BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION
CHANGE IN PROVISION
(Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Samiad Limited

ADDRESS: Unit 1 Holt Court
Birmingham Science Park
Birmingham
B7 4EJ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Alex Hopkins

DATE OF INSPECTION: 16 February 2021

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 27 May 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1.   Background to the provider

Samiad Limited (Samiad/the Provider) is a private limited company established in 2013 by the two current Managing Directors. In June 2020, the Provider established a sister school called Tudor School (TS). TS has a focus on delivering the Provider's online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) provision.

TS is registered at the same address as Samiad in Birmingham in the United Kingdom (UK), and both entities share staff, business processes and lesson materials. TS aims to provide EFL courses that are delivered flexibly, to best meet participants' needs.

The provision offered by TS is overseen by the two Managing Directors, one of whom has day-to-day active involvement with TS.

TS was established as a result of a recruitment agent based in Russia requesting online EFL courses for two participants. From this, a successful partnership has quickly grown between the team in Russia and TS in the UK, with numbers of participants growing significantly over time.

2.   Brief description of the current provision

TS offers part-time online non-accredited EFL courses at 11 levels, from beginners to advanced. The levels are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The vast majority of courses are taught one to one. The learning packages vary in length and numbers of hours a week, ranging from one lesson to 36 lessons over a period of 18 weeks. A lesson can vary in length from 30 to 50 or 60 minutes.

The vast majority of participants take a taster course and on the basis of this, make their decision about the length of the course and their teacher. A short conversation with the participant, together with information provided to the Russian team by parents, allow TS to place the participant in a class at the appropriate level. Participants may choose the class times that best suit them from those available on the online booking system.

At the time of the inspection, 120 participants were registered. There is no maximum capacity and the number of classes depends on the number of trainers available. The trainers deliver classes from a range of countries around the world.

The majority of participants were following courses of 50 minutes twice a week over 18 weeks. The vast majority of participants are from Russia. Other countries represented are China, Senegal and Germany. There are equal numbers of males and females. Participants are aged under 18, except for three adults.

Participants can register to start a course at any time. There are no entry requirements for courses.

3.   Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken remotely by one inspector over one day. The inspector scrutinised documentation and videos of classes and had video calls with senior managers, trainers and participants. Parts of three lessons were observed. The Provider responded promptly to all requests for information.

4.   Background to the supplementary inspection

This supplementary inspection arose from TS being established as a new online school. It is part of Samiad Limited, which is a provider accredited by BAC. The courses offered by the Provider are new and have not previously been inspected. Other elements of the provision are shared with Samiad and have recently been inspected.

5. **Inspection history**

Inspection type	Date
Stage 2	24–25 February 2014
Stage 3	4 August 2014
Interim	1 October 2015
Re-accreditation	15, 17 & 24 August 2018
Interim	23 October 2020

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the short course provider scheme document and main full inspection report.

INSPECTION AREA – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9.   Programme management is effective

9.1	There is a suitably qualified and experienced programme manager or management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment and the management of the body of trainers	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
9.2	Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
9.3	The allocation of trainers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
9.4	There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA

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

Comments

A suitably qualified and experienced Head of Teaching and Learning is responsible for overall course management and delivery. Consequently, the quality of courses is well supported.

Classes are timetabled according to the availability of the trainers. The times of the classes are available to see on the excellent online booking system, so that participants are able to easily book their own classes at times that suit them. If they decide to make a change, this is flagged up immediately by the system, which lets the Russian team, the Provider and the trainer know, thus keeping everyone suitably informed. The system is flexible and works well, resulting in positive feedback from all those who use it. As a result, the participants' needs are suitably accommodated.

The curriculum is based on materials provided by TS, so supporting a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Individual trainers are selected by the participant. Lessons are observed by the Head of Teaching and Learning by means of either drop- in or full observations. Lessons are recorded and so can be readily observed. This further contributes to the consistency of the delivery.

The only academic resource necessary for the courses is the acquisition by trainers and participants of a coursebook from which the daily homework tasks are given. The procedures for this are clearly articulated to all concerned. The Provider has developed a bank of materials, which have been suitably adapted for online teaching.

10.   The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable participants to succeed

10.1	Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow participants to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments or which meet stakeholders' requirements.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
10.2	Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ NA
10.3	Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations.	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA

10.4	Participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
10.5	The academic backgrounds and particular needs of participants are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course.	☒ Yes ☐ No

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

Comments

> Courses have been designed to allow participants to successfully achieve in their regular assessments and to support their development in the use of the English language.
>
> At the end of each level, participants are given an assessment quiz to determine their suitability to move to the following level. In preparation for this, over the 18 weeks of a typical course, two revision lessons suitably prepare participants for the final-level quiz.
>
> Participants are enabled to develop their independent learning skills through the regular homework tasks. The homework frequently requires participants to undertake research, as well as reviewing their lesson notes before the following lesson, at the start of which there is time for a recap.
>
> Stakeholder requirements have been taken into account through the development of materials aimed specifically at the ages and levels of proficiency in English of participants who are following courses remotely.
>
> Teaching strategies have also been developed to ensure the engagement of predominantly young participants learning remotely.

