

Organisation name	BSC Edinburgh
Inspection date	5–6 November 2024

Section standards	
Management The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals, values, and publicity.	Met
Premises and resources The premises provide students and staff with a safe, 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.	Met
Teaching and learning 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 meets the requirements of the Scheme.	Met
Welfare and student services The provision meets the needs of the students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including, where offered, out-of-class activities and suitable accommodation.	Met
Safeguarding under 18s There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in any leisure activities or accommodation provided.	Met

Recommendation

We recommend accreditation with a spot check in the first 18 months.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited BSC Edinburgh in November 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 small private language school offers courses in general English for adults (18+) and young people (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, staff management, student administration, learner management, and teaching.

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

Introduction

BSC Edinburgh forms part of the BSC Education group with accredited schools in Brighton, London, Manchester and York. The group also holds separate accreditation for Young Learners English language courses. The previous school located in Edinburgh was closed in 2020. A new company was formed in 2020 and the current Edinburgh centre was opened in new premises in the summer of 2023. Accreditation was granted by extension from the BSC Manchester school in December 2023. A spot check was carried out in February 2024 and recommended a full inspection within 12 months.

The inspection took place over a day and a half with two inspectors. All three teachers timetabled during the inspection were observed twice and inspectors held focus groups with staff and students. Meetings were held (some online) with the managing director, director of global operations, college manager, group director of people and performance, compliance and safeguarding manager, director of marketing, admissions and accommodation manager, director of customer experience and service delivery, lead teacher and student experience facilitator. One inspector visited one student residence and spoke to the homestay agency.

Address of main site/head office

26 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh EH12 5AL

Description of sites visited/observed

The school is situated in a building near Haymarket Station in Central Edinburgh. BSC has sole occupancy of the building. The ground floor/entrance area comprises the reception, the 'welcome hub', a seating/relaxation area for students, two classrooms, a toilet and a kitchenette area with fresh water for student use. The lower ground floor comprises three further classrooms (one of which doubles as a quiet room), toilets, kitchenette, storage space and access to an enclosed rear garden area with outside seating. The staffroom or 'team room' is situated on the first floor with a cupboard of teaching resources. Two more classrooms, toilets and a staff kitchen are on this floor. The top floor has three classrooms. The school has ten classrooms of varying sizes in total.

Course profile	Year	round	Vacatio	on only
	Run	Seen	Run	Seen
General ELT for adults (18+)				
General ELT for adults (18+) and young people (16+)	\boxtimes	\boxtimes		
General ELT for juniors (under 18)	\boxtimes			
English for academic purposes (excludes IELTS preparation)				
English for specific purposes (includes English for Executives)				
Applied English/Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)				
Teacher development (excludes award-bearing courses)				
ESOL skills for life/for citizenship				
Other				
Comments	•	•		

The school offers general English, IELTS preparation courses and closed group courses for groups of under 18s.

Management profile

Overall management of the school lies with the college manager, who divides his time between the Manchester and Edinburgh schools. He is supported by the lead teacher and the student experience facilitator.

Accommodation profile

The main accommodation offering is homestay accommodation in partnership with an accommodation agency registered with the British Council. At the time of the inspection fourteen adult and four under 18 students were staying in homestay accommodation. On request, BSC Edinburgh can try to find rooms in privately run student residential accommodation. At the time of the inspection two adult students were staying in a private residence, located approximately 15 minutes' walk from the school.

Summary of inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's clearly stated goals, well-defined values, and publicity. Staff benefit from clear procedures and extensive development opportunities. Student administration is very well managed. *Strategic and quality management, Staff management* and *Student administration* are areas of strength.

Premises and resources

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

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. 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 very 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. *Learner management* and *Teaching* are areas of strength.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The welfare and security of students is ensured in a practical and sensitive manner; accommodation is of a good standard and well managed. The leisure programme provides a mixture of appropriate activities.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. There are effective policies and procedures in place to safeguard students under the age of 18 within the organisation. Procedures are clear and robust and encompass accommodation and leisure activities.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Evidence

Management

Area of strength
Strength
Strength
Met
Met
Strength
Strength
Strength

Comments

M1 There is a very clear statement describing the goals and values of the organisation, which was created in consultation with all the schools and staff. All staff are aware of the statement, and it runs through the school's operations, including the staff appraisal systems.

