

Organisation name	UK College of English, London
Inspection date	24 July 2023
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: inspect new or additional premises

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2025; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in W1 have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

The areas of strength for premises and care of students have been removed.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited UK College of English in February 2020 and July 2023. 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 for closed groups of under 18s and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, student administration, and leisure opportunities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

Premises and resources

The premises offer a comfortable, professional working environment for students and staff. The school facilities are well utilised and the space thoughtfully organised. A good range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The provision meets the needs of students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including out-of-class activities and suitable accommodation, the latter provided by accommodation agencies. Leisure opportunities is an area of strength.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2011
Last full inspection	February 2020
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	UK College of Business and Computing Undergraduate and foundation year courses in accounting and business.
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: March
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	109	188
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	14	14
Typical age range	19–28	20–30 (including closed group of 90 students 14–17 typical age range for that week)
Typical length of stay	12 weeks	3–4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Turkish, Brazilian, Albanian, Colombian, Ecuadorian, Chinese	Ecuadorian, Italian, Brazilian, Colombian, Turkish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	15	15
Total number of managers including academic	6	6
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	2

Premises profile

Address of main site	Eastgate House, 40 Dukes Place, London EC3A 7LP
Additional sites in use	1–2 Soho Street, London W1D 3GN
Additional sites not in use	None
Sites inspected	Eastgate House

Introduction

Background

This was a spot check to inspect the new premises of UK College of English, London (UKCE) following its move from the previous main premises in Soho, London. The move took place in January 2022. The new site is used for teaching and administration purposes. The premises in Soho are still used for evening classes.

Preparation

The spot check was carried out by one inspector, who had not been involved in the full inspection of February 2020. The inspector contacted the centre to check if there were any dates which would not be suitable and when the key staff would be present. The Accreditation Unit sent the inspector relevant documents. The inspector looked at the UKCE website.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 11.30 and left at 15.15. He had meetings with the head of academic delivery (HEAD), who is also the designated safeguarding lead. Separate meetings were held with a group of students and a group of teachers. The HEAD conducted a full tour of the premises. Upon arrival, the inspector requested a range of documents, all of which were provided.

Findings

Findings are reported in the following section and in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Premises and resources

UKCE relocated to a six-storey building near Liverpool Street in the City of London in January 2022 from its Soho school, which continues to accommodate evening classes. The school shares the Liverpool Street premises with its sister organisation, UK College of Business and Computing (UKCBC).

UKCE's office is based on the first floor of the building. The first floor also comprises a number of classrooms, the HEAD's office, teachers' room and resources room. The basement floor comprises a student common room and cafeteria, as well as classrooms, a library and IT suite, a multi-faith prayer room and the school's IT department. On the ground floor, there is the main reception which leads to lift and stair access to all other floors. In addition, there is a students relaxation area and an auditorium. Floors two to four comprise classrooms which are used by UKCE and UKCBC. UKCE has access to three to 14 classrooms depending on the time of year. There is a staff relaxation area and kitchen on the fourth floor. The fifth floor is used exclusively by UKCBE. There are men's and women's toilet facilities on each floor.

The inspection included checks of health and safety policies and procedures, and while there are premises and fire risk assessments in place, adequate fire drills are not carried out twice per year (W1).

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.	Strength
P2 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Met
P3 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Strength
P4 Free drinking water is available. A choice of appropriate food at affordable prices is available to students on site, if not available locally.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display of general information.	Met
P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions, and for teachers to carry out their preparation and marking.	Met

Comments

P1 The building offers very good space for students to study in. Cleaning is of a high standard, and the building is in an excellent state of decoration and repair. A lift is available for staff and students.

P3 The student common and library spaces are inviting and comfortable. Facilities include a water fountain, a cafeteria, and a bank of computers.

P5 (previously judged as a strength). While there is adequate signage, it is not in keeping with the high presentation standards of the premises.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Teaching and learning

T11 The course structure for short courses and closed groups provides insufficient guidance for less experienced teachers. There is no clear fit with the needs and objectives.

Addressed. There is now good guidance documentation for teachers, and courses are designed with outcomes that match learners' needs.

T13 Course outlines for short and closed group courses do not provide appropriate learning outcomes.

Addressed. Course outlines now include appropriate learning outcomes based on functional language.

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 There is no information on how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and insufficiently detailed guidance on handling delayed suitability checks is provided.

Addressed. The policy has been suitably updated and includes contact details for the safeguarding lead and appropriate guidance on delayed suitability checks.

S4 Two reference request forms had no question about the suitability of prospective staff to work with under 18s. The standard reference request form's question about suitability does not force the referee to answer the question and several referees had left the question unanswered.

Addressed. The reference request form includes a suitability question, and in the references sampled during the spot check inspection, this question had been answered.

S5 The toilet break arrangement was not being strictly adhered to.

Addressed. The toilet arrangements for under 18s are clearly stated in the safeguarding policy, and are adhered to by staff.

Conclusions

The new building provides suitable premises and facilities for staff and students. The school has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the areas of teaching and learning and safeguarding under 18s.