BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL) Full Inspection

NAME OF PROVIDER:　　　　　　　　Connexcel Limited

ADDRESS:　　　　　　　　Excalibur House
　　　　　　　　Priory Drive
　　　　　　　　Langstone Business Park
　　　　　　　　Langstone
　　　　　　　　NP18 2HJ

HEAD OF PROVIDER:　　　　　　　　Mr John Zhang

DATE OF INSPECTION:　　　　　　　　11-12 March 2019

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION:　　　　Unaccredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

☐ Accreditation awarded for the full four-year period

☒ Probation accreditation

☐ Decision on accreditation deferred

☐ Award of accreditation refused

 DATE:　 23 May 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Connexcel Limited (the Provider) is a privately-owned organisation which provides online tuition courses in a variety of subjects to support learners in their applications to educational providers in the United Kingdom (UK), such as boarding schools, independent schools and universities. The Provider was first established in 2011 as an education agency to support learners' applications to study in the UK. Since 2017, the Provider has offered online tuition to learners who wish to study in the UK.

The Provider is based in Newport, South Wales but has established links in Shanghai, China where it has an office that manages the initial introduction and face-to-face interactions with learners and their parents and/or guardians.

The aim of the Provider is to provide a tailored programme of tuition that is designed around the specific needs of the learner to enable and support an individual learner's application to study in the United Kingdom (UK). The programmes of study are non-accredited and designed to reflect the ability levels of each learner providing an opportunity for development that is specific to that individual.

The Provider is governed by two Company Directors, who undertake specific management functions within the organisation. One Company Director focuses on business engagement, finance, recruitment of staff and tutors, health and safety and the legal and statutory aspects of the business. The second Company Director takes the lead on sales, marketing, human resources and relationships between the organisation and the parents and learners. The provider is governed by a Board and the two Company Directors are supported by a team of five administrative staff who undertake the operational aspects of the business. The tuition programmes are supported by a team of self-employed tutors.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers online non-accredited tutorial courses across a number of subject areas that include English, English Language, English Literature, English Writing, Creative Writing, Writing Skills, Science, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Life in the UK, Humanities and History. The organisation does not offer face-to-face tuition as all learners are based in China. All the tutors are based in the UK and undertake teaching through the use of online, distance and blended learning technology.

The tuition is undertaken by a team of 19 self-employed tutors who are engaged when there is a need and demand for their services.

The courses are offered to learners aged 8 to 18 and the content of each course is tailored around the ability of each learner rather than a specific level or age group. The majority of the learners are between 11 and 17 years of age and are mainly female. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 learners from China enrolled across ten different programmes.

Enrolment is offered on a continuous basis which provides the opportunity for learners to join and leave the programmes at any time.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out over two days by one inspector. Meetings were held with both Company Directors, the Tutor and Host Family Relationship Officer, the Office Administrator, for tuition, and the Learner Progression Officer. Further meetings were held with three tutors who were involved in the delivery of the online tuition during the inspection process. Due to the nature of the online approach and the physical location of the learners, three learners were interviewed and a further group of four learners responded to a questionnaire to capture their perspective. A wide range of documentation was made available during the inspection. The Provider provided full support and cooperation throughout the inspection.

PART B - JUDGMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1.   The provider is effectively managed

1.1	The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body.	☒ Yes	☐ No
1.2	Senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.	☒ Yes	☐ No
1.3	Senior managers have an understanding of the special requirements of online, distance and blended learning.	☒ Yes	☐ No
1.4	There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff, especially those working remotely.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met

Comments

Connexcel has a clearly defined management structure in place which is documented in an organisation chart. The organisational structure is communicated well to staff, tutors, parents and learners and clearly identifies the remit and responsibilities for each role within the structure. Job descriptions are clearly documented and identify the level of authority and the interconnection between members of the team. As a result, there are clearly documented channels to support effective communication both within and from outside the organisation.

The Provider is managed by two Company Directors who work collaboratively in the leadership and management of the business. Although each Company Director has defined areas of responsibility, it was clear that both held responsibility for the strategic direction and also the operational management of the business on a daily basis. Both Company Directors, therefore, demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of delivering educational support services to overseas learners. They maintain this currency by undertaking regular business visits to China to promote the business and provide face-to-face interaction with parents and learners.

