



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Oxford Scholastica Academy

ADDRESS: 26 Osberton Road
Oxford
OX2 7NU

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Jamie Dear

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 15 September 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 26 November 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Oxford Scholastica Academy (OSA/the Provider) is a privately owned limited company based in Oxford. It was founded in 2014 and is owned by two Directors, who are the members of the company Board.

The OSA's mission is to provide a truly memorable summer school experience for every participant. In addition to helping participants to identify what they want to study when they leave school and starting to identify a career path, the Directors also want to support the young people who attend OSA to consider ways in which they can become more active and socially engaged citizens.

To support this mission, OSA runs academic, short summer programmes that enable the participants to develop their awareness of the range of future academic and career possibilities and gain greater certainty over the future direction they want to pursue. The Provider offers a range of courses designed for participants aged from 15 to 18 years in computer science, creative writing, debate and public speaking, engineering, enterprise, leadership, psychology, law and medicine. In 2016, courses were introduced for participants aged from 13 to 14 years in business, medicine, technology and creative writing. These courses are also been made accessible to participants aged 12 years in 2020.

In 2020, courses were delivered at Cherwell Sixth Form College. Residential accommodation was hired for the period at the Hugh Oldham Building of Corpus Christi College Oxford.

A Director oversees the day-to-day running of the Provider and is supported by an education consultant and two Deputy Directors.

OSA has established a charitable foundation. This provides support, including funding, advice and publicity, to social impact projects, which have been founded by or involve the Provider's alumni. This activity supports the Provider's aim of building a network of alumni, as part of an objective of gradually diversifying so that it is not wholly dependent on income from summer schools.

In 2017, OSA launched a scholarship scheme targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The scheme provides a non-residential programme as part of the summer provision. It had two participants in its first year, and grew to 25 participants in 2019. The scholarship covers the participants' fees, travel and all other expenditure.

2. Brief description of the current provision

OSA usually runs a series of three consecutive courses, each of two weeks' duration, during July and August. These are divided into the programmes intended for participants aged 12 to 14, in business, medicine, technology and creative writing, and for participants aged 15 to 18, in computer science, creative writing, debate and public speaking, engineering, enterprise, leadership, psychology, law and medicine. There are no specified entry requirements

Core subject-based sessions are supported by a programme of masterclasses and sessions led by guest speakers. The masterclasses cover a range of broad topics and debates on current issues, as well as practical issues such as how to apply to a university in the United Kingdom (UK). These sessions enable participants to engage with a person at a reasonably early stage in their career, who has made interesting choices. The speakers have often had significant social impact, through the application of the skills and knowledge they acquired through their academic study, for example, young entrepreneurs with start-up businesses.

The courses are delivered face to face and include classes, private study and visits or practical sessions, as appropriate to the subject.

In 2019, 370 participants attended OSA courses, while 14 attended in 2020. Participants came from the UK, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States of America. The majority were female and most were under the age of 18. No courses were running at the time of the inspection.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over half a day. Meetings were held with the Director, a Deputy Director, the education consultant, teaching staff and a participant. A range of documentation, photographs and videos were scrutinised. These included evidence of the quality of the new teaching premises. The Provider was helpful and flexible in the organisation of the inspection and provided all requested documentation promptly.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Stage 2	11 February 2014
Stage 3	14 July 2014
Interim	10 August 2015
Re-accreditation	3, 8 & 9 August 2018

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 institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The reduction in enrolments in 2020 resulted in a restructuring of OSA, with the loss of two Deputy Director positions and one managerial and two administrative roles.

The Provider has vacated its leased offices in Oxford and is currently operating under its registered company address in Oxford. All staff are working remotely.

New teaching accommodation was hired this year at Cherwell Sixth Form College in response to the change in participant numbers, which resulted in small class sizes. The Provider secured new, high-specification residential accommodation in the Hugh Oldham Building of Corpus Christi College Oxford.

This year, OSA lowered the age limit for its courses in business, medicine, technology and creative writing from 13 to 12.

2. Response to actions points in last report

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

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

Given the reliance of participants on the public internet for their private study each day, it is recommended that some consideration is given to increasing awareness among participants of the relative reliability of different online sources.

The Deputy Director briefs participants on the use of reliable internet sources and how to reference sources. In addition, further tutor guidance is given in class. Tutors confirm that instances of reference to unreliable sources and plagiarism have significantly reduced as a result.

