

Organisation name	Olivet English Language School, Brighton
Inspection date	9 October 2018
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 until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2021. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in M6, M18, M29 and W11 have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Olivet English Language School in April 2017 and October 2018. 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 adults (16+) and for closed groups of adults (16+).

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

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1998
Last full inspection	April 2017
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	November 2017
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: September
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	34	109
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	16
Typical age range	16–51	16–50
Typical length of stay	10 weeks	5 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Italian, Swiss, Saudi	Italian, Swiss
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	6	10
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile	
Address of main site	50–52 Norfolk Square, Brighton BN1 2PA
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	50–52 Norfolk Square, Brighton BN1 2PA

Introduction

Background

Olivet English Language School, Brighton is a school with a Christian ethos. It occupies premises on the upper floors of a commercial property in Brighton city centre. The school offers general English and examination preparation courses for adult students (16+) and for closed groups of adults (16+). Accommodation is in homestay or in the nearby Olivet student house which has six bedrooms and shared facilities.

The school was inspected in April 2017. The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the areas of staff management, quality assurance and accommodation. A spot check within six months was required and the school was informed that an action plan should be submitted by 15 October 2017. The action plan was provided by the school as required. A spot check followed in November 2017, but a number of points had not been addressed. The decision was taken to place accreditation under review and a further spot check within six months required.

This is the report of the spot check.

Preparation

Inspectors received copies of the previous spot check report, the action plan, the annual declaration, and correspondence between the Accreditation Unit and the school. The reporting inspector contacted the school in advance of the visit to check availability of staff, but did not inform the school when the visit would take place.

Programme and persons present

The spot check inspection was carried out by two inspectors, one of whom was visiting the school for the first time, and one who had been part of the inspection team for the school's last full inspection in 2017. They toured the school and held meetings with the principal, the director of studies (DoS), and the registrar, student welfare and accommodation officer. One inspector also held a focus group meeting with students, and the other inspector held one with teachers. The inspectors arrived at 10.30 and left at 15.00.

Findings

Significant changes since the last inspection

Management

The school continues to be well run by its small management team, in line with its Christian ethos. The points to be addressed identified at the last full inspection in April 2017 had been reviewed by the school and an appropriate action plan was submitted to the Unit by the October 2017 deadline. Job descriptions now accurately and fully describe the role of each staff member, and good progress has been made in terms of safer recruitment. The recruitment procedure is now complete, and all teachers have had the required suitability checks. References were not entirely complete, but the majority of files sampled held two suitable references. A system for regular appraisal/performance reviews is now in place. Systems for obtaining student feedback have been improved with both initial and end-of-course feedback being taken. A system for collating and evidencing action taken in response, however, is not yet in place.

Premises and resources

The school continues to provide a comfortable working environment for students and staff. Classrooms are spacious and there is ample space allocated to students for relaxation and private study. Students appreciated the kitchen facilities where they can prepare food at lunchtimes. One staircase has been redecorated, with another partially re-carpeted. The men's toilet has been completely refurbished and the front of the school has been repainted. The remaining stairways are still in need of repair, but the school plans to address this as part of their rolling redecoration programme.

Teaching and learning

The DoS has made good progress with developing academic management systems which will have a positive impact on the learning experience of the students. He has systematised the afternoon programme to ensure that students focus on real-life situations in which they need to communicate in English, and developed an appropriate syllabus to meet these needs. He has provided continuing professional development (CPD) training for teachers, and keeps a CPD diary for each of them.

Welfare and student services

Students are well cared for and commented positively on the friendly and supportive atmosphere in the school. Systems for informing students of the emergency telephone number have been improved, with most students in the focus group aware of having received this as part of their enrolment. Feedback forms for both the school and accommodation are now collected, but collated results with evidence of action taken were not available. The school has now acted to ensure that all homestay hosts complete a fire risk assessment, and the accommodation manager is in the process of visiting each of these to help them carry it out.

Safeguarding under 18s

Systems are in place to ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed at the school. The principal has appropriate training for his role as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Most staff have had basic safeguarding training. Suitability checks are carried out, and safer recruitment procedures are now followed consistently; one or two references are still outstanding, but the school is in the process of addressing this. Parental consent forms have been updated to include the school's emergency number.

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.

Management

M2 The job title of the registrar/accommodation officer does not make it clear that she has responsibility for student welfare.