The Company Directors are supported by a team of five administration staff who demonstrated a thorough knowledge of both the requirements of providing online tuition to overseas learners and also a sound knowledge of the operational elements of the business.

Communication is managed both formally and informally on a day-to-day basis through staff meetings, discussions, e-mails and telephone conversations. Strategic updates within the organisation are communicated via e-mail. Communication with the tutors is by means of e-mail and telephone which is an effective way of sharing information.

2.   The administration of online, distance and blended learning is effective

2.1	Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.	☐ Yes	☒ No
2.2	The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provision.	☒ Yes	☐ No
2.3	Offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider.	☒ Yes	☐ No
2.4	The administrative support available to the management and learners is clearly defined, documented and understood.	☒ Yes	☐ No

2.5	Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated.	☐ Yes	☒ No	
2.6	Data collection and collation systems are effective including the logging of tutor and learner submissions	☒ Yes	☐ No	
2.7	Learner and tutor records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up-to-date.	☒ Yes	☐ No	
2.8	The provider has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its learners and tutors.	☒ Yes	☐ No	
2.9	Satisfactory procedures are in place for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The administration team comprises five staff members who work alongside the Company Directors. The staff have specific responsibilities as a Tutor and Host Family Relationship Officer, an Office Administrator for tuition, a Learner Progression Officer, a Finance Administrator and a general Office Administrator. The members of the team support the online tuition element of the business as well as the wider functionality and services it offers. The administration team is sufficient to support the size of the business. All the members of staff are appropriately qualified and contribute experience and expertise of online tuition in the Chinese education system as well as a working knowledge of the school application process within the UK. Consequently, there is an effective infrastructure provided by the administration team to support the business as well as the needs of the learners, their parents and the tutors.

The Company Directors and the administration team work closely and effectively together, thus providing a backup infrastructure if one member is not available.

Job descriptions are available and these identify roles and responsibilities. The members of the administration team were clear as to the requirements and expectations of their roles.

Policies and procedures, which include safeguarding, disciplinary procedures and a complaints and grievance policy, are documented within the staff and learner handbooks. Any updates are coordinated by the Company Directors as needs arise and then communicated to the administration team.

2.5 Not all the self-employed tutors are provided with a tutor handbook to include the up-to-date policies and procedures.

The administration team ensures the efficient and effective control of the day-to-day data collection and collation systems and their maintenance and update using an electronic central storage system in the office that is accessible to all staff. Learner and tutor records are stored within this secure system. This ensures that centralised records and data are accessible to the members of the management and administration teams and that there are effective security measures in place.

3. The provider employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

3.1	There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced administrative staff.	☒ Yes	☐ No
3.2	Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.	☒ Yes	☐ No
3.3	There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.	☐ Yes	☒ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Policies and procedures are available and clearly documented to both support the recruitment of staff to the organisation and also to provide clarity on the expectations of them whilst they are employed.

Policies are appropriate and include a disciplinary procedure and are articulated within the staff handbook, which is distributed to new members of administration staff upon joining the organisation. Updates to policies and procedures are communicated to the administration team through informal staff meetings.

There is a rigorous recruitment and interview system in place for administration and tutoring staff where qualifications and experience are verified along with references.

3.3 Staff members are informally appraised throughout the year where individuals are provided with oral feedback on their performance and areas that may need further development. However, there is no formal system for the regular review of the performance of staff that is documented and reviewed on a regular basis. As a result, an individual member of staff has no formal mechanism to have their performance appraised and an opportunity to discuss their role and development needs.

4.	**Publicity material gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the online, distance and blended learning offered**		
4.1	The website and other publicity material give an accurate description of the online, distance and blended learning courses offered.	☒ Yes	☐ No
4.2	All advertising materials and images provide an accurate description of any training offered.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The website is well presented and provides an accurate representation of the ethos of the organisation, the breadth of services and a description of the available training. The services are clearly articulated and there is a clear mechanism to contact the organisation to enquire about specific programmes of study and the logistics of online tuition and the technology requirements.

