



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SPOT CHECK INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: The English Studio

ADDRESS: Ruskin House
40–41 Museum Street
London
WC1A 1LT

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Gregory Ledgard-Hoile

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 8 December 2022

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 26 January 2023

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The English Studio is the trading name of TES Education Limited (TES/the Provider), a privately owned organisation that offers English language courses. The Provider is based in central London and the courses are delivered in London.

TES aims is to support participants in developing proficiency in the English language as an important life skill.

The Provider is owned by the three shareholders who make up the Board. One of the shareholders undertakes a support role where needed, currently in sales and health and safety, and one acts as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is supported by a small team of senior managers, including a General Manager and a Director of Studies.

Founded in 1997, TES was purchased by the current owners in June 2020. Key staff were retained to ensure continuity. The Provider plans to open a permanent school in Oxford and a school in Dublin in 2023.

2. Brief description of the current provision

During the inspection, in-person courses were running at a range of levels for General English and International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) preparation. These short courses run throughout the year, with a choice of 15, 20 or 25 hours of study a week.

The Provider is also offering summer courses for young participants. Participants under the age of 18 are enrolled on the summer programmes.

At the time of the inspection, there were 31 participants, the majority of whom were female. The total capacity is 74. All participants at the time of the inspection were over 18 years of age and come from a broad range of countries, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Columbia, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, Taiwan, Mexico and Honduras.

The entry requirement for the IELTS courses is a minimum language ability at an appropriate level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The other courses do not have entry requirements.

Enrolment is on a continual basis and new participants can join courses on a Monday.

3. Background to spot check

The spot check is as a result of feedback received that involved comments about poor-quality teaching, incorrect language level assessment and placement, unclear refund policy and inaccurate publicity material.

Further feedback threw into doubt whether the Provider was independent of another school, St George's International (SGI), which has recently gone into liquidation. This potentially raised issues regarding the protection of participants from adverse experiences in the instance of an institution going into liquidation.

4. Inspection process (including staff interviewed)

The inspection was carried out in person by one inspector in one half-day. The inspector met with the Provider's management, with a student group of participants and with a group of teachers. The inspector observed all the

available lessons taking place at the time of the inspection. A range of relevant documentation was scrutinised. The English Studio co-operated fully with the inspection.

5. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full accreditation	18 & 20–21 January 2022

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

Since the previous inspection in March 2022, TES's lease on its premises expired and the Provider had to find alternative premises. It found temporary accommodation at several locations, including sharing premises with another school, SGI, on a temporary basis. TES has now found and moved into its own new, permanent premises in central London and has just signed a new lease.

2. Findings from inspection

The ownership and management structure of The English Studio

TES is a private company owned by three shareholders who make up the Board. One of these three acts as the CEO. The CEO is supported by a General Manager and a Director of Studies.

One of TES's shareholders was also a shareholder in SGI. Because of this link, when TES had to vacate its premises, SGI offered TES shared accommodation on a temporary basis. During this period, the two Providers remained separate within the premises. They maintained separate finances, management and staff, and separate student bodies. This arrangement finished when TES moved into its own new, permanent premises. SGI subsequently went into administration.

The links between The English Studio and Saint George's International (SGI)

One shareholder of SGI also has a share in TES and enabled TES to share the SGI premises when TES needed a site. TES shared premises with SGI as a temporary measure prior to finding its own suitable premises. SGI has since gone into administration. The management of the two schools is completely separate. No managers moved across to TES when SGI went into liquidation. Some of the teachers, however, were employed by TES. No participants were recruited from SGI.

TES has signed a new lease on premises in a shared-used building in central London, where it occupies a complete floor of the building. There are no other language schools in the building. TES has its own very conspicuous branding in the foyer of the building.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Overall, teaching is effective and enables participants to make progress. All the teachers are knowledgeable and experienced. Classes are planned with a detailed knowledge of the participants, including their levels and aims. Teachers employ a variety of activities with individual, paired and whole-class teaching.

There is, on occasions, insufficient assessment of learning and a minority of lessons are focused more on knowledge of the language rather than ability to use the language and the pace of the lessons is slow.

Teachers are confident in their use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards.

Participants confirm that they are happy with the progress they are making. They have confidence in the ability of their teachers and are confident of achieving their goals.

Course management is effective and the Provider is very well resourced. Lessons are timetabled and rooms are allocated appropriately for the courses offered. Classrooms have interactive whiteboards and teachers are

confident in using these. Teachers have access to a wide range of printed materials to support class-based activities.

The Provider does not yet offer the full range of CEFR levels. However, participants can study at lower intermediate level and then progress to intermediate and upper intermediate levels as well as to IELTS test preparation, as appropriate.

Placement, induction and finances

Participants are provisionally allocated to groups based on the results of an online test. The group allocation is confirmed by an on-arrival placement test, which includes an oral assessment. Following allocation to a group based on these assessment results, there is provision for moving participants who might not have been appropriately allocated to a level or group, but this has not had to be done often so far.

The participants confirm that placements are accurate. Teachers also confirm that group allocation of participants is appropriate. Inspection observation confirms this view.

A participant induction takes place each Monday afternoon. This makes participants aware of the class timetables and course materials, as well as introducing the staff, the social programme, the local area and health and safety. The induction includes an appropriate presentation. The induction introduces the participants to the Provider and its rules and regulations.

SGL went into liquidation, but this does not affect the finances of TES. Although the two Providers temporarily shared premises, their finances remained separate. Accounts show that TES is trading in profit and has additional reserves. TES has a policy of being cash positive, that is, of not taking on debt. There are sufficient funds in TES's reserves to reimburse all participants if the Provider were to cease trading.

Accuracy of publicity materials as the information on the website did not match the experience of a participant

The information regarding the courses and accommodation that TES supplies on its website is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Participants confirm that the information they received is accurate.

However, the publicity relates to London, Oxford and Dublin provision, though TES was only operational in London at the time of the inspection. Similarly, the 'About us' section gives a history of the company that does not relate to the present size and circumstances of the Provider.

The participant experience, as depicted in the videos and participant brochure that are available through the website, relates to TES in the past, when it was a much larger organisation with much more going on than the present range of activities. This could lead to a misunderstanding of the size of the current organisation.

Refund policy

The refund policy is easily accessible via the website and provides clear information and appropriate detail on refunds, deductions and the basis for the refusal of refunds. Clear information is also included on how to make a formal complaint regarding any declined refunds and what cancellation fees are payable. The language used is at approximately intermediate level and thus is accessible. The crucial information regarding cancellation fees is in simpler English and laid out in an easy-to-follow set of bullet points. As a result, the refund policy is easy to understand.

3. Conclusion

TES is completely independent of SGL. SGL going into administration does not result in an adverse financial effect on TES.

The teaching at TES is overall effective although improvements would enhance the quality. Initial group allocation is accurate, with a procedure in place to change individual participants' groups if teachers feel they have been placed at the incorrect level.

The publicity material is accurate in terms of the information it provides although it does not accurately depict the current activities and size of the Provider.

The refund policy is accessible and easy to understand.

4. Compliance declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The publicity materials, including on the Provider’s website, must be updated to accurately reflect the Provider’s current location and range of provision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

The Provider should disseminate best practice in English language teaching to enliven the lessons, focus on the acquisition of oral and written language skills and ensure that the effective testing of understanding takes place in all lessons.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE
