

Organisation name	Essential English Centre, Manchester
Inspection date	8 July 2015

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	July 2014
Last full inspection	July 2014
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit (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	N/a

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution Signalled: monitor effect of change of provision

Premises profile

Address of main site	Gainsborough House, 109 Portland Street, Manchester M1 6DN
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	Gainsborough House (as above)

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week August
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	44	48
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	14	16
Typical age range	18–35	18–35
Typical length of stay	4–16 weeks	4–16 weeks
Predominant nationalities	No predominant	No predominant
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	4
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	2	

INTRODUCTION
Background

Essential English Centre was first inspected and accredited in July 2014. At that time its work was exclusively with adult students (16+). Since then the two directors have decided to investigate the possibility of running a small number of group-based junior courses (12–16) and to this end they notified the Accreditation Unit that they would be running a pilot course in July 2015. This spot check was therefore arranged as a routine inspection of the adult provision in the first 18 months of accreditation, and to focus on the working of the pilot junior course.

Preparation

The inspector contacted the school in June to establish the availability of the key staff, and to clarify the programme for the junior course. No information was given about the actual date of the spot check.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 09.30 and left at 14.45. During this time, meetings were held together and separately with the two directors (who are both actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the school). There were also meetings with the academic manager, the teacher working with the junior course, and the junior student group. A brief visit was made to the junior class to observe the teaching. A range of documentation was presented, particularly relating to the junior course, and this was discussed at length with the director responsible for child safeguarding.

FINDINGS

The management team, and many of the teachers, are the same as those in place at the time of the 2014 inspection. There has therefore been continuity of staffing and, in relation to the adult courses, of provision. At the time of the original inspection, academic management was provided by one of the directors (TEFLI), supported by an external consultant. The director has now handed over responsibility to one of the teachers, who is also TEFLI (about to complete a diploma-level qualification) similarly supported by an external consultant. The accommodation officer in place in 2014 has now left, and her work has been taken over by one of the directors.

The academic staff qualifications profile was checked and was found to be satisfactory, except for one teacher brought in at short notice to cover a week's absence, who had a certificate that did not meet Scheme requirements.

The premises in use are the same as at the time of the 2014 inspection, and remain comfortably furnished and attractively decorated.

Arrangements for the welfare of students on the adult courses, and for the care of the few under 18s enrolled on these, remain as they were at the time of the original inspection and are completely satisfactory in relation to Scheme criteria.

The pilot junior course in operation at the time of the spot check was a closed group of eight students aged 14–17, all from the same language academy in Spain. They were accommodated in homestays, and were accompanied by a group leader who was responsible for the students outside class. The contract with the Spanish academy specified that the school was responsible for providing only tuition and accommodation; however, they recognised their duty of care for the students at all times.

Comprehensive documentation has been developed to support managers, staff, and hosts in safeguarding under 18s, and to inform parents about the measures the school has taken and the context within which their son or daughter will be living and studying. See the *Care of under 18s* section below.

Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Suitability checks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

The focus of this section is on the pilot group of students aged 14–17 who were studying in the school at the time of the spot check. Occasional 16 or 17 year olds are accepted on the adult programme and arrangements for these were found to be satisfactory in the original 2014 report.

C1 A full safeguarding policy is in place. It covers most areas required by the Scheme criteria, but would benefit from the specification of a 'Code of conduct' which staff (and hosts) could sign. At present hosts are given the full policy, but this could be usefully supplemented by a more accessible version setting out their key responsibilities.

C2 One of the directors has a background in secondary education and has undergone safeguarding training in this context. She is the designated child protection officer and she has briefed all staff about this area. Guidance for hosts is provided through documentation.

C5 Although all hosts had signed a self-declaration, not all of the hosts who had juniors staying with them had in-date (less than three years old) enhanced suitability checks. Applications for checks had been made and close monitoring of the students concerned was in place (including unannounced visits to the hosts concerned by both directors).

C6 As noted above, the contractual responsibility for the supervision of students outside class lies with the group leader. However, good arrangements were in place for liaison, advice, and support.

C7 The hosts selected were experienced and had all received good feedback from previous students from this school. All had been thoroughly briefed, and full documentation and guidance had been provided. Curfew arrangements were clear.

Care of under 18s summary

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 the leisure activities and accommodation provided. However, it will be important on any future junior courses to ensure that all hosts have appropriate suitability checks before students are placed with them.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

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

Management

M26 It is not made clear in all publicity that accommodation is only arranged for students aged 18 and over.

Addressed

Resources and environment

None.

Teaching and learning

None.

Welfare and student services

W9 One homestay visited did not provide any table or desk for private study.

No accommodation visits were made.

W24 This criterion is not met. Students are not informed of the practical and legal implications of their living in bed-sits or flats.

Not checked.

Care of under 18s

None.

CONCLUSIONS

In relation to the courses for adults, the provision remains as at the time of the original inspection and is of a good standard. The junior course operating at the time of the spot check consisted of a single closed group of eight students, for whom the school was providing a tuition and accommodation package, with responsibility for the out-of-school activities remaining with the group leader. This was envisaged as a pilot course to evaluate the feasibility of running such courses on a somewhat larger scale in future. In most respects the arrangements in place were satisfactory in terms of Scheme requirements, but there is a need to monitor the effect of any increase in the current level of activity.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2018; in relation to the adult courses there are no grounds for bringing this forward, but the school should be required to notify the Accreditation Unit of any increase in the level of provision for juniors, and this should be liable to a spot check.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

Courses for closed groups of under 18s can be added.

Summary statement

Original

The British Council inspected and accredited Essential English Centre in July 2014. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation for details).

This private language school offers courses in general and professional English for adults 16+.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, and leisure opportunities.

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

Revised

The British Council inspected and accredited Essential English Centre in July 2014 and July 2015. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of 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 (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, and leisure opportunities.

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

Points to be addressed outstanding from the previous inspection or arising from this visit

Welfare and student services

W9 One homestay visited did not provide any table or desk for private study.

No accommodation visits were made during this inspection.

W24 This criterion is not met. Students are not informed of the practical and legal implications of their living in bed-sits or flats.

Not checked.

Care of under 18s

C5 Not all of the hosts who had juniors staying with them had in-date (less than three years old) enhanced suitability checks.
