

Organisation name	Preston Academy of English
Inspection date	24–25 September 2024

Section standards	
Management The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider’s stated goals, values, and publicity.	Met
Premises and resources The premises provide students and staff with a safe, comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. A range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students. Guidance on the use of these resources is provided for staff and students where needed.	Met
Teaching and learning The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers receive sufficient guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Courses are structured and managed to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. The teaching observed meets the requirements of the Scheme.	Not met
Welfare and student services The provision meets the needs of the students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including, where offered, out-of-class activities and suitable accommodation.	Met
Safeguarding under 18s There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in any leisure activities or accommodation provided.	N/a

Recommendation
We recommend that accreditation be placed under review because the section standard for Teaching and learning was not met. The period of review to be ended by a spot check within 12 months focusing on Teaching and learning.

Summary statement
The summary statement has been withdrawn and should not be used.

Introduction

Preston Academy of English (PAE) was founded in 2012. The principal is the director. It was first inspected and accredited in 2014. The last full inspection of the main school took place in 2019, with a spot check in 2023 following a change of premises. The school operates year round from its main premises.

The inspection took place over one and a half days with two inspectors. Meetings were held with the principal, the academic manager, the enrolment officer, the administrative/human resources officer and the student coordinator. Focus group meetings were held with teachers and students. Two of the teachers timetabled were observed twice, and another once. One of the inspectors visited the residence used by some of the students and spoke with the manager.

Address of main site/head office

93 Lancaster Road, Preston PR1 2QJ

Description of sites visited/observed

The school is in the centre of Preston and is well served by public transport links. It occupies the first and second floor of a building which has one coded access door. Stairs from the entrance hall lead directly to the first floor where there are three teaching rooms, the reception, kitchen, principal's office and staff kitchen. A student room with kitchenette and lounge, a teaching classroom and a computer learning room which is also the academic manager's office are located on the second floor. A separate space with its own entrance on the ground floor of the building is used as a government test centre that is administered by the school.

Course profile	Year round		Vacation only	
	Run	Seen	Run	Seen
General ELT for adults (18+)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General ELT for adults (18+) and young people (16+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General ELT for juniors (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English for academic purposes (excludes IELTS preparation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English for specific purposes (includes English for Executives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applied English/Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher development (excludes award-bearing courses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESOL skills for life/for citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

The school offers morning general English courses for six, nine, 12 or 15 hours per week in groups of a maximum 10 students per class. These classes can be supplemented with afternoon classes in speaking and listening and examination preparation.

Management profile

The principal/director is responsible for oversight of all operations in the school. The academic manager, enrolment officer, administrative/human resources assistant and student coordinator report directly to him. The teaching team reports to the academic manager.

Accommodation profile

Most students arrange their own accommodation independently. However, the school provides residential accommodation at a student residence, which is a five-minute walk away. Accommodation is arranged and booked by the enrolment officer. Students are placed in self-contained shared student flats. Each flat has six to eight lockable single bedrooms with ensuite shower room and a communal kitchen and lounge. All students are accommodated on a self-catering basis

Summary of inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students and staff, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals, values, and publicity. The structure of the organisation is clear, communication is generally good and student administration is carried out very efficiently and effectively. *Student administration* is an area of strength.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard. The premises provide students and staff with a comfortable and pleasant environment. Safety and security are well provided for. Learning resources are appropriate to the age and needs of the students. Guidance on the use of resources for students and staff is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The provision does not meet the section standard. The academic staff team does not have a professional profile appropriate to the context and deployment is not consistently appropriate. The teachers benefit from some good support from the academic manager, but guidance and documentation are unsatisfactory in some aspects. Courses are structured appropriately and learner management is effective. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme. There is a need for improvement in *Academic staff profile* and *Academic management*.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The provision meets the needs of the students for security, pastoral care and information. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including suitable accommodation.

Safeguarding under 18s

No students under the age of 18 are accepted.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Evidence

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.	Met
M6 The provider regularly seeks and records feedback from all staff on the services offered. Appropriate action is taken and recorded.	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

All criteria in this area are fully met.

Staff management and development	Met
M8 The provider implements appropriate human resources policies, which are made known to staff.	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.	Strength

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.	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.	Not met

Comments

M11 Thorough induction is provided for all staff, including self-employed teachers. This is evidenced by the provision of a comprehensive induction programme including opportunities for observing and shadowing colleagues.

M13 Although CPD opportunities are offered to staff, they are not always relevant to their development needs, and CPD undertaken is not consistently recorded.

