

Organisation name	St George's Business School and English Language Centre, Hastings
Inspection date	4 June 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.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited St George's Business School and English Language Centre in March 2017 and June 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 residential courses in general English for adults (17+).

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

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2013
Last full inspection	March 2017
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	October 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	University foundation courses in business
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Buckswood Overseas Summer School, Hastings
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Buckswood School, Hastings Buckswood schools in Nigeria and Georgia

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: May
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	8	12
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	17	17
Typical age range	19–20	18–20
Typical length of stay	9 months	9 months
Predominant nationalities	Chinese, German	Saudi, Georgian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	1	3
Total number of managers including academic	2	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	4	4

Premises profile	
Address of main site	7–9 Holmesdale Gardens, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1LY
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	7–9 Holmesdale Gardens, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1LY

Introduction

Background

At the last full inspection in March 2017 accreditation was placed under review because the section standard for Care of under 18s was not met and there were weaknesses in management, academic staff profile and W1. A spot check was carried out in October 2017 to assess progress in addressing these weaknesses. The section standard for Care of under 18s was found to be met. A new principal had been appointed and had addressed some of the outstanding weaknesses, but some issues were still outstanding. The academic staff profile remained weak as the academic manager was not suitably qualified and did not have relevant experience. It was agreed that the period of review should be extended for six months, to be ended by a further spot check.

Preparation

Inspectors received copies of the previous full inspection report, the October 2017 spot check report and correspondence between the school and the Accreditation Unit. The reporting inspector contacted the school to check staff availability and school closure days. Additional documentation was also requested. No indication of the day of the inspection was given.

Programme and persons present

Two inspectors carried out the spot check inspection. The reporting inspector had been the co-inspector at the full inspection in March 2017. The co-inspector had been the reporting inspector on the spot check in October 2017. The inspectors toured the school, but did not visit the residential areas of the premises. Meetings were held with the principal, the director of studies (DoS) and the marketing manager. A focus group was held with all eight students enrolled at the school. The inspectors arrived at 09.20 and left at 15.30. A short feedback session was provided for the principal and the marketing manager.

Findings

Significant changes since the last inspection

In January 2018 the school was renamed St George's Business School and English Language Centre. Previously it was known as Buckswood St George's College. A new website was created and a new brochure published. The minimum age was raised from 16 to 17 years. In January 2018 a new DoS was appointed. This person has worked at the school as a teacher for some years and is appropriately qualified and experienced. In April 2018 the principal left the school and a new principal was appointed. The handover period between the two principals was short; however, the new principal has received guidance and support from staff at Buckswood School (BS), particularly the BS marketing manager who is based at St George's.

Management

The new principal has already made a significant contribution to the school in a relatively short time, reviewing policies and procedures and embarking on a programme of improvements. A list of innovations was provided. The self-evaluation template is being used to monitor and review progress.

Publicity

The minimum age is given in the publicity as 17 years. At the time of the inspection one student was aged 16 years. Most leisure activities are offered free of charge. However, there is no indication in the publicity of approximate costs of activities for which an additional charge is made. The website includes details of the St George's guardianship service for under 18s studying in the UK. However, this service is not yet fully operational and the school currently recommends external companies accredited for the provision of guardianship services. The website needs to be amended to reflect the actual level of service offered.

Premises and resources

Public areas of the school have been improved. Signage and noticeboards have been updated. Two new classrooms have been created on the ground floor of the adjacent Braybrooke House. There is a new basketball court to the rear of the school. A programme of refurbishment of the residential accommodation is in place. The

garden is now attractively presented.

Teaching and learning

Academic procedures were not investigated in detail at this inspection.

Welfare and student services

Welfare and student services were not investigated in detail at this inspection.

Safeguarding under 18s

Safeguarding issues continue to be well managed by the school. The principal and the housemaster are the designated safeguarding leads. Both have had appropriate training and are named in the safeguarding policy. Procedures were not reviewed in detail at this inspection.

Action taken on points to be addressed

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Outstanding points to be addressed from the March 2017 full inspection are in standard type.

Outstanding points to be addressed from the October 2017 spot check inspection are in italics.

Action taken in response to these points to be addressed and noted at this inspection is in bold type.

Management

M22 Some information found in publicity is inaccurate and misleading.

Not yet addressed.

Partially addressed. There are some typographical errors in the new brochure and on the new website.

The publicity refers to 'hours' when what is meant is periods of 55 minutes.

Partially addressed. This is still the case. Additional teaching hours are offered at no additional charge, so the stated contact hours are routinely exceeded. However, total contact hours are not clearly stated in the publicity.

M25 Regarding activities organised by the students, the brochure states 'At times these independent activities may be paid for by Buckswood St George's College'. It is not clear what this means.

Not yet addressed. The same text is still in the brochure.

Addressed. The text has been removed from the brochure.

M29 *An incorrect version of the Accreditation Scheme marque is used in some instances.*

Addressed.

Teaching and learning

T4 The criterion is not met as the VPA does not have three years' full-time relevant teaching experience.

Not yet addressed. Much of the new academic manager's experience is with very young learners.

Addressed. The DoS appointed in January 2018 has relevant and appropriate teaching experience.

T5, 2018: T4 The rationale given for the academic manager's lack of qualification and appropriate experience was not accepted within the context of the inspection.

Not yet addressed. The new academic manager is TEFLI and does not have sufficient relevant experience. The college, however, feels she is the right person for the post and has decided to fund her study for a diploma-level qualification.

Addressed. The DoS appointed in January 2018 is appropriately qualified and has appropriate experience.

T14, 2018: T13 Students can access the teachers' schemes of work on a shared computer drive, but as these are not intended for students they are written in language difficult for students to understand.

Partially addressed. This shared drive is being reorganised.

Partially addressed. Students no longer have access to the shared computer drive. Schemes of work are provided for the full nine months of the course, but these are insufficiently detailed.

Welfare and student services

W1 No member of staff has had fire marshal training.

Not yet addressed. No members of staff had yet had fire marshal training.

Addressed. Staff have had introductory fire marshal training from BS staff. Further training by an external consultant will take place shortly.

W28 Procedures to ensure that risk assessments are read in advance of each activity are not fully implemented.

Not yet addressed.

Not yet addressed.

Conclusions

The school is now run by an enthusiastic and effective management team, with appropriate support from Buckswood School managers. Since the last full inspection staff turnover has been high. A period of stability is now required; the current management team should be given both the authority and support they need to take the school forward and ensure its long-term success. Points arising from the last full inspection and the subsequent spot check have, for the most part, been adequately addressed.