The website makes use of learners' comments to provide a picture of their experiences studying at the Provider and, thereby, provides the opportunity to explain how the online tuition has supported their application to enrol at a school in the UK. However, it is recognised that the website needs to be refreshed to extend and develop the content to better promote all aspects of the business.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

5.	**Management of the programme is effective**		
5.1	There is a suitably qualified manager with experience in online, distance and blended learning who has responsibility for teaching, learning and achievement and management of the tutor body.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.2	The provider has a sufficient number of qualified tutors to give individualised instructional service to each learner.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.3	The provider has a robust tutor recruitment system which is designed to ensure the safety of the learners. The recruitment process for tutors working remotely includes a face-to-face interview using a suitable online communication platform.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.4	The allocation of tutors to courses provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.	☐ Yes	☒ No
5.5	Realistic deadlines are set and communicated well in advance to learners.	☒ Yes	☐ No

5.6	Delivery methods are sufficient to attain the stated programme objectives and intended learning outcomes - suitable supplementary study aids have been considered where appropriate, whether via investment in technology, additional tutor support, issuing extra study materials or offering face-to-face learning sessions.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.7	The programme reflects current knowledge and practice. Internal programme reviews are conducted on a periodic basis.	☐ Yes	☒ No
5.8	The programme is sufficiently comprehensive for learners to achieve the stated programme objectives and its content is supported by sound research and practice.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.9	Commissioning of course materials is managed effectively and materials are checked to ensure standardisation and consistency across the provision.	☐ Yes	☒ No
5.10	Learner assessment is guided by published grading policies and a marking system that includes prompt return of accurately, fairly, and consistently graded assessments.	☐ Yes	☒ No
5.11	The provider uses assessment strategies which demonstrate the achievement of defined learning outcomes.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.12	The provider takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and plagiarism and penalise offenders.	☒ Yes	☐ No
5.13	Learners have appropriate access to tutors for learning support.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be:　　　　　　　　☐ Met　　☒ Partially Met　　☐ Not Met

Comments

The Provider has undertaken significant research into the field of Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL) and has developed a team that is experienced in the management and coordination of this approach. The Company Directors also have a good knowledge of the Chinese education system and the online infrastructure that would be accessible within China. As a result, the management and administration team demonstrate the skills and experience required to deliver an effective ODBL model.

Tutors are recruited based on both their academic knowledge and skills and their experience and suitability for teaching and assessing through the online medium. The majority of tutors have previous experience or are currently engaged with other online providers and have expertise in the online approach and the strategies that need to be used to ensure effective engagement with the learner.

The recruitment process is robust and thorough. The Provider actively sources tutors as the need arises and makes the first contact. The prospective tutor submits a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and details of their experience and an interview takes place using video software between the Provider and the tutor. Following the interview, tutors are invited to participate in a shortened lesson that is observed by the Tutor and Host Family Relationship Officer to provide feedback on engagement with the online software and the audience. As a result, there is a rigorous recruitment process of tutors to monitor that they engage effectively with the learners.

5.4 The Provider has recently introduced a process to monitor and observe tutors whilst they are teaching by joining the lesson. Although some notes are taken regarding the tutor's academic background and their teaching approaches, this is not fully developed and consistently applied across all tutors. To ensure consistency across all tutors, a more robust and documented system for tutor observation needs to be introduced that identifies strengths in their performance and also areas of development which would then feed into the tutor appraisal system.

Deadlines for assessments and homework are set by the tutors and communicated via the administration office to allow for a centralised monitoring of learner and tutor engagement with the homework process.

Effective teaching strategies are used to deliver a wide range of subjects that include separate lessons for History, Physics and English language. Technology is used with confidence by both the tutors and the learners and additional course materials is made available to supplement the online input.

5.7 There are no documented internal programme reviews as each tutor devises their own plan.

The programmes deliver relevance and currency with individual tutors holding the responsibility of ensuring that their design and content allow for the learner to achieve the relevant learning objectives.

5.9 The Provider commissions individual tutors to develop and manage their own course materials. However, there is currently no process in place to review each programme plan on a regular basis to ensure parity and consistency in the learners' experience of being tutored.

5.10 Since there are no published grading policies or a marking system to provide graded assessment, this key indicator is not applicable.