The Provider should give further thought to the nature and scheduling of masterclasses to increase their relevance to the full group of potential participants.

The session on university applications is now optional as it is most applicable to those intending to apply for UK universities. It has been replaced by a class on debating. The masterclasses offered are now fully relevant, engaging and meet the participants' needs. Participants confirm that these are a valuable and interesting aspect of the course.

The Provider should put in place a clear process through which tutors can request additional teaching resources, and ensure that tutors are fully aware of the process and its operation.

A suitable process is clearly documented and included in the tutor handbook and discussed during the annual tutor induction. Tutors are asked during induction to identify additional resources they would like. They can make further requests at any time through liaison with the education consultant. They can obtain small items without request through petty cash. Tutors confirm that they know about the process and that it is effective.

Consideration should be given to enhancing the facilities that are available to the non-teaching staff, so that they have somewhere to take their scheduled breaks during the day away from the participants.

Part of the participant accommodation premises has been allocated for staff use. In any event, this has not been an issue in 2020 due to the reduction in staff numbers and the change of premises for delivery.

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 of the Provider is very effective. Oversight is robust and clear channels of communication ensure that operations run smoothly.

Managers promote a strong collegiate atmosphere, resulting in high levels of commitment from both core and seasonal staff. Staff clearly share the Provider's vision, ensuring effective achievement of the OSA's mission and ethos.

Suitable data collection and collation systems support the smooth running of courses well. Participant admissions and attendance data are well recorded and easy to retrieve.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are regularly updated and effectively disseminated across the Provider.

Feedback is regularly obtained from all stakeholders. This contributes to a thorough annual review process, which covers all aspects of the provision and informs a detailed action plan. The Provider has a calendar of activities that allows for a clear focus on the implementation of actions during the quieter months, and results in continuous improvements to the provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The courses are regularly updated and appropriately adapted to meet the needs and interests of participants. They are designed to engage, challenge and inspire teenage learners and are delivered in ways that encourage high levels of participation and the development of independent learning skills.

Tutors receive thorough pre-course training and are well supported during the courses by an appropriately experienced education consultant.

Classroom observations take place for all tutors on each course during the summer teaching period. The well-designed observation report form reflects the priorities of the Provider and results in clear feedback to tutors on the extent to which these are met. Areas for development are well defined and followed up in subsequent observations. Tutors confirm that the process is helpful.

Tutors are provided with information on their class members in advance of the course and use this to plan their courses very well. They confirm that participants are placed on appropriate courses. As a result, courses are successful in meeting participants' interests and learning goals.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Clear and appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that applicants are suitably counselled in advance of selecting a course and are provided with all the necessary information prior to arrival.

Participant welfare is central to OSA's provision. Effective welfare is supported through comprehensive policies and procedures, which are clearly communicated to staff and participants at induction and through handbooks.

The Deputy Director is responsible for participant welfare and safeguarding and builds effective relationships with participants and their parents prior to participants' arrival. Consequently, the Deputy Director is able to deal promptly with any issues as they arise.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and the Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that staff are appropriately briefed in their responsibilities. All staff are trained in safeguarding to the required level and safer recruitment procedures are effectively implemented to ensure the safety of all participants.

Residential accommodation is chosen to provide participants with an authentic experience of living in an Oxford college and to support safe social interaction on site. The accommodation hired this year was used exclusively by OSA for the duration of the summer courses. Participants benefited from study bedrooms with individual access from the campus and good outdoor amenities for social gatherings.

OSA's residential staff are present at all times throughout the teaching period to support participants and supervise the evening curfew. This ensures that participants are safe and secure. Participants confirm that they were given health and safety induction on arrival and appreciate the high standard and comfort of the accommodation.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

New teaching premises were hired this year in response to the change in participant numbers.

Cherwell Sixth Form College provides tutorial rooms that are well suited to small class sizes. Staff and participants confirm that the teaching premises are safe and comfortable, and that they support the OSA approach to teaching and learning.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Highly effective leadership successfully supports the achievement of the OSA’s mission.

Well-organised quality assurance processes take good account of all appropriate sources of information to evaluate and improve provision.

There is very effective training and ongoing support for tutors.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are successfully disseminated and ensure the safety and welfare of all 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
