

Organisation name	Britannia English Academy, Manchester
Inspection date	15 August 2024
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: follow up on points to be addressed from October 2023 inspection

Recommendation

In view of the unsatisfactory findings of this spot check, the date of the next full inspection should be brought forward to 2025.

Changes to the summary statement

The area of strength for academic management must be removed and a need for improvement in academic staff profile added.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Britannia English Academy, Manchester in September 2023 and August 2024. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and safeguarding under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation for details).

This private language school offers courses in general English for adults (18+) and young people (16+) and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the area of student administration.

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the areas of academic staff profile and course design.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

Updated summary inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard. However, there are insufficient staff to manage and deliver the provision and to ensure continuity at all times. Systems for reviewing this aspect of the provision are ineffective.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. However, overall, the academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is not appropriate to the school's context. There was no member of the academic management team with the required level of qualifications and the proportion of teachers with a professional profile requiring additional support was too high for the level of support available. Academic management is no longer an area of strength. There is a need for improvement in *Academic staff profile*.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. However, the needs of the students for security during the leisure programme are not always met, as some activities had not been formally risk assessed.

Safeguarding under 18s

Overall, the provision meets the section standard. However, the method for ensuring the safe recruitment of homestay providers is not always satisfactory.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2015
Last full inspection	October 2023
Subsequent checks/visits (if applicable)	N/a

Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	190	370
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	7	3 (family classes)
Typical age range	14 to 17	14 to 17
Typical length of stay	4 weeks	4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian, Colombian	Saudi Arabian, Colombian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	13	13
Total number of managers including academic	3	3
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	4	4

Premises profile	
Address of main site	12 Charlotte Street, Manchester M1 4FL
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	Mary Seacole Building, Salford University, Salford M6 6PU
Sites inspected	Britannia English Academy – main site

Introduction

Background *(from the October 2023 report)*

Britannia English Academy (BEA) was founded in October 2012 by the two owners and directors. The school is based in central Manchester and has occupied its current premises since 2014. The school offers courses for students aged 16 and over throughout the school year, as well as seasonal courses for students aged seven to 15 in July and August.

There had been a recommendation in the October 2023 report that evidence should be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in W1 and S4 had been addressed. A spot check should be carried out the following summer focusing on the accommodation and safeguarding of under 18s.

Preparation

The reporting inspector was sent a copy of the previous report and associated written communications. He was then commissioned to carry out a signalled spot check in the summer of 2024. In addition, the inspector was briefed concerning complaints received by the Accreditation Unit about the failure of BEA to comply with the Accreditation Scheme's criteria.

The inspector contacted the school about suitable dates for the spot check and requested a summary document on the staff changes that had taken place since the 2023 inspection. He also explained to the school that the Accreditation Unit had no record of these changes as required by the Scheme.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school at 11.30. The school knew he would be arriving in August. There were meetings with the two managers responsible for the current running of the school about the points to be addressed from the last report and related issues. In addition, there was a general discussion about the failure to submit documents required by the Scheme regarding key staff changes. The managers had not been informed about the existence of any formal complaints but were aware of the concerns expressed by the Accreditation Unit about the absence of the required documentation. There was a meeting with the head teacher and the inspector was provided with a guided tour of the premises.

Findings

Management

Since the last inspection the following members of staff have left: the manager, the director of studies, the assistant director of studies, the accommodation officer. A non-TEFLQ 'head teacher' has been appointed but none of the other posts have been filled. The reason given for the unfilled posts was that staff had obtained different jobs, the

appointment of a new accommodation officer had been unsuccessful, and there had been a lack of available management time for the recruitment process.

There was no clear evidence that these staff vacancies had substantially affected the quality of the provision in the short term, and a superficial check of student feedback confirmed overall satisfaction with the provision and services. However, it was clear that the current managers, who had both joined the company at a lower level in the administrative team, were finding the situation difficult and were required to cover too many management and administrative functions. There was no evidence that the school's owners were involved in reviewing the current unsatisfactory situation. There are insufficient staff to manage and deliver the provision, and to ensure continuity at all times. The area of strategic and quality management is weak, and systems for reviewing this aspect of the provision are ineffective.

Teaching and learning

General English, conversation and examination preparation courses for adults and young people (16+) are offered in flexible patterns throughout the day between morning and evening so that students can put together a timetable that fits their schedules. Business English classes are offered at the same times when there is demand. Classes are also offered on Saturdays to suit students who work during the week. One-to-one and one-to-two classes are also available, as are online classes. Summer vacation courses for juniors aged seven to 15 are offered in July and August although they were no longer running at the time of the spot check. Family courses are also offered.

Overall, the academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is not appropriate to the school's context. There was no member of the academic management team with the required level of qualifications and the proportion of teachers with a professional profile requiring additional support was too high for the level of support available. The qualifications profile of the teachers working on the summer junior course did not meet the Accreditation Scheme's requirements with several teachers not possessing appropriate TEFLI or Level 6 qualifications. There was no academic manager on site during the summer junior programme at Salford University.

The current head teacher is not TEFLQ. However, he observes teachers, provides feedback and organises related continuing professional development activities. There was no evidence that this situation is going to change.

Welfare and student services

Systems and procedures are in place to ensure the general welfare and security of students. Homestay and summer junior residential programmes are available and a leisure programme is offered. However, there had been some difficulty appointing a full-time accommodation officer which had resulted in a lack of appropriate management supervision. Although the leisure programme co-ordinated by an appropriately qualified outside provider met all the Accreditation Scheme's requirements, it was clear that some junior leisure activities managed directly by the school had not been formally risk assessed.

Safeguarding under 18s

At the time of the spot check there were 64 students under the age of 18 studying at the main school in separate classes from adults. One 17-year-old student was included in an adult class. All junior students are taught on one floor separate from the adult classes with their own toilet provision. In the residential summer school at a separate site there had been 90 students. Although there was evidence that some suitability checks on homestay providers accommodating juniors had not come through yet, safeguarding overall was satisfactory.

Action taken on points to be addressed from the 2023 report

Welfare and student services

W1 (2024: P1) Some fire doors were propped open during the inspection.

Addressed. During the inspection there were no fire doors propped open.

Safeguarding under 18s

S4 One member of the school's support staff had not received a DBS check. In addition, references obtained for homestay providers are not dated.

Partially addressed. All school staff had received a DBS check. References for homestay hosts on records sampled are now dated. However, records indicated that some homestay providers without completed DBS checks were hosting junior students.

Conclusions

As this report makes clear, there have been significant changes to the staffing since the last inspection and the school is currently failing to meet key accreditation requirements in some of the areas it was possible to check during this brief visit. Although the provision appeared to be working in a satisfactory manner during the spot check, there was no evidence provided of any plans to address the inadequacies highlighted.

A full re-evaluation is necessary to see whether the points to be addressed identified in this spot check have been rectified and whether the provision continues to meet all the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme in other areas.

Items requiring early action

Evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in W22 and S4 have been addressed prior to accepting juniors onto courses.
