

Organisation name	ETC International College, Bournemouth
Inspection date	9 August 2023
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: follow up on Points to be addressed

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2024; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

The need for improvement in accommodation can now be removed.
The need for improvement in safeguarding under 18s can now be removed.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited ETC International College, Bournemouth in August 2019 and August 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 large private language school offers residential courses in general and professional English for adults (18+) and young people (16+), and for closed groups of adults (18+), young people (16+) and under 18s, and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, student administration, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, academic management, and learner management.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The needs of the students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities are met. The residential and homestay accommodation provided is suitable and appropriate systems are managed effectively. Students are given access to local events and a range of leisure activities is offered. The supervision of leisure activities is generally effective.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. A comprehensive safeguarding policy is in place and relevant training is provided to staff and homestay hosts. Recruitment processes are satisfactory. There are clear rules and guidelines on supervision for homestay hosts, residence staff and group leaders. Students are suitably supervised and accommodation for under 18s is well managed.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2003
Last full inspection	August 2019
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	August 2023
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	FE/HE courses (BTEC HND) Externally validated teacher training
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	343	548
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	12 (except on parent + child course, where the minimum age is 8)	12 (except on parent + child course, where the minimum age is 8)
Typical age range	16–21	16–21
Typical length of stay	2–3 weeks	2–3 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian, Colombian, Kazakh	Saudi Arabian, Colombian, Kazakh
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	29	30
Total number of managers including academic	12	12
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	17	17

Premises profile

Address of main site	22–26 West Hill Road, Bournemouth BH2 5PG
Additional sites in us	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	22–26 West Hill Road, Bournemouth BH2 5PG

Introduction

Background

Following the full inspection in August 2019 continued accreditation was recommended with a spot check the following summer focusing on accommodation and safeguarding of under 18s. An action plan had to be submitted within three months to show how the issues raised would be addressed. This time scale was disrupted by the pandemic, and so the spot check was delayed until the summer of 2023.

ETC International College, Bournemouth, is a large, private language school. It was established in 1989 and has been accredited since 2003. In addition to ELT, the school offers further and higher education foundation courses, a range of professional and training specialisms and externally validated ELT teacher training at certificate and diploma levels. Most of the school's students enrol through agents. Staffing at management level has largely been consistent since the last inspection.

Accommodation is offered in homestay and at student residences. Homestay accommodation is available at standard and executive levels. Executive homestays have ensuite bathrooms. ETC has its own on-site residence which is used exclusively by under 18s during the summer season. Outside this period, only students aged 18 and over are accommodated there. The school cafeteria serves breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, for residents and non-residents. Adult students stay at a university hall of residence located 15 minutes away from the school by public transport. The hall offers self-catering cluster flats consisting of six ensuite bedrooms and a communal kitchen/diner and social area.

A new course was offered in the summer of 2023 for young learners (aged 16–17) which 'provides more autonomy than the junior course' (aged 14–15). These students were accommodated either in homestays or in the university hall of residence.

Local hotels are also used to accommodate closed groups of students under 18 and their leaders. The school has exclusive use of the whole hotel or of particular buildings in the hotel grounds. Breakfast and dinner are provided. All accommodation types offer a laundry service or laundry facilities and a weekly change of bed linen.

Preparation

The spot check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. The inspector contacted the school directly prior to the inspection to check staff availability. The date of the spot check inspection was not indicated.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school at 9.15 and left at 13.15. The inspector met the principal, the business manager, the homestay inspector, and the admissions manager. She interviewed two students living in homestays, and two homestay hosts remotely. She asked to see various documents, which were provided in paper form or electronically. After leaving ETC, she visited the university residence used by the school.

Findings

Welfare and student services: accommodation

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

Safeguarding under 18s

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

Safeguarding under 18s	Met
S1 There is a safeguarding policy which specifies procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students under the age of 18. A named member of staff is responsible for implementing this policy and responding to child protection allegations.	Met
S2 The provider makes the policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation, and provides guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation.	Met
S3 The provider has written parental/guardian consent reflecting the level of care and support given to students under 18, including medical consent.	Met
S4 Recruitment procedures for all roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s are in line with safer recruitment good practice and the organisation's safeguarding policy.	Met
S5 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students during scheduled lessons and activities.	Strength
S6 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students outside the scheduled programme.	Met
S7 There are suitable arrangements for the accommodation of students.	Met
S8 There are suitable arrangements to ensure contact between the provider and parents, legal guardians or their nominated representatives concerning the welfare of students.	Met

Comments

Criteria which were previously not met are now met; see below.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Welfare and student services

W11 A small number of active homestays have not been visited in the past two years. Some current homestays do not have up-to-date Gas safe certificates.

Addressed. A spreadsheet had been created which enables the accommodation team to make regular checks on their requirements and statutory regulations. The inspector was able to check that all homestays had been visited in the last two years, and that all current homestays had Gas safe certificates.

W16 One of the homestays visited had recently accommodated five students in their home.

Addressed. Documentation showed that in 2023 no homestays had accommodated more than four students. Information for hosts had been revised to draw attention to this requirement.

W18 One of the homestays visited accommodated three students in the same bedroom with no specific request from parents or legal guardians.

Addressed. Documentation showed that in 2023 no homestays had accommodated more than two students in one bedroom. Information for hosts had been revised to draw attention to this requirement.

Safeguarding under 18s

S3 The parental consent form does not specify that students aged 14 and 15 travel to and from school independently, nor does it ask for consent for times when students aged 16 and 17 are not directly supervised on excursions.

Addressed. Parents are now asked to consent to their child travelling to and from school using public transport and are informed that students 'may be unsupervised when using public transport.' In addition the consent form includes a clause stating '14–17 year olds in homestay accommodation will travel independently to and from school.' Parents also sign to show they understand that 16–17 year olds may not be directly supervised on excursions.

S4 Many current hosts who were recruited after January 2016 and are hosting under 18s do not have two references. Reference requests do not ask a question regarding the suitability to work with under 18s.

Addressed. Documentation showed that all current hosts have two references on record. Reference request forms now include a question asking whether prospective hosts are suitable to work with children. The inspector advised that 'children' should be amended to 'under 18s' to avoid any ambiguity.

S6 Supervision rules were not enforced by one of the hosts that was visited.

Addressed. The inspector asked both the two students and the two hosts interviewed about the supervision rules. All four demonstrated clear understanding of the rules. ETC had also revised information to hosts to highlight this area.

Conclusions

The school has systematically addressed the weaknesses identified in its points to be addressed that were the focus of this inspection.
