

Organisation name	Ardmore Language Schools, Maidenhead
Inspection date	8 November 2023
Current accreditation status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: end period under review

**Recommendation**

The period of review may now be ended and accreditation continued until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2026.

**Changes to the summary statement**

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

**New summary statement**

The British Council inspected and accredited Ardmore Language School, Maidenhead in August 2022 and November 2023.

The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and safeguarding under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see [www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This private language teaching organisation offers residential courses in general English for under 18s and for closed groups of under 18s in school premises.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

**Updated summary inspection findings****Management**

None.

**Premises and resources**

None.

**Teaching and learning**

The provision meets the section standard. The academic staff team generally has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers generally receive sufficient guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Teachers are formally observed by TEFLQ managers. Courses are structured and managed to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

**Welfare and student services**

The provision meets the section standard. The provision meets the needs of the students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities. There are systems in place to ensure students' welfare and safety. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including out-of-class activities and suitable accommodation.

**Safeguarding under 18s**

The safeguarding policy specifies appropriate procedures, and all staff are suitably trained. Satisfactory arrangements for supervision are in place. The safeguarding of under 18s is appropriate.

**Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance**

The items sampled were satisfactory.

## Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2019
Last full inspection	August 2022
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	English language courses in the USA. School Integration and Academic Year Programmes. Development & Enrichment Programmes with ALG partner companies.

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	45	131
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	8	8
Typical age range	16–17	8–17
Typical length of stay	1 week	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Chilean	French and Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	2	6
Total number of managers including academic	1	2
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	3	9

## Premises profile

Address of main site	Berkshire College of Agriculture, Hall Place, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6QR
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Main site

## Introduction

### Background

Following the full inspection in August 2022, the school was placed under review because the section standard for teaching and learning was not met and there were weaknesses in W1, W11, S2, S4 and S6. The period of review to be ended by submission of an action plan within three months and a spot check focusing on teaching and learning.

The school offers year-round programmes to students aged between eight and 18 years old. Courses include teaching, activities and excursions and residential accommodation. Some students follow English and academy programmes with horse riding, golf and tennis.

### Preparation

The spot check inspectors were sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. One inspector contacted the school prior to the spot check to clarify how many students would be on site during the autumn but did not indicate when the inspection would take place.

### Programme and persons present

In the week of the spot check, there were two teachers working on daytime classes and the director of studies was also teaching a third class. Of the 45 students enrolled 42 were under 18 and two were 19 years old. The Chilean group were following a one-week language and activity programme which formed part of a wider five-week programme including a 'Future World Leaders' course (six hours) plus an activity and excursion programme, two weeks of School Integration (in Cognita schools), one week of Character Development (with Ardmore's Active Learning Centres), and one week of Cultural Trips.

The inspectors arrived at the school at 09.00 and left at 14.00. Meetings were held with the head office academic director, the local course director and the director of studies. The course director is the local Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). The overarching designated safeguarding lead is the operations director, who mostly

works remotely, is based nearby and available as required. In addition to the meetings the inspectors viewed a variety of teaching resources, policy documents and completed records including staff files, observation records and student records. They also held separate focus group meetings with the two group leaders, some students and the two teachers. The three classes running were observed separately by both inspectors.

## Findings

### Management

Findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

### Premises and resources

No criteria in this section were examined during this inspection.

### Teaching and learning

Findings are reported in the following section and in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

### Welfare and student services

Findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

### Safeguarding under 18s

Findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching: classroom observation	Met
T23 Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge and awareness of the use of English and the linguistic systems underlying it, and provide appropriate models of both spoken and written English.	Met
T24 The content of the lessons shows that the course objectives, the learning needs and cultural backgrounds of the students have been taken into account.	Met
T25 Lessons lead to relevant learning outcomes, made known to students and achieved through a coherent sequence of activities.	Not met
T26 Teaching techniques are appropriate to the focus of the lesson and to the needs of the group and individual learners.	Met
T27 Teachers promote learning by the effective management of the classroom environment and resources.	Met
T28 Students receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance during the lesson.	Not met
T29 Lessons include activities to evaluate whether learning is taking place.	Met
T30 Teachers demonstrate the ability to engage students and create a positive learning atmosphere.	Met

## Comments

T23 Teachers produced clear accurate models of grammar and vocabulary.

T24 As this was an unannounced spot check full lesson plans were not available. Lessons observed reflected the course objectives; topics and materials were appropriate to students' interests.

T25 Lessons were set around a single topic and unit objectives are stated in the workbooks. Some segments included teaching aims and were shared with students but this was not consistent across all segments and teaching aims were not expressed as student learning outcomes.

T26 There was evidence of a range of teaching techniques including elicitation, nomination and some concept checking.

T27 Resources were generally effectively managed. Seating arrangements did not always lend themselves to pair and group work. Instructions were clear and mostly checked.