M2 Very explicit plans are in place for the Edinburgh school, with sensible and well-planned objectives, which are in line with company-wide goals.

M5 Systems to obtain feedback from students at various points in the course are robust. There is evidence of how this feedback is logged and relevant action taken.

M6 Staff have many opportunities to provide feedback on the school's operations and services, including regular meetings, appraisals and forms. The school regularly seeks feedback on new courses and changes within the organisation.

M7 Reviews of systems, processes and practices are regular and robust. There is evidence of views of all relevant stakeholders being considered in these reviews.

Staff management and development	Area of strength
M8 The provider implements appropriate human resources policies, which are made known to staff.	Met
M9 The provider specifies the duties of all staff working with ELT students, and ensures that these are up to date.	Met
M10 There are effective procedures for the recruitment and selection of all staff.	Met
M11 There are effective induction procedures for all staff.	Strength
M12 There are effective procedures for monitoring and appraising all staff, for highlighting good performance, and for handling unsatisfactory performance or conduct. These procedures are made known to all staff.	Strength
M13 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of all staff to meet the needs of the individual, the students and the organisation.	Strength

Comments

M11 Induction procedures are extensive and provide useful and comprehensive information for new staff, who also receive on-going support when they are new to their roles.

M12 Appraisal procedures are very efficient and there is a clear link to CPD and development goals for every member of staff.

M13 Staff have extensive CPD opportunities. The internal professional development is detailed and includes mentorship, a leadership programme and regular workshops and other training. External training opportunities include study support.

Student administration	Area of strength
M14 Staff are helpful and courteous to students and their representatives, and provide good levels of customer service.	Strength
M15 Students or their representatives receive sufficient information and advice on their course choices before arrival and during their stay.	Met
M16 There are clear systems in place to enrol students effectively and maintain accurate information about student payment and course details. This information is readily accessible to relevant staff.	Strength
M17 There are effective systems to maintain up-to-date and accessible records of local contact details for students, and their designated emergency contacts.	Met
M18 There is a clear and effective policy on student attendance and punctuality that is known to all staff and students and is applied consistently.	Met
M19 All staff and students are made aware of conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course.	Met
M20 All students and, where appropriate, group leaders and parents/legal guardians, receive information in writing about who to see about problems and how to make a complaint.	Strength
Commente	•

Comments

M14 Staff are helpful and courteous. Students interviewed spoke very positively about the support they receive from administration staff.

M16 Systems to enrol students are very effective and well managed, with fail safes to ensure all student records are always complete.

M20 Information on how to make a complaint is very clear. Systems to log complaints and action taken are robust.

Publicity	Met
M21 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
M22 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Met
M23 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Met
M24 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Met

M25 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.	Met
M26 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	Not met
M27 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Met
M28 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met

The website is the main publicity. This is supplemented by a prospectus, price list, a brochure and various social media.

M26 Some information on the homestay provision was missing and there was no information on a student residence which was being used.

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Providers ensure the safety and security of students on their premises by measures _ appropriate to their age and background, and the location.	Met
P2 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
P3 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Strength
P4 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display or sharing of general information.	Met
P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for work, meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions.	Met

Comments

P2 The premises are in a very good state of repair; they offer a comfortable and professional environment for students and staff.

P3 Classrooms are all spacious, well laid out and provide opportunities for alternative seating configurations.

Learning resources	Met
P7 There are sufficient learning resources for classroom use for the number of students enrolled, appropriate to their age and the level, length and type of courses offered.	Met
P8 There are appropriate resources for teachers, which are adequate in number, accessible, and well maintained and organised.	Met
P9 Any educational technology inside the classroom and elsewhere is well maintained with adequate technical support. Staff receive appropriate training in using the available technology to support learning.	Met
P10 Students have access to resources for independent learning, relevant to their learning aims and expectations.	Strength
P11 There is a policy for the continuing review and development of teaching and learning resources, and evidence of its implementation.	Met
Comments	

Comments

P10 Students have access to extensive self-study opportunities through the school's app and virtual learning environment.

Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile

T1 There is a clear recruitment and support policy for the academic team relevant to the stated course objectives and student profile.

Met

T2 The academic manager/academic management team has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership.

T3 The teaching team has ELT/TESOL qualifications, general level of education, experience, knowledge and skills relevant to the courses they are teaching.

The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is appropriate to the school's context. The recruitment and support policy is effectively devised and implemented in line with the stated course objectives and the student profile.

Academic management	Met
T4 Teachers are matched appropriately to courses and there are effective procedures for the appropriate timetabling of students, courses and classrooms.	Met
T5 There are formalised arrangements for covering for absent teachers which are satisfactory to students and staff.	Met
T6 Where enrolment is continuous, explicit attention is paid to all aspects of academic management affected.	Met
T7 There are effective arrangements for the academic induction of new teachers appropriate to their needs.	Met
T8 There are effective arrangements, led by an academic manager, to ensure appropriate day-to-day guidance and support for all teachers.	Met
T9 There are effective arrangements for the observation and monitoring of teachers' performance by a TEFLQ academic manager based on clear standards known to teachers.	Met
T10 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of all teachers to meet the needs of the individual teachers, the students, and the organisation.	Strength
Comments	

Comments

T10 The teaching team has extensive CPD opportunities, including regular in-house workshops, funded courses and a system to encourage staff to present at teaching conferences.

Course design and implementation	Met
T11 The course design is comprehensive and is based on the provider's stated approach to learning or educational philosophy, and is appropriate to the learning context.	Met
T12 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.	Met
T13 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.	Met
T14 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students and referred to in class.	Met
Comments	

All criteria in this area are fully met.

Learner management	Area of strength
T15 There are effective procedures for the correct placement of students, appropriate to their level and age.	Met
T16 There are effective procedures for evaluating, monitoring and recording students' progress.	Strength
T17 Students are helped to identify their learning needs and receive support to meet course objectives.	Strength
T18 Where relevant, students are guided to select the examinations and examination training best suited to their needs and interests. Students wishing to progress to mainstream UK education have access to relevant information and advice.	Met

Comments

T16 Student progress is evaluated regularly with weekly tests. Results are recorded and monitored well through the schools' app which feeds into student tutorials.

T17 Students undergo needs analysis at the beginning of their course. Very regular tutorials provide a good opportunity to revisit learning needs and provide support.

Classroom observation record

Number of teachers seen	3
Number of observations	6

All teachers scheduled to teach in the week of the inspection were observed twice (once by each inspector).

Teaching: classroom observation	Area of strength
T19 Teachers produce accurate models of spoken and written English; they provide clear explanations and relevant examples of language and usage, that are appropriate to the aims of the lesson and suitable for the students' level.	Strength
T20 The content of the lessons is based on the overall course objectives and takes into account the differing students' needs and backgrounds.	Met
T21 The intended learning outcomes of lessons are made known to students, and are achieved through an appropriate sequence of activities.	Met
T22 Teaching techniques used are appropriate to the focus of the lesson, to the context, and to the needs of the group and individual learners.	Strength
T23 Teachers enhance learning by effectively managing the classroom environment and teaching and learning resources.	Strength
T24 Students receive and benefit from appropriate and timely feedback on their performance during the lesson.	Met
T25 Lessons include activities for teachers and students to evaluate whether learning is taking place.	Met
T26 Teachers promote a positive and inclusive learning atmosphere and students are engaged in the lesson.	Strength
Commente	

Comments

T19 Language used by teachers was appropriate to the students' level. Examples and explanations were relevant and concise. Models of pronunciation were provided for individual words and parts of speech were indicated, supported by phonemic script and stress marks. Teachers helped develop emergent language and encouraged learners to consider similarities and differences between English and the students' own language. T20 Topics and materials selected were appropriate in all lessons. Lesson plans were based on course objectives and scheme of work. Some content of lessons was based on student requests. Plans identified basic learning needs and potential issues in lessons. Timings of activities in the lesson plan were realistic. Differentiation was built into some lessons.

T21 Learning outcomes were expressed well, for the most part. There was a clear link between learning outcomes and activities. Potential difficulties were identified and pre-empted.

T22 Confident use of techniques to present and practise language in an engaging way which are appropriate to the course context was observed. The wide range of techniques included concept checking, effective elicitation and questioning, nomination, instruction-giving and checking understanding of tasks.

T23 Teachers controlled the learning environment well, including seating arrangements. They made good use of learning resources, including interactive whiteboards, whiteboards, coursebooks and handouts.

T24 Teachers monitored students' performance during activities and corrected students' language, including pronunciation, and gave useful feedback to students on their performance during the lessons. On the spot and peer correction and feedback were observed.

T25 Activities were included to give students opportunities to see how well they could perform against learning outcomes.

T26 Teachers built rapport and trust with learners. Whole-class, group and pairwork activities were set up and managed effectively. Student talking time was maximised Students' knowledge, experience and interests were drawn upon. Teachers actively listened to and acknowledged students' contributions.

Welfare and student services

Care of students	Met
W1 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
W2 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.	Strength
W3 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
W4 Where relevant, students receive a 24-hour emergency contact number for the provider, in writing.	Met

W5 Students receive advice on relevant aspects of travel to and life in the UK.	Met
W6 Students have access to adequate health care provision.	Met

W2 Pastoral care for students features strongly throughout the school; it was clear that all staff understood they had a part to play in the well-being of students, regardless of their job. Posters encouraging students to talk about any problems and who they should talk to are displayed throughout the school; all students spoken to in the focus groups said they felt very well looked after and knew who to go to with any issues.

Accommodation (W7–W18 as applicable)	Met
All accommodation	
W7 Students have a comfortable living environment throughout their stay.	Met
W8 Arrangements for cleaning and laundry are satisfactory.	Met
W9 A responsible representative inspects all accommodation (for safety and suitability) before students are placed, and at least every two years after that.	Met
W10 Students receive written confirmation of accommodation booked, giving clear and accurate information.	Met
W11 There are effective procedures for identifying and resolving any problems students have with their accommodation.	Met
W12 Accommodation providers receive written confirmation of the rules, terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services.	Met
W13 Students receive meals as agreed; these offer a well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements students may have.	Met
Comments	

All criteria in this area are fully met.

Accommodation: homestay only	
W14 Homestay hosts comply with the agreed terms and conditions for student placements.	Met
W15 Homestay placements encourage students to use English.	Met
W16 Hosts ensure that there is an adult available to receive students on first arrival.	Met
Comments	

All criteria in this area are fully met.

Accommodation: other	
W17 Students receive information about the implications of their living in private rented accommodation and advice in case of difficulties.	Met
W18 The provider monitors any other accommodation recommended, and booking and payment arrangements are clear.	Met
Comments	

Both criteria in this area are fully met.

Leisure opportunities	Met
W19 Students have appropriate information about and access to social, cultural and sporting events and activities which enhance their experience of studying in the UK.	Strength
W20 The content of any leisure programme is appropriate to the age and interests of the students.	Strength
W21 Any leisure programmes are well organised and sufficiently resourced.	Met
W22 There are effective systems to ensure the health and safety of students on all on-site and off-site activities.	Met
W23 Staff supervising sporting and leisure activities on or off-site have appropriate experience, support and training.	Met

W19 Alongside an attractive handbook about what to do in Edinburgh throughout the year, students are given upto-date information about what is happening in the local area, including messaging group alerts about local events and festivals. They are also given help to book tickets for events or travel when needed.

W20 The content of the leisure programme has been well thought through and offers something for everyone. Plans for each activity are thorough and focus on the different interests of the students. Students in the focus group were very happy with the types of activities offered.

Safeguarding under 18s

Met
Not met
Strength
Met

Comments

Students aged 16 and 17 are accepted on adult courses. There were four students aged 16–17 enrolled at the time of the inspection. Closed groups of juniors with group leaders are also accepted.

