

# BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

## INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

**PROVIDER:** KE Foundation

**ADDRESS:** Wellington House  
East Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 1BH

**HEAD OF PROVIDER:** Mr Samuel Yang

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 4 July 2019

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation 26 September 2019

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the provider**

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Kingdom Education Group (KE/the Provider) is a limited company established in 2013. Trading as KE Foundation, the Provider operates exclusively in the summer period offering short course programmes for international high school students aged 15 to 17. The courses are based at three study centres on university campuses in Cambridge, Durham and St Andrews. KE does not have its own premises.

KE's programmes were first established in the United Kingdom (UK) and then in the United States of America (USA) from 2015 and Canada from 2016. The operation in Canada has now been discontinued. The scope of this inspection and accreditation is limited to the UK programmes.

All the programmes have a focus on university entry and give participants the opportunity to experience university life. KE aims to offer life-changing experiences at centres of academic excellence across the English-speaking world together with guidance on applying to high ranking universities and pursuing excellent careers. Its philosophy is that prospective university students should be exposed to the whole educational experience comprising development of critical and independent thinking, commitment, teamwork and debate as well as academic achievement.

Its two co-founders are responsible primarily for governance, strategic direction, marketing in Asia and development of new projects. Programmes in the UK are managed by the Principal/Academic Manager, who is also responsible for the North American operation as well as administration, publicity materials and marketing.

In response to participant feedback KE has modified its course structures from 2019.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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In 2019 there are four programmes offered in the UK, of which three are of two weeks duration and one of three weeks. All of the programmes are multi-centred, with participants spending one week in one university college then moving to another for a further week and possibly to another for a third week. Each programme consists of courses, structured in 2019 as A, B and C. These introduce participants to subjects unlikely to have been included in their international high school curriculum. The available subjects are currently business and entrepreneurship, engineering and technology, law, society and international relations, medical sciences and psychology. Participants can choose programme and course dates and locations. None of the courses offered are approved by external awarding bodies.

Since 2018, programmes have only been run for one age group. This is for participants who are 15 to 17 years of age. The programme inspected featured course B, which is called Prepare for the Future. This was held at Cambridge, with participants then moving on to Durham after a week. Each major course A, B and C is accompanied by a minor one. Within course B run during the inspection, the minor course was Practical Leadership and Teamwork where participants undertake entrepreneurial challenges in a competitive environment.

Other course options include Course A which is called Critical Thinking and Academic Language Skills. Complementary components are provided in each course such as seminars aimed at helping participants choose the university which would best suit them, putting together a good application, drafting a personal statement, interview techniques, presentation skills and dining and etiquette, which is followed by a formal dinner.

Participants customarily come from China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Macao, Japan and various European countries, with a very small number from the UK. At the time of the inspection, there was a total of 30 participants enrolled on the UK1 programme with an approximately even split of male and female participants. The capacity on each programme is 40. The total number enrolled in the UK in 2018 was 123. All overseas participants are resident on campus in undergraduate accommodation.

KE additionally offers closed-group programmes for international participants over the age of 18. Two closed groups with a total of 14 participants were enrolled by KE for two Taiwanese universities during the summer of 2019. Participants in closed groups are normally accompanied by tutors from the institutions where they are registered which offer credit-bearing courses linked to the participants' visit to the UK. KE arranges the accommodation, meals, local visits and excursions and also arranges seminars on various aspects of life in the UK, as well as workshops on critical thinking and creativity. For the first time, in 2019 one of the universities has requested KE to be fully involved in teaching and learning, including assessment towards the award of Taiwanese university credits.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with one of the owner/Directors, the Principal, who is also the Academic Manager, the Director of Studies and the Centre Manager. The inspector interviewed the Participant Welfare Officer by telephone, talked to teaching staff and a student mentor and attended a trainers' and managers' joint meeting. In addition, parts of three classroom sessions were observed and the inspector met a small group of participants. Full documentation was made available to the inspector and staff co-operated fully with the inspection process.

### **4. Inspection History**

<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Stage 2	8 April 2013
Stage 3	16 July & 7 August 2013
Interim	7 August 2014
Re-accreditation	26-27 July 2017

## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

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The London and Canadian operations have been discontinued owing to cost. The provision continues to be based at St Catharine's College but from 2018 now operates just one cohort of 15 to 17-year olds rather than two different aged cohorts. This has enabled teaching and welfare procedures to be streamlined. Creative Arts has been discontinued as a subject owing to low demand.

From 2019, programme and course organisation have been further streamlined and re-structured into three courses, titled A, B and C. Each of these courses includes a major component and a minor component, such as a business team challenge.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

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There were no action points in the last report.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

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*Consideration should be given to including appropriate guidance on the staff grievance and disciplinary procedure in the Staff Handbook.*

The staff grievance and disciplinary procedure is now detailed in the Staff Handbook.

