

Organisation name	Richard Language College, Bournemouth
Inspection date	12 February 2020
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: monitor effect of change of ownership

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2022; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, evidence must be provided within three months to demonstrate that all homestays in current use have conducted up-to-date fire risk assessments. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Richard Language College, Bournemouth in April 2018, November 2018 and February 2020. 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 and professional English for adults (18+) and young people (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the area of premises and facilities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings

None.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1982
Last full inspection	April 2018
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	November 2018
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	Teacher methodology refresher courses
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: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	18	250
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	12
Typical age range	18–28	12–55
Typical length of stay	1–4 months	2–3 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi, Omani, Kuwaiti, Yemeni, French, Estonian	Saudi, Omani, French, Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	5	18
Total number of managers including academic	5	5

Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	4	6
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Premises profile

Address of main site	43–45 Wimbourne Road, Bournemouth BH3 7AB
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	43 and 45 Wimbourne Road

Introduction

Background

Richard Language College (RLC) was established in Bournemouth in 1964. In addition to year-round courses for adults, the school runs closed group and vacation courses for under 18s. In August 2019 the school notified the Accreditation Unit that the original Paris-based owners had sold the school to a new owner and also that a new principal had been appointed. At its meeting in October 2019 the committee recommended a spot check within the next six months to determine the effects of the change of ownership.

Preparation

The inspector was sent relevant documents and telephoned the school in late January 2020 to introduce himself and ask whether there were any dates in the next few weeks to avoid for the spot check. He did not specify the date of the spot check.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school at 09.50 and left at 13.10. He had separate meetings with the principal, the client services manager, the director of studies and designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the examinations manager, and the accountant. He also toured both school buildings, one of which was not in use at the time of the inspection, and had meetings with a group of students and the five teachers. He looked at documents and sampled items on the Action Plan that was submitted following the full inspection and the spot check of 2018.

Findings

Effect of the change of ownership

The new principal took over from the acting principal at the start of September. She had recently moved to the UK from Oman where she worked as an academic manager, ICT co-ordinator and teacher trainer. At Richard Language College her role so far is mainly academic; the new owner is responsible for managing the business and promoting the school. Since joining, the principal has run three in-house professional development sessions, has prepared an academic quality plan and a list of academic priorities for 2020, has created a new development plan for staff, a new syllabus for all levels, and has introduced a new placement test and a number of other documents.

The director of studies has worked at RLC since 2008. His job description and contract remain as before. He reported that the changes being made by the new owner and the principal were necessary and he approved and supported them. The new management team works well. An academic assistant, a new role in the school, was appointed at the start of the year.

The client services manager has worked at the school for ten years, and the examinations manager for 40 years. Both were positive about the change of ownership. They reported that the new owner was very supportive and provided help whenever and wherever needed and noted that decisions were now taken locally so there was no time lapse. The accountant who has worked for the school for six years also commented positively on the fact that the new owner was based on site.

The group of eight students were pleased with the school, which they described as clean, warm and well equipped, and with their lessons and their homestays. There was a social programme after class which they enjoyed. One student who had been at the school since March said he had noticed no change since the change of ownership. Another, who had moved from another school, praised the experience of the teachers.

The teachers the inspector spoke to had all worked at the school for a number of years. They described the new owner as enthusiastic, approachable and accessible, and were pleased with the changes the new principal had introduced.

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.

The 2018 spot check report stated "The school has taken prompt and effective action to deal with all the points to

be addressed from the last inspection report". As noted below, teaching was not observed and a point to be addressed was raised about homestay fire risk assessment (criterion W11).

Conclusions

The change of ownership was viewed positively by all the staff interviewed. They welcome the 'hands on' approach of the new owner, his availability on site and the improvement they can see in student recruitment. They were also enthusiastic about the support provided and changes introduced by new principal.
