



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Libra Education

ADDRESS: 126 New Kings Road
London
SW6 4LZ
UK

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Oscar Hardy

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 8 March 2022

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 19 May 2022

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Libra Education (the Provider) is a privately owned training organisation that was established in 2017. It offers a wide range of educational consultancy, including bespoke tuition and home-schooling, through an online school. It also offers short residential courses held in venues in the United Kingdom (UK). The provision is intended for participants aged from eight to 18 years.

The Provider's head office is based in a shared office complex in south-west London, where there are also two areas used for tuition.

Libra Education aims to provide exceptional education in the form of advice, tuition and mentoring to participants aged 18 years and under from across the world.

The Provider has two company directors. These are the Executive Director, who is involved in strategic oversight and planning, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the business. The CEO is supported in his role by a Managing Director and a Senior Education Consultant, and together they form the senior management team, responsible for directing four full-time education and administrative staff. Course direction for the online school is undertaken by a team of education consultants.

Since the previous inspection, requests for, and take-up of online courses, especially in home-schooling, have continued to grow and are now a significant part of the provision.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers an online school, which runs for two terms each academic year. The school aims to provide tutorial education through an agreed syllabus, daily lessons, progress tests and formal external examinations.

Participants receive an agreed monthly schedule of lessons, with goals for each subject as appropriate for the participant's age. All participants are assigned a personal consultant, who undertakes an initial assessment of the participant's skills and knowledge and may liaise with their mainstream schools to request course transcripts or a specific curriculum.

Each subject course focuses on the key requirements of the national curriculum for England and Wales at the relevant Key Stage, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or post-16 level, as well as looking ahead to university-level subject knowledge and skills. Tutors create bespoke courses of learning for the participants using a Cambridge tutorial style that prompts creative and independent thought, whilst ensuring the necessary attention to detail. Lessons are delivered remotely by appropriately qualified, subject-specialist tutors.

Parents have access to daily and weekly progress reports that are sent to them via e-mail. This information is also uploaded to Libra Education's online management platform and provides a record of participant progress and achievement. Participants' progress in their curriculum is regularly monitored and assessed through internally set tests. A review of participants' academic objectives takes place and new learning targets are set for the next term.

A number of short residential courses are held in venues in the UK each year. These academic courses take place during the summer or half-term holidays. They offer one-to-one and small-group tuition designed for the needs of each individual participants.

At the time of the inspection, there were six online home-school participants enrolled. The majority of the participants were male and ranged in age from eight to ten years old. Their days are divided into 40- to 60-minute sessions. Participants receive no fewer than ten hours of one-to-one classes a week.

Enrolment is undertaken throughout the year and participants can join their tuition programme at any time.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out on-site at the Provider's head office over one day by one inspector. The inspector held meetings with the CEO, the Operations Director, the senior education consultant and a number of administrative staff. Two online lessons were observed and a wide range of documentation was scrutinised. A virtual tour of the Provider's shared premises was undertaken. The Provider was well prepared for the inspection and gave full co-operation to the inspector.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Stage 2	10 February 2020
Stage 3	3–4 November 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.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

No significant changes have been introduced since the last inspection.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points identified in the last inspection report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should consistently undertake all reference checks for all new staff prior to commencing their duties.

A detailed checklist has been introduced for all new staff, which includes confirming that references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks have been undertaken prior to staff commencing their duties.

It is recommended that the frequency of observing online tutors is increased to reflect the frequency of each tutor's lessons.

Observations for the whole year have been planned to ensure that all tutors are observed at least once in each academic year. Additional observations are scheduled where tutors deliver a large number of lessons in any academic year.

The Provider should communicate to all staff the name of the person responsible for participant welfare as the point of contact for any concerns.

The name of the member of staff responsible for participant welfare is communicated repeatedly to staff via e-mail and during regular staff meetings.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Management, staffing and administration are excellent. A very clear management structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, ensures that all members of staff fully understand the range of different roles and duties. This structure is appropriate for the size of the Provider and effectively supports the aims and objectives of the business.

Regular and effective communication, together with online access to information, ensure that staff are fully aware of any operational changes or issues and are able to raise any concerns.

The CEO is well qualified, experienced in educational leadership and fully understand his responsibilities. As a result, clear direction is provided and appropriate standards, financial planning, risk assessment and investment in staff, accommodation and resources are maintained.

Administrative support is very good and is highly effective in supporting managers and teachers. The administrative team is sufficient in number and meets the day-to-day needs of the Provider well. When required, the Provider uses external specialists, for example in the provision of its financial management.

An appropriate range of well-developed policies is in place. These are regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness and appropriately implementation and dissemination to staff.

Systems to collect, manage and monitor data collection are excellent. A wide range of key performance data is collected, analysed and used effectively to monitor performance and bring about improvement.

A safe recruitment policy clearly outlines the procedures for both permanent and tutoring staff recruitment. It used effectively to ensure that staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their roles. Staff performance is regularly reviewed. All permanent staff are subject to yearly appraisals as well as quarterly follow-up meetings to discuss professional development and potential training needs.