Addressed 2017. The job title has been amended to registrar, student welfare and accommodation officer.

M3 The principal's role as DSL is not included in a job description.

Addressed.

M5 The staff recruitment policy does not state that all staff are required to have a DBS check. It does not state that identification checks are carried out and does not make clear that referees are asked about the suitability of applicants to work with under 18s.

Addressed. The recruitment policy has been amended to include all requirements.

M6 Three staff files lacked references for teachers who had been appointed since the last inspection.

Partially addressed. The files of the seven existing teachers were checked. Of the five for teachers who had been employed since 2014, three contained two suitable references each. One file had one suitable reference with one still outstanding, and the last had two references, but neither addressed suitability to work with children.

M8 The appraisal/performance review has not taken place for at least two years.

Addressed. All staff spoken to confirmed that they had had a performance review in the last year, and records were seen.

M15 The conditions under which a student may be asked to leave the course are not made known to students or staff.

Addressed 2017.

M18 The approach to obtaining student feedback is not systematic. Initial feedback is not pro-actively sought and end of course feedback is not collated, and there is no record of action taken in response to feedback.

Partially addressed. Initial feedback and exit feedback are both obtained; however, there is no evidence of this feedback being collated or any action taken in response. A number of feedback forms were seen with a common complaint, and although the school did act, there was no record to support this.

M29 The Accreditation Scheme marque does not always include 'for the teaching of English'.

Partially addressed. The correct marque is now in use on the school brochure and on internal documentation. The school reported that it had requested the marque from the Accreditation Unit in order to update the website, but they had not received it yet.

Resources and environment

R2 The stairwells are in need of repair and re-decoration.

Partially addressed. The school has a rolling redecoration programme with one stairwell re-carpeted, and another partially so. The men's toilet has been completely refurbished and the front of the school has been redecorated.

Teaching and learning

T10 There was little evidence of regular CPD sessions for teachers since the last inspection.

Addressed. All staff now have CPD diaries which provide evidence of CPD that ran up until June 2018. No CPD sessions were run during the summer, but a programme is in place for the sessions to start again from this autumn.

T11 The frequency of teacher observations is not stated in the staff recruitment and development policy.

Addressed. The policy now states that all teachers will be observed at least twice a year.

T11 The DoS has not carried out regular monitoring inspections over the last two years.

Addressed. All teachers confirmed that they had been observed in the last year, and records were seen.

T16 Strategies which ensure that students can develop their language skills outside the classroom are not part of the formal learning programme.

Addressed. The DoS has developed the new syllabus and it is now in use.

Welfare and student services

W5 The school's emergency contact number is not given to adult students.

Addressed. The school provides this on an email to all students, and in the focus group all but one student had it. The school is looking into providing student cards in the future, which would include this information.

W11 There is no regular check to ensure that fire risk assessments have been completed for homestays and no guidance on this has been given to homestay providers.

Partially addressed. All existent homestay providers have been sent notification of the need for a fire risk assessment along with the school's pro forma. The accommodation officer is in the process of visiting all the providers in order to complete the risk assessment with them.

W13 Confirmation of homestay accommodation does not state the time taken to travel from the accommodation to the school.

Addressed. This information is now included on the homestay confirmation.

W14 There is no method for systematically obtaining accommodation feedback from students at an early stage and no written records are kept of any feedback obtained informally.

Addressed. All students are asked about accommodation during their initial tutorial with the teacher, and this is recorded on their tutorial forms.

Care of under 18s

C1 The safer recruitment elements of the safeguarding policy had not been fully implemented for some recent appointments.

Partially addressed. See M6 above.

C4 Safer recruitment practice is not fully implemented. In staff files there is no record of references being taken up and not all staff have completed suitability (DBS) checks. References are not sought for homestay hosts and DBS checks are only required for the main carer. DBS checks obtained by other organisations are accepted. Proof of identity is not always requested of staff.

Partially addressed. All staff have completed suitability checks and evidence is kept on file. References are mostly complete (see M6 above).

C8 The school does not provide parents with the school's 24-hour emergency number.

Addressed 2017. The emergency number is printed on the parental consent form.

Conclusions

At the time of the inspection the school had made good progress in addressing all points from the previous inspections. A small number remain only partially addressed, but the school now meets the requirements for Scheme criteria.
