

Organisation name	EngXcel, Cambridge
Inspection date	3–4 October 2022
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: monitor effect of change; inspect new or additional premises; newly accredited institution

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2025. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in S3 have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

The change of name and the date of the spot check inspection can be added. An area of strength can be added for premises and facilities.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited EngXcel, Cambridge, in July 2021 and October 2022. 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 and professional English for adults (18+) and young people (16+), under 18s, closed groups of under 18s, and vacation courses for adults (18+) and under 18s in school premises and online.

Strengths were noted in the area of premises and facilities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard. There is a detailed strategic plan for the future of the school, and quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. There are appropriate policies and procedures for staff recruitment, induction and development, and for student administration. Publicity is well presented and gives rise to realistic expectations.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The premises and facilities used by the organisation are of a high standard. There is an appropriate range of resources for teachers, and educational technology is well maintained. *Premises and facilities* is an area of strength.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and 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 the benefit of students. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The needs of students for safety and security are met. Appropriate information is provided to students about aspects of life in the UK. Homestay accommodation is well managed. The school provides students with information about local cultural, social and sporting activities and either offers its own social programme or facilitates arrangements with the group leaders of closed groups.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. 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.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	July 2021 (as ABC Cambridge)
Last full inspection	July 2021 (as ABC Cambridge)
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	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	EngXcel provides the English language teaching for Experio Summer which runs an International Summer School in partnership with Bishop Stortford College at Bishop Stortford College.

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	63	197 (of which 160 at Bishop Stortford College)
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	16	5
Typical age range	16–17	13–17
Typical length of stay	1–3 weeks	1–3 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Austrian	Argentinian, Italian, Hungarian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	14
Total number of managers including academic	2	3
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	2

Premises profile

Address of office	115 Fitzgerald Place, Cambridge CB4 1WA
Site in use	Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, Cambridge CB1 1PT
Additional sites not in use	Chesterton Community College, Gilbert Road, Cambridge CB4 3NY; Bishops Stortford College, Maze Green Road, Bishop Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 2PQ
Site inspected	Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)

Introduction

Background

The organisation was first inspected as ABC Cambridge in July 2021. At this time, only online lessons were taking place so premises could only be inspected via video. Accommodation was being arranged directly by the organisation; it is now arranged by an accommodation agency. The liquidation in November 2021 of Group Study Holidays Ltd (9660364) trading as ABC Cambridge and the transfer of activities to EngXcel Ltd (13642156) was reported to the Accreditation Unit and reviewed by the Accreditation UK Board. In April 2022 accreditation was transferred for a limited period of six months, during which a follow-up inspection was to take place.

The organisation no longer has a separate head office. The operation is run remotely from the residence of the managing director, and teaching premises are hired as needed. During this spot check it was possible to inspect the provision taking place at ARU: a closed group of under 18s. Throughout the year, at ARU and online, the organisation offers general and professional English courses for adults (18+) and young people (16+) as well as closed group courses and one-to-one lessons. The bulk of its provision is for closed groups of school children aged

16–17. The organisation also offers vacation courses for adults (18+) and young people (16+), including ‘parent and child’ courses, in July and August at Chesterton Community College.

In addition, EngXcel provides the teaching for Bishop Stortford College summer camps.

Preparation

The day of the spot check was arranged in advance with the managing director. Arrangements were also made to have a meeting with the owner of the accommodation agency used by the organisation. A number of relevant documents relating to the accommodation were sent to the inspector in advance.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took the equivalent of a half and a part day over two days. On the first day, a meeting was held remotely with the owner of the accommodation agency. On the second day, the inspector visited Anglia Ruskin University where she had meetings with the managing director, the operations assistant, the academic manager, the teachers, the group leaders and a representative group of students. The arrangements for the morning arrival of students and attendance checking were observed, a tour of the premises was conducted, the teachers were briefly observed, and documentation was scrutinised.

Findings

Management

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

Premises and resources

Findings are reported in the following section.

Teaching and learning

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

Welfare and student services

Findings on accommodation are reported in the following section.

Safeguarding under 18s

S3 For closed groups, individual parental consent forms are not always made available to the organisation in a timely manner.

See also Action taken on points to be addressed.

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.	Strength
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.	Strength
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 premises used are in an excellent state of repair, cleanliness and decoration.

P2 The classrooms are modern, spacious, air-conditioned and well equipped and furnished.

P4 Students can make use of the university cafeteria and café which provide a good selection of snacks, hot and cold food and drinks at affordable prices.

Accommodation (W9–W22 as applicable)	Met
<i>All accommodation</i>	
W9 Students have a comfortable living environment throughout their stay.	Met
W10 Arrangements for cleaning and laundry are satisfactory.	Met
W11 A responsible representative inspects all accommodation (for safety and suitability) before students are placed, and at least every two years after that.	Met
W12 Students receive written confirmation of accommodation booked, giving clear and accurate information.	Met
W13 There are effective procedures for identifying and resolving any problems students have with their accommodation.	Met
W14 Accommodation providers receive written confirmation of the rules, terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services.	Met
W15 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.

<i>Accommodation: homestay only</i>	
W16 Homestay hosts accommodate no more than four students at one time.	Met
W17 Homestay hosts do not accommodate more than one student with the same language, unless the students, their agents, parents or legal guardians specifically request this in writing.	Met
W18 No more than two students share the same bedroom, unless the students, their agents, parents or legal guardians specifically request this in writing.	Met
W19 English is the language of communication within the homestay home.	Met
W20 Hosts ensure that there is an adult available to receive students on first arrival.	Met

Comments

All criteria in this area are fully met.

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

M5 The timing and format of initial feedback is currently unsatisfactory.

Addressed. The way initial feedback is obtained and acted upon is satisfactory.

M9 Job descriptions show no evidence of review.

Addressed. Job descriptions are regularly reviewed.

M10 Two references were not on file for all teaching staff.

Addressed. Two references are on file for all members of staff.

M18 The level of English for students' emergency contact is not recorded.

Addressed. The level of English for students' emergency contacts are recorded.

Teaching and learning

T2 The proportion of rationales for teachers without appropriate ELT qualifications is too high.

Addressed. No rationales were required.

T17 Placement procedures are in place but are not appropriate for all students, especially the very young.

Addressed. Placement procedures are appropriate.

T18 There is no procedure in place for monitoring the progress of summer school and closed group students.

Addressed. There are appropriate procedures for monitoring the progress of students.

Welfare and student services

W12 Some students are not informed about the approximate time and cost of travel between homestays and the teaching premises.

Addressed. Information is available to students about travel between homestays and teaching premises.

Safeguarding under 18s

S4 No references have been collected for homestay hosts; two references were not on file for staff stating their suitability to work with under 18s.

Addressed. The homestay agency used has two appropriate references on file for all homestay hosts.

Conclusions

Overall, the provision meets the standards of the Scheme. All points arising from the first inspection (conducted in July 2021) that were inspected during this spot check have been addressed. It was possible to inspect, and find satisfactory, provision that it was not possible to assess at the time of the 2021 inspection, notably the teaching premises. The arrangements for accommodation, now made via a local agency, are much improved.
