

Organisation name	BISS (Brighton International Summer School)
Inspection date	7 July 2016

BACKGROUND

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2008
Last full inspection	March 2016
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit (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	N/a

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: end period under review

Premises profile

Address of main site	Dorothy Stringer School, Loder Road, Brighton BN1 2PZ
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	Dorothy Stringer School

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	123	123
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	13	13
Typical age range	14–15	14–15
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Hong Kongese, Spanish	Hong Kongese, Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	8	8
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	13	13

INTRODUCTION

Background

BISS (Brighton International Summer School) conducts all its courses from the premises of the Dorothy Stringer High School, a large comprehensive school in Brighton.

During the academic year, BISS runs one or two-week integration courses for groups of school-age students with group leaders. Students study a mixture of English lessons focused on speaking and listening, and integration lessons with UK students in subjects such as modern languages, cooking, art and physical education. In summer BISS runs an open enrolment summer school with English lessons in the mornings and activities and trips in the afternoons and at weekends. Most summer school students also come in groups with leaders and stay for a week or two, but a small number of individual students may attend for up to four weeks. At all times, the age range is 13 to 17, students have lessons in the classrooms of the Dorothy Stringer High School (DSHS), and have social programmes and homestay accommodation arranged by BISS.

The principal and owner of BISS is a former state school teacher and has run junior courses for overseas students since the 1980s. The school was first accredited in 2008. Following its inspection in early March 2016, its accreditation was placed under review because the section standard for *Care of under 18s* was not met, the period of review to be ended by a spot check.

This spot check was timed to take place when the open enrolment summer school was running. The main school was still working at the time so BISS and the local students were sharing the same facilities, including classrooms. That arrangement involved BISS teachers and students regularly changing classrooms. After the main school breaks up later in July, BISS will have exclusive use of the site and facilities including classrooms.

Preparation

The spot check was conducted by two inspectors, one of whom had inspected the school at its full inspection in March 2016. They were sent relevant documents in advance. They contacted the school in advance to check courses were running in the period of their intended visit but did not specify the day.

Programme and persons present

The inspectors arrived at the Dorothy Stringer High School (DSHS) shortly before 08.30. The director of studies (DoS) took them to the teachers' office where they met the teachers. Later they interviewed the principal, the two administrators, welfare accommodation and safeguarding managers, the DoS and the leisure programme organiser. They had meetings with the teachers, two groups of students, two group leaders, and also met the DSHS head teacher. They looked at documents including teachers' certificates and student feedback, records and resources, and one inspector was given a brief tour of the DSHS premises. The other observed segments of six teachers' lessons. After a brief roundup with the principal and senior staff, the inspectors left the school at about 16.45.

FINDINGS

The spot check coincided with the peak week of the summer programme. There were 123 students aged 13 to 17 from Hong Kong, Italy and Spain, divided into eight classes. Most were staying for one or two weeks, a small number for three. Nine students were individual bookings; the remainder were in groups with leaders.

Teaching takes place in the mornings with three hour-long lessons from 08.50 to 12.10. Most classes and their teacher change classrooms after every lesson with the result that the two pre-break lessons are several minutes shorter than the nominal one-hour lesson length shown in publicity. Teachers stay with the same class throughout the morning. At 10.50 all the BISS students assemble with the principal for a 20-minute break in the sports hall. At 12.10 students, their group leaders and the activity leaders leave for afternoon activities, where they have lunch. All but one of the students were in homestay accommodation with other students. Hosts provide a packed lunch. On the day of the spot check, one group from Hong Kong were away on a trip to Cambridge.

There were eight appropriately qualified teachers. Six teachers' lessons were observed. Overall the standard of teaching was satisfactory and met the requirements of the Scheme. The student feedback forms sampled indicated a high level of satisfaction. However, appropriate action taken in response to feedback was not recorded.

Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C5 Safety and supervision during scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision outside scheduled lessons and activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

BISS only accepts students year round or in the summer in the age range of 13 to 17.

C1 The school has systematically approached the need to develop child protection processes and procedures, which it was largely unaware of at the last inspection. It has developed a comprehensive child protection policy. The designated safeguarding persons have completed advanced safeguarding training.

C2 The school's safeguarding policy is drawn to the attention of, and made available to, all adults in contact with its students. All staff are required to do basic safeguarding training. At least one member of the homestay is required to complete online safeguarding children-awareness training and provide evidence that he or she has completed the course. The evidence is recorded on the homestay database. Although the process is ongoing, the records show that most homestay hosts have already completed the course.

C3 The level of care and support given to students aged under 18 is satisfactorily described in publicity.

C4 Suitability checks are carried out in line with the school's safeguarding policy and safer recruitment practice. Lead hosts are required to provide evidence of a DBS check, which the school now pays for. There is a section of the homestay database which records when this evidence is provided.

C5 There is a good level of supervision provided for all on-site and off-site activities.

C6 Rules for what students may do outside scheduled activities are provided in the *BISS School Rules – Code of Conduct* in the student handbook in their welcome pack. They are now told to be home for their evening meal on time and that, without exception, the curfew time is 22.00. However, the rules only 'advise' students under 16 to be home by 21.00. Under 16s are also told they must not leave the Brighton area in their free time, implying that if they are over 16 they can. Some of the language in the student handbook is unnecessarily difficult. The student code of conduct is not reproduced in the *Code of Conduct Guidelines for BISS Staff and Homestay Providers*.

C8 The school does not collect the 24-hour contact details of all parents or legal guardians from all students when they arrive.

