

Organisation name	Birmingham College
Inspection date	27 March 2019
Current accreditation status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: end period under review

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The period of review may now be ended and accreditation continued until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2022.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Birmingham College in October 2018 and March 2019. 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+).

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

Changes to summary inspection findings**Management**

The penultimate sentence and the need for improvement in *Publicity* can be removed.

Welfare and student services

The sentence referring to weaknesses in safety and security and the need for improvement in *Care of students* can be removed.

Safeguarding under 18s

This summary should be removed as the school no longer enrolls under 18s.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

There was no summary in the 2018 report.

New summary inspection findings**Management**

The provision meets the section standard. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals and values.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard. The premises provide students and staff with a comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. A range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students. Guidance on the use of these resources is provided for staff and students where needed.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers receive sufficient guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Courses are structured and managed to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The needs for pastoral care, information and leisure activities are met and students are given a good deal of individual, personal assistance. Accommodation is not offered.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2010
Last full inspection	2018
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	Teacher, head teacher and vocational principals' professional training programmes.
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: March
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	6	6
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	18
Typical age range	18–30	18–30
Typical length of stay	20–30 weeks	20–30 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	4
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile

Address of main site	BMI Building, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	BMI Building

Introduction

Background

Birmingham College was inspected in October 2018 and accreditation was put under review because the section standard for *Safeguarding under 18s* was not met and there were weaknesses in *Publicity* and *Care of students*.

Preparation

The school was contacted at the beginning of March to check availability of key staff and to request some documents. Documents were provided in advance by the Accreditation Unit and by the school. The website was checked. A proposed list of people to be seen was sent to the school.

Programme and persons present

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors and took place on 27 March starting at 09.00 with a tour of the building and finishing at 16.30 with a short feedback session. Meetings were held with the principal, the vice-principal/director of studies, the assistant director of studies, the school administrator and an administrative assistant, who is also a teacher. Focus group meetings were held with students and teachers and two teaching sessions were observed. Documents, including the *Birmingham College Strategic Development Plan*, the *Emergency Action Plan*, the school's *Action Plan in response to the points to be addressed*, the *Employee Handbook*, and personnel records, were scrutinised. Some spread sheets and other IT records were checked.

Findings

Safeguarding under 18s

The main finding was that the school management had decided to no longer enrol students under the age of 18 years. This decision was documented in the *Birmingham College Strategic Plan*, in minutes of meetings, and in the revised website and brochure.

Other findings are reported in the following section areas: *Publicity* and *Care of students*, and in the Action taken on the points to be addressed.

Publicity	Met
M22 All publicity and information is accurate, and gives rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.	Met
M23 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Met
M24 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Met
M25 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Met
M26 Publicity or other information made available before enrolment gives an accurate description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.	N/a
M27 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	N/a
M28 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Met
M29 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met
Comments	
All criteria in this area are fully met.	

Welfare and student services

Care of students	Met
W1 Providers ensure the safety and security of students on their premises by measures appropriate to their age and background, and the location.	Met
W2 There is a comprehensive plan to respond to any emergency. This plan is known to all staff, and relevant elements are known to students.	Met
W3 Students receive pastoral care appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. All staff and students know the name(s) of the person or people who deal with students' personal problems.	Met
W4 There are policies to promote tolerance and respect, and procedures for dealing with any abusive behaviour. All staff and students are aware of these.	Met
W5 Where relevant, students receive a 24-hour emergency contact number for the provider, in writing.	Met
W6 Students receive in advance information on the most appropriate forms of transport between the point of entry to the UK and the provider or accommodation, including approximate costs.	Met
W7 Students receive advice on relevant aspects of life in the UK.	Met
W8 Students have access to adequate health care provision.	Met
Comments	
All criteria in this area are fully met.	

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points which must be addressed before continued accreditation can be recommended

Safeguarding under 18s

S2 The designated safeguarding leads' training is out-of-date and none of the rest of the staff have basic level training.

S3 The parental consent form is written in language likely to be inaccessible to many parents/guardians. A current consent form revealed that there was no guardianship agreement in place for the two under 18s enrolled at the school.

S4 A teacher vacancy advertisement made no reference to the need for a suitability check, and a sampling of files

revealed that suitability checks have been accepted from previous employers with no further checks carried out by the school. Suitability checks are not renewed every three years.

S5 In their handbook, students are advised to stay in, or close to, the college reception areas, but this is not adhered to and there are no risk assessments for accessing the rest of the open-access building, to use the toilets, the café or other classrooms.

