

Organisation name	Portsmouth English Language School
Inspection date	5 December 2016

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2009
Last full inspection	January 2016
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	July 2016
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	None
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: inspect new premises

Premises profile

Address of main site	10 Landport Terrace, Southsea, Portsmouth PO1 2RG
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	None
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	None
Sites inspected	The current premises are located in a three-storey-plus-basement Edwardian house on a main road in central Portsmouth. They comprise seven classrooms, for from 7–12 students, one of which will be used as a computer room. There is reception, kitchen, common area, offices and two single toilets, as well as a large car park area at the back.

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	13	40
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	17	9
Typical age range	17–48	12–30
Typical length of stay	4–5 months	2 weeks–3 months
Predominant nationalities	Kuwaiti, Omani	Italian, French, Omani
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	5	
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	5	

INTRODUCTION

Background

Report expires 31 March 2020

The school was founded in 2008. It had an unsettled period in 2014, with two changes of ownership and a lengthy period without a suitably qualified director of studies. A full inspection was carried out in 2015 and a further full inspection in January 2016, followed by a supplementary inspection to inspect the junior courses in July 2016. Accreditation was continued until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2020.

On the 18 October 2016 the British Council was informed that the school had moved into smaller premises on 3 October 2016. The purpose of this spot check, conducted by one inspector, was to inspect the new premises.

Preparation

The inspector was informed about the ownership history. He received the full and supplementary report (July 2016), annual declarations from 2012 to 2016 and subsequent correspondence.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 10.00 and departed at 13.45. He had meetings with the director/ director of studies (DoS); the assistant director of studies/welfare officer/designated safeguarding lead (welfare officer); and the marketing officer. He had a meeting with the teachers, spoke to the head of administration/receptionist, and spoke to individual students informally. The proprietor, the accommodation officer and the social activities co-ordinator were not in school.

FINDINGS

The school moved from premises in Hampshire Terrace into smaller premises a short distance away in Landport Terrace over the weekend of 1–2 October 2016. The previous premises were sold by the proprietor and the current premises have been leased for three years.

Although the school is cramped in places (stairwells, academic office) classrooms appear to be of sufficient size for the maximum number of students. However, classes were very small at the time of the spot check and were not observed. Classrooms, reception, relaxation area, crèche and offices have been refurbished to a basic but acceptable standard. The planned teachers' room and computer room are still to be decorated and equipped. Some areas of the school are in need of redecoration and some areas of carpet are worn. Toilet provision is insufficient. Plans have been made for further refurbishment while the school is closed over the Christmas period. The DoS forwarded to the inspector an action plan agreed with the proprietor after the spot check. The details are as follows: the students' social room, resource room and teachers' room will be ready in January; one of the classrooms on the top floor will also be made into a self-access quiet study room when not used for the lessons (during the winter months it will be available to students at all times and in the summer in the afternoons and evenings); extra toilets will be added within the six months and part of the area at the back of the school will be made into a patio area for student use in the summer.

The inspector was satisfied that safety measures were adequate. M1 was Met at the last spot check and this remains the case. Visitors from the street have to pass through reception, CCTV is about to be installed, and most fire safety measures are in place, although as yet there have been no fire drills in the new premises. The crèche has direct access to the street but access to the school is closed off when the crèche is closed.

The inspector's main concern was that publicity on the website had not been modified to show a change of location, making some of the information untrue and misleading (address, internet room, number of classrooms). Criterion M22 (Publicity... will give rise to realistic expectations...) was Not Met at the time of the previous spot check and this remains the case. A few days after the spot check the website was updated and misleading statements removed but publicity will still need to be updated to describe the new premises.

Student and staffing levels have remained similar to those in Hampshire Terrace and there were no job losses as a result of the relocation. However, a new administration manager/receptionist and an accommodation officer have been appointed since the last spot check in July.

The school plans to continue with the same range of courses, including courses for juniors.

Although the premises are smaller than the previous premises, neither teachers nor students spoken to by the inspector commented negatively on the relocation.

Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R6 Staffroom(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

R1 This criterion is just met. There is adequate space in classrooms and some space for students to relax in during break times. However, there are too few toilets and stairwells would be cramped during busy periods.

R2 At the time of the present spot check there was still scaffolding covering the front of the building. Some areas of the school are still rather scruffy and in need of refurbishment. Some carpet areas are worn. This criterion was Met at the last inspection; it is now Not Met.

R3 Classrooms are adequate in size and number for the number of students enrolled. Staff reported that heating provision was an improvement over the previous premises. There is traffic noise but teachers claimed it is not intrusive.

R4 There is a small relaxation area for staff and students to eat packed lunches, with a kitchen area with urn and microwave. There are many reasonably priced eating establishments near the school.

R5 Display facilities are sufficient and classrooms are clearly labelled. This criterion was Not Met at the last spot check. It is now Met.

R6 As yet there is no teachers' room for teachers, making this criterion Not Met. It was Met at the last inspection. There are plans to refurbish one of the rooms for teachers in the basement over the Christmas period.

Resources and environment summary

The provision just meets the section standard. Overall students study in a satisfactory classroom environment and there is adequate provision for relaxation space for students. However, some areas of the school are in need of refurbishment, there are too few toilets and there is no staffroom for teachers. Learning materials for students are appropriate.

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. Only points reviewed during this spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.

Management

M18 There are inadequate procedures for collating and analysing feedback collected, or for systematically identifying action points. This was raised in the previous report.

Addressed. Collected feedback is passed on to the relevant departments and is analysed in staff meetings during which key action points are defined.

M28 Publicity describes teachers as experienced. One of the teachers teaching the summer junior course programme had only recently qualified.

Addressed. The newly qualified teacher has left the school and the description in the publicity now reflects the reality.

M29 The Accreditation Scheme marque at the top of the home page appears without the revised wording 'for the teaching of English in the UK' and needs to be changed.

Addressed.

Welfare and student services

W13 The cost of travel between the accommodation and the school, and the conditions and procedures under which accommodation arrangements can be terminated are not included on the booking confirmation.

Addressed. Booking confirmation now includes this information.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Management

M22 Publicity needs to be fully updated to describe the new premises.

Resources and environment

R1 There are too few toilets.

R2 Some areas of the school are in need of refurbishment and redecoration. Some carpet areas are worn.

R6 There is no teachers' room for teachers.

Welfare and student services

W1 There have been no fire drills in the present building.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the new premises provide an appropriate environment for students. However, further refurbishment is necessary. There is no staffroom and toilet provision is insufficient. Publicity needs to be fully updated to describe the new premises.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in resources and environment (R1, R2 and R6) and welfare (W1) have been addressed.

SUMMARY STATEMENT**Changes to summary statement**

No changes need to be made to the summary statement.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Portsmouth English Language School in January 2016. 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 English for adults (16+) and vacation courses for under-18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of teaching and care of under 18s.

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