BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION
(Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

PROVIDER: Notting Hill College

ADDRESS: 19 Woodcock Court
                         Waters Side Business Centre
                         Mowden Road
                         Salford
                         Manchester
                         M5 3EZ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Dr Ahmed Zaki

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 19 September 2023

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 22 February 2024

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1.   Background to the provider

Notting Hill College (the Provider) is a private limited company. It offers externally accredited and internally awarded online distance learning courses in teacher development, education leadership and management, and language. The Provider is based in Manchester.

The Provider was established in 2004 and began offering blended learning programmes in 2007. It discontinued offering the blended learning courses in 2020 to focus on delivering online distance learning courses.

The aim of the Provider is to deliver courses that include the latest methods, activities, theories and examples of best practice to help practising teachers become more successful teachers of English and to support the promotion of teachers into management roles.

The Provider is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is supported by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the Academic and Assessment Manager, and the Administration and Operations Manager.

2.   Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers a range of online distance learning internal awards leading to diplomas and certificates, primarily in the field of teacher development and education leadership and management, from level 4 to level 6. These are offered as part of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for teachers in schools, mainly in the Middle East. The Provider also offers qualifications for English language teachers.

The current provision includes a Diploma in Educational Psychology, a Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) at levels 4 and 5, a Diploma in Teaching Young People and a Diploma in Education Leadership and Management. The level 5 TEFL certificate is accredited by Training Qualifications UK (TQUK).

The Provider also offers short English language courses in Phonetics and Phonology and courses covering teaching methods. All courses are currently offered on a part-time basis. The Provider also offers in-person learning if there is sufficient demand.

At the time of the inspection, 20 learners were enrolled on two learning programmes in Education Leadership and Management. All learners are over the age of 18. The majority of learners are female and from Egypt. Other countries represented include Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Algeria and Nigeria.

Learners are enrolled on a continuous enrolment basis. Entry requirements include vocational experience, prior qualifications and language proficiency. The language proficiency requirements are of a high level to reflect the level of learning and the demands of the online distance learning.

3.   Inspection process

The one-day inspection was conducted by one Inspector. Interviews were held with the COO, the Academic and Assessment Manager and the Administration and Operations Manager. Meetings were held with teaching staff and learners. Observations of online teaching and learning were conducted. A range of documents was scrutinised. Online administrative systems, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and learner and staff records were also reviewed. The Provider co-operated extremely well with all information requests and ensured the smooth running of the inspection.

4.   Inspection history

Inspection type	Date

Full Accreditation	29 August & 1–2 September 2016
Supplementary	26 January 2017
Interim	28 June 2017
Re-accreditation	16 & 30–31 July 2021

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

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

2.   Response to action points in last report

5.5 *The Provider must develop a mechanism to communicate to learners the responses to their feedback.*

The Provider has developed effective mechanisms to communicate its responses to learner feedback. This includes use of the college's regularly updated web page and a social media platform.

3.   Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

There were no recommendations in the last report.

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

There is a well-defined management structure that includes all job roles, titles and reporting arrangements. As a result, all members of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Communication between all members of staff and managers is very effective. Regular informal and formal means of communication are used, including e-mail and the effective use of online platforms. Regular meetings are held. This results in all staff being well informed and supported, including staff who are working remotely.

The Provider has a very effective risk management system that includes a risk management policy and strategy and a detailed risk register. The risk register is monitored and updated regularly so that the Provider's is able to respond well to change and to mitigate risks.

Administration is effective. Policies and procedures are thorough, regularly reviewed and well communicated. Systems are well maintained.

Notting Hill College has robust policies and systems in place to protect the data of staff and learners. Staff and learner data is kept on a secure digital portal, and information is checked regularly. This results in the effective security and maintenance of all personal data.

Staff have access to a range of effective internal and external CPD opportunities. Mentoring opportunities are available, and there is a culture of continuous learning. Consequently, all staff and tutors are well supported in their roles.

