

Organisation name	Stamford Academy
Inspection date	18 May 2015

## BACKGROUND

### Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2009
Last full inspection	April 2014
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	N/a
Other related schools / centres /affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	Modern language classes

### Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: follow-up on Points to be addressed

### Premises profile

Address of main site	46a High Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 2DB
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	The school occupies the first floor of a modern two-storey commercial building on a pedestrian street in the centre of Stamford. The well-maintained premises comprise the office/reception, four classrooms, separate WCs for males and females, and a small kitchen. Three of the classrooms have interactive whiteboards, the fourth is equipped with a computer linked to satellite television. One of the classrooms also serves as a resource centre with two computers for student use.

### Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week (please give month)
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	9	30 (July)
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	14
Typical age range	18–60	14–17
Typical length of stay	5–6 months	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Spanish, Italian	Spanish, Italian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	5
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

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The 2014 report, which ended a period of review, recommended a spot check within 12 months to ensure that the *Points to be addressed* relating to the *Care of under 18s* had been acted on, and that weaknesses in publicity had been addressed.

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### Preparation

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The inspector received hard and soft copies of the 2014 report in mid-April, together with the *Annual declaration* for 2013-14 (since the declaration for 2014-15 had not been submitted). In late April, contact was made with the school by telephone and email in order to establish the availability of key staff and to request a number of documents in advance of the visit. No documents were received. It was agreed with the Accreditation Unit that the spot check should go ahead nevertheless.

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### Programme and persons present

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The inspector arrived at 11.05 and left at 14.45. He discussed current and planned provision (including changes since the last inspection) and issues with the website with the managing Director (MD), and looked briefly at the latest version of the new website. He also checked teacher personnel files, examined a number of documents (e.g. safeguarding policy, parental consent form, hosting guidelines, staff and student handbook), and finally gave brief feedback. Additional documents were received later the same day.

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## FINDINGS

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### Course provision and changes affecting provision

The school continues to provide full-time (15 hours per week) and part-time general English courses for adults year round. The voucher system for part-time classes – under which students paid for a certain number of classes to be taken within a limited period of time – has been discontinued, and part-time students now attend for nine hours (three mornings) per week. The maximum class size for all classes has been reduced to ten and the minimum age for adult classes has been standardised at 18. The arrangement with New College Stamford to offer a year-long course has been terminated.

Because the school is small and year-round students tend to come from the local area, classes at specific levels are created on the basis of demand. Summer courses are aimed at students between pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate level, and an online test is provided which enables students to assess their own level.

On the day of the spot check one part-time course was running (upper-intermediate, with a business skills orientation), with nine students enrolled. One of these was a full-time student, who was doing one-to-one IELTS-preparation classes on the other two mornings. The inspector was told that two courses had finished the previous day and one the previous week.

### Action plan

No action plan has been drawn up to deal with the *Points to be addressed* from the last inspection.

### Annual declaration 2014-15

The inspector had been informed by the Accreditation Unit that the *Annual declaration* had not been received, despite a reminder being sent, and no evidence was produced during the spot check that the declaration had been submitted.

### Publicity

A small number of changes have been made to the website, and these are indicated under the *Points to be addressed* below. The inspector was told that security issues with the website had prevented further editing and it had proved necessary to commission a new website, which was briefly demonstrated. Final technical adjustments are being made to ensure that the new website is accessible on mobile devices.

### Care of under 18s

A number of changes have been made to deal with the *Points to be addressed*. These are indicated below

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## Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Publicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Suitability checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Comments

C3 The current website provides no information on the level of care and support for under 18s. The inspector was told that information for parents/guardians and a link to the safeguarding policy would be included on the new website.

C6 No procedures exist for the supervision of open-enrolment students who opt out of the organised afternoon activity programme, and the parental consent form makes no reference to the supervision of students outside lesson times.

C7 Hosting guidelines include differentiated curfew times for students of 16 to 17 and under 16 respectively; however, these times are not specified in the notes for parents and students. The inspector was told that if evening activities finished after 21.00 students would be walked to their homestays in two groups, but this is not included in the notes for parents and students or the hosting guidelines.

### Care of under 18s summary

The provision just meets the section standard. There is appropriate provision within the organisation and in any leisure activities or accommodation provided for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 who are part of an accompanied group. Safeguarding provision for open-enrolment students and information for the parents/guardians of such students need further development.

### POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

*Points to be addressed from the previous inspection report with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.*

#### Points to be addressed within 12 months

##### Management

The comments below are based on an examination of the provider's website on the day before the spot check. They should, however, be read in conjunction with the findings on publicity (see above).

M21 Some of the English of the school's website is unnecessarily difficult for students with limited English. Some of the sentences are unnecessarily long. The information given on the website is not always where a potential student would expect to find it.

##### **Not yet addressed.**

M22 A student might be led to expect a larger school than in fact exists. For instance the statement "there is a range of class levels" could suggest to a reader more than three.

##### **Not yet addressed. Moreover, the description of the school is so minimal that it would be difficult for a prospective student to gain a realistic impression of what to expect.**

M23 The website says that the general English course levels are "from Lower-Intermediate through to Advanced" whereas at inspection the school was providing classes at three levels: elementary, intermediate and upper-intermediate.

##### **Not addressed in the sense that classes at all levels from lower-intermediate to advanced are always available (see Findings).**

M24 The information presented on the website does not always exactly match what was found at inspection. For instance, the times of classes and the length of break were slightly different. Non-teaching dates are not clearly set out. The minimum enrolment age for both adults and juniors was not clear to the inspectors at the time of the inspection (but was corrected during its course). The stated maximum class size varies between 10 and 12 depending on what source of information is consulted.