The Provider's website is of a high quality, easy to navigate and informative. It accurately details the range and scope of the provision on offer.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Teaching, learning and assessment are excellent. Programme management and course development are highly effective. The educational managers are well qualified and have extensive management and curriculum experience in relation to the UK educational system, including the national curriculum and further education and higher education provision.

Courses and their delivery are regularly reviewed to ensure that these allow participants to develop the knowledge and skills that will be required to complete their assessments successfully. As a result, the curriculum offer is well planned and provides clear progression opportunities for further study.

The allocation of tutors to courses is very well developed. A large database of tutors who have a wide range of subject knowledge at various levels ensures a consistent and high-quality experience for the participants. Teaching is regularly monitored and tutors receive a staff handbook detailing the Provider's required methodology and quality standards for lessons and programmes.

Courses are carefully designed to cover the knowledge and skills that are required to meet its stated learning outcomes. The course design and content accurately reflect current knowledge and practice and content is appropriately reviewed and revised to meet participants' needs and curriculum changes before being delivered.

Assessment is well planned and regular, and includes a detailed schedule of assessments. Clear and constructive feedback is regularly provided to participants. Monitoring of participants' performance is highly effective.

Tutors who are used to deliver the Provider's courses are well qualified and experienced and have appropriate subject knowledge and the pedagogic and communication skills that allow them to deliver courses effectively.

Tutors respond effectively to the different backgrounds and particular support needs of participants in their delivery lessons. Tutors also provide regular and constructive individual feedback to participants during their lessons, which is effectively tailored to meet their specific needs.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The provision for participant welfare is excellent. There is a named member of staff responsible for participant welfare who is suitably experienced, accessible and available to all participants throughout their course to provide advice. This role is clearly highlighted in the staff and participant handbooks, and in-house information is shared with staff via the online communication system.

A wide range of information, advice and guidance is provided to participants prior to the commencement of their course. This includes detailed information regarding the content and assessment of the course, as well as information on the logistics of the delivery of participants' learning. Where residential courses are organised, clear information about travel, accommodation and social activities is provided.

Participants receive an appropriate induction pack prior to the start of their course. This includes a copy of the participant handbook, the Provider's complaints procedure and an overview of the participant's individual programme of study. In addition, the Provider's rules and the code of conduct, including a clear definition of bullying and harassment and the sanctions that would be applied if bullying or harassment were to occur, are clearly provided.

A detailed e-policy provides guidance for ensuring online safety and reporting on discrimination or cyberbullying. Contact details are issued for emergency support in the form of senior administration.

Excellent arrangements are in place, and regularly reviewed, for the safeguarding of participants under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults. There is a named and appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and a detailed safeguarding policy that provides clear advice and guidance on how to monitor and support young participants and vulnerable adults.

A suitable policy and effective arrangements to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism are in place. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and staff have undertaken relevant training.

Arrangements for collecting, collating and storing contact details for participants are appropriate, and staff can quickly access the information if needed.

An appropriate complaints policy is in place and is communicated to participants at the start of their course. Participants are also advised about the BAC complaints procedure during induction.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has secure tenure on its head office premises, which are located in a purpose-built office complex. The lease is reviewed and renewed annually, with the capacity to rent additional external space as required.

Provision for health and safety is excellent, with appropriate fire and other required signage in place.

The premises are very well maintained, and in an excellent state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Security is excellent.

High-quality commercial venues are booked as needed for the delivery of the Provider's residential courses.

4.5 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

The senior management team has a very clear understanding of the specific requirements of online, distance and blended learning.

Well-developed data collection and collation systems are in place. These include the logging of tutor and participant submissions and interactions. In addition, live data is generated as the courses are running, which enables effective monitoring and prompt resolution of any issues by managers.

The online activity of participants and tutors is appropriately monitored, with action taken immediately if there are concerns about cyberbullying or other online risks to participants. A comprehensive e-policy is in place and is communicated effectively to tutors and participants.

Online tuition is managed and supervised by a highly qualified and experienced management team. The Provider has access to a large number of well-qualified online tutors to ensure that each participant is provided with high levels of support. Tutors have an excellent understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning, which contributes significantly to the success of the online home-schooling provision, including knowledge of technology applications.

Tutors are appropriately allocated to courses to provide a consistent learning experience. Delivery is effectively monitored to ensure consistency, with the methods used sufficient to attain the stated course objectives and intended learning outcomes.

The Provider's online programmes use a wide range of appropriate and highly effective teaching aids and learning resources, which effectively supports participants' learning.

Participants are provided with clear information prior to the start of their course. This includes information about the necessary level of digital literacy required to successfully undertake the programme of study.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Strong and focused leadership guides the Provider and supports continuous improvement of the standards of provision.

Excellent teaching results in high levels of participant engagement and progress.

Highly effective systems are used to monitor participants' progress and provide additional support where necessary.

The very well-developed welfare and safeguarding system is highly effectively in protecting and supporting participants.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE
