recommendations.

Upon arrival foreign learners receive a weekly programme of social events. The Social Programme Manager is in constant contact with them and each week tries to adapt the programme to learners' special interests. The programme includes visits to museums, theatres, sightseeing tours in and around St. Petersburg, singing, dancing, parties, etc. In conversations with learners it became clear that they are also gladly given extra advice and support for individual trips round the country.

Points of Excellence

Point 7.1 is considered excellent because of the thorough induction procedure, information pack and the continuous support given to all learners during the course and the entire period of their stay.

Point 7.2 is also considered excellent because of the variety and range of social and cultural events in the leisure programme provided to the learners every week and the high degree of satisfaction expressed by them. Also, the accommodation visits showed excellent living conditions in the guest house and shared flats with local families. The families always sign a contract with the Institution specifying the rights and responsibilities of both sides. The process of selecting host families, the process of monitoring of accommodation, as well as obtaining regular feedback from learners (first impressions and end of course feedback) and acting upon it demonstrate high quality standards regarding client-oriented services.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None



8. Quality Assurance (Eaquals General Charter 1.3; Charter for Course Participants 2.2, 2.7, 3.2; Staff Charter 4, 6)

Verdict statement:

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

- 8.1 There are systems to foster a culture of quality through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.
- 8.2 The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems (including regular classroom observations) which are used to improve the quality of all services.
- 8.3 There are procedures which enable learners and sponsors to give regular feedback relating to the academic and other services provided.

The Institution has managed to successfully establish the foundation of quality culture through various mechanisms. Externally, it is officially recognised by the Russian Association of Teachers for Russian Language and Literature and takes active part in its activities. The quality of its Russian language programmes is also accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and also by international organisations like CSN (Sweden) and Bildungsurlaub (Germany). Internally, the three language departments have established stronger links among themselves exchanging ideas and good practices during administrative and methodology meetings. They have already agreed on and adopted common templates for syllabus design, lesson planning, and observation of lessons, which is a big step forward.

A system of regular class observations with supported documentation has been successfully implemented by the school. The newly appointed methodologists managed to observe all teachers following an observation sheet with a set of observation points called "Analysis of the observed lesson". These follow the items in the detailed lesson plan template and focus on the stages, accomplished aims, materials, controlled and speech production activities, motivation of the learners, etc. After the lesson the methodologist discusses the performance with the teacher and makes recommendations. However, some of the recommendations in the reviewed documentation sounded too general and therefore were difficult to control. They need to be concrete and better integrated into the internal teacher training programmes of the school. The Institution has also demonstrated some good examples of peer observation and it will be wise to continue with these by observing teachers from the other language departments as well.

Feedback is obtained from students every Wednesday and Friday for the foreign learners and at the end of each course for the remaining courses. The questionnaire for students of Russian includes aspects of teaching, accommodation and social events. The foreign language learners complete information on the atmosphere of learning, on the appropriate ratio between theoretical and practical aspects of the course, on the teaching materials, etc.. All learners are given opportunities to express their attitude, comments and suggestions for improving aspects of the course.

On the whole, the Institution meets the criteria in this category.

Recommendations:

- **To further develop the system of class observations and make recommendations to teachers which are specific and well targeted. To follow the effect of these and integrate the results into individual and group training events.**
- Put into practice peer observations of teachers teaching different languages and the exchange of best practices across languages.

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

- 9.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, teachers and administrative staff are relevant and adequate for each area of responsibility.
- 9.2 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.
- 9.3 There is a formal framework to assure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

All administrative staff have sufficient experience and a University degree corresponding to the area of responsibility. The methodologists hold a PH.D. degree in the respective area and at the same time are highly experienced practitioners. The Russian teachers have a well balanced team in terms of teaching experience ranging from newly appointed young teachers to teachers with 30 years experience (10 years working for the Institution). Half of them hold a PH.D and the rest an MA in linguistics and all of them have been trained at University to teach Russian to foreigners. The team of Italian, English, French and German teachers are also sufficiently experienced and appropriately qualified. All native speaking Italian teachers have appropriate university qualifications with the exception of one teacher who is among the most experienced ones with extensive on the job training in the Institution and also in the training provided by the Italian consulate. It would be recommendable for him to obtain a formal qualification by getting the international diploma for teachers of Italian. A formal qualification will be needed for the only native speaking English teacher, although the number of lessons he teaches is insignificant.