11.   Trainers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them

11.1	Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.2	Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.3	The appraisal procedures for trainers incorporate regular classroom observation.	☐ Yes ☒ No
11.4	Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of participants.	☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ NA
11.5	Trainers respond to different learning needs of participants where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.6	Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.	☒ Yes ☐ No

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

Comments

> Trainers are all EFL or primary school teachers and so are appropriately qualified and have teaching experience in a range of environments. A small minority of the trainers do not have experience of teaching online, so reducing the quality of teaching in their classes.
>
> All trainers are employed based on their subject knowledge and pedagogic and communicative skills, so allowing them to deliver appropriate courses.
>
> A system of performance reviews for new trainers is in place to ensure that they are settling in.

11.3 As a result of the newness of TS and the fast growth in the business, although lesson observations take place, the performance reviews do not yet consistently include an observation. Consequently, opportunities for individual and institutional development are missed.

The Head of Teaching and Learning offers regular and helpful support to trainers through a social media group.

11.4 However, trainers are not supported in their professional development though a formal training programme. As a result, opportunities for quality improvements are reduced.

Trainers are made aware of any participants' learning needs by the team in Russia, whose members are in close contact with the participants' parents. Materials have been adapted in a limited number of circumstances to meet the needs of participants with additional learning needs. This allows for appropriate action to be taken to meet their needs.

The vast majority of classes are taught one to one, so trainers work closely with participants. They are able to check understanding immediately, and if necessary, can instantly access alternative materials to ensure engagement and learning. The flexibility in the system allows trainers to move participants up or down levels to support better understanding of course content.

12.	The provider provides participants and trainers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study

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

Comments

Lesson materials are online, and readily accessible to trainers. Trainers and participants are supported by a coursebook, which is made available to them in order to access homework tasks at the end of every lesson. These allow lessons to be delivered effectively.

However, teachers report that more materials at different levels and focusing on a wider range of young people's interests would be helpful to better meet the needs of the participants.

13.	Participants receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored		
13.1	Feedback is given to individual participants tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.	☒ Yes	☐ No
13.2	Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to participants and trainers.	☒ Yes	☐ No ☐ NA
13.3	Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.	☒ Yes	☐ No ☐ NA
13.4	Participants are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.	☒ Yes	☐ No ☐ NA
13.5	Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to participants who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.	☒ Yes	☐ No ☐ NA
13.6	Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside class time.	☒ Yes	☐ No ☐ NA

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

Comments

At the end of each level, a quiz is scheduled in order to determine whether the participant has reached the requirements for that level. This is made known to all stakeholders, who are therefore appropriately briefed.

Trainers closely monitor progress in lessons, as well as the participants' ability to complete homework tasks, engagement in revision lessons and the assessment quizzes at the end of a level. In these ways, trainers are able to determine whether satisfactory progress is being made. Where this is not the case, action is taken to support progress. Information is immediately conveyed to the Russia team, which contacts the parents. As a result, all parties are kept informed.

Through the homework tasks, revision lessons and assessment quizzes, participants are made aware of how their progress relates to the expected achievement for the level.

For those participants not making sufficient progress for the level at which they are studying, a change of level may be suggested, or trainers may feed back information to the Russia team, which will inform parents about suitable support to help the participant achieve. Feedback gained from meeting with managers, trainers and the Russia team during the inspection indicates that this is a successful approach.

Oral feedback is regularly given to participants. This is posted on the online communications system, so making it available to the Russia team, and hence parents as well. This is helpful in indicating what additional support may be required to help the participant to make appropriate progress.

Participants and their parents have access at any time to the Russia team, whose members convey information via the online communications system to trainers. This efficient system is highly effective.

14.	The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate

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

Comments

15.	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)			
15.1	There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the RQF and evidence that participants who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
15.2	There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA
15.3	External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ NA

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

Comments

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

16.1	The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
16.2	For internal assessments and awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for participants to appeal against their marks.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

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

Comments

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The excellent bespoke booking and communications system allows for immediate and effective communications between all parties concerned, resulting in a good-quality teaching model.

The high degree of flexibility of the managers enables stakeholder requirements to be met efficiently and appropriately.

The high levels of support offered by the managers and the Russia team to participants and parents give rise to high-quality, tailored provision.

The categorisation of 11 levels of English proficiency means that participant needs can be closely met.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

11.3 Lesson observations must be consistently included in trainer reviews to enhance classroom practice.	☐ High	☒ Medium	☐ Low
11.4 Professional development opportunities must be introduced for all trainers to support quality improvements.	☐ High	☒ Medium	☐ Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is suggested that training in online teaching is given to all trainers to help in confidence-building.

Additional materials aimed specifically at participants with additional learning needs should be developed to support engagement.

It is recommended that materials available are increased to better meet the needs of long-term participants and that these include a wider variety of topics that focus on young people's different interests in order to support better engagement.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE