

Organisation name	Brighton Metropolitan College
Inspection date	14 March 2024
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: extend accreditation (following changes)

Recommendation

We recommend continuation of the extension of accreditation pending a full inspection of the provision within 12 months.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection and updating the name change of the college and reference to adults 16+.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Brighton Metropolitan College in April 2018 and March 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).

The English language teaching department of this college of further education offers courses in general and academic English for adults (18+), young people (16+) and for closed groups (16+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, learning resources, academic staff profile, academic management, teaching, and care of students.

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	1997
Last full inspection	April 2018
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	Chichester College Group also has an accredited centre, Chichester English Language School, on the Chichester College Campus
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Worthing College, part of the CCG has international students on High School Programmes. It is not accredited.

Student and staff profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak: September
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	1	17
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	16	16
Typical age range	17–24	17–24
Typical length of stay	1 academic year	4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Chinese	Danish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	1	2

Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Brighton Metropolitan College Pelham Street Brighton East Sussex BN1 4FA
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Brighton Metropolitan College Pelham Street Brighton East Sussex BN1 4FA

Introduction

Background

The last full inspection of Greater Brighton Metropolitan College took place in April 2018. In September 2022 the college merged with Chichester College Group (CCG) and changed its name to Brighton Metropolitan College (BMET). CCG is made up of seven colleges across West Sussex with the main centre in Chichester where there is a large English language provision that is separately accredited by the scheme. Group strategy is to differentiate English language provision across the group, grow student numbers at BMET and maintain its separate accreditation. As BMET is a centre of the Creative Arts and offers an international foundation course in Art and Design (IFAD) the group strategy is for the college to focus on ESP in this area, as well as offering short course provision for closed groups.

Since the merger, student numbers at BMET have been very small with only one student studying English language for two hours a week on the IFAD this academic year and a four-week closed group course for 16 students in September 2023. As a full re-inspection was inappropriate within this context, a spot check was arranged to ensure that appropriate systems are still in place from the last inspection until a full re-inspection can take place.

Preparation

The spot check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and a set of Stage 2 documents by the college. The inspector also had an online meeting with the director of studies (DoS) prior to the visit and sent a proposed schedule. Stage 3 documents were provided on arrival.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 9.00 and left at 15.00. Meetings were held with the head of international CCG, the director of studies CCG, the head of accommodation CCG and the international course and welfare officer BMET. An online meeting was held with the director of safeguarding CCG and the teacher. No teaching was taking place on the day of the spot check so no teaching was observed. The one student enrolled was not available for a meeting.

Findings

Management

There is a very clear strategic plan for BMET that involves growth of the IFAD provision over the coming years (as mentioned above). The head of international, who is TEFLQ, is leading on this plan group-wide and line manages the director of studies (DoS). With current ELT operations being very small, a pared-back staffing level is in place while the college regroups and recruits for a new intake of learners for September 2024. New appointments have been defined including a deputy group director who will lead on new product development, standardisation and curriculum development. In the interim, the ELT operation is being managed by the DoS from Chichester. Staff are aware of reporting lines and roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions and contracts have recently been reviewed and renewed. Evidence was seen of regular meetings and communications between the DoS, the teacher, staff from the IFAD team, the course and welfare officer and the head of international. Staff felt well supported and had appropriate development opportunities. All systems have been standardised across campuses with BMET now using the same processes and systems as other CCG campuses, and there are robust performance management and appraisal systems in place. The HR system is currently undergoing a refresh with a new group wide solution to

be rolled out in April 2024. Student administration is handled effectively by the international student admissions team.

Premises and resources

The BMET campus is in central Brighton (Pelham Street) and consists of an 11-storey 1950's tower block, Pelham Tower. At the last inspection the college also owned two Victorian former schools, across a narrow street but these have been sold. The international department is situated on the second floor of the tower block, and all English classes in Brighton are located in this building. The reception area and student services are on the ground floor, a café and cafeteria on the first floor, and the learning resource centre and the international office on the second floor. Students and staff also have access to a training restaurant and beauty salons. The building is currently undergoing major structural work due to cladding issues. This work will be completed by the summer of 2024.

Teaching and learning

The director of studies at BMET left in October 2023 and since then, academic management has been overseen by the DoS at Chichester College. The one student who is studying English two hours a week at BMET has been taught by a teacher who is a member of the team at Chichester College and therefore has ongoing support and guidance from the DoS and other colleagues. Cover is provided by the DoS. The curriculum for the art and design English provision was designed in collaboration with art and design specialists and the teacher works closely with these colleagues to deliver appropriate and specific learning outcomes. Review and learner management processes are in place. A plan is in place to recruit a new director of studies for BMET and a team of teachers in the next six months as numbers are expected grow for the September intake of the IFAD.

Welfare and student services

The international courses and welfare officer at BMET is the main point of contact for welfare issues. She is also responsible for all aspects of international student safety and security, pre- and post-arrival information and support, and liaises with the central accommodation team at Chichester for the placement of students with homestay hosts. The central accommodation team in Chichester manages the recruitment, checking, monitoring and placement processes. Currently there are two homestay hosts on the BMET books and the current student is staying with one of them. There is no residential accommodation available for students at BMET. There is a college-wide sports and social programme which provides opportunities for international students to mix with UK students.

Safeguarding under 18s

The current student studying English language at BMET is over 18. There is a group director of safeguarding and well-being and a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) at BMET. The head of accommodation is the DSL for all international students and liaises with the DSL at BMET. All staff receive safeguarding training and DSLs receive level three safeguarding training and home office Prevent training.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

Not checked as part of this spot check.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points from the previous full inspection with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

Points which must be addressed within three months

Evidence of action taken to address W11 and S4 was received and accepted by the Accreditation Scheme Advisory Committee in October 2018.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M20 The conditions and procedures leading to a student being asked to leave a course are insufficiently transparent.

Addressed. A clear explanation is now in the student handbook.

M21 The complaints procedure is insufficiently clear. There was no evidence that parents/guardians are made aware of the procedure.

Partially addressed. The complaints procedure is clear. Evidence that parents/guardians are made aware of the procedure was not checked.

M22 The description of facilities applies to all campuses and may therefore be misleading in relation to the two campuses where English is taught to international students.

This is no longer applicable.

M23 The more general sections of the prospectus and website which are aimed at all international students may not be easily accessible to students with limited English proficiency.

Addressed. Language has been simplified and made clearer for students with limited English proficiency.

M24 There is little information on course content.

Addressed. Students receive detailed schemes of work.

M28 The prospectus describes teachers as 'fully qualified'. This was not an accurate description of all teachers employed at the time of the inspection.

Addressed. The prospectus describes teachers as 'qualified'. This is an accurate description of the teachers employed at the time of inspection.

Welfare and student services

W7 Much of the language used in the one-page information leaflets is unnecessarily complex for international students.

This is no longer applicable.

W12 Information on the approximate cost of transport to and from the college is not included in the personalised information received by the student.

Addressed. Approximate costs are now in the pre-arrival information.

Conclusions

The college has been through a major change process and experienced a severe drop in student numbers but has clear plans to grow its provision by September 2024. The spot check has identified that the college is maintaining the standards as set out in the last inspection report and that it would therefore be advisable to postpone a full re-inspection until next academic year when the provision has grown.
