

Organisation name	The Stay Academy, London
Inspection date	9 February 2016

BACKGROUND

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	August 2014
Last full inspection	N/a
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	February 2015
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution

Premises profile

Address of main site	34 Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 8AJ (the Camden site) General English classes and occasional one-to-one Six classrooms and a teachers' room
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	5J Nicoll Road, London NW10 9AX (the Willesden site) Closed junior group tuition, junior group courses, used year-round, and for occasional one-to-one Seven classrooms and a teachers' room
Sites inspected	Main site

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week (July)
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	29 (C: 29, W: 0)	344 (C: 80, W: 264)
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	C: 15, 10 under 18	C: 16, W: 12
Typical age range	C: 16–56	C: 16–50, W: 15–17
Typical length of stay	C: 3 weeks	C: 4 weeks, W: 2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	C: Argentinian	C: Italian, Spanish W: Argentinian, Russian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	C: 4	14 (C: 7, W: 7)
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	C: 5	

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Stay Academy (TSA) grew out of, and is housed in, a student residential development called The Stay Club. The Stay Club is a limited company, the Hallmark Property Group, which is developing a series of custom-built

student residences across London. Two are already in operation: The Stay Club@Camden opened in March 2013; The Stay Club@Willesden opened in August 2012. The Camden Stay Club has 260 studios that can accommodate a maximum of 530 students and is open to students both from London universities and from language schools. The Willesden Stay Club also houses students but, as it has a part-hotel licence, it can take guests who are not students. It has 126 studios and can accommodate a maximum of 264 guests. Both clubs accept both UK and non-UK students.

A 2013 survey of students staying in the Camden residence revealed that some of the language school students staying there would prefer to have language lessons in their residence, rather than travelling to schools around London, so the company decided to introduce English language lessons, initially at the Camden residence and then at the Willesden residence, under the name The Stay Academy (TSA). TSA is a separate company but is under the same ownership as The Stay Club.

The management of the two Stay Clubs – unit managers, reception managers and maintenance teams – play a part in the running of the non-academic side of the two TSA sites but are not employed by TSA and were not interviewed during the previous inspections or during this check.

General English courses run at both centres. Accompanied groups of students under age 18 are taught and accommodated at Willesden year round, with a significant rise in numbers in July. Both group and individual bookings are accepted at Camden, where the minimum age is 16.

Another Stay Club/Academy is due to open in Colindale in September. This is a 17-floor building with 600 studios and 48 classrooms. There will be three restaurants, a supermarket and a gym. University Study Abroad programmes, International Foundation Year and customised courses are being advertised in current publicity.

The Stay Academy was inspected for the first time in August 2014. Accreditation was withheld because the section standard for *Care of under 18s* was not met. However, the school was invited to apply for a supplementary inspection, which was arranged for February 2015. The school demonstrated that the weaknesses in this and other sections, publicity and course design, had generally been addressed and accreditation was awarded for four years. This was the routine spot check of a newly accredited provider.

Preparation

The inspector was sent copies of both previous reports, the action plan following the first inspection, correspondence and a brochure. No notice was given to the school of the visit.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived, without any prior notice, at 10.00 and left at 15.00. Meetings were held with the chief executive officer of The Stay Academy, the director of studies/acting principal, the regional sales manager and the student services coordinator. The inspector did not visit the Willesden site as there were no students enrolled there. All the teachers and students were out on a study visit.

FINDINGS

Management

At the last inspection a year ago, TSA's structure of management involved three key senior managers, the TSA principal, a newly-appointed full-time director of studies (DOS), and the student services manager who were responsible for overseeing their respective areas at both sites, while each site had its own dedicated academic services administrator.

The principal, who had been present at the previous inspections, had left the company in January. The DoS had been asked to take on the role of acting principal and, at the time of the visit, had been carrying out these duties for three weeks. She has continued in her role of DoS at both centres. Although the DoS had worked closely with the principal since her appointment 12 months ago, there was no specific handover period. As well as taking on the role of acting principal, the DoS also took on the role of designated safeguarding officer (DSO) and responsibility for the review of the Prevent policy. However, there is no designated Prevent lead and a full Prevent risk assessment has not yet been carried out or action plan completed.

At the end of last year an appointment for a new role, chief executive officer (CEO) of The Stay Academy, was made. However, due to various commitments, the CEO, who was recruited from outside the organisation, had only recently been able to take up his new position at the time of the spot check visit.

The revised organogram shows the CEO reports to the board of the Hallmark Property Group. Once recruited, the principal will report to the CEO. The current DoS has so far had little support in her role as acting principal. She has been invited to apply for the principal role and to continue as DoS. It is envisaged that an operations manager would

be recruited to assist her if she was appointed to this dual role.

The student services manager, who has been in this role for one and a half years, currently reports to the acting principal.

The sales manager, responsible for recruiting groups and for overseeing operations for junior groups, has been in post since May last year.

Publicity

M22 Publicity does not make the location of courses at the different sites clear. There is no specific location given for the International Junior Camp programme. The brochure states that both junior and adult courses take place at Willesden, which is no longer the case.

Welfare and student services

Entrance to the Camden Stay Academy is through the reception area for the Stay Club and non-residents (staff and visitors) are meant to be checked and signed in on arrival. However, there are no procedures to ensure that this is done and the associated risks have not been assessed. At Willesden there is a swipe card system of entry, but there are no measures to prevent Stay Club residents entering the Stay Academy premises.

Care of under 18s

There is a safeguarding policy which has recently been reviewed and updated. Procedures for safe recruitment are in place and the requirement for suitability checks is made clear in the policy. However, other safe recruitment requirements are not stated in the policy.

The different levels of care and support given to students under 18 at the two centres are not made clear in publicity. At Willesden the students are never allowed off the premises unescorted and there is a high level of supervision, but at Camden any 16 or 17 year olds are treated as adults with a curfew time of 23.00. The advice and rules given to students under 18 in the handbook and at induction are not sufficiently clear and do not take account of the very different situations and circumstances at the different centres.

The Stay Academy often provides only the accommodation and lessons for groups and the group's accompanying leaders arrange their own leisure activities and excursions. However, the school does not provide group leaders with guidelines or rules for students to ensure adequate safeguarding measures are in place for this aspect of the programme.

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. (Comments from supplementary inspection in italics.)

Outstanding points to be addressed, to be assessed at the spot check

Management

M8 Procedures for monitoring and appraising staff and for handling unsatisfactory performance are in place but had not yet fully bedded in due to the short time in which the school had been fully operational.

Addressed. Procedures are in place for regular monitoring and appraising staff.

M13 Currently, students' and their next-of-kin details are collected on paper and then entered onto the database, which is accessible at any time to whoever is holding the emergency phone. However, there is sometimes too long a period between the collecting of the information on paper to it becoming accessible on the database.

A new bespoke database, which will merge all TSA and TSC student data, will be put in place by the end of February 2015.

Addressed. The new database is now fully operational.

M25 There is no mention of the approximate cost of any leisure programme not included in the course fees.

Not addressed.

Resources and environment

R3 The classrooms at the Camden school lack natural light as they are on the lower basement floor. At both sites, the majority of the classrooms have one long, narrow and heavy table which takes up most of the classroom space, thus restricting student movement. The resulting seating arrangement, with two long lines of students sitting down the long sides of these tables, prevents students from seeing the board without peering round the students in front of them.

Partially addressed. The problems with seating arrangements in some classrooms in the Camden school remain.

Not addressed.

R12 The school is in the process of developing teaching and learning resources for the first time, so there has been little opportunity for review.

Partially addressed.

Addressed.

Teaching and learning

T23–T29: Lessons were not observed at the supplementary inspection.

Lessons were not observed at the spot check.

Welfare and student services

W7 Students are not given advice on traffic regulations.

Addressed.

Care of under 18s

C5 Two teachers are awaiting a DBS report but have completed appropriate declarations.

Addressed.

All teachers have had appropriate suitability checks.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Management

M2 Recent changes in management roles and structure have resulted in some lack of continuity and uncertainty about the future management structure.

M3 Job descriptions of current and proposed management roles are not finalised.

M22 Publicity does not make the location of courses at the different sites clear.

M25 There is no mention of the approximate cost of any leisure programme not included in the course fees.

Resources and environment

R3 The problems with seating arrangements in some classrooms in the Camden school remain.

Welfare and student services

W1 Security risks at both centres have not been fully assessed or addressed in the premises risk assessments.

W4 Policies and procedures relating to the Prevent strategy are not made known to students.

Care of under 18s

C1 Full procedures for safe recruitment are not stated in the safeguarding policy.

C3 The different levels of care and support given to students under 18 at the two centres are not made clear in publicity.

C6 Rules are not specific enough to take account of the differences at the two centres. The school does not provide group leaders with guidelines or rules for students to ensure adequate safeguarding measures are in place when they take the under 18s off the premises.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the points from the previous two inspections have now been fully addressed. However, there have been many very recent changes in management personnel and structure and there has been some lack of continuity as a result. The acting principal, in addition to maintaining her role as academic manager has also had to take on the role of DSO. As yet, no one has been designated Prevent lead.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the unsatisfactory findings, particularly as a result of all the recent and proposed management changes and also in a few aspects of *Care of under 18s*, an action plan should be submitted within three months and a further spot check carried out within six months.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

No changes need to be made to the publishable statement (now called summary statement).

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited The Stay Academy in February 2015. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare and care of 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 (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s in school premises.

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