The first round of performance review interviews in the Institution was conducted with teachers and administrative staff at both locations at the start of the year. The evaluation process was based on a clear set of criteria and was preceded by self-assessment. The interview was aimed at comparing the grades of self-assessment and assessment and formulating recommendations for further development of staff. The criteria for teachers related to lesson preparation and conducting of lessons, use of materials and multimedia, design of materials, participation in teacher training events and professional development. For the administrative staff the criteria concerned communicative ability, creativity in task performance, task management and professional development. The appraisal procedure for all staff at both locations is well documented. The Institution has developed and adapted its own version of the European Profiling Grid for teachers which is used as an additional staff evaluation tool based on European standards. The management refers to three phases of development of teachers which better correspond to the three categories of teachers they have in the school: novice teacher, teacher, senior teacher. The next stage of performance review will have to deal with the way recommendations have been taken into account.

The internal teacher development system is in place and very active, although not formally recorded as an annual programme. It is the methodologist's responsibility to organise training events and teachers meet regularly to discuss various issues of teaching techniques, new technology in the classroom and the design of teaching materials (their own coursebooks and on-line materials). The more experienced teachers who also teach at the University exchange experience with colleagues and support the less experienced ones. Teachers regularly attend seminars organised by the University and the Zlatoust Publishing House. All foreign language teachers are obliged by state law to increase their qualification and every five years to attend at least 72 hours of additional training.

Overall, the Institution meets Eaquls standards in this category.



Recommendations

- **To further consolidate and improve the annual performance review system. To exercise control on the agreed recommendations and keep written record to be filed in the personal folders of staff.**
- **To formally record all training events in a long-term training and development plan paying special attention to newly recruited teachers.**

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

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

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

There is an appropriate mix of short-term and permanently employed staff at the Institution. More than half of the Russian and Italian teachers are on a permanent contract with sufficient evidence of stability in staffing. Both permanently employed and hourly paid teachers are issued with written contracts which are in compliance with the national Employment Law. All administrative and managerial staff are permanently employed.

The terms and conditions of employment are fair and comply with all statutory requirements. Arrangements for extra hours of work are transparent and clear to all. All teachers in the teacher focus group expressed their full satisfaction with the employment terms and conditions.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None



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

Verdict statement:

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

11.1 The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication among members of management and/or staff are clearly defined and documented.

11.2 There is formal, documented, communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.

11.3 Information is available to staff about the institution, its mission and any planned developments.

11.4 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place for staff and are known to them.

11.5 Information about Eaquals and its resources is available to staff and learners.

The structure, the main responsibilities and lines of accountability among members of management and staff are clearly defined in the organisational chart of the Institution. A more detailed account of all managers' and teachers' rights and duties are to be found in their detailed and up-to-date job descriptions attached to their personal files.

The meetings with staff members provided sufficient evidence about the specific area of responsibility of each member and also about the existence of on-going coordination of activities between them. There are weekly meetings of the managers as well as weekly meetings of the managers with the teachers of the three departments. Each department holds its own departmental meetings as well. Record is kept of all decisions taken.

The recently published Guidelines for Teachers contain in-depth information on the foundation, structure and leadership of the Institution, its licence, international affiliation and accreditation, the functions of its three departments and the guiding methodological principles of the teaching activities. There are explicit requirements concerning staff discipline, quality control, staff evaluation and staff development. Elements of the complaints procedures exist in the feedback forms for students and in the appraisal forms for teachers and staff where comments and complaints are regularly and seriously taken into consideration. However, the full cycle of the procedure could be described in a separate paragraph in the Manual for Teachers and in the Students' Handbook.

The managerial and teaching staff were generally well informed about the mission of Eaquals, and the purpose and procedures of the inspection process. But both teachers and learners needed more detailed information on different aspects of Eaquals activities and membership, on its complaints procedures and professional training events and resources as became clear in the conversations with them.

On the whole the atmosphere in the Institution was positive, constructive and collaborative and one repeatedly got the impression of communicating with people who are valued and confident in pursuing their aims. The Institution meets Eaquals criteria in this category.

Recommendations:

Include a fuller account of the complaints and disciplinary procedures for learners and teachers in the respective set of Guidelines (Manuals).

Provide more information about Eaquals through various written and oral channels, so that staff members and learners are aware of its mission, members, training events, resources, complaints procedure, and relevant aspects of its activities.

Requirements: None



12. External Communications (Information Charter 1-7)

Verdict statement:

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

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

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

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

The website and the printed promotional materials (brochure and leaflets) of the Institution provide logically and visually well presented facts of the Institution's courses and activities. The information on courses and prices is comprehensive and comprehensible, easy to follow, complete and truthful. In the enrolment form for foreign students one can quickly find information on course types, structure and length of courses, size of the group and language proficiency levels. There is explicit information on what exactly the course fee includes. In addition the terms and conditions for course participation are specified with reference to booking deadlines, visa support, methods of payment, cancellations, medical and travel insurance, public holidays, etc.

