

Organisation name	The Language Gallery Nottingham
Inspection date	18 August 2021
Current accreditation status	Accredited by extension
Reason for spot check	Signalled: first inspection of new extension

Recommendation

We recommend continuation of the extension of accreditation pending a full inspection of the provision within 12 months.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	August 2021
Last full inspection	N/a
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
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	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	TLG London and Birmingham
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: <i>July</i>
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	20	28
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	18
Typical age range	21–25	21–25
Typical length of stay	18 weeks	18 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian	Saudi Arabian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	3
Total number of managers including academic	1	1
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile

Address of main site	1st Floor, 1 Royal Standard Place, Nottingham NG1 6FS
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Nottingham

Introduction

Background

The Language Gallery (TLG) operates three schools in the UK, including Nottingham. TLG is part of the Global University Systems (GUS) group, along with a range of higher education institutions. TLG Birmingham requested an extension of its accreditation to a new Nottingham centre, which opened in October 2020. Due to the global pandemic, it closed again at the end of November 2020, reopened briefly in January 2021 and has now remained open since March 2021.

Preparation

The inspector was sent relevant documents and visited the school's website in advance. She spoke to the regional academic manager and the academic director prior to the inspection to check the availability of key staff in

Nottingham and centrally, and to manage practical and technical aspects of the inspection as it was to be conducted remotely. The school was aware in advance of the week in which the spot check would take place, and the actual day was confirmed the night before, together with an outline programme for the inspection.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took half a day. It began at 10.00 and finished at 13.15. An additional meeting of 30 minutes was held the day before the main inspection. The inspector had meetings with the academic director (AD), the regional academic manager (RAM), the student services manager (SSM) and the academic support officer (ASO) for Nottingham. Brief focus group meetings were held with teachers and students. A live video tour of the school premises was carried out, and a range of documents was checked and discussed. The inspector conducted a brief round up session with the AD and the RAM before concluding the spot check inspection.

Findings

Management

The management structure is clear. TLG organisation sits within the wider GUS management structures and a number of management functions, including human resources (HR), sales and marketing and payroll, are carried out by GUS employees, some dedicated to TLG, and others whose time can be utilised by TLG. TLG has its own managing director, and the AD, who is based in London, reports to him. The SSM, also based in London, and the RAM, responsible for Birmingham and Nottingham, both report to the AD. Each of the Birmingham and Nottingham schools have an ASO, and these both report to the RAM, as well as the teachers in each school.

During the global pandemic, this structure has been both emerging and adapting, and at the time of the inspection, the RAM was completing her last week before leaving the organisation. Recruitment was in process to replace the post with an academic manager for Birmingham only. The AD will oversee the Nottingham school in the meantime, and the academic manager for Birmingham, once appointed, will liaise closely with the Nottingham school. The longer-term plan is to have an academic manager in each school.

Following the opening of the Nottingham school, the RAM, who is TEFLQ, was responsible for academic management in liaison with both the AD and the ASO, who is TEFLQ and who carries out the day-to-day running of the school. In the week that the inspection took place, there were four teachers.

Liaison with the AD, SSM and RAM has clearly been very important, and communications are appropriate and effective, with regular meetings and frequent informal channels. TLG systems for quality assurance, staff management and administration are all in place for Nottingham, centrally managed and implemented locally as necessary. For example, recruitment is carried out by the AD and relevant staff in each school, with the necessary administrative support and paperwork from central HR services. Publicity is appropriate and mentions the new school as part of the wider TLG offer, with photographs of the actual premises and facilities.

Premises and resources

The school can be reached by lift or stairs, and occupies part of the first floor of a building on the University of Law (ULaw) campus in a central area of Nottingham. TLG has an office, two dedicated classrooms and a further one which can be booked. There is a large communal area for students with three booths, and a range of differently configured tables and seating. A kitchen area includes microwaves and fridges as well as hot and cold water. These facilities are shared in principle with ULaw, although there have been no ULaw students so far. There are toilets on each floor.

Teaching and learning

The AD, RAM and AOS are all TEFLQ, and two of the four teachers at the time of the inspection are also TEFLQ. The others are TEFLI. Teachers have benefited from regular monthly development sessions and all have been observed, with written feedback.

Academic English is advertised, as well as general English and IELTS preparation, both of which have run since the school opened. Only general English classes, with speaking and writing electives, were being taught at the time of the inspection. Class weekly plans are displayed on noticeboards and students have tutorials at least monthly, and more often by request.

Welfare and student services

The SSM is based in London but has been in regular contact with the school since its opening. She ensures that welfare systems are effectively implemented and that staff have completed any training needed. Although teachers and the ASO in the school are students' first point of contact, the SSM carries out daily welfare checks with any students with particular issues – a student in the focus group mentioned her own experience of this with great appreciation.

The school has an up-to-date premises risk assessment and a Covid risk assessment. Fire drills have been suspended during the pandemic but are expected to resume once the university opens its doors to students once again in September. Induction for all students and staff includes evacuation procedures and routes, which are also posted in each classroom. The fire alarm is tested weekly.

Homestay accommodation is offered through an agency registered with the British Council. At the time of the inspection, one student was in a homestay. No other accommodation had been arranged by the school, although the SSM has been working with a number of student residences, with a view to offering placements. Procedures for monitoring such accommodation are not clear. The school produces an information sheet to help students find private rentals, but students in the focus group were not aware that this was available.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.	Strength
P2 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Strength
P3 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Met
P4 Free drinking water is available. A choice of appropriate food at affordable prices is available to students on site, if not available locally.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display of general information.	Met
P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions, and for teachers to carry out their preparation and marking.	Met

Comments

P1 Premises were spotlessly clean throughout, with ample space for staff and students outside class time. The school can be accessed by stairs or lift.
P2 All classrooms are spacious and bright, with good natural light and flexible furniture.
P3 Students have access to a kitchen area with a microwave and fridges, and there is a hot water dispenser for preparing hot drinks, although this facility was not in use at the time of the inspection due to Covid measures.
P4 As well as kitchen facilities, there is a range of food and drink outlets on the campus and in the local area, and there are vending machines on the ground and second floors of the building.
P5 The TLG areas are clearly indicated and there are ample noticeboards for the display of information.
P6 Teachers have desks in classrooms, and can also use communal areas for preparation. Meetings are usually held in the office. There is a large bank of lockers for staff use.

Action taken on points to be addressed

N/a.

Conclusions

From the evidence seen during this spot check, the overall provision at TLG Nottingham meets the standards of the Scheme. Accreditation by extension can continue pending a full inspection of the school within twelve months.