Homework tasks and questioning strategies are effective with the tutors making use of a variety of techniques and different approaches to their questions to enable the learner to understand and respond appropriately.

The Provider has a cheating and plagiarism policy in place that is documented in the Learner handbook.

Learning support needs are identified during the application and initial assessment process. There are also a number of formal assessment points where learning support needs can be identified, and an appropriate intervention applied. The first takes place after the first three hours of tuition where initial feedback is sent from the tutor to the learner to identify areas for development and set goals. After a further 20 hours of tuition, a more detailed review is undertaken, and the first assessment point occurs with a specific focus on language ability. After 25 to 30 hours of tuition, the Provider undertakes a formal meeting with the tutor where individual learner progress is discussed and, if relevant, the UK schools that are being targeted. A second assessment for numeracy and reasoning assessment takes place after 35 to 50 hours of tuition. At this point, the parent and the learner are provided with a comprehensive review of performance and progress. This support and discussion with parents and learners continues on a monthly basis in the run up to the entrance examination process of the school they have chosen in the UK. Consequently, there is a comprehensive, effective and regular dialogue between the Provider and parents to ensure that the learner is fully supported during the process.

6.   Tutors have an acceptable level of subject knowledge and pedagogic skill

6.1	Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced.	☒ Yes	☐ No
6.2	Tutors have an understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning.	☒ Yes	☐ No
6.3	Tutors have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of programmes effectively.	☒ Yes	☐ No
6.4	The appraisal procedures for tutors incorporate regular monitoring of tutor feedback.	☐ Yes	☒ No
6.5	Tutors are properly and continuously trained with respect to provider policies, learner needs, instructional approaches and techniques, and the use of appropriate instructional technology.	☐ Yes	☒ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met   ☒ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met

Comments

The tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced in both the subject area and working with international learners. They have sound subject knowledge and demonstrate effective pedagogic and communicative skills to facilitate the online tuition experience.

Many of the tutors have prior experience of working in the field of online tuition and are able to make use of this expertise and appreciation of some of the logistic challenges that ODBL can sometimes present in their work at the Provider. All tutors undertake an initial introduction to the software that is used for the tuition and the feedback from tutors confirms that they feel that they are confident in its use. They are also complimentary about the support infrastructure that is provided by the administration team should a technological issue arise.

6.4 Informal appraisal procedures are in place for tutors through the feedback received from learners and parents. However, a more formalised mechanism would be appropriate to capture and document how effective a tutor is and where development areas can be identified. This can then be checked against learner and parent feedback to provide a full picture of the tutors' performance.

6.5 Although training is provided on the use of the software at the start of the tutor contract, there are no formal opportunities to identify training needs for individual tutors.

7. Tutors respond to the individual learning needs of learners

7.1	The academic backgrounds and particular needs of learners are taken into account in the delivery of the programmes which build on former learning or experience.	☒ Yes	☐ No
7.2	Learners are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.	☒ Yes	☐ No
7.3	Tutors respond to different learning needs of learners where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of courses.	☒ Yes	☐ No
7.4	Tutors employ effective strategies to check learners' understanding of concepts and programme content.	☒ Yes	☐ No
7.5	Learners are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated programmes.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Provider prepares an individual tuition plan that is bespoke to a given learner and their needs. The plan is appropriately supported by teaching materials and resources that are developed with the needs of the individual learner in mind.

There is an effective mechanism in place to ensure that the academic background and the particular needs of a given learner are met during the design and delivery of the tuition plan and also provide the opportunity to develop independent learning skills through self-directed activities in between sessions.

Tutors tailor their teaching materials to cater for the needs of an individual learner. This allows for an alternative strategy or approach to be used when a learner fails to fully understand a concept. This is effective in developing understanding.

Effective questioning techniques are used and tutors make good use of a variety of strategies to check understanding of curriculum content and concepts.

The Provider ensures that all learners have the digital skills to access the online forums by providing tuition in the use of the software and how to resolve any potential problems. As a result, issues regarding software failure or internet connection are handled with confidence by the learner to allow for the session to resume.