The contracts signed by the Institution and individual learners contain specific and clearly stated information on the rights and responsibilities of both parties. They refer to general aspects of the course programme and organisation, teaching, teacher substitution in case of illness, payment conditions, size of groups and change of group make up in case of larger or smaller groups, how it impacts on the course fee and also how the course fee can be refunded in case of serious illness or business travel. Special attention is given to disciplinary and safety issues (absences, compliance with the Institution's internal rules and safety regulations).

The contract would be even more client-oriented if it provided more specific information on the number and duration of teaching hours, on the entry requirements (placement procedure) and CEFR levels, on the learner complaints rights and procedures concerning the quality of the service.

On the whole, the Institution meets Equals standards in this category.

Recommendations:

Consider including more specific information in the contract with learners on the number of course hours and length of lessons, on the placement procedure requirements, on the learners' complaints rights and procedures regarding various aspects of the course.

Requirements: None



Section Four: Summary

Areas which have not been inspected in this inspection and need follow-up inspection: Not applicable

Summary of Points of Excellence

7	Client Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point 7.1 is considered excellent because of the thorough induction procedure, information pack and the continuous support given to all learners during the course and the entire period of their stay.• Point 7.2 is considered excellent because of the variety and range of social and cultural events in the leisure programme provided to the learners every week and the high degree of satisfaction expressed by them. Also, the accommodation visits showed excellent living conditions in the guest house and shared flats with local families. The families always sign a contract with the Institution specifying the rights and responsibilities of both sides. The process of selecting host families, the process of monitoring of accommodation, as well as obtaining regular feedback from learners (first impressions and end of course feedback) and acting upon it demonstrate high quality standards regarding client-oriented services.



Summary of Recommendations

1	Management and Administration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To consider the financial possibility of appointing a Vice Rector who will be responsible for the optimal coordination and growth of the three language departments in the Institution.
2	Teaching and Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Further improve the skill of lesson planning by adding the rationale for each of the main stages of the lesson and by adding the expected patterns of interaction for each stage (individual, pair or group work). An added extra would also be the ability to anticipate grammatical, lexical or management problem areas and ways of solving them.When organising fluency based speaking practice silently note down the most typical errors and at the end of the activity discuss these with your learners in a delayed error correction stage.Check and crosscheck in several ways whether learners understand the meaning of more challenging lexical items.Consider using more realia and visual materials to clarify meaning, especially with lower level learners.Further reduce the amount of teacher talking time when giving grammatical or lexical explanations.Consider improving the handling of reading and listening comprehension tasks for general and specific information.Increase the amount of pronunciation practice (individual and choral drilling of sounds and patterns)Create more opportunities for self- and peer correction: involve learners in checking their tasks, peer and self-correcting their written work.
3	Course Design and Supporting Systems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Include the lexical element in the course syllabi, highlighting key vocabulary taught at each levelAdd to the syllabi the basic reading and listening competences to be developed at all levels by students of RussianDisplay a copy of the syllabus and timetable for students to consult in all classroomsInclude the induction system of new teachers in the Teacher Manual to make it more explicit and transparent.
4	Assessment and Certification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider the appropriateness of including receptive skills components in the tests for Russian learners.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the possibilities for including a speaking skill component in the final testing procedure (discussion, project presentations, etc.) to reinforce the communicative orientation of all courses. • Display information on the CEFR level system on the certificates of English, French and German
6	Learning Environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways for clearer signposting of the exit, as well as of the number and location (Western/Central Wing) of the different classrooms at Fontanka. • In the future consider possibilities for providing a larger room for the teachers at both locations, place where they can work on their own with the books and computers needed. • Think of providing separate rooms for the Rector and the senior managers which will also contribute to the increased effectiveness of work.
8	Quality Assurance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further develop the system of class observations and make recommendations to teachers which are specific and well targeted. To follow the effect of these and integrate the results into individual and group training events. • Put into practice peer observations of teachers teaching different languages and exchange best practices across languages.
9	Staff Profile and Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further consolidate and improve the annual performance review system. To exercise control on the agreed recommendations and keep written record to be filed in the personal folders of staff. • To formally record all training events in a long-term training and development plan paying special attention to newly recruited teachers.
11	Internal Communications
	<p>Include a fuller account of the complaints and disciplinary procedures for learners and teachers in the respective set of Guidelines (Manuals).</p> <p>Provide more information about Eaquals through various written and oral channels, so that staff members and learners are aware of its mission, members, training events, resources, complaints procedure, and relevant aspects of its activities.</p>
12	External Communications
	<p>Consider including more specific information in the contract with learners on the number of course hours and length of lessons, on the placement procedure requirements, on the learners` complaints rights and procedures regarding various aspects of the course.</p>



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

DATE: 28.10.2014

Signed

Galya Mateva

(Reporting inspector)

Signed

Irena Ziger

(Co-inspector)