Care of under 18s summary

The provision meets the section standard. There is now appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in the leisure activities and accommodation provided, although the rules still need to be clarified and systems for gathering students' next of kin details need to be improved.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Points to be addressed from the previous inspection report with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

Care of under 18s

C1 Safeguarding policy

The safeguarding policy is not comprehensive and does not include all the procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all the students under the age of 18. For example, there is no mention of training, handling allegations or making referrals.

Addressed. (See Care of under 18s section above.)

C2 Guidance and training

The named safeguarding officer at the outset of the inspection had received no formal safeguarding training nor had the other staff or homestay providers received, for example, online generic child protection awareness training.

Addressed. (See Care of under 18s section above.)

C3 Publicity

Not met. There is no transparent statement regarding the level of pastoral care outside scheduled activities.

Addressed. (See Care of under 18s section above.)

C4 Recruitment procedures

Not all homestay hosts have had suitability checks.

Addressed. (See Care of under 18s section above.)

C6 Safety and supervision outside scheduled lessons and activities

It was not clear if it was optional or a requirement for students to be home for the evening meal.

Addressed, although other requirements to meet the criterion need attention. (See Care of under 18s section above.)

Management

M3 Job descriptions are not dated or up to date in some cases. The re-apportioning of the social manager's responsibilities has not yet led to revised job descriptions, which also do not refer to the safeguarding duties of staff.
Addressed.

M4 Communication channels

There are very few minuted, formal meetings each year, no review meetings, for example, after the summer, and no minuted, formal meetings involving teachers throughout the year or in the summer.

Addressed. Although the daily morning teachers' meetings are not minuted, there is now evidence of minuted management and occasional staff meetings.

M7 Induction procedures

Staff induction checklists have not been updated to refer to the school's safeguarding policies.

Addressed.

M9 Professional development

The school does not have a written CPD policy and very little professional development of teachers had taken place over the past year.

Addressed.

M13 Contact details

Local contact details and emergency contact details are not readily accessible to BISS staff outside office hours.

Not yet addressed. Students' contact details are not systematically recorded. Too much reliance is placed on group leaders or agents being able to provide the details at any time in the event of an emergency.

M17 Continuing improvement

There are no formal meetings or reports written to review systematically the school's systems and processes.

Addressed. Minuted management and occasional teachers' meeting have recently been introduced. These provide evidence of reviews of the school's systems and processes and, for the current provision, are adequate.

M21 Accessible accurate language

The language in certain sections of the website is too complex, for example, some of the descriptive passages about Brighton.

Partially addressed. The accessibility of language varies from 'we-you' friendly to language which many students and parents will find difficult to understand.

M24 Course information

The maximum enrolment age is given as 17 and 18 years in different places in the publicity.

Addressed.

M28 Staff qualifications

Teachers are referred to as 'experienced', when the school has a policy of employing less experienced teachers in the summer.

Addressed.

M29 Accreditation

An incorrect version of the Accreditation Scheme marque is used on stationery and in the brochure.

Addressed.

Resources and environment

R5 No noticeboards are used by BISS for the display of information outside the summer.

Addressed. There is now a small noticeboard, primarily for group leaders' use, outside the BISS office.

Teaching and learning

T10 Formalised support for teachers

Insufficient guidance is given to teachers regarding planning courses either in planning sessions or in the very brief teachers' handbook. There are very few in-service training sessions run throughout the year or in the summer.

Addressed. There are now occasional paid CPD sessions, and teachers also now have access to a shared-work drive on the teachers' section of the BISS website which provides a range of relevant materials.

T11 Observation and monitoring

Not all of the teachers had been formally observed in the previous summer.

Addressed. Although early in the summer programme, all the teachers had been observed.

T12 Principled course structure

Teachers are not given sufficient guidance as to how to devise weekly programmes that take into account the needs of particular students.

Partially addressed. Teachers are now asked to submit a scheme of work at the start of each week and those seen were generally satisfactory, but two teachers had provided schemes which were incomplete.

T14 Course outlines and outcomes

Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes are not made known to students. The weekly plans of teachers are not shared with students.

Not yet addressed. The course description in the student handbook is rather vague, saying the course allows 'space for planned and unplanned discourse'. Some teachers shared their lesson aims with their students at the start of lessons and reviewed what had been achieved at the end, but others did not.

Welfare and student services

W6 Transport and transfers

There is no information made available to students making their own transfer arrangements.

Addressed.

W17 Rules terms and conditions

At the time of the inspection there were no written terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services including booking and cancellation arrangements.

Addressed.

W28 Health & Safety

Risk assessments do not include information on how to respond to situations where students are at risk.

Partially addressed. Risk assessments now include information on how to respond to situations where students are at risk. Activity leaders carry a pack which includes a first aid kit, an accident book, a register with relevant telephone numbers and the risk assessment for that activity. However, activity leaders do not at present record, for example by signing it off, that they have read the risk assessment.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

M18 Appropriate action taken in response to student feedback is not recorded.

M24 Most classes and their teachers change classrooms after every lesson with the result that the two pre-break lessons are several minutes shorter than the nominal one-hour lesson length shown in publicity. The taught hours per week shown in publicity are therefore not entirely accurate.

T12 Two of the teachers had not submitted the completed weekly scheme of work required by the school.

C6 Rules for what students may do outside scheduled activities are sometimes unclear. Some of the language in the student handbook is unnecessarily difficult. The student code of conduct is not reproduced in the *Code of Conduct Guidelines for BISS Staff and Homestay Providers*.

C8 The school does not collect the 24-hour contact details of all parents or legal guardians.

CONCLUSIONS

The school has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the March 2016 report. All the section standards are now met.

RECOMMENDATION

The period of review may now be ended and accreditation continued until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2020.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited BISS (Brighton International Summer School) in March 2016. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation for details).

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

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