8. Learners receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored

8.1	Programmes are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to learners and tutors.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
8.2	Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of learners who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
8.3	Learners are made aware of how their progress relates to their target level of achievement.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA

| 8.4 | Additional support or advice on alternative programmes is provided to learners who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. | ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 8.5 | Feedback is given to individual learners on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Each programme is tailored and bespoke to the individual learner needs and academic background. There are course designs available, however, individual tutors choose to develop their own course material and resources which include a detailed assessment plan and homework schedule coordinated by the administration team. This centralised approach of communication is effective and enables the Provider to maintain an overview of non-submission of homework so that a parent can be notified. Non-engagement with homework assessments are documented to allow for prompt intervention. As a result, there is a clarity of expectation from both the tutor and the learner as to the requirement to complete homework in preparation for the next session.

Parents and learners receive regular updates and constructive feedback regarding their progress through regular communication with the administration office. Where the need for additional support is identified, the administration office manages the process to ensure that there is an effective dialogue between the tutor, the parent and the learner.

9.	**Assessments are designed to support and encourage the learning process, as well as to monitor and establish the level of ability acquired by the learner**	
9.1	Assignments and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
9.2	Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☒ NA

Comments

INSPECTION AREA – LEARNER SUPPORT

10.	**The enrolment process is comprehensive, transparent and supportive to applicants**	
10.1	Applicants are provided with enough information to enable them to make a judgement on their suitability for the course and the delivery methods and can discuss any concerns before enrolment.	☒ Yes ☐ No
10.2	Enrolment and application documentation is easily accessible and simple to complete and submit.	☒ Yes ☐ No
10.3	Learners are given advance information about course requirements and equipment for succeeding in the programme. The provider takes reasonable steps to ensure that learners accepted for enrolment meet these requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.	☒ Yes ☐ No
10.4	Learners are enrolled on programmes under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. If only limited information can be made available, suitably extended refund arrangements should be in place.	☒ Yes ☐ No
10.5	The provider makes it clear to applicants that they are responsible for checking that they have the skills and knowledge required to study on the chosen course.	☒ Yes ☐ No
10.6	After enrolment, the applicant has the benefit of a stated cooling off period during which they can cancel the enrolment.	☒ Yes ☐ No

10.7	Learners are made aware of the language proficiency needed to study on and complete the programmes.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Provider provides comprehensive information to potential applicants about the online tuition services they offer through advice and guidance sessions both in China and remotely via video communication software and e-mail. Both Company Directors play a key role in the publicity and marketing of the provision and are the first point of contact for initial enquiries and are fully involved throughout the application and enrolment process.

The procedures for application and enrolment are clear. During this stage, potential learners are provided with all relevant information regarding course requirements and equipment, including access to hardware and software, to enable their effective engagement with the online tuition process. Each application is rigorously vetted to confirm eligibility and suitability to access online tuition. The enrolment process is clearly documented in the agreement between the parents and the Provider and details the refund process.

The cooling off period is clearly documented within the contract, should the parents decide not to pursue the arrangements.

Parents are responsible for confirming that the knowledge and skills declared about an individual learner are accurate and truly reflect their ability to engage with the course.

The website and promotional literature detail the English language ability required to engage with and be successful on a course. English language proficiency is also assessed during the initial interview.

11. Services provided meet the reasonable needs of learners

11.1	Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the tutorial materials are made available to assist learners to learn effectively and efficiently.	☒ Yes	☐ No
11.2	Staff are available to assist learners to resolve issues of a general and/or technological nature. All enquiries from learners are handled promptly and sympathetically.	☒ Yes	☐ No
11.3	The provider ensures that learners understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technological problems which are the provider's responsibility.	☒ Yes	☐ No
11.4	The provider supports and encourages peer-interaction through a variety of communication channels including social media.	☐ Yes	☒ No
11.5	Learners who are unable to make satisfactory progress through the programme are encouraged to continue and supported to achieve a satisfactory outcome wherever possible or offered an alternative programme.	☒ Yes	☐ No
11.6	Learners have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the programme.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Provider ensures that individual learners and parents are informed and prepared on the expectations of the tuition programme and this is supplemented through the Learner handbook, which provides further detail on how to gain the most benefit from the programmes and how to approach online study. The handbook also provides comprehensive instructions and support to ensure that the learner has access to the required computer system specification and software to ensure that they are able to learn effectively and efficiently.

