

Organisation name	Marcus Evans Linguarama London
Inspection date	15 October 2024
Current accreditation status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: end period under review

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The period of review may now be ended, and accreditation continued. However, the school has relocated and a spot check of the new premises is now required; additional evidence is required in relation to W1.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Marcus Evans Linguarama London in March and October 2024. 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 small private language teaching organisation offers courses in general and professional English for adults (18+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of academic staff profile and course design.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard. Overall, the management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals, values, and publicity.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard. The premises provide a suitable location and environment for students although there are some issues arising from the fact that the floor is shared with other Marcus Evans companies. Entrance security is well managed, but risk assessments for the floor that Linguarama London occupies have not been carried out.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. There is generally a good provision for the pastoral care and safety of students, although the emergency plan is incomplete and is not made known to staff or students. Students benefit from the services provided and suitable accommodation options. The leisure programme caters very much for the varied needs and interests of the students. However, there is insufficient attention given to the function and management of all related risk assessments.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	November 2005
Last full inspection	March 2024
Subsequent checks/visits (if applicable)	October 2024
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	Estimate at peak: August
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	1	10
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	26	18
Typical age range	51	30–55
Typical length of stay	1 week	1 week
Predominant nationalities	German	French, German, Italian, Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	2	10
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Linguarama, St. Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6HE
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	[New location: 11 th Floor, 20 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB]
Sites inspected	Linguarama, St. Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6HE

Introduction

Background

This was a signalled spot check to end a period of review with a focus on points to be addressed from the previous inspection.

Preparation

Prior to the visit, the reporting inspector contacted Linguarama London (LL) to confirm key staff would be available during October. An updated action plan on points to be addressed, and *People to be seen* form were requested. The date of the visit was not disclosed until the day before.

Programme and persons present

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors and lasted for one day. The inspectors arrived at 09:30 and left at 16:30. Meetings were held with the centre manager, director of studies (DoS), and centre administrator. Separate meetings were held with the one teacher and one student on site that day. Documents viewed included company plans, meeting minutes, collated feedback, appraisals, lesson observation reports, staff files, student records, premises risk assessments, and excursion risk assessments. The website was also checked.

Subsequent action

Further action was requested in relation to several outstanding Points to be addressed. An updated action plan and supporting evidence were subsequently submitted and reviewed; updates are reflected in the Action taken on Points to be addressed section of this updated report.

Findings

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

Management

Strategic and quality management	Met
M1 There is a clear statement describing the goals and values of the organisation, which is made known to all staff.	Met
M2 The management has clear objectives for the future of the organisation and has realistic plans to achieve them.	Met
M3 There is a documented and clearly understood structure for the ELT operation. There are sufficient staff to manage and deliver the provision, and to ensure continuity at all times.	Met
M4 There are effective channels of communication between all involved in the ELT operation, and between the ELT operation and any wider organisation of which it is a part.	Met

M5 The provider regularly obtains and records feedback from students on all the services offered. Feedback is circulated to relevant staff and appropriate action is taken and recorded.	Not met
M6 The provider regularly seeks and records feedback from all staff on the services offered. Appropriate action is taken and recorded.	Not met
M7 The provider reviews systems, processes and practices with a view to continuing improvement. Appropriate action is taken and recorded in an annual self-evaluation.	Met

Comments

M5 Feedback is collected and collated to produce useful statistics. Action is taken in response to individual feedback, but this is not recorded.

M6 The company collects annual staff feedback, but teachers are not included in this procedure.

Staff management and development	Met
M8 The provider implements appropriate human resources policies, which are made known to staff.	Not met
M9 The provider specifies the duties of all staff working with ELT students, and ensures that these are up to date.	Met
M10 There are effective procedures for the recruitment and selection of all staff.	Met
M11 There are effective induction procedures for all staff.	Met
M12 There are effective procedures for monitoring and appraising all staff, for highlighting good performance, and for handling unsatisfactory performance or conduct. These procedures are made known to all staff.	Not met
M13 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of all staff to meet the needs of the individual, the students and the organisation.	Met

Comments

M8 Some HR policies are available on the staff portal, but a number were not seen, including whistleblowing.

M9 Appraisal records show that job descriptions are discussed during appraisal meetings, but the documents show no evidence of review.

M12 An appraisal procedure is in place for full-time staff, but appraisal reports express no recognition of good performance and focus exclusively on areas for development. Teachers are not included in the appraisal process.

Action taken on points to be addressed

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

Management

M2 There are no written plans for the future of the organisation.

Addressed. A plan was seen as well as meeting minutes which show evidence of steps taken towards achieving the goals set out in the plan.

M4 Communication channels do not appear effective. There are no records of meetings with action points, and staff commented that the lack of formal communications has resulted in them being unclear about various aspects of their roles.

Addressed. Meeting minutes with action points were seen for the core team. Teachers do not have formal meetings but felt well informed by both face-to-face and electronic communications with the management team.

