

Organisation name	Twin English Centre, Eastbourne
Inspection date	29 August 2017

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	May 1983
Last full inspection	August 2016
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
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	Twin English Centre, London
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	Signalled: follow up on Points to be addressed; inspect new premises.

Premises profile

Address of main site	27 Gildredge Road, Eastbourne BN21 4RU
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	Eastbourne College Science Centre, Old Wish Road, Eastbourne BN21 4JX
Sites inspected	Gildredge Road is a main road on the one-way system in the centre of Eastbourne. Number 27 is a porticoed Edwardian building a two-minute walk from the station and various cafes and shops. It has four storeys and a semi-basement which provide six classrooms over three floors, two small offices, which accommodate the principal and the director of studies, a ground-floor reception, a teachers' room, and a student common room. There are also plans for a snack bar area and a library/study centre in the semi-basement. The building currently has two female toilets and one male. At the back there is parking for three cars, and at the front a small area which has a picnic table for student use.

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	28	271
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	17	12
Typical age range	17–40	12–60
Typical length of stay	4 weeks	2.5 weeks

Predominant nationalities	Italian, Saudi, Spanish	Chinese, Italian, Russian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	20
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	5	17

INTRODUCTION

Background

The last inspection report recommended continued accreditation but noted weaknesses in Welfare and student services (accommodation) and Care of under 18s. A spot check was therefore recommended within 12 months focusing on these areas. In addition, the principal informed the Accreditation Unit in April 2017 that the school was moving to new premises so this spot check also includes an inspection of the premises and the attendant publicity.

Preparation

The inspector received the previous report, and copies of correspondence between the organisation and the Accreditation Unit. The inspector read the documentation and visited the Twin English Centres website which covers provision at Eastbourne and Greenwich in London.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took place on 29 August, at the end of the summer season. The Twin summer school in the Eastbourne College premises had finished the previous week, and the adult school was delivering general English courses for students aged 16+. The inspector, who had been the reporting inspector at the previous inspection, arrived at the school at 10.30 and left at 13.30. The school had not been informed of the date of the inspection. As well as a tour of the school, the visit included discussions with the principal and the temporary student services assistant, who was employed for the summer, and an informal discussion with the teaching staff about the new premises. Both the director of studies (DoS) and the accommodation and activities manager were on annual leave. The inspector also examined documentation relating to publicity and DBS checks, and the action plan documentation prepared in response to the 'Points to be addressed'. A short feedback session was provided for the principal.

FINDINGS

At the time of the last inspection in August 2016 the Twin premises in St Anne's Road were having repair work done to the roof. The cost of this escalated, and head office decided to sell the house, so the school moved to temporary premises in March 2017, as appropriate permanent accommodation was difficult to find. In May 2017 it moved into the present house in Gildredge Road, on a ten-year lease. Little renovation work was undertaken during the busy summer, but work had begun in late August to paint the exterior, and conversion of parts of the interior is to follow. Staff confirmed that they found the building satisfactory as a language school, even in its unconverted state.

A further change was that the school was no longer working with a local accommodation agency, and was relying entirely on their 'in house' homestay provision.

Apart from these, no other changes were reported. The management and the teaching staff remain the same, as does the course offer.

Issues arising from the points to be addressed within 12 months are dealt with below. One further issue arose relating to accommodation: although homestay hosts are asked to do a fire-risk assessment, they are not expected to produce it and its existence or not is not recorded on the homestay database.

Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

R6 Staffroom(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Comments

R1 The new premises are adequate in size for the year-round adult school, though it has fewer classrooms than the previous Victorian building, and there is no garden. The narrow paved area at the front of the building on the main road provides an area where a few students may gather. There is a plan to convert the female basement toilet into a larger male toilet, so that eventually there will be two female toilets on the first floor and two male toilets in the basement. CCTV is to be installed front and back and at the entrance.

R2 At the time of the spot-check inspection the exterior of the house was being painted and the building was encased in scaffolding. The painting is scheduled to be completed by mid-September. The interior is clean and in satisfactory decorative order.

R3 The six classrooms vary in size, but all can accommodate ten students comfortably, and some more. Some rooms have conventional tables and chairs, others have tablet chairs, so staff can change rooms if they have a particular requirement. All have whiteboards, shelves on which resources are stored, and natural light. Three interactive whiteboards transferred from the previous school building have yet to be installed. The principal, who had viewed the new accommodation in the winter, reported that the heating was satisfactory. There is a large room in the semi-basement adjacent to the common room which is to be a library/study centre, though no decision has yet been made as to precisely what technology it will contain. The building has Wi-Fi.

R4 Currently there is a basic students' common room in the semi-basement; a medium-sized room off it will be renovated and furnished as a small snack bar, with a drinks machine and snacks. There are cafes and shops in the vicinity.

R5 Met, but display boards are currently limited. There are signs indicating which rooms are on which floor, and fire exit and fire action escape route signs throughout the building.

R6 There is a small staffroom on the second floor furnished with four desks and three computers, just adequate for the present staff.

