

Organisation name	British Study Centres, London
Inspection date	4 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 2026; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in accommodation have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

The need for improvement in course design can now be removed.

An area of strength can be added for premises and facilities.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited British Study Centres London in February 2022 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 adults (18+) and young people (16+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The school premises provide a very comfortable environment for staff and students for both study and relaxation and are in an excellent state of maintenance and cleanliness. There is an adequate range of resources for teachers. *Premises and facilities* is an area of strength.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. The profile of the academic team is suitable, and teachers are effectively supported. Sufficient guidance is offered to students regarding their learning inside and out of the classroom and to those students wishing to follow examination courses or enter mainstream UK education. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2004
Last full inspection	February 2022
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	International Foundation Year (ISI)
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	BSC York, Manchester, BSC Young Learners
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	BSC Brighton, BSC Edinburgh

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: February
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	28	65
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	16	16
Typical age range	16–35	20–40
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Brazilian, Saudi Arabian	Thai, Brazilian, Saudi Arabian, Italian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	7
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	3	5

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Staple Inn, North Building, London WC1V 7PZ
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Staple Inn, North Building, London WC1V 7PZ

Introduction

Background

This was a spot check to inspect the new premises of BSC London, following its move from the previous premises in Bear Gardens, London. The move took place on 6 June 2022. The new site is used for teaching and administration purposes.

Preparation

The spot check was carried out by one inspector, who had not been involved in the full inspection of February 2022. 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 BSC London website.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 11.00 and left at 15.00. He had meetings with the college manager (CM) and the compliance manager, and took the opportunity to check information presented regarding action taken since the previous inspection. Separate meetings were held with a group of students and a group of teachers. The CM 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.

Management

The following changes to the management of school have taken place since the last inspection. A new director of studies (DoS) was appointed in August 2022 and ran the school alongside the student experience manager. In March 2023 BSC went through a restructure and the DoS was appointed as the college manager (CM). At the time of inspection, the CM had overall responsibility for the school, supported locally by a lead teacher and a student experience lead facilitator. In addition, they are supported at a group-wide level by the compliance manager (who is based at the school twice per week), operations manager, head of operations and mobilisation, and at board level, the director of global operations and academic delivery and the group academic director.

Premises and resources

The school has relocated to a building near Holborn in Central London. BSC has sole occupancy of the building. The school occupies all five floors of the building. The ground floor comprises the entrance area which leads to a staircase which serves the remaining floors.

On the first floor there is a reception area which includes the administrative functions of the school and a kitchenette available for staff and students to use. The first floor also has a student common room and one classroom.

Floors two to four each have three classrooms holding 10–14 students per room, making a total of ten classrooms. The school's capacity is 120. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and whiteboards. The fourth floor also has a multifaith prayer and reflection room.

On the fifth floor there are some storage areas as well as the teachers' room with copying facilities, computers and a microwave oven for teachers' use.

There are a total of five unisex toilets on the stairwell between floors.

Welfare and student services

During the student focus group meeting, two students made some serious complaints about their homestay accommodation including the fact that they had to share a bed, that the homestay was dirty and that the homestay host was extremely unwelcoming. The school was aware of some, but not all of these issues, and offered the students the opportunity to change homestays, but the students had chosen to remain in their homestay for the remainder of their stay. There was no evidence that the provider has made concerns known to the accommodation agency. The complaints of the students have been noted in the 'New points to be addressed arising from this visit' section below.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Area of strength
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.	Met
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.	Strength
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.	Strength
Comments	
P1 The premises are in a very good state of repair and cleanliness. There is daily cleaning, as well as cleanliness checks during the school day, and occasional deep cleans at the weekend. The facilities manager carries out maintenance checks at least weekly to ensure that the premises are very well maintained.	
P5 Signage is very clear, visually attractive, informative and up to date. In addition there is a very useful digital display in the student common room. Signage around the building is used to promote wellbeing, safety, language learning and the overall student experience.	
P6 There is a quiet spacious teachers' room with sufficient workspace for all and good resources and facilities. Teachers commented positively about the space available to them.	

Teaching and learning

Course design and implementation	Met
T11 Course design is based on stated principles. There is a coherent and appropriate course structure described in writing for teachers' guidance.	Met
T12 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.	Met
T13 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students.	Met
T14 Any activities additional to English classes, and which form part of the language curriculum, encourage the acquisition of language and the development of relevant language skills.	Met
T15 Courses include study and learning strategies that support independent learning and enable students to benefit from their programmes and continue their learning after the course.	Met
T16 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.	Met

Comments

Notes below are on 'not met' criteria from previous report. All other criteria remain 'met'.

T11 Induction now includes guidance for teachers on the planning and delivery of the afternoon skills courses. This is backed up by advice on the shared teachers drive to ensure that they have sufficient initial and ongoing advice.

T13 Weekly plans with explicitly stated learning outcomes are posted by teachers on the BSC online learning platform. Students reported that they were accessing weekly plans through this platform.

T15 A learning strategies syllabus has been developed and published on the shared teachers drive. Teachers have been made aware of this resource through induction and continuing professional development.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points from the previous full inspection and/or subsequent spot checks or interim visits with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed. Only points reviewed during this spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.

Management

M9 Job descriptions do not currently reflect the scope and range of responsibilities of the post holders.

Not yet addressed. While job descriptions have been updated, safeguarding responsibilities are not clearly defined and described within them.

M11 Systems are not currently in place for the induction of administrative staff.

Addressed. There is a formal induction planned and delivered now for all administrative staff.

M22 The description of facilities on the website could lead to the impression that the school has sole occupancy of the premises and the total number of classrooms it holds.

Addressed. The school now has sole occupancy of the premises, and the website gives a realistic impression of premises and facilities.

M27 Information on accommodation does not include that there will be no more than three other students staying with a homestay.

Not yet addressed.

Teaching and learning

T8 Insufficient guidance is available for teachers on how to successfully integrate new students into a class and how to ensure existing students remain motivated during these phases of a lesson.

Addressed. Teachers receive advice in regard to continuous enrolment through professional development sessions and guidance through a helpful document which is stored on the teachers shared drive.

Welfare and student services

W2 The emergency plan does not provide clear channels of communication and responsibility or specific plans such as 'lockdown' procedures in the event of an intruder.

Addressed. The emergency plan now includes clear communication and responsibility lines, as well as plans for possible scenarios including 'lockdown' procedures.

W11 There are no records of an inspection of the student residence.

Addressed. The residence has been inspected twice since the last inspection, and will be inspected at least annually.

W21 There are no formalised systems or documents for providing advice and support with regards to the renting of private accommodation, despite a large number of their students choosing to do so.

Not yet addressed.

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 There are a number of different safeguarding policies in place with the potential for confusion and delays in accessing crucial information.

Addressed. The safeguarding policy has been updated and is now the only one in place. Staff induction includes reference to the policy, and all staff must have read and understood the policy before starting work with the school.

S6 The school does not currently reserve the right to reject requests for overnight stays nor does it have any systems in place to check on the safety or suitability of such trips.

Addressed. The consent form, signed before students arrive at the school, makes it clear that overnight trips are approved at the discretion of the school.

Conclusions

The new building provides highly suitable premises and facilities for staff and students. The school has addressed the weaknesses identified in the area of course design and has made satisfactory progress in rectifying other points raised in the previous report.