

Organisation name	TopUp Learning London
Inspection date	1 August 2024
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: inspect new or additional premises and check provision not seen at inspection

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2025; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, the committee recommended that evidence be sought within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in P1 and W22 have been addressed.

Changes to the summary statement

Vacation courses for under 18s can be added.

New summary statement.

The British Council inspected and accredited TopUp Learning London in August 2021 and in 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+) in school premises and online, for adults (18+) and under 18s online, and vacation courses in general English for under 18s in school premises.

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, student administration, premises and facilities, and leisure opportunities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

None.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2004
Last full inspection	2021
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)	15	40
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	8	8
Typical age range	8–16	8–16
Typical length of stay	2–4 weeks	2–4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Chinese	Hong Kongese
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	3
Total number of managers including academic	2 (based at main school)	2 (based at main school)

Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	2	2
Premises profile		
Address of main site	148 Camden High Street, London NW1 0NE	
Additional sites in use	London Junior – Summer: St Pancras Community Association, 67 Plender Street, London NW1 0LB Royal Alexandra & Albert School, Galton Park, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0TD	
Additional sites not in use	N/a	
Sites inspected	London Junior – Summer: St Pancras Community Association, 67 Plender Street, London NW1 0LB	

Introduction

Background

This was a signalled inspection of additional premises offering courses to a new age range at a seasonal centre that was declared in 2023.

Teacher Training International (TTI) was acquired by the current owner in October 2020 and TopUp Learning was created as a new brand, offering face-to-face and online tuition. Due to the global pandemic, the school went through periods of opening and closing, and has now been open since March 2021. In 2023, two junior summer vacation courses were offered for students aged 8–16 years at new premises in Reigate and Camden. The Reigate centre is entirely residential and at Camden a half-day non-residential programme is offered alongside a full-day programme including activities and accommodation arranged by the school at a nearby student residence.

Preparation

The spot check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. The inspector contacted the school directly prior to the inspection to check staff availability. The date of the inspection was agreed with the provider.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 09.30 and departed at 13.30. Meetings were held with the CEO/principal and the director of studies (DoS) who has been in post since October 2023. Informal conversations were held with some of the students, teachers and a member of the junior operations team. The inspector had a tour of the premises and visited the residence where some of the students were staying.

Findings

Management

The CEO and DoS, based at the main school a short walk away, are responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. They frequently visit the centre and are supported by one of the teachers who sets up the classrooms every morning and a member of the junior operations team who accompanies the students from the residence each morning and stays at the centre to monitor them during the breaks in lessons. This arrangement is appropriate while there are only three classes running but job descriptions do not reflect the additional duties these members of staff are expected to perform. Cover for any members of staff is organised by the main school. Student feedback is not currently collected. The London summer school brochure is generally representative but information on costs under 'optional extras' is misleading and there is a typo with the start date of the programme.

Premises and resources

This section relates only to the site visited for the spot check.

The school has access to three classrooms on the first floor of the community centre. Access to the building is controlled from a reception desk and all visitors are required to sign in and out. A staircase to a large landing leads to an area with two classrooms, separate male and female toilets, a disabled toilet, and changing rooms which are locked and out of use when the school is in operation. A further corridor leads to a large classroom which doubles as a break area for students. Comfortable seating is arranged around the perimeter of the room with suitable classroom furniture and equipment in the centre. One other corridor which is clearly marked as out of bounds, is used by the community centre staff. Branding is deliberately minimal but classroom signage is clear and students are accompanied at all times when on the premises and monitored when using the bathroom facilities. A lift from the ground floor was not in operation during the inspection period. The centre is clean, well maintained and decorated but classrooms contained stacks of additional furniture that could pose a risk to students of this age. Risk assessments are in place for the premises and the accommodation in use. However, they do not identify risks specific to the areas being used by the school and in relation to the age of the students. At the residence the accommodation is secure.

Teaching and learning

Teachers were seen to be well prepared and had clearly developed a good rapport with their learners. Feedback from incidental conversations with teachers and students was very positive. Teachers prepare their lessons at the main school in the mornings before relocating to the summer centre. Classrooms are appropriately furnished and include suitable educational technology.

Welfare and student services

All accommodation is in single, ensuite rooms with a shared kitchen/lounge area. Boys and girls are on separate floors in a secure cluster of rooms, monitored at all times by a member of the school staff who occupies one of the rooms. The school has fitted its own CCTV camera just inside the entrance to the cluster so that they can further monitor access 24 hours per day. Meals are provided in the shared kitchen area each evening. The activity programme is generally well managed. The programme is prepared by the CEO and students are accompanied by a teacher in the afternoons and the 'house parent' in the evenings. Risk assessments are in place but do not sufficiently consider risks specific to each activity. One of the teachers at the centre is first aid trained.

Safeguarding under 18s

All staff have basic level safeguarding training. The CEO is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school and all concerns are reported directly to him, he is assisted by the DoS who is the Deputy DSL.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Action taken on points to be addressed

N/a

Conclusions

The junior summer centre is generally well managed and provides a suitable environment for students for study and relaxation. Classrooms are appropriate in size and comfortably accommodate the maximum number of students. The accommodation is suitable for students of this age and the leisure programme is appropriate to their needs and interests. The safety and security of the students is mostly appropriate; however, risk assessments of premises and activities are insufficient in scope.