The learner is also able to access the support services of the administration team who are trained in the use of the software and able to resolve any operational issues. Learner feedback was particularly complimentary regarding the speed of response in addressing any technological support issues.

A local support infrastructure is available through the Provider's Shanghai office which manages the formal school entry application systems but also has expertise in supporting the software that is used for online tuition. Tutors are also trained in the use of the software and are competent in addressing basic operational issues as they occur.

The contract between the organisation and the parents documents and clarifies that it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the learner is able to access the online tuition software and that the specification of the local computer system is able to support the functionality requirements.

11.4 The Provider does not promote or facilitate opportunities for peer-interaction. It would be beneficial to explore the option of providing appropriate forums for those learners with a common and shared interest, for example, preparing to come to the UK to start their school experience.

The tutor feedback system is effective in highlighting concerns with individual learners' progress, which are communicated and shared with the administration team. By working collaboratively, the aim is to develop a plan to support the learner. In the situation where a learner is not responding to a support plan, then the Provider is able to provide advice on suitable alternative programmes of study.

The complaints and appeals policies are clearly documented within the learner handbook and communicated to learners as they join the tuition programme.

12. Course materials are appropriate to the medium of delivery and are effective

12.1	Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support when necessary.	☒ Yes	☐ No
12.2	Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable learners to achieve the programme objectives.	☒ Yes	☐ No
12.3	Course materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice and are regularly reviewed and revised.	☒ Yes	☐ No
12.4	Programme designers make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning resources.	☒ Yes	☐ No
12.5	The provider makes effective provisions for learners to access conventional and online resources.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Each learner benefits from an individual learning plan that is tailored for the subjects they have chosen, their academic background and any specific identified support needs.

Each tutor is responsible for developing their own course materials which they forward to the administration office for dissemination to the learner.

In the tutorial sessions, effective use is made of a variety of resources and methods. These include presentations, essay writing and videos.
The Provider ensures that the learner has access to a range of both online and conventional resources to support and enhance the tuition process. The materials reflect the UK curriculum requirements and many of the courses undertaken by the learners reflect the GCSE and A level syllabi available through a range of awarding bodies.

13. The technology used to deliver the programmes is fit for purpose and effective

13.1	The provider uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise interaction between the provider and the learner and enhance instructional and educational services.	☒ Yes	☐ No

13.2	The provider has access to the services of an experienced Information Technology (IT) technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide support to learners, tutors and staff working remotely.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Provider has been proactive in sourcing technology with which both the learners and tutors are able to engage effectively and, as a result, makes effective use of appropriate technology that is accessible by both the UK-based tutors and the learners in China.

Both tutors and learners undertake training in the use of the technology when they first join the organisation. This training is supported by user manuals and a member of the administration team is on hand to manage any technological issues as they arise, to ensure smooth operation and provide support to both tutors and learners.

The Provider is also able to access the Information Technology (IT) support services of its office located in Shanghai, which is able to provide a local service to learners and parents experiencing any issues with the use and access to the online tuition technology.

INSPECTION AREA – MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

14.	**The provider has effective systems to monitor its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**		
14.1	There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance.	☒ Yes	☐ No
14.2	Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans.	☐ Yes	☒ No
14.3	Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on learner satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.	☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ NA	
14.4	Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management.	☐ Yes	☒ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met   ☒ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met   ☐ NA

Comments

The Provider has just completed its first year of offering online tuition and a meeting attended by the Company Directors and the administration team provided a forum to review performance and set targets for the coming year. Operational performance was discussed and reviewed. The meeting also included consideration of a number of metrics and data which included applications, enrolments, withdrawals, achievement, learner progression detail and course developments.

14.2 The Provide does not compile a formal report to include a rigorous and inclusive review of all aspects of the business on an annual basis and the subsequent action plan lacks rigour and detail.

14.3 The Provider has no formal system to review its own standards and performance or a mechanism to establish future annual targets. The development of an annual review process would allow the Provider to record centrally all key aspect of the business.

14.4 The action points, that are included in the action plans, are not clearly documented and communicated across the organisation.

