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|------------------------------|--|
| Organisation name            | BLS English, Bury St Edmunds                   |
| Inspection date              | 7 May 2019                                     |
| Current accreditation status | Accredited                                     |
| Reason for spot check        | Signalled: follow up on Points to be addressed |

### Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2022; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

### Changes to the summary statement

The need for improvement in the areas of course design, leisure opportunities, and safeguarding under 18s can now be removed.

### New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited BLS English, Bury St Edmunds in April 2018 and May 2019. 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 school offers courses in general English for adults(18+) and young people (16+) and for closed groups of under 18s.

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

### New summary inspection findings

#### Premises and resources

Overall the provision meets the section standard. The school provides a pleasant learning and relaxation environment for students. The school buildings are attractive and well maintained. The learning resources are adequate for the current needs of students and their teachers.

#### Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. Teachers are appropriately qualified, with a range of qualifications, experience and interests between them. Teachers are offered satisfactory support by the DoS to meet the needs of their students. Course design is satisfactory. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

#### Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. Arrangements to ensure students' safety and security on school premises are in place, including major incident procedure covering events on or off-site. There is suitable provision for the pastoral care of students. Accommodation in homestays and the residence is suitable and is appropriately managed, particularly in relation to pre-arrival information, and the quality of meals provided. The delivery of the leisure programme for juniors is good. Excursions are well organised and include specific risk assessments.

#### Safeguarding under 18s

Overall, the provision meets the section standard. Staff are appropriately trained, and basic awareness training has been offered to hosts. Suitability checks are carried out, and other aspects of safer recruitment are met. Group leaders are clearly informed of their safeguarding responsibilities, and are well supported. The safeguarding policy is good and the parental consent forms are very thorough.

### Organisation profile

| Inspection history   | Dates/details |
|----------------------|---------------|
| First inspection     | October 2016  |
| Last full inspection | April 2018    |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 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           | N/a |

| <b>Student and staff profile</b>                 | At inspection    | In peak week: July week 1 |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)         | 162              | 230                       |
| Minimum age (including closed group or vacation) | 10               | 10                        |
| Typical age range                                | 14–15            | 10+                       |
| Typical length of stay                           | 1 week           | 2 weeks                   |
| Predominant nationalities                        | Spanish, Italian | Spanish, Italian          |
| Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses | 9                | 16                        |
| Total number of managers including academic      | 3                | 3                         |
| Total number of administrative/ancillary staff   | 6                | 10                        |

| <b>Premises profile</b>     |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Address of main site        | 147 Kings Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3DJ   |
| Additional sites in use     | 5 Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1UZ<br>8 Springfield Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3AN |
| Additional sites not in use | N/a  |
| Sites inspected             | 147 Kings Road and 5 Angel Hill  |

## Introduction

### Background

The aim of the inspection was to check the areas of weakness arising from the last report and to monitor progress on the need for improvement in *Course design* for the young learner courses, *Leisure opportunities* and *Safeguarding under 18s*.

### Preparation

The inspector was sent copies of recent reports and related correspondence. She contacted the school by phone to find out when young learner courses would be running and check which days students might be off-site on excursion. No warning was given of the spot check date.

### Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 09.30 and explained the reason for the visit and provided a list of documentation to be seen. She visited two sites: the head office building and one of the sites where young learners were being taught. She held focus group meetings with group leaders, a class of young learner students and teachers. She held meetings with the principal and the director of studies. Relevant documentation was scrutinised. The inspector departed at 13.30.

## Findings

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

| <b>Course design and implementation</b>  | Met |
|--|-----|
| T11 Course design is based on stated principles. There is a coherent and appropriate course structure described in writing for teachers' guidance. | Met |
| T12 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.          | Met |
| T13 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students.                  | Met |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| T14 Any activities additional to English classes, and which form part of the language curriculum, encourage the acquisition of language and the development of relevant language skills. | N/a      |
| T15 Courses include study and learning strategies that support independent learning and enable students to benefit from their programmes and continue their learning after the course.   | Met      |
| T16 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.                          | Strength |

### Comments

T16 Students are frequently taken out of the classroom into the community to give them an opportunity to use their English for genuine communication in the outside world. Structured, fun materials are provided to encourage students to engage with their homestay hosts and to make the most of excursions.

### Action taken on points to be addressed

#### Premises and resources

P7 The provision of resources for younger learners is very modest and much of it rather dated. Materials used were in some cases far too advanced for the levels in the younger learner classes.

**Partially addressed. The young learner resources have increased but are still limited in range and level. A second coursebook series has been allocated, along with a selection of published supplementary coursebooks. Teachers continue to use a significant amount of their own home-produced material. Students expressed satisfaction with the lesson content and materials supplied.**

P12 There are no formal procedures for the review and development of resources.

**Addressed. Staff reported that regular reviewing opportunities have been introduced since the last inspection and this has resulted in the purchase of additional materials.**

#### Teaching and learning

T11 There is no course design available to teachers for the closed groups of younger learners.

**Addressed. The course structure for young learner courses has improved and is now just satisfactory. One and two-week programmes are organised around daily topics and ideas for lesson content are provided in the teacher handbook.**

#### Welfare and student services

W2 There is no formalised major incident procedure covering events on and off-site.

**Addressed. Arrangements are in place to deal with routine emergencies. Since the 2018 inspection a major incident policy with detailed procedures has