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**Not yet addressed. The minimum enrolment age for adults is now 18, but the website shows 16 for part-time courses. The minimum age for juniors is 14; although this is implied in the age-range shown it is not explicitly stated. Non-teaching dates are not given. The information on summer courses for adults states that there are 18 hours' tuition per week, but only morning classes (9.30-13.00, Monday to Friday) are indicated.**

M25 The inspectors found it difficult to establish from publicity whether the coursebook or a workbook was included in the course price, and where the approximate costs of any course-related examination fees were presented. The requirements for deposits, payment of fees and the school's refund policy are presented in difficult language.  
**Partially addressed. The website states that a coursebook is provided, but does not make it explicit that this is included in the fee. There is a link to a page showing examination dates and fees. The information on requirements for deposits, cancellation and refunds is still expressed in language which would be difficult for a student with limited proficiency to understand.**

M26 The website advertises its accommodation service under the heading 'Homestay and Private Home Accommodation'. No distinction between the two types of provision is made, and the school only arranges homestay accommodation.

**Addressed. The website simply refers to 'Accommodation'.**

M29 The website includes the correct accreditation marque in its footer limiting accreditation to its teaching of English. However, a flash across the screen proclaims "British Council Accredited" with the logo. Although the inspectors pointed this out during the inspection, it was still on the website ten days after the inspection.

**Not yet addressed on the currently available website. The flash had been removed in the new version of the website demonstrated.**

### **Care of under 18s**

C1 Development work is needed to ensure that the safeguarding policy meets all aspects of Scheme requirements in this area.

**Addressed. There is a safeguarding policy and a code of conduct. In combination, they meet all aspects of Scheme requirements. The MD is the named safeguarding officer and the administration manager is the designated senior person.**

C2 Development work is needed to provide guidance to all stakeholders on all aspects of the implementation of the safeguarding policy.

**Addressed. The administration officer's training as a nurse included child protection and the care of vulnerable adults. The MD has taken one online course and has almost completed a second, at foundation level. He is working towards level 2 certification. The policy has been disseminated to existing staff and will form part of induction for any new staff. Guidelines for homestay hosts are clear.**

C3 The website needs development to make information about the level of care provided to under 18s available to parents of prospective open enrolment students.

**This has not been addressed in the currently available website, but the safeguarding policy will be available on the website. A more simply written document has also been produced for parents and students which covers most of the areas likely to be of concern to a parent, and the inspector was told that this will also be available on the new website. The notes do not include any information on the supervision of students who opt out of the organised activity programme (see C6).**

C5 Not all homestay hosts working with under 18s had been checked at the time of the inspection.

**Addressed.**

C6 Arrangements for the supervision of open enrolment students outside class time need to be developed and formalised.

**Not yet addressed. No procedures exist for the supervision of students who opt out of the organised afternoon activity programme, and the parental consent form makes no reference to the supervision of students outside lesson times. Although hosting guidelines include differentiated curfew times for students of 16 to 17 and under 16 respectively these times are not specified in the notes for parents and students. The inspector was also told that if evening activities finished after 21.00 students would be walked to their homestays in two groups, but this is not included in the notes.**

### **Other points to be addressed**

#### **Management**

M13 There is no proactive system for ensuring that students' own and next-of kin-details are kept up-to-date.

**Not checked.**

M17 There is no formalised procedure for reviewing systems, processes and practices, and recording any action taken.

**Not checked.**

M18 Some of the language used in the initial and final questionnaires is unnecessarily difficult, the questionnaire templates do not include a date, the initial questionnaire has no space for students to add their names so they can

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be identified for follow-up action, and there is no space to record any action taken.

**Not checked.**

M20 The complaints procedure in the student handbook could usefully be developed to include a stage beyond first talking and then writing to the managing director.

**Not yet addressed.**

### **Resources and environment**

None.

### **Teaching and learning**

T14 Schemes of work (or similar course outlines) are not made available to, or written in language accessible to, the students.

**Not checked.**

T15 The school's support of independent learning is not systematic and needs to be developed further.

**Not checked.**

T16 The school could usefully exploit the opportunities afforded by this English country town more proactively and systematically to help students to develop their language skills outside the classrooms.

**Not checked.**

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## **CONCLUSIONS**

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Although some progress has been made in relation to *Care of under 18s*, issues with the school's website have delayed efforts to deal with most of the *Points to be addressed* under publicity.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

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In view of the unsatisfactory findings, accreditation should be placed under review. The period of review will be ended by the submission of an action plan and supporting evidence to demonstrate that the outstanding *Points to be addressed* have been dealt with. This evidence must be submitted to the Accreditation Unit by 18 September 2015 and the committee reserves the right to conduct a spot check to verify the action taken before ending the period of review.

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## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

### **Changes to summary statement**

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The summary statement has been withdrawn and must not be used.

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### **Summary statement**

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N/a

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## **Points to be addressed outstanding from the previous inspection(s) or arising from this visit**

### **Management**

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M20 The complaints procedure in the student handbook could usefully be developed to include a stage beyond first talking and then writing to the managing director.

M21 Some of the English on the school's website is difficult for students with limited English. Some sentences are unnecessarily long. The information given on the website is not always where a potential student would expect to find it.

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there are more than three levels.

M23 The website says that the general English course levels are “from Lower-Intermediate through to Advanced” whereas classes at specific levels only run when there is sufficient demand.

M24 The minimum enrolment age for adults is now 18, but the website shows 16 for part-time courses, and the maximum class size is now 10 rather than 12. Non-teaching dates are not given. The information on summer courses for adults states that there are 18 hours’ tuition per week, but only morning classes (9.30-13.00, Monday to Friday) are indicated.

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