M5 No evidence was seen that student feedback is collated or that action taken in response is recorded.

Partially addressed. Feedback is now collated to produce useful statistics. It was clear that action is taken in response to individual feedback, but this is not yet recorded.

Subsequent action: responses to complaints are now logged in the complaints book in the school management system.

M6 The company conducts annual staff feedback, but teachers are no longer included in this due to the change in their contractual status. Combined with the lack of formal meetings (M4) this means that the centre does not provide any formal opportunities for most staff to give feedback.

Not addressed. There have been no changes made to the feedback provision for teachers.

Subsequent action: UK teachers were included in the annual staff feedback questionnaire.

M8 A number of standard HR policies were not seen, including whistleblowing,

Not addressed. There have been no additions to HR policies.

Subsequent action: a whistleblowing policy has been developed and uploaded to the staff portal.

M9 Job descriptions showed no evidence of recent review despite the fact that all key roles had changed substantially in the last few years.

Partially addressed. Appraisal documents show that job descriptions are discussed during this process. However, the job descriptions themselves are generic, used across the company, and templates show no evidence of review with regard to the specific context of the post holder.

Subsequent action: teachers are now included in the appraisal process.

M10 Staff files seen were missing a number of documents including signed contracts and references.

Addressed. Staff files sampled were up to date.

M12 Teachers are not included in the school's appraisal procedures.

Not addressed. There has been no change to the above. Appraisals for full-time staff members show no recognition of good performance, instead focusing exclusively on areas for development.

Subsequent action: Appraisal templates have been amended and the appraisal process now includes both the core team and teachers.

M17 Emergency contacts were not recorded for two of the five students studying during the week of the inspection.

Addressed. Student records sampled were complete.

M20 Information regarding who to see about problems and how to make a complaint is not made available in writing.

Addressed. This information is now made available in the folder students are given upon arrival.

M23 Much of the required information for courses was missing from the website. This includes the total number of hours taught as well as an indication of lesson times.

Addressed. This information has now been added to the website.

M26 The description of homestay accommodation gives no information regarding the provision of bedding, towels or laundry and cleaning services.

Addressed. This information has now been added to the website.

Premises and resources

P1 No premises risk assessments were seen nor were records of fire drills.

Not addressed. A premises risk assessment for the building was seen but this does not cover 'tenanted areas'; LL have not carried out a risk assessment of their area. A record of one fire drill was seen and this indicated that a second was not required until a year after the first.

Subsequent action: LL is now in new premises. A premises risk assessment has been carried out; staff have received training on fire procedures; students are briefed at the start of their course; there are regular tests of fire alarms and drills.

P3 Teachers complained about the lack of soundproofing. They consider this a particular issue due to the rooms being used for business meetings by other companies within the ME group.

Not addressed. No changes are possible in the current context.

Subsequent action: LL is now in new premises.

P6 There is nowhere for teachers to store their possessions securely.

Not addressed. There have been no changes to the above.

Teaching and learning

T9 Although the DoS has been in post for three months, he has not been permitted to carry out formal observations of the teachers. Most teachers have not been observed for two years, and the most recent-appointed teacher has not been observed by a qualified academic manager since starting eight months ago.

Partially addressed. The DoS was not permitted to carry out formal observations until nine months after employment began. Therefore, although a schedule for observations is in place, a number of teachers have still not been observed for two years or more.

Subsequent action: the programme of observations has been continued; all ELT teachers have now been observed.

T10 Teachers are not required to complete any CPD.

Not addressed. Various initiatives have been discussed but teachers are still not required to complete any CPD.

Subsequent action: promotion of CPD opportunities has increased engagement.

Welfare and student services

W1 There is an emergency plan, but this is not known to staff or students. In addition, it does not meet all the requirements of the criterion.

Not addressed. The emergency plan is a generic one for the entire group of companies and makes no reference to LL's specific context nor any of their personnel who would have to respond should an emergency arise.

Subsequent action: the plan has been amended to include information specifically for LL; London staff have received copies and can also access it on the school management system or staff portal. However, additional information is still required.

W9 There were no records of homestays being visited during the last two years.

Addressed. Records of homestay visits are up to date.

W22 Staff involved in supervising off-site activities had not had their attention drawn to any of the related risk assessments drawn up by the school.

Not addressed. Risk assessments are overly generic, and staff are not required to read them prior to taking students on excursions.

Subsequent action: risk assessments have been amended and are shared on the staff portal.

Legal and regulatory compliance

D1 The CLA licence was not seen, and no guidelines were made available to teachers regarding limits to photocopying. The government health and safety at work poster was not displayed.

Not addressed. Although a CLA licence was produced, no guidelines are made available to teachers regarding limits to photocopying.

Subsequent action: new guidelines have been produced, are displayed at the photocopier and in the staff portal.

Conclusions

The section standard for management is now met. Action has been taken since the spot check in response to the Points to be addressed that had been outstanding at the time of the visit. The school has also relocated to new premises, so a further spot check will be required.