15.	**Learner progress is effectively monitored and the monitoring is linked to procedures to allow for prompt intervention where appropriate**		
15.1	Prompt action is taken when learners miss deadlines, when set, or work submitted is not of a satisfactory standard.	☒ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be:	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

The administration team, in communication with the tutors, is highly proactive in following up occurrences where learners miss deadlines or work is submitted that is not of a satisfactory standard. As a result, there is a robust mechanism to ensure that learners adhere to deadlines and fulfil the requirements of individual programmes of study.

16.	**The provider has a means of accessing and monitoring the views of learners and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**	
16.1	The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner providers and employers) on all aspects of the provider's provision.	☒ Yes ☐ No
16.2	The feedback is regularly reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.	☒ Yes ☐ No
16.3	There is a mechanism for ensuring learners know what action has been taken as a result of their feedback.	☒ Yes ☐ No
16.4	Opinions of learners are systematically sought as one basis for evaluating and improving tutorial materials, the delivery of instructions and educational services.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

Comments

There are a number of mechanisms to gather feedback from both learners and tutors. When a new learner is assigned to a tutor, the tutor completes an informal feedback exercise after the first three sessions with commentary on how the learner engages with the lesson to include their appropriateness and suitability to engage effectively with online tuition. This feedback is shared with parents.

Following the initial tutor feedback, there are regular points during the tuition schedule where comments are gathered and reviewed by the administration office and then escalated to the management team when there are more significant concerns. Typically, the administration team formulates a response and action plan to address any areas that arise from the feedback. However, the feedback process would benefit from being formalised with an analysis of comments and collation of common themes that could then feed into the performance review process of the organisation.
Learners are contacted individually by the administration office via e-mail with a response to their feedback to show what action has been taken to close the loop.

Learner feedback is gathered through regular questionnaires and comments from parents regarding their views of the suitability of and satisfaction with the tuition service. Opinions of learners are also captured through informal methods during tuition sessions. Conversations with the learners indicated a high level of satisfaction with both the Provider and the tutors, who the learners confirmed responded positively to their comments.

17.	**There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards (this does not apply to the provision of certificates of attendance only)**	
17.1	There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the RQF where applicable and evidence that learners who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
17.2	There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
17.3	External moderators are involved in the assessment process if appropriate to the level or programme being studied.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met ☒ NA

Comments

18. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

18.1	Evidence is provided that the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration are complied with.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
18.2	For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for learners to appeal against their marks.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
18.3	The provider has processes through which the provider verifies that the learner who registers in the programme is the same learner who participates in and completes and receives the credit.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☒ NA

Comments

INSPECTION AREA - FACE-TO-FACE COMPONENT (if applicable)

19. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises

19.1	The provider has secure tenure on its premises.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
19.2	Where required, the provider has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

20. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for learners and staff

20.1	Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.	☐ Yes ☐ No
20.2	The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.	☐ Yes ☐ No
20.3	There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to learners, staff and visitors.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
20.4	General guidance on health and safety is made available to learners, staff and visitors.	☐ Yes ☐ No
20.5	There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.	☐ Yes ☐ No
20.6	There is adequate circulation space for the number of learners and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.	☐ Yes ☐ No

20.7	There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.	☐ Yes ☐ No
20.8	There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.	☐ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met

Comments

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21. Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the programmes offered

21.1	Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them.	☐ Yes ☐ No
21.2	Training rooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops and studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each programme.	☐ Yes ☐ No
21.3	There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each programme.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met   ☐ NA

Comments

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22. There is an appropriate policy on learner attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

22.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on learner attendance and punctuality.	☐ Yes ☐ No
22.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all learners, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
22.3	Learner absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

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23. There are appropriate additional facilities for learners and staff

23.1	Learners have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources.	☐ Yes ☐ No
23.2	Tutors have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation.	☐ Yes ☐ No
23.3	There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.	☐ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met	☐ NA

Comments

24. Learners attending face-to-face components receive appropriate support

24.1	There is at least one named staff member responsible for learner welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all learners and available to provide advice and counselling.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
24.2	Learners receive appropriate advice before arrival.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
24.3	Learners receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
24.4	Learners are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
24.5	The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
24.6	Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all learners safe.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
24.7	Effective arrangements are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.	☐ Yes	☐ No	