T28 Correction techniques were limited to reformulation by the teacher with little or no evidence of strategies such as student self-correction, student-to-student correction or delayed feedback and correction.

T29 Occasional tasks to check learning were included and there were references to previous lessons.

T30 Students were generally involved and engaged, and teachers made good use of nomination. Attempts to control the use of off-topic L1 were mostly effective.

## Classroom observation summary

---

The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme and the teaching ranged from satisfactory to unsatisfactory against the criteria with the majority being satisfactory. Teachers provided accurate language models. Lessons were generally coherent and relevant to students needs with evidence of basic teaching techniques. Classroom management was not always consistent and there was insufficient attention to correction and feedback on students' language. Overall, there was a positive classroom atmosphere.

---

### Action taken on points to be addressed

#### *Points which must be addressed before continued accreditation can be recommended*

##### Teaching and learning

T8 Insufficient attention is paid to the academic management implications of continuous enrolment and clear guidance for teachers is lacking.

**Addressed. Ardmore course booklets have been revised; standalone units can be selected and organised to suit the group. The Teachers' Guide includes information, and the Director of Studies (DoS) meets with teachers to discuss and plan how programmes of study should be organised.**

T10 Not all teachers working in the centre over the summer had been formally observed and none in the first four weeks of summer courses.

**Addressed. All teachers working at the time of the inspection had been observed and records sampled from the busier summer period indicated that observations had been completed by a TEFLQ manager.**

T11 Some of the online materials referred to in the course design notes could not be used in lessons as no modern educational technology was available in classrooms.

**Addressed. Online dependent materials have been removed from the course resources. Classes in the main building have the educational technology to use web-based or digital supplementary course material as desired.**

T13 Weekly written course outlines of lessons are not made available to students.

**Partially addressed. The revised Ardmore workbooks now make reference to learning objectives and topics for each unit so there is an overview of each day or two days but not necessarily for the whole week.**

T15 Activities to support independent student learning were not being used systematically in the centre.

**Addressed. Learning strategies are now included in the Ardmore workbooks.**

T17 There was a wide range of ages in many classes and in some this range was inappropriate, for example, one class had 12 and 17 year-olds in the same class.

**Addressed. Age ranges in the classes in operation at the time of the inspection were homogenous.**

T21 There is no evidence to support comments on overall progress in end-of-course reports. The progress referred to in academic reports cannot be empirically validated and any apparent improvements in performance might be misleading.

**Addressed. End-of-course progress test results are recorded on the report which also includes teacher comments on participation, overall progress and points to work on.**

#### *Points which must be addressed within three months*

##### Welfare and student services

W1 No fire drills had been conducted in the main or other buildings.

**Addressed. Records showed that fire drills had been conducted with all groups attending courses in the summer and when students were on site in the autumn.**

W11 Up-to-date records were not available from the local organiser. There were no records of visits and no evidence of Gas Safe certificates or fire risk assessments.

**N/a. Homestay accommodation is no longer in use, so checks have not been completed and are not relevant. The school is aware that suitable checks will need to be undertaken in the event of homestay accommodation being offered in the future.**

##### Safeguarding under 18s

S2 The CD, who is the designated safeguarding lead, had only completed basic level training. The local homestay organiser had not undertaken up-to-date safeguarding training and there was no evidence that homestay hosts were made aware of the safeguarding policy.

**Addressed. The local on-site course director is qualified to Advanced level and has a course for Specialist level training booked for late November 2023. The operations director is the overarching designated safeguarding lead, and he holds a Specialist level certificate.**

S4 Safer recruitment procedures were not in place for homestay hosts, including conducting current criminal record checks and obtaining references.

---

---

**N/a. Homestay accommodation is no longer in use, so checks have not been completed on homestay hosts. The school is aware that suitable checks will need to be undertaken in the event of homestay accommodation being offered in the future.**

S6 There was insufficient monitoring of the rules about accessing the residences during the daytime and in one case the homestay host was not following the correct procedures regarding free time at the weekend.

**Addressed. Group leaders are responsible for supervising their own students in the residential accommodation during breaktimes and Ardmore staff supervise the classrooms and outdoor spaces.**

***Other points to be addressed***

M5 There was no written evidence presented of student and group leader comments having been acted on in the centre.

**Addressed. Action taken is now recorded and the records sampled reflected this new practice.**

M10 Copies of some teachers' degree certificates were missing at the time of the inspection.

**Addressed. Degree certificates were on file for all academic staff working at the time of the inspection.**

---

## **Conclusion**

The school has systematically addressed the weaknesses identified in its teaching and learning provision and has made satisfactory progress in rectifying other points raised in the previous reports. Classroom teaching has improved and is of a satisfactory standard with some areas, such as learning outcomes and feedback, that require continued attention.

---