S6 There are no arrangements in place for the supervision and safety of under 18s outside class times.

S7 At the time of the inspection two 17 year-old sisters were living alone in a city centre flat without an appointed guardian and the school was not monitoring this.

Addressed:

The school no longer enrolls under 18s.

Points which must be addressed within three months

Management

M9 Safeguarding and pastoral responsibilities are not assigned to any roles.

Addressed:

Safeguarding for under 18s is no longer relevant; pastoral responsibilities are made clear in the school administrator's job description. Students were well aware of who to go to with regard to welfare matters.

M22 Photographs do not give rise to realistic expectations. Information about weekly excursions arranged by the teachers was not accurate at the time of the inspection.

Partially addressed:

The website, which covers activities other than English language provision, carries photographs of rooms and facilities in the BMI building which may only very occasionally be used by English language students. The English language courses brochure, however, shows photographs that are representative of provision for English language students.

M23 Information is not easy to find and it is often embedded in complex text that would not be accessible to speakers of English at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Addressed:

The website has been revised; information is easy to find and is in language accessible to speakers of English at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference.

M24 The outline descriptions of the courses do not include clear objectives and levels. Times of classes are not given. The stated maximum class size is not consistent.

Addressed:

Course outlines include clear objectives and levels. Times of classes and sample timetables are provided. The stated maximum class size is consistent.

M26 Descriptions of the level of care and support given to any students under 18 are not adequate. Publicity gives no information and the parental consent form is written in complex language that would not be accessible to speakers of English at level B1 of the CEFR.

Addressed:

The school no longer enrolls students under 18. The minimum age of 18 is clearly stated in general information and in the application section of the website.

Welfare and student services

W1 The school does not have fire risk assessments for the building, risk assessments for rooms used by the school do not show evidence of regular updating, and logs of fire drills were incomplete and incorrectly entered.

Addressed:

The school has a detailed building fire risk assessment; risk assessments for rooms used by the school have been updated since the last inspection; regular fire drills have taken place and logs are correctly entered.

W2 The procedures for a major incident lack detail regarding locating and communicating with students.

Addressed:

A full major incident plan was seen. It was detailed and included workable methods of locating and communicating with students.

W8 Information on health care provision is not provided in writing, and there is inadequate first aid provision.

Addressed:

Information on healthcare provision is available in writing on the website and in the *Student Handbook*. It is reinforced at induction. Two members of staff have received first aid training. At least one is always present in the school; one always accompanies students on excursions.

Legal and regulatory compliance

D1 There is no named health and safety officer.

Addressed:

The school has two named and trained health and safety officers.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M2 Plans are discussed and recorded in minutes of senior management meetings, but these are not developed or stated as clear objectives with measurable means of achieving goals.

Addressed:

The school has produced a detailed *Strategic Development Plan*, which includes a clear statement of objectives, measurable means to achieve them, a realistic assessment of risks, and ways to obviate them.

M7 Some points from the last inspection, particularly in publicity, have not yet been addressed.

Addressed:

See section area above.

M9 Job descriptions are not regularly reviewed or kept up-to-date.

Addressed:

Records show that all job descriptions have been reviewed and are up-to-date.

M12 Several members of staff and management have not had an annual appraisal as stated in the policy.

Addressed:

Records show that all staff, apart from one who is on maternity leave, have been appraised.

M29 The school is described as being 'a member of Accreditation UK' and the sign at the entrance to the school uses an old marque without the correct wording.

Addressed:

The school uses the correct Accreditation Scheme marque in all publicity.

Teaching and learning

T13 Intended learning outcomes are not available to students.

Addressed:

Weekly plans stating intended learning outcomes are provided for students.

T27 In some segments, boardwork was unplanned and not well organised.

Addressed:

Teachers have taken part in an in-house continuing professional development session on improving boardwork.

T28 There was very limited error correction overall, with many missed opportunities, particularly in pronunciation.

Addressed:

Teachers have taken part in an in-house continuing professional development session on error correction. It is particularly noted in peer observation sessions.

Welfare and student services

W6 There is no indication of approximate costs of the various travel options from point of entry to the provider.

Addressed:

The website pre-arrival information indicates approximate costs of various travel options from point of entry to the provider. It is reinforced through attachments to the confirmation of course letter.

W26 Risk assessments for excursions are not regularly updated, or referred to, and risks, and the procedures for mitigating against them, are not always clear.

Addressed:

Up-to-date, completed risk assessments were seen for the latest and the forthcoming excursion.