S1 The safeguarding policy is generally a comprehensive, accurate and very well-written document with evidence of specialist input. However, at the time of inspection it did not contain information on how to handle delayed suitability checks and information about the DSL was incorrect. These were amended at the inspection and S1 is no longer a point to be addressed.

S2 The safeguarding policy is issued to all staff at induction or when it has been reviewed and updated. Safeguarding scenarios form part of the interview process and all staff complete online training which is regularly updated. Homestay hosts are also required to undergo online basic level safeguarding organised by the registered accommodation agency.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

D1 The organisation certifies that it operates at all times in accordance with the declarations in the *Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance*.

The Accreditation Scheme requires accredited providers to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Providers must take steps to ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, all existing and new legal requirements.

On initial application and annual renewal of accreditation, providers are required to confirm that they are complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

Inspectors will check a random sample of items during inspection, in relation to criterion D1; if they find evidence of a breach of statutory or other legal requirements, the provider will be required to submit evidence of compliance confirmed by the appropriate regulatory body.

Any breach of the law or regulations will be viewed seriously by the Scheme and may result in the withdrawal or withholding of accreditation.

Any sustained breach of the law or regulations which an accredited provider fails upon reasonable notice to remedy will result in accreditation being withdrawn.

D1 The items sampled were satisfactory.

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	November 2024
Last full inspection	N/a
Initial spot check	12 February 2024
Current accreditation status	Accredited by extension
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	Exam preparation classes for overseas medical professionals
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	BSC Brighton, BSC London, BSC Manchester, BSC York, BSC Education Young Learners
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	BSC Education colleges in Malta and Thailand

Private sector

Date of foundation	2020
Ownership	Name of company: BSC Education Ltd Company number: 12655362
Other accreditation/inspection	N/a

Premises profile

Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the	N/a
inspection but not visited/observed	
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of	N/a
the inspection	

Student profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	At inspection	June
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) 18 years and over	17	9
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged 16–17 years	4	18
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged under 16	0	12
Part-time ELT aged 18 years and over	0	0
Part-time ELT aged 16–17 years	0	0
Part-time ELT aged under 16 years	0	0
Overall total ELT/ESOL students shown above	21	39
Adult programmes: advertised minimum age	16	16
Adult programmes: typical age range	17–18	18–22
Adult programmes: typical length of stay	28 weeks	12 weeks
Adult programmes: predominant nationalities	Omani	Saudi Arabian
Junior programmes: advertised minimum age	8	8
Junior programmes: advertised maximum age	17	17
Junior programmes: typical length of stay	N/a	2 weeks
Junior programmes: predominant nationalities	N/a	Chinese

Staff profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	4
Number teaching ELT 20 hours and over a week	1	
Number teaching ELT under 20 hours a week	2	
Number of academic managers for eligible ELT courses	1	1
Number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff working on eligible ELT courses	0	
Total number of support staff	0	

Academic manager qualifications profile

Profile at inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of academic managers
TEFLQ qualification and at least three years' full-time relevant teaching experience	1
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or three years' relevant experience	0
Total	1
Quere and a	

Comments

The academic manager (college manager) was not scheduled to teach during the week of the inspection and does not normally have set teaching hours.

Teacher qualifications profile

Profile in week of inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of teachers
TEFLQ qualification/profile	0
TEFLI qualification	3
ATEFL portfolio in progress	0
Non-ELT-related qualified teacher status only (for short courses for under 18s)	0
Holding specialist qualifications only (for ESP/CLIL)	0
Alternative professional profile	0
Total	3
Comments	
None.	

Accommodation profile.

Number of students in each at the time of inspection (all s	tudents on eligible courses)	
Types of accommodation	Adults	Under 18s
Arranged by provider/agency		
Homestay	14	4
Private home	1	N/a
Home tuition	N/a	N/a
Residential	2	N/a
Hotel/guesthouse	N/a	N/a
Independent self-catering e.g. flats, bedsits, student houses	N/a	N/a
Arranged by student/family/guardian		
Staying with own family	N/a	N/a
Staying in privately rented rooms/flats	N/a	N/a
Overall totals adults/under 18s	17	4
Overall total adults + under 18s	21	