Background

Organisation profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection history</th>
<th>Dates/details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First inspection</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last full inspection</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent spot check (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates</td>
<td>UK College of Business and Computing, London</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current accredited status</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for spot check</td>
<td>Routine: newly accredited institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signalled: inspect new premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signalled: check course not running at inspection</td>
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</table>

Premises profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address of main site</th>
<th>55–59 Oxford Street, London W1D 2EQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites inspected</td>
<td>The main site is a five-floor property on the corner of Oxford Street and a side street leading to Soho Square. There is CCTV throughout the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is an entrance at street level and a lift to all floors. Reception is on the first floor with two workplaces and an office; there are also offices for the chief executive, the centre head, a marketing office and a student lounge. On the second floor there is a reading room, and four classrooms; there are four classrooms on the third floor and three classrooms on the fourth floor. The staffroom is on the fifth floor, next to the academic office, which has up to seven workplaces. There are toilets on the third and fourth floors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student and staff profile

| Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT) | 139 | 139 |
| Minimum age (including closed group or vacation) | 14 | 12 |
| Typical age range                          | 16–40 | 16–40 |
INTRODUCTION

Background
The UK College of English (UKCE) was inspected and accredited in April 2016. The recommendation was that the routine spot check should take place within 12 months and when the school was running a closed group course for students aged under 18.

On 31 March 2017, the school moved from 37–39 Oxford Street to new, renovated premises at 55–59 Oxford Street, and the Accreditation Unit was informed accordingly.

The UKCE is part of a larger organisation with a college offering courses in business and computing in east London. The UKCE offers courses in general English, as well as preparation courses for external general English examinations and IELTS; for adults (16+) throughout the year. The maximum class size is 14. Some one-to-one tuition also takes place. Classes take place in the morning, afternoon, and on three evenings a week (from 18.30–20.30). The school also accepts closed groups of young learners from 12–17, accompanied by group leaders. The maximum class size for such groups is 18.

At the time of the spot check visit there were five adult classes running in the morning, three in the afternoon and six over three evenings (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday).

A closed group of 40 Italian students were in school from 24 July to 4 August 2017 on a two-week course of 15 hours in the morning. See care of under 18s below.

Preparation
The spot check was carried out by one inspector who had not been to the school before. She contacted the centre head to confirm the dates of the closed group course. In order to make best use of time, they agreed that the premises check would be carried out on the same day as the routine spot check, and the check of the course for under 18s. The Accreditation Unit was informed. The exact date of the spot check was not given to the school. The inspector was sent the previous inspection report and other relevant documents. She checked the school's website before the visit.

Programme and persons present
The inspector arrived at 09.15 and left at 17.00. She had meetings with the new chief executive, the centre head, the director of studies (DoS) and the office administrator. She checked a range of documentation, including teachers' qualifications. She observed both groups of under 18s, spoke to the students in one of the classes, and briefly with one of the teachers. The centre head showed the inspector the new premises and related documentation. A brief round up was given to the centre head and the DoS.

FINDINGS

Management
An amended structure of management has been recently put in place and the inspector was shown the school's revised organogram. A new chief executive was appointed at the beginning of July 2017; he reports to the owner of the organisation and has overall responsibility for the school. The centre head reports to the chief executive, and manages the academic team (DoS and ADoS) and the administrative team of three staff. The chief executive is a very experienced ELT professional and the focus of his role will be largely related to marketing the school's programmes.

The DoS had been in post since October 2015 and has had the support of two senior teachers. He was working his last week at the time of the spot check. One of the senior teachers, who is TEFLQ and suitably experienced, is now the new DoS, and the other senior teacher is the ADoS. She is currently studying for her diploma-level qualification. There have been no other changes in staff since the time of the last inspection.

Student administration
The inspector sampled some student records, both of adult students and the closed group students, and all the required information was complete, with the exception of one missing record of next of kin details from a new adult student, which the office administrator will follow up immediately. Records can be accessed remotely.

Attendance is monitored by means of a spreadsheet, an improvement on the system in place at the time of the last inspection, although percentages of classes missed have to be calculated by staff. The administrative staff are currently receiving training in the use of a new database which, once this is in operation, will make tracking attendance more efficient.

Quality assurance
All the points checked from the last inspection have been addressed.

Student feedback is collected at the beginning of courses with a first impressions questionnaire, and at the end of courses. Feedback forms sampled showed a good level of satisfaction with the school's courses and services.

Publicity
The school's website has accurate information about the school and its courses. The pictures of the new premises give an entirely realistic impression.

Premises and facilities
The new premises are in a very central location and have been acquired on a 15-year lease. The building previously housed a college. The premises were entirely re-designed and have been re-fitted to a very high standard, and stylish design. All fittings and furniture, including the lift, are new. Staff were involved in the development of the new school, and their opinions of the design and fittings taken into account. Various members of staff told the inspector that they enjoyed working in the new premises, particularly because of the additional space in comparison to the previous premises.