Publicity

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
M21 Accessible accurate language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
M22 Realistic expectations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M23 Course descriptions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M24 Course information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M25 Costs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M26 Accommodation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M27 Leisure programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M28 Staff qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
M29 Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

The website is the primary source of publicity for the school, but at the time of the inspection contained very little on Twin Eastbourne. There is a very general 'Summer Centres' brochure, which covers the seven Twin summer centres, and contains a lot of uncaptioned photographs. There is also a brochure which went to press at the end of August, and should be available by mid-September. A copy of this new brochure, which is prepared by head office in London, was not available. Comments here therefore refer to the website.

M22 There is very limited information, and insufficient to form a coherent view either of the school or of the programme the school offers. On the home page there is a photograph of the back garden and house of the previous premises. The site claims that the school uses "tested methods alongside modern technologies", but currently there are very limited modern technologies installed. Photographs under the title 'Centre photos' are of Eastbourne, not the Centre, and repeat the photo of the previous premises.

M23 Courses are listed but minimally described.

M24 None of the requirements of this criterion are provided.

M25 None of the requirements of this criterion are provided.

M26 Accommodation is not mentioned.

M27 No leisure programme is mentioned.

M28 No mention is made of staff qualifications.

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. Only points reviewed during this spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.

Welfare and student services

W1 The large jeep and open trailer containing rubbish, which has been parked immediately outside the school for a number of months, is potentially a health hazard.

No longer applicable. The school has moved to new premises.

W9 There was inadequate hanging and drawer space for clothes in one homestay visited.

Partially addressed. The particular host had been asked to rectify the position. The temporary student services assistant confirmed that hanging and drawer space was checked on initial visits and revisits. However, although the homestay handbook mentions the need for this facility, the homestay induction check list does not.

W10 One host visited was unaware of the need for a Gas Safe certificate and overall just under 50 per cent of Twin's hosts do not have Gas Safe certificates.

Partially addressed. The school has been following up Gas Safe certificates, and now estimates that 20–25 homestays out of 119 are without (21 per cent). The inspector spot-checked ten per cent of the list, and found one without a certificate on file.

W12 There is no record to show that a Gas Safe certificate is not in place.

Addressed. Certificates are now scanned and appear on a host's record on the database.

W16 There were two examples of a homestay hosting more than four students.

Addressed. The particular host had been asked to rectify the position. The accommodation officer checks this when he visits, and both the homestay handbook and the induction list include it.

W17 One host left her three students (aged 11 and 12) alone in the house two mornings a week and had given them a house key so that they could lock up the house when they went to school.

Addressed. The particular host had been asked to rectify the position. The accommodation officer checks the host's understanding of the rules when he visits, and both the homestay handbook and the induction list are clear that keys must be provided to students aged 18+, and that 'a responsible adult will be present ...when students under 16 are at home'.

Care of under 18s

C4 A significant number of homestay hosts who were hosting under 18s at the time of the inspection had not undergone criminal record checks. Some group leaders did not have evidence that they had been police checked in their home countries. Although the two agencies claimed that all their hosts who were hosting under 18s had had criminal record checks, there was no formal agreement between Twin and the agencies to ensure that appropriate suitability checks had been carried out.

Partially addressed. The school has followed up DBS checks for all the hosts and their households on their list. The inspector checked ten per cent, and found that all those hosting under 18s had up-to-date DBS checks bar one, and in this case there was an email on file showing that its absence had been chased. So there is one DBS check for hosts hosting under 18s still outstanding. Certificates are now scanned and appear on a host's record on the database. This is not acceptable practice. Records need to be kept detailing the date the disclosure was obtained, the level of disclosure, the unique reference number and whether or not the record was clear. The copy of the certificate should then be destroyed. The school policy is to require a DBS update every three years. The school presented evidence to demonstrate that group leaders had supplied police checks, and that those from countries where this service was not available had signed a self-certification form. The school no longer works with agencies.

C7 In one case, a responsible adult was not at home at all times when her 11 and 12 year-old students were in the house. At the main school 16 and 17 year-olds do not have their lunches provided and parents do not confirm that they agree to this arrangement.

Addressed. The parental consent form makes it clear that lunches are not provided for 16 and 17 year-olds on adult courses.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Premises

R4 Currently there is a basic students' common room in the semi-basement which has a medium-sized room off it which will be renovated and furnished as a small snack bar, with a drinks machine and snacks.

Publicity

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Accommodation

W9 Although the homestay handbook mentions the need for adequate hanging and drawer space for clothes, the homestay induction check list does not.

W10 The school has been following up Gas Safe certificates, and now estimates that 20-25 homestays out of 119 are without (21 per cent).

W12 Although homestay hosts are asked to do a fire-risk assessment, they are not expected to produce it and its existence or not is not recorded on the homestay database.

CONCLUSIONS

The school has moved into smaller premises which are undergoing renovations. Although the building is currently useable, when these are completed the school will provide an appropriately professional environment for both students and staff. The current publicity on the website lacks many of the details required by the Scheme and is inadequate. The school has made an effort to update its systems and ensure its homestay hosts accommodating students under 18 are DBS checked, and this is now satisfactory. There has been some considerable improvement in the number of hosts who have Gas Safe certificates, but there is still a need for further improvement. Hosts should be supported to produce a written fire-risk assessment, and the school's database needs to record these.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in August 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in publicity and accommodation have been addressed.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

'Large' can be deleted from the summary statement.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Twin English Centre, Eastbourne in August 2016. 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 large private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s/adults (16+) and vacation courses for under 18s and adults (16+).

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of accommodation.

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

Revised summary statement

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