The Provider has effective systems in place to monitor and review all aspects of its performance. This includes an annual performance report, a growth and development plan, a self-evaluation report, and a quality assurance framework. The outcomes from these systems are evidenced in improvement plans and are well monitored.

There are effective mechanisms for learners to give feedback on the Provider's provision. The Provider takes prompt action in response to learners' suggestions of areas for improvement. This leads to the continuous improvement of the learners' experience.

Notting Hill College has an effective mechanism to report on its responses to learner feedback. As a result, learners value the feedback process because they know that the Provider takes their feedback seriously.

4.2   Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

A well-qualified, experienced manager ensures the effective management of all academic programmes.

Highly effective teaching delivery methods ensure that learners are supported to achieve the programme's objectives and learning outcomes. Learners are very satisfied with the delivery methods. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Tutors have very good subject knowledge and are effective in delivering online learning. They demonstrate very good understanding of the challenges of distance online learning and are effective in supporting all learners in their studies.

Tutors have good communication skills and demonstrate effective pedagogical skills in delivering online learning programmes. This includes the very effective use of technology to enhance and support the learning experience.

Learners' assessment plans focus effectively on assessment criteria and learning outcomes and support learners well in preparation for their final assessments and/or examinations. Assessment plans for internal awards reflect the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders, ensuring that assessment plans combine theory and practice that are relevant to the workplace.

Progress is well monitored and the monitoring processes are effective in supporting learner progress. Tutors and managers regularly review the outcomes of formative assessment, and intervention is prompt and supportive. Learners are highly satisfied with their progress and the support offered. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Provider is very effective in complying with the requirements of awarding bodies. External quality assurance reports identify effective internal quality assurance processes and high standards of assessment and feedback. Inspection findings support this view.

4.3   Learner Support (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Enrolment and application processes are efficient and accessible. Learners receive appropriate information before the application and enrolment process and they report high levels of satisfaction with the application and enrolment process. This view is supported by the findings of the inspection.

Learners have access to clear and comprehensive information before registration. This includes a course overview, details of the assessment requirements and types of distance learning modes of delivery. This effectively supports learners in making well-informed decisions about their choice of course.

The Provider makes use of a comprehensive checklist, that includes digital skills requirements and the identification of any support needs. The completed checklist provides clear information to learners and informs the Provider of any identified learners' support needs.

The Provider has appropriate mechanisms in place to protect learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. This includes a clear and well-communicated policy, a risk assessment and evidence of suitable staff training.

The Provider has a comprehensive set of terms and conditions that are fair, transparent and well communicated to learners. This includes an appropriate cooling-off period and refund policy. As a result, learners are well informed about their obligations and responsibilities when enrolling on courses.

The assistance that is provided to resolve learner issues, including issues of a general or technical nature, is prompt and very effective. Learners are highly satisfied with the response times and support provided for their queries. This results in learners making very good progress and achieving at a high level.

The Provider is very effective in encouraging and supporting peer interaction. Study groups are facilitated, and group messaging is used very effectively to enable regular communication between learners.

The programme materials are varied and of a high quality and well designed. This contributes effectively to learners' progress and achievement.

Technical support is very effective. An experienced and well-qualified technician ensures that systems are operational at all times and provides prompt support to learners and staff, including staff who work remotely.

4.4   Compliance Declaration

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

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Highly effective and well-designed teaching, learning and assessment strategies meet the needs and interests of learners and employers, resulting in improved practice in the classroom, promotion opportunities and high levels of learner confidence.

Highly effective and prompt responses to outcomes of internal and external quality assurance processes, including learner and stakeholder feedback, result in a culture of continuous improvement of the learner experience.

Very experienced, vocationally expert and well-qualified tutors provide learners with excellent subject knowledge and skills, including a range of wider study skills, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Very effective monitoring and prompt responses to learner support needs leads to very good progress and achievement for learners.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Linda Ross	Lead Inspector