Each classroom is equipped with a computer, projector, screen and whiteboard. There are plans to install an e-library in the reading room on the second floor, with electronic reading devices available for students to borrow.

A premises risk assessment, and fire risk assessment, is in place. Fire drills are held twice a year and one was carried out in July, and recorded. Fire safety training has been provided for staff. First aid provision is excellent, with eight members of staff trained in first aid.

The front door at street level is currently open access. The centre head showed the inspector plans already submitted to the council for planning permission to install a new security door with a coded entry system; this will be operated electronically by cards issued to staff and students. As soon as planning permission is granted, expected within the next six weeks, the installation of the door will go ahead. The centre head is very aware of the potential security issues related to the front door; there is CCTV in the entrance, monitored from reception, and staff are alert to the entry of any visitors. Extra care is taken by the member of staff in charge when evening classes are running; evening classes are for adults (18+) only. All staff and students wear lanyards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Not met</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>See comments</th>
<th>N/a</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1 Adequate space</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Condition of premises</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 Classrooms and learning areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 Student relaxation areas and food</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5 Signage and display</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6 Staffroom(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td>☒</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments
R1 The building offers good space for staff to work and for students to study in. There is no outside space but there is a student lounge and staffroom.
R2 The new premises have been renovated to a very high standard. Everywhere is spotlessly clean.
R3 Classrooms seat the school's maximum class size of 14 comfortably. For closed groups of 18 the tablet chairs can be rearranged so that all students can see and hear easily. The tablet chairs are of excellent quality and have good-sized tablets, which means students can read and write in comfort. There is secondary glazing and air conditioning throughout the building. All classrooms have good natural light.
R4 There is a very attractive student lounge on the first floor with tables and chairs, two vending machines selling coffee and snacks, and access to drinking water. There is a wide range of eating outlets very close to the school in Oxford Street. The student lounge also has six computers with internet access, and a wide-screen television.

R5 Signage is clear throughout. On the landings the signs to the facilities on each floor have a very creative design. Noticeboards in classrooms and corridors are well maintained and visually very attractive.

R6 The staffroom on the fifth floor is an appropriate size for the number of staff, and has good natural light. There are workplaces, and tables and chairs for relaxation. Every teacher has a locker for personal possessions. There are four computers with internet access, and a printing facility. There is a kitchen area with fridge and a microwave; the school provides tea and coffee.

The school premises are smart and very attractive, and offer a very professional working environment for students and staff.

Academic management
The DoS and ADoS work closely together. The DoS is responsible for observations, course design and continuing professional development (CPD); the ADoS has responsibility for timetabling, academic administration and the leisure programme. The ADoS was not in school on the day of the spot check.

At the time of the spot check there were eight teachers working in the school. One was TEFLQ and the others all TEFLI. Teachers’ files were in impeccable order. There was evidence of two-weekly CPD sessions attended by most teachers, with a focus on practical teaching issues such as using technology in the classroom and classroom management skills. The school supports teachers financially if they attend external training events.

Observations are carried out regularly and records were on file. The two teachers working with the closed group had not been observed; the DoS agreed with the inspector that drop-in observations in the first week of a two-week course would be useful.

Teaching
The inspector observed both classes of under 18s, one a group of 18 and one of 15. The teaching was satisfactory and met the requirements of the Scheme. Teachers were using appropriate materials, and topics were relevant and of interest to the age group. A range of techniques was seen, including good elicitation and prompting, and some checking of meaning. Teachers used various methods of correcting; one teacher was taking notes to provide feedback after the activity, and one was encouraging self- and peer correction. Students were engaged with the activities and there was a good learning atmosphere in both classes. Students in one class told the inspector they were enjoying the opportunities to speak in class activities.

Welfare
Staff and students wear different colour lanyards, and visitors are required to sign in and out. See Premises and facilities above for information about the front door.

Accommodation
Demand for accommodation remains very low. The school has agreements in place with two accommodation agencies registered with the British Council to provide homestays if required.

Leisure programme
The school offers a weekly programme and information about this is in the student lounge and on noticeboards around the school. The August programme includes a Harry Potter tour and a visit to see a Shakespeare play. Risk assessments are on file.

Care of under 18s
The age range of the closed group of Italians was 12–18. Ten 18 year-olds in the group were integrated into the morning adult classes and 33 under 18s were being taught in two groups, one at level B1 and one at level B2. The group was accompanied by three group leaders. The school was providing tuition in the morning, and the students’ accommodation and leisure programme was organised by the group leaders. The school has a clear group leader agreement which defines the responsibility of the group leaders, and which group leaders sign. The school holds next of kin details for all the students. Parental consent forms are on file.

Attendance of the closed group students is checked by their group leaders every morning, and by the teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Not met</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>See comments</th>
<th>N/a</th>
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<tr>
<td>C1 Safeguarding policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Guidance and training</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
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</table>
UKCE accepts closed groups of young learners throughout the year. No groups were enrolled in 2016. One group of 18 Italians had been in school in May 2017 and a group of 40 Italians (including ten 18 year-olds) was in school at the time of the spot check.

C1 The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy. The language has been adjusted to ensure that it is clear and accessible throughout. The DoS is the designated safeguarding lead and has completed appropriate training.

C2 All staff receive the safeguarding policy and sign to confirm that they have read it; these records were on file. All staff complete an online basic awareness training course, and a number of staff have completed advanced training.

C4 All staff are DBS checked and records were on file. An appropriate risk assessment was in place for a teacher whose DBS check was in progress; he was teaching a class in the evening where the minimum age is 18. Two references were on file for every teacher.

C5 The closed group students are identified as under 18s by the red lanyard they are required to wear. Their classrooms are on the fourth floor where no other classes are being held. Their timetable has different timings from that of the adult courses so they have access to the student lounge and toilets before the adult students have their break. They arrive at school each morning with their group leaders, and leave with them at the end of lessons at 12.45.

C6 All arrangements relating to meals, leisure activities and supervision outside lessons are the responsibility of the group leaders.

C7 UKCE is not responsible for the group’s accommodation. They were staying in a hotel organised by the group leader, and were accompanied to school each day by their three group leaders.

**Care of under 18s summary**

The provision meets the section standard. Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for students aged under 18. Staff training is good.

**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.*

**Management**

M13 The emergency contact details of students are not easily accessible when the school is closed.

*Addressed. The records are now accessible remotely.*

M14 The current systems for recording absences are cumbersome and make it difficult to track the percentage attendance rate of students.

*Partially addressed. A spreadsheet has been set up to track attendance more efficiently, although percentages still have to be calculated separately. A new database will be in operation once staff training is completed.*

**Resources and environment**

R6 The teachers’ room on the third floor is very small. The preparation area on the fifth floor is largely unused by teachers.

*No longer applicable as the school has moved to new premises. See R6 comment above.*

R11 The self-study materials on the school’s website are not currently introduced to students at the beginning of their course.

*Addressed. This is in the student handbook and introduced at induction.*

**Teaching and learning**

T11 The comments in observation notes are not sufficiently expressed as action points to improve and develop teaching.

*Addressed. The DoS has worked on giving a better focus to action points, and has developed a system for...*
tracking these across observations.
T23 In a few classes, strong forms of some verbs were used when contractions would have been more natural.
Lexis was not always explained clearly or accurately.
Addressed. Some good teaching of new vocabulary was seen. Teachers' language use was appropriate in terms of register.
T25 Lesson objectives were not always expressed as learning outcomes.
Addressed. Lesson outcomes were on the whiteboards.
T28 Insufficient attention was paid to correcting student errors in many of the lesson episodes observed.
Addressed. A range of correction techniques was seen in the two classes observed.

Welfare and student services
W1 The rear fire exit can only be accessed through a classroom; there is no notice on the classroom door indicating that this is the case.
No longer applicable as the school has moved to new premises. See Findings/Premises above.
W4 The information for students on abusive behaviour policies and procedures is presented, at times, in language that would be hard for lower level learners to understand.
Partially addressed. The notice explaining the procedures has been simplified by means of a flow chart but the explanation of the policy is still expressed in language too formal and difficult for students to understand. This is also true of the language in the student handbook.
W5 The school's emergency phone is currently held by too few members of staff.
Addressed. Two emergency numbers are given to students and group leaders. The centre head holds one emergency phone, and the second is held on a rota by other members of staff.

Care of under 18s
C1 The safeguarding policy is written in language that is not always accessible.
Addressed. See C1 comment above.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit
M13 One record of a newly arrived student had no next of kin information.

CONCLUSIONS
The move to the new premises has been implemented smoothly and the new building offers a smart and very professional environment for students and staff. A new management structure has been put in place recently. All the required safeguarding measures are in place for the closed group of under 18s, and the teaching of both classes was entirely satisfactory. The school continues to maintain the standards of the Scheme in all aspects of its work checked in this spot check visit.

RECOMMENDATION
The next inspection falls due in 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

SUMMARY STATEMENT
Changes to summary statement
An area of strength can be added for premises and facilities.
Summary statement
The British Council inspected and accredited UK College of English in April 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 private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s (16+).
Strengths were noted in the area of leisure opportunities.
The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.
Revised summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited UK College of English in April 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 private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s (12+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, and leisure opportunities.

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