

Organisation name	MC Academy Liverpool
Inspection date	21 May 2024
Current accreditation status	Accredited
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.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection and the Liverpool site.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited MC Academy Manchester in May 2023 and MC Academy Liverpool in May 2024. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and safeguarding 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 (18+) and young people (16+). Strengths were noted in the area of premises and facilities and learner management.

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the areas of course design, leisure opportunities, and safeguarding under 18s.

Overall, the inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

Updated summary inspection findings

None.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2005
Last full inspection	May 2023 - Manchester
Subsequent checks/visits (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

Student and staff profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak: August
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	18	46
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	19	16
Typical age range	19–41	16–50
Typical length of stay	12–24 weeks	12–24 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian	Saudi Arabian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	6
Total number of managers including academic	3	5
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	5	7

Premises profile	
Address of main site	MC Academy, 21–23 Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JG
Additional sites in use	MC Academy, 52–54 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5SD
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Liverpool

Introduction

Background

MC Academy Manchester was founded in 2005 under the name of Manchester Central School of English (MCSE) and moved to its current premises in 2010. The school was rebranded as MC Academy in 2019 following plans to open additional premises in Liverpool. After a period during which these plans were put on hold, the Liverpool school began operating in February 2024. The purpose of the spot check was to assess the suitability of the provision in the new Liverpool extension.

Preparation

The inspector contacted the school in advance of the inspection to check on general availability of key staff, and student and teacher numbers. The Accreditation Unit provided the necessary background documentation.

Programme and persons present

Meetings were held with the executive director, the student experience manager, members of the student experience team responsible for enrolments and admissions, accommodation and administration, the ADoS, and two teachers. A further meeting was held remotely with the DoS and ADoS in the Manchester school.

Findings

Management

The student experience officer and her team are based in Liverpool and responsible for day-to-day operations. The Liverpool ADoS has academic responsibility, supported by the DoS in Manchester. Management and administration systems are common to both schools, and there is regular communication and exchange between the schools, including virtual and face-to-face meetings. Managers travel frequently between sites and staff are supported effectively in their roles through formal training as well as ongoing support. Publicity is generally clear but the frequently asked questions (FAQs) section of the website is insufficiently clear about accommodation arrangements (see below).

The school's action plan with points to be addressed from the previous inspection was made available; however, as the plan cites the full criterion in each case, rather than the specific point to be addressed, responses to some points were unclear.

Premises and resources

The school occupies part of a large building previously in use as a language school, with extensive space and facilities. The operation currently uses only a small part of the space available, leaving ample room for expansion. There is an outside area for use in good weather, and appropriate areas for staff and students. Resources for students and teachers are satisfactory.

Findings are reported in the Premises and facilities section below.

Teaching and learning

Teachers have relevant qualifications and receive day-to-day support from the ADoS, who has also carried out some observations which have been well received by teachers. However, he is not TEFLQ, and annual monitoring observation will need to be carried out by the Manchester DoS. Course design and syllabuses are common across both schools.

Welfare and student services

Both MC Academy schools have the same policies and procedures regarding welfare and student services. Security and health and safety procedures are in place. Appropriate pastoral care, information and advice are available. Residential accommodation is arranged through an agency; this is clear in publicity but not in the FAQ section of the website. The school is beginning to establish its own homestay provision; paperwork is not yet complete but appropriate systems are in use.

Safeguarding under 18s

Students aged 16–17 can enrol on adult courses, although no under 18s have been enrolled yet. The safeguarding policy and procedures established in Manchester will be followed in Liverpool; there is a designated safeguarding lead in each school.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Premises and resources

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Providers ensure the safety and security of students on their premises by measures appropriate to their age and background, and the location.	Met
P2 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.	Met
P3 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Met
P4 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display or sharing of general information.	Met
P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for work, meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions.	Met

Comments

All criteria in this section are met.

Action taken on 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.