

Organisation name	Express English College, Manchester
Inspection date	26 January 2023
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution

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

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

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Express English College, Manchester in May 2019 and January 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 (17+).

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
Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The premises are very clean and well maintained. The building has been organised to provide students with a very welcoming and comfortable environment for work and relaxation. A modest but sufficient range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students. *Premises and facilities* is an area of strength.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	April 2019
Last full inspection	April 2019
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	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: <i>July</i>
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	26	70
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	16	16
Typical age range	18–28	18–28
Typical length of stay	10 weeks	8 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Kuwaiti, Brazilian	Saudi Arabian, Kuwaiti, Brazilian

Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	8
Total number of managers including academic	3	4
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	3	3

Premises profile

Address of main site	130 Princess Road, Manchester M16 7BY
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Princess Road

Introduction

Background

Express English College (EEC) was founded in 2016 and moved to its current premises in September 2017. It is approximately 10 minutes by bus from the city centre. The school offers predominantly general English courses with IELTS preparation and business English available as add-ons.

EEC was first accredited following an inspection in April 2019. This January 2023 inspection was a routine spot check for a newly accredited provider.

Preparation

The inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. The inspector contacted the centre in December 2022 to inform them that the spot check would take place at some point in January and asking them to provide information on staff availability and/or planned absences. The inspector also asked for and was provided with a number of documents including an updated action plan and staff chart.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school at 12.00 and left at 15.30. Meetings were held with the acting academic manager (acting AM), the operations director, the welfare officer, the administrator, and the receptionist. The owner director and the academic manager (AM) were not present on the day of the inspection. A brief focus group meeting was held with teachers and another with a group of students. The inspector was given a tour of the building.

Findings

Management

The management structure remains the same, although the majority of staff are new in post since the last inspection.

The owner director is now less frequently in the school and more occupied with marketing. The AM is still in post as at the last inspection. New staff members include the receptionist, the administrator, the welfare officer, the two assistant academic managers (AAMs) – one of whom is the acting AM – and the teaching team. The AM has had periods of absence and the acting AM role has been facilitated to cover these.

Premises and resources

The premises have been reconfigured and updated to create additional classroom space and more extensive facilities for students. The student common room has been expanded and now includes a kitchen area with facilities for making hot drinks as well as a larger seating area, vending machines, table football and a large TV screen. A small study/testing area with computers is also incorporated into the space.

The first and second floors now consist almost exclusively of classrooms, one of which can be used for prayer as required. There are toilets and a small academic management office on the first floor. The reception and toilets remain on the ground floor. There is no longer a dedicated staffroom or games room. The outside terraced area with seating also remains.

Teaching and learning

The AAM who is covering for the AM is not TEFLQ, although she intends to undertake a course conferring TEFLQ status, with support from the school. The other AAM is TEFLQ but has a full teaching timetable in addition to his academic management responsibilities. As a result of this situation, teachers have been observed by the AAM who is not TEFLQ.

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.	Strength
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.	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 Premises are well maintained and very clean. For the size of the student population there is ample space for students outside class time, with very good facilities in the common room as well as outside when the weather permits.

P2 Classrooms are bright, spacious and well appointed, with good natural light and flexible furniture.

P3 The student areas are very welcoming and provide very good facilities.

P6 Although there is no dedicated staffroom, teachers are able to make use of vacant classrooms as well as the social space on the ground floor.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points which must be addressed within three months

Management

M18 Student records are not backed up or easily accessible to key staff outside office hours.

Addressed. Evidence was sent to the Accreditation Unit within three months.

Welfare and student services

W26 There were no formal risk assessments produced by the school for leisure activities.

Addressed. Evidence was sent to the Accreditation Unit within three months.

Safeguarding under 18s

S4 Some staff had only one reference and not all referred specifically to suitability to work with under 18s.

Addressed. Evidence was sent to the Accreditation Unit within three months.

Other points to be addressed within 12 months

Management

M9 There is no explicit reference to the welfare manager being the designated safeguarding lead.

Addressed. Job descriptions have been updated with a system for regular review, and include all additional responsibilities.

M10 References were available for some staff but not all employee files were complete.

Addressed. References have been secured for all staff and systems for maintaining staff files updated and integrated.

M26 There is currently no description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.

Partially addressed. An under 18s handbook has been produced but this is more focused on rules and conduct than levels of care.

Welfare and student services

W6 There is no information on the most appropriate forms of transport from point of entry into the UK and the school for students who choose not to use the meet and greet service or who arrive at an airport other than Manchester and Liverpool.

Addressed. This information has been added to the school's publicity.

Conclusions

The college meets the standards of the Scheme and provides a dynamic and welcoming environment for students. Almost all points to be addressed from the previous inspection have been fully dealt with and there are plans in place to address issues with observation procedures.