*Consideration should be given to increasing the level of scrutiny which is used to assure the effectiveness of recruitment agents.*

The use of agents has been reduced, with only five participants being provided through established agents in 2019. If required in the future for new agents, there are thorough vetting procedures in place, including the use of references and discussions via online meeting platforms.

*The Provider should consider establishing a system of recording the rationale for operational changes, so that their impact can be effectively monitored.*

The rationale for operational changes is discussed regularly at management meetings. The current system for recording details ensures that the course operation is regularly and effectively monitored through oral and written participant and staff feedback, leading to changes in course structures, as exemplified in the new major and minor courses in 2019.

*Consideration should be given to inviting participants to identify themselves on their feedback questionnaires.*

Participants are now invited to insert their names on feedback forms.

*The Provider should consider how best to spread good practice in the development and use of lesson plans, taking account of the nature of each course and its objectives, across all its centres.*

To assist standardisation of practice, a lesson plan template has been designed and is now used by all trainers. Trainers and managers say it is proving successful in focusing on short-term objectives for major and minor course lessons. Inspection findings confirmed that the new lesson plan template is effective.

#### 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**

The management structure is well organised with well-defined roles. Managers and trainers work very well together as a team. They are very well supported by one of the three owners who is directly involved in operations. This impacts positively on participants' overall experience. Both informal one-to-one and formal communication channels, such as staff meetings, work well to ensure that all staff are aware of priorities. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Participants' attendance is effectively monitored and recorded using attendance registers that are taken five times a day, including both taught courses and scheduled visits.

Effective mechanisms are used to obtain participant feedback. These involve regular discussions with participants after courses and activities, sharing of information at staff meetings and summative feedback forms, which include a range of good questions. As a result, owners and managers are aware of participants' views. The impact of feedback from participants and staff is seen in the revised course structure operating from 2019 based on major and minor subjects and activities.

Excellent quality assurance procedures are used. All the regular management and other staff meetings are recorded and action points have clearly led to continuous improvements, as in the way courses and visits are planned and organised. An outstanding feature is the regular lesson observation, with oral and written feedback, carried out by the Director of Studies to ensure relevance and consistency of learning. The use of the new standardised lesson plan has already had a good impact on the quality of the course delivery.

##### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

Academic management is very effective. The Principal/Academic Manager works very well with the Director of Studies, Centre Manager and trainers to ensure that courses meet participants' aspirations and needs. Trainers are well supported through thorough induction, regular staff meetings and lesson observations and have access to appropriate facilities and materials. Courses, such as Preparing for the Future, are relevant and fit for purpose. The Director of Studies' new lesson plan pro-forma has been well received by trainers.

Trainers are highly skilled in their subjects and adept at engaging participants, who respond well to trainers' prompts and questions. Participants confirmed that the trainers and undergraduate student mentors were open, friendly and approachable, as well as knowledgeable and efficient in planning appropriate activities. The three teaching sessions observed were practical and interactive, involving participants working in groups to improve oral and written communication, practical Information Technology (IT) and problem-solving skills. Participants of all abilities are well supported.

Participants' records are efficiently maintained, as are records of participant feedback. Participants' said that they had already obtained useful advice about UK university course requirements. The introduction of one age band, from 15 to 17 years old, has enabled trainers to plan lessons even more effectively to ensure participants' needs and aspirations are fully addressed.

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#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The Welfare Officer is well qualified and experienced and ensures that participants receive excellent information before and on arrival at the Provider. Before arrival, the bulk of this information is supplied through the comprehensive website and e-mailed documentation.

There is a regularly updated noticeboard. As a result, the participants interviewed confirmed that they received comprehensive information and were fully aware of programme objectives, major and minor course options and the timescales for each module. They said that they know who to approach with any personal problems. Consequently, they are well supported throughout their programme.

Participants also benefit from being among other young students on site. Safeguarding arrangements during the programme operation, both on-site and on scheduled trips, are comprehensive and well-monitored by managers.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The premises and facilities in St Catharine's College, which is part of the University of Cambridge, are of high quality and include a number of well-equipped classrooms and a spacious cafeteria for participants and staff.

Participants and new staff are given an appropriate briefing regarding health and safety through a full initial induction and supplementary guidance literature.

The university premises are subject to a high level of safety and security procedures. As a result, they provide a high quality learning and working environment.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

Owners, managers, administrators and trainers work well collaboratively, enabling high quality teaching and welfare outcomes for participants.

Teaching and learning, that make use of university resources in three UK centres, including the deployment of student mentors, are of high quality due to well-planned courses that fully engage participants and meet their needs and aspirations.

Study visits to places of interest are exceptionally well planned to maximise learning opportunities.

Excellent quality assurance processes feature regular management and teachers’ meetings and lesson observations with detailed written feedback.

**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**