Student administration	Area of strength
M14 Staff are helpful and courteous to students and their representatives, and provide good levels of customer service.	Strength
M15 Students or their representatives receive sufficient information and advice on their course choices before arrival and during their stay.	Strength
M16 There are clear systems in place to enrol students effectively and maintain accurate information about student payment and course details. This information is readily accessible to relevant staff.	Strength
M17 There are effective systems to maintain up-to-date and accessible records of local contact details for students, and their designated emergency contacts.	Met
M18 There is a clear and effective policy on student attendance and punctuality that is known to all staff and students and is applied consistently.	Met
M19 All staff and students are made aware of conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course.	Met
M20 All students and, where appropriate, group leaders and parents/legal guardians, receive information in writing about who to see about problems and how to make a complaint.	Met

Comments

M14 Administrative staff work closely together to provide a very good, personalised service. Students in the focus group spoke very positively about the helpfulness of all school staff.

M15 Comprehensive pre-course information and communication is evident, with staff providing responsive and helpful advice to enquiries. Students have ready access to the principal, the academic manager, the enrolment officer and other staff during their course for further advice and information as required.

M16 The enrolment process is very efficiently handled in a professional and helpful manner, records are meticulously kept and available to key staff at all times.

Publicity	Met
M21 All publicity and information is accurate, and gives rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.	Met
M22 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Met
M23 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Met
M24 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Not met
M25 Publicity or other information made available before enrolment gives an accurate description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.	N/a
M26 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	Met
M27 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Not met
M28 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met

Comments

The main medium of publicity is the school's website. The school also maintains a social media page.

M24 At the start of the inspection there was no indicative cost for exam fees or residential accommodation on the website. These were added at the time of the inspection and this is no longer a point to be addressed.

M27 At the start of the inspection the description of the level of experience of teaching staff was inaccurate and misleading. This was amended at the time of the inspection and this is no longer a point to be addressed.

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Providers ensure the safety and security of students on their premises by measures appropriate to their age and background, and the location.	Met
P2 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.	Met
P3 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Met
P4 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display or sharing of general information.	Met
P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for work, meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions.	Met
Comments	
All criteria in this area are fully met.	

Learning resources	Met
P7 There are sufficient learning resources for classroom use for the number of students enrolled, appropriate to their age and the level, length and type of courses offered.	Met
P8 There are appropriate resources for teachers, which are adequate in number, accessible, and well maintained and organised.	Met
P9 Any educational technology inside the classroom and elsewhere is well maintained with adequate technical support. Staff receive appropriate training in using the available technology to support learning.	Met
P10 Students have access to resources for independent learning, relevant to their learning aims and expectations.	Met
P11 There is a policy for the continuing review and development of teaching and learning resources, and evidence of its implementation.	Not met
Comments	
P11 There is a teaching and resource policy in place which includes procedures for the review and development of teaching and learning resources, but there is no evidence that these procedures are carried out, and there are no records of any review work.	

Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile	Need for improvement
T1 There is a clear recruitment and support policy for the academic team relevant to the stated course objectives and student profile.	
T2 The academic manager/academic management team has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership.	
T3 The teaching team has ELT/TESOL qualifications, general level of education, experience, knowledge and skills relevant to the courses they are teaching.	
Comments	
Overall, the academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is not appropriate to the school's context. There was no member of the academic management team with the required level of qualifications. The rationale submitted was not accepted within the context of this inspection. The academic manager is not TEFLQ and at the time of appointment did not have three years' of relevant teaching experience.	
The recruitment and support policy is not sufficiently well implemented in line with the stated course objectives and the student profile. The support offered to newly qualified staff was not relevant to their immediate development needs. Students were preparing for an examination for which there were no suitably experienced teaching staff.	
Academic management	Need for improvement
T4 Teachers are matched appropriately to courses and there are effective procedures for the appropriate timetabling of students, courses and classrooms.	Met

T5 There are formalised arrangements for covering for absent teachers which are satisfactory to students and staff.	Met
T6 Where enrolment is continuous, explicit attention is paid to all aspects of academic management affected.	Not met
T7 There are effective arrangements for the academic induction of new teachers appropriate to their needs.	Met
T8 There are effective arrangements, led by an academic manager, to ensure appropriate day-to-day guidance and support for all teachers.	Met
T9 There are effective arrangements for the observation and monitoring of teachers' performance by a TEFLQ academic manager based on clear standards known to teachers.	Not met
T10 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of all teachers to meet the needs of the individual teachers, the students, and the organisation.	Not met

Comments

T6 There is no written guidance for teachers in managing continuous enrolment and, in particular, students who only join the full-time morning classes for some days of the week.

T9 Observations are carried out but not by an appropriately qualified TEFLQ academic manager. Records of observations are not consistently dated, are not based on teaching standards shared with teachers in advance, and in some cases are not sufficiently detailed with little or no follow-up action specified.

T10 Although some CPD is offered to teachers, it is limited and has poor take up. It is not based on a needs analysis which considers the needs of the organisation, students, and teachers. Records are not maintained of teacher participation in CPD, and CPD provision is not regularly reviewed in the light of stakeholder feedback.

Course design and implementation	Met
T11 The course design is comprehensive and is based on the provider's stated approach to learning or educational philosophy, and is appropriate to the learning context.	Met
T12 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.	Met
T13 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.	Not met
T14 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students and referred to in class.	Met

Comments

T13 Although some comments from students about the structure of afternoon classes has been noted by the provider, there is no evidence of any regular or systematic review of course design.

Learner management	Met
T15 There are effective procedures for the correct placement of students, appropriate to their level and age.	Met
T16 There are effective procedures for evaluating, monitoring and recording students' progress.	Met
T17 Students are helped to identify their learning needs and receive support to meet course objectives.	Met
T18 Where relevant, students are guided to select the examinations and examination training best suited to their needs and interests. Students wishing to progress to mainstream UK education have access to relevant information and advice.	Met

Comments

All criteria in this area are fully met.

Classroom observation record

Number of teachers seen	3
Number of observations	5
Parts of programme(s) observed	Morning general English and supplementary afternoon classes in speaking and listening and examination preparation were observed.

Comments

One teacher was observed only once as no students attended one of her scheduled observed classes.

Teaching: classroom observation	Met
T19 Teachers produce accurate models of spoken and written English; they provide clear explanations and relevant examples of language and usage, that are appropriate to the aims of the lesson and suitable for the students' level.	Met
T20 The content of the lessons is based on the overall course objectives and takes into account the differing students' needs and backgrounds.	Not met
T21 The intended learning outcomes of lessons are made known to students, and are achieved through an appropriate sequence of activities.	Met
T22 Teaching techniques used are appropriate to the focus of the lesson, to the context, and to the needs of the group and individual learners.	Met
T23 Teachers enhance learning by effectively managing the classroom environment and teaching and learning resources.	Met
T24 Students receive and benefit from appropriate and timely feedback on their performance during the lesson.	Met
T25 Lessons include activities for teachers and students to evaluate whether learning is taking place.	Met
T26 Teachers promote a positive and inclusive learning atmosphere and students are engaged in the lesson.	Met

Comments

T19 Generally, teachers produced accurate models of spoken and written English, and clear explanations and examples of language and usage which were appropriate to the students' level and the aims of the lesson.

T20 Profiles and individual learning plans were not used in the planning of the lessons observed, and there were no specific strategies noted for differentiating in sessions where mixed ability was evident.

T21 Intended learning outcomes were shared with learners in most lessons, and were worked towards with logical staging of activities.

T22 A satisfactory range of teaching techniques was seen, in particular eliciting and monitoring.

T23 Teachers generally managed the classroom environment well and used appropriate resources.

T24 Teachers were encouraging and praised students' work. Some effective correction was observed.

T25 Lessons mostly included appropriate tasks and activities to enable teachers and students to evaluate the learning.

T26 In general, most teachers created a positive and engaged classroom atmosphere.

Welfare and student services

Care of students	Met
W1 There is a comprehensive plan to respond to any emergency. This plan is known to all staff, and relevant elements are known to students.	Met
W2 Students receive pastoral care appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. All staff and students know the name(s) of the person or people who deal with students' personal problems.	Strength
W3 There are policies to promote tolerance and respect, and procedures for dealing with any abusive behaviour. All staff and students are aware of these.	Strength
W4 Where relevant, students receive a 24-hour emergency contact number for the provider, in writing.	Met
W5 Students receive advice on relevant aspects of travel to and life in the UK.	Met
W6 Students have access to adequate health care provision.	Met

Comments

W2 Students receive a very good level of pastoral care. All staff are encouraged to be aware of students' potential needs and who to refer particular issues to. Residence staff communicate directly with the school should any welfare concerns arise with individual students. Students reported that there is a general caring atmosphere throughout the school and that they felt well supported.

W3 Tolerance and respect feature prominently in the organisation's ethos and students and staff are made very aware of these and the procedures for dealing with abusive behaviour.

Accommodation (W7–W18 as applicable)	Met
<i>All accommodation</i>	

W7 Students have a comfortable living environment throughout their stay.	Strength
W8 Arrangements for cleaning and laundry are satisfactory.	Met
W9 A responsible representative inspects all accommodation (for safety and suitability) before students are placed, and at least every two years after that.	Met
W10 Students receive written confirmation of accommodation booked, giving clear and accurate information.	Met
W11 There are effective procedures for identifying and resolving any problems students have with their accommodation.	Met
W12 Accommodation providers receive written confirmation of the rules, terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services.	Met
W13 Students receive meals as agreed; these offer a well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements students may have.	N/a

Comments

W7 The residence offers an extremely comfortable living environment. The bedrooms, kitchen areas in the flats and communal areas are all of a very high standard and very well equipped.

Accommodation: homestay only

W14 Homestay hosts comply with the agreed terms and conditions for student placements.	N/a
W15 Homestay placements encourage students to use English.	N/a
W16 Hosts ensure that there is an adult available to receive students on first arrival.	N/a

Comments

None.

Accommodation: other

W17 Students receive information about the implications of their living in private rented accommodation and advice in case of difficulties.	Met
W18 The provider monitors any other accommodation recommended, and booking and payment arrangements are clear.	N/a

Comments

The relevant criterion in this area is fully met.

Leisure opportunities

W19 Students have appropriate information about and access to social, cultural and sporting events and activities which enhance their experience of studying in the UK.	Met
W20 The content of any leisure programme is appropriate to the age and interests of the students.	N/a
W21 Any leisure programmes are well organised and sufficiently resourced.	N/a
W22 There are effective systems to ensure the health and safety of students on all on-site and off-site activities.	N/a
W23 Staff supervising sporting and leisure activities on or off-site have appropriate experience, support and training.	N/a

Comments

W19 The school does not offer a leisure programme, but appropriate information is made available regarding relevant local events and activities.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	October 2014
Last full inspection	October 2019
Subsequent checks/visits (if applicable)	January 2023

Current accreditation status	Accredited
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	Examination test centre
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Private sector

Date of foundation	October 2012
Ownership	Name of company: Preston Academy Ltd Company number: 08239535
Other accreditation/inspection	N/a

Premises profile

Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection but not visited/observed	N/a
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a

Student profile

	At inspection	Estimate at peak
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	At inspection	July
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) 18 years and over	10	16
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged 16–17 years	0	0
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged under 16	0	0
Part-time ELT aged 18 years and over	1	1
Part-time ELT aged 16–17 years	0	0
Part-time ELT aged under 16 years	0	0
Overall total ELT/ESOL students shown above	11	17
Adult programmes: advertised minimum age	18	18
Adult programmes: typical age range	20–22	20–22
Adult programmes: typical length of stay	3–6 months	3–6 months
Adult programmes: predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian	Saudi Arabian
Junior programmes: advertised minimum age	N/a	N/a
Junior programmes: advertised maximum age	N/a	N/a
Junior programmes: typical length of stay	N/a	N/a
Junior programmes: predominant nationalities	N/a	N/a

Staff profile

	At inspection	Estimate at peak
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	4
Number teaching ELT 20 hours and over a week	2	
Number teaching ELT under 20 hours a week	1	
Number of academic managers for eligible ELT courses	1	1
Number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff working on eligible ELT courses	4	
Total number of support staff	0	

Academic manager qualifications profile

Profile at inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of academic managers
TEFLQ qualification and at least three years' full-time relevant teaching experience	0
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or three years' relevant experience	1
Total	1

Comments

The academic manager was not timetabled to teach during the inspection, and is not normally timetabled to teach.

Teacher qualifications profile

Profile in week of inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of teachers
TEFLQ qualification/profile	0
TEFLI qualification	3
ATEFL portfolio in progress	0
Non-ELT-related qualified teacher status only (for short courses for under 18s)	0
Holding specialist qualifications only (for ESP/CLIL)	0
Alternative professional profile	0
Total	3
Comments	
None.	

Accommodation profile

Number of students in each at the time of inspection (all students on eligible courses)		
Types of accommodation	Adults	Under 18s
<i>Arranged by provider/agency</i>		
Homestay	N/a	N/a
Private home	N/a	N/a
Home tuition	N/a	N/a
Residential	N/a	N/a
Hotel/guesthouse	N/a	N/a
Independent self-catering e.g. flats, bedsits, student houses	3	N/a
<i>Arranged by student/family/guardian</i>		
Staying with own family	7	N/a
Staying in privately rented rooms/flats	1	N/a
Overall totals adults/under 18s	11	0
Overall total adults + under 18s	11	

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

D1 The organisation certifies that it operates at all times in accordance with the declarations in the *Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance*.

The Accreditation Scheme requires accredited providers to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Providers must take steps to ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, all existing and new legal requirements.

On initial application and annual renewal of accreditation, providers are required to confirm that they are complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

Inspectors will check a random sample of items during inspection, in relation to criterion D1; if they find evidence of a breach of statutory or other legal requirements, the provider will be required to submit evidence of compliance confirmed by the appropriate regulatory body.

Any breach of the law or regulations will be viewed seriously by the Scheme and may result in the withdrawal or withholding of accreditation.

Any sustained breach of the law or regulations which an accredited provider fails upon reasonable notice to remedy will result in accreditation being withdrawn.

Comments

D1 The items sampled were satisfactory.