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met	☐ NA

Comments

25. International learners are provided with specific advice and assistance

25.1	International learners receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in the UK.	☐ Yes	☐ No
25.2	International learners receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.	☐ Yes	☐ No
25.3	Information and advice specific to international learners continues to be available throughout the programme of study.	☐ Yes	☐ No
25.4	Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations.	☐ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be:	☐ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met	☐ NA

Comments

26. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised

26.1	Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of learners.	☐ Yes	☐ No

26.2	Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where learners under 18 are accommodated.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
26.3	A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of learners.	☐ Yes	☐ No	
26.4	Separate accommodation blocks are provided for learners under 18.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

27.	**Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of learners is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed**		
27.1	Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for learners and is appropriately located for travel to the provider and back.	☐ Yes	☐ No
27.2	Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before learners are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider.	☐ Yes	☐ No
27.3	The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision.	☐ Yes	☐ No
27.4	Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and learners before and during the placement.	☐ Yes	☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated ☒ Yes ☐ No

PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Provider's Strengths

There is a clear commitment to provide a tailored and bespoke online tuition offer to support the preparation and transition of learners to the UK school system.
Experienced management and administration staff bring experience from the fields of the Chinese education system, the UK education system and technological expertise in online tuition and learning.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
2.5 The Provider must devise a suitable method by which tutors receive up-to-date copies of relevant policies and procedures.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
3.3 The Provider must introduce a formal, documented appraisal process for staff.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Provider's Strengths

Extensive knowledge and experience of working with the UK boarding school sector and universities that are appropriate for the Chinese market.
Learning is led and supported by a highly qualified team of tutors who bring their own professional and ODBL experience to further enhance the learner experience.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
5.4 The Provider must introduce a documented system for tutor observation that identifies strengths in their performance and also areas of development.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
5.7 The Provider must implement an internal programme review process so that each plan is reviewed on a regular basis.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
5.9 The Provider must undertake an exercise of standardising course materials to ensure parity and consistency of the learners' experiences of being tutored in the same subject by different tutors.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
6.4 The Provider must undertake a review of the current appraisal procedures for tutors to ensure that they receive regular feedback on their performance and that areas of development and training recommendations are identified and documented.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
6.5 The Provider must develop and implement a training programme for tutors and staff to provide initial and update sessions on policies and procedures, learners' needs, instructional approaches and techniques and the use of appropriate ODBL technology.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low

LEARNER SUPPORT

Provider's Strengths

There is an infrastructure of genuine support and care for the learner across the Provider.
A hands-on approach is offered by the whole team who are proactive and committed to the ethos of the Provider ensuring a learner-centric approach.

The Provider ensures that the tuition experience is not only tailored to the individual needs of each learner but also delivers on the requirements of the national curriculum to support their transition from the Chinese school system to that of the UK.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
11.4 The Provider must investigate the opportunities for peer interaction to facilitate learner discussions.	☐ High ☐ Medium ☒ Low

MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Provider's Strengths

The Provider is committed to delivering high standards of service which is realised through the recruitment of highly experienced and qualified tutors in their field of expertise as well as the ODBL approach. The learner-centric approach to tuition fully considers the needs of the learner, their academic background and future aspirations.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
14.2 Reports must be compiled at least annually which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
14.3 The Provider must develop and implement a robust self-evaluation review and reporting process to include analysis of a number of metrics relating to performance.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low
14.4 The Provider must include clear action points as part of the action planning that are effectively communicated so that they can be reviewed on a regular basis to support continuous improvement.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low

FACE-TO-FACE COMPONENT (if applicable)

Provider's Strengths

This standard area is not applicable.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

To be reviewed at the next inspection

It is recommended that the Provider undertakes a refresh of its website and uses this opportunity to showcase learners' work and success stories. It is recommended that the Provider introduces an induction programme for staff, learners and tutors that is supplemented and supported by appropriate handbooks outlining key information and all pertinent policies and procedures. The Provider is recommended to analyse the feedback it receives in order to collate the common themes that could then feed into the performance review process.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS