

Organisation name	Preston Academy of English
Inspection date	3 July 2025
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 2028.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Preston Academy of English in September 2024 and July 2025. 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+) on site.

Strengths were noted in the area of student administration.

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

Summary 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 meets the section standard. 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.

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.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2014
Last full inspection	September 2024
Subsequent checks/visits (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	Testing services including B1 test for citizenship and ILR
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)	13	16
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	18
Typical age range	18–24	18–24
Typical length of stay	3–6 months	3–6 months
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian	Saudi Arabian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	3
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	2	2

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	1
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or three years' relevant experience	0
Total	1
Comments	

The director of studies (DoS) is timetabled to teach for five hours per week and also covers classes as needed.

Teacher qualifications profile

Profile in week of inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of teachers
TEFLQ qualification/profile	0
TEFLI qualification	2
ATEFL registered 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*	1
Total	3
Comments	

Re one teacher with 'Alternative professional profile' - see Recruitment and support policy.

Premises profile

Address of main site	93 Lancaster Road, Preston PR1 2QJ
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Main site

Introduction

Background

Preston Academy of English (PAE), in the centre of Preston, was founded in 2012. The school is managed by the principal/director. There are four teaching rooms and general English courses run for six, nine, 12 or 15 hours per week in groups of a maximum of 10 students per class. These classes can be supplemented with afternoon classes in speaking and listening and examination preparation. The majority of students enrol for 15 or 21 hours per week. This was a signalled inspection to end a period of review. The school was last inspected in September 2024 and was placed under review because of a need for improvement in *Academic staff profile* and *Academic management*. The focus of this spot check was on Teaching and learning.

Preparation

The spot check was carried out by two inspectors, who had both carried out the previous inspection in September 2024. The reporting inspector contacted the provider in advance to check if there were any dates which would not be suitable and when key staff would be present. The actual date of the visit was not known by the school. The Accreditation Unit sent the inspector relevant documents in advance.

Programme and persons present

The inspectors arrived at 10.30 and left at 14.15. Meetings were held with the principal/director and the director of studies (DoS). A meeting and short pop-in observations were conducted with the three teachers timetabled to teach during the morning. These were not full observations because the teaching criteria were all fully met at the previous full inspection. Upon arrival, a range of documents were requested, all of which were provided.

Findings

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

Management

M27 The description of teaching staff being qualified was inaccurate, as one teacher is currently unqualified. This was amended at the time of the inspection and is no longer a point to be addressed.

Teaching and learning

See relevant section areas below

Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile	Met
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	
The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is largely appropriate to the school's context. One teacher, who has several years' relevant teaching experience abroad, does not have a TEFLI qualification. This teacher is receiving appropriate support and is currently undertaking an online recognised TEFLI course.	
The recruitment and support policy is effectively devised and implemented in line with the stated course objectives and the student profile.	
Academic management	Met
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.	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.	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.	Met

Comments

All the criteria in the above area are fully met

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 the criteria in the above area are fully met

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

M13 The CPD offered is not always relevant to development needs, and CPD undertaken is not consistently recorded.

Partially addressed. Although relevant CPD is offered to staff and some records are kept, these are incomplete.

Premises and resources

P11 There is no evidence that the procedures detailed in the school's teaching and resource policy are carried out, and there are no records of any review work.

Not yet addressed.

Teaching and learning

T1 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.

Addressed. The recruitment and support policy is now sufficiently well implemented in line with the stated course objectives and the student profile. The support offered to the unqualified teacher is relevant to their immediate development needs.

T2 There is no member of the academic management team with the required level of qualifications and teaching experience.

Addressed. The DoS has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership.

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.

Addressed. There is a policy, and procedures are in place for managing continuous enrolment, and teachers have received guidance.

T9 Observations are not carried out 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.

Addressed. Observations are carried out by the appropriately qualified DoS. Teachers reported that they have found these and the suggestions for development helpful.

T10 CPD for teachers 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.

Addressed. CPD sessions are regularly delivered, based on needs identified by the DoS, and requests and input from the teachers. Teachers reported that they find these sessions very helpful.

T13 There is no evidence of any regular or systematic review of course design.

Not yet addressed.

Conclusions

The school has made all the necessary changes and developments in order to address points from the previous inspection. All the points from the two areas needing improvement, *Academic staff profile* and *Academic management*, have been fully addressed. The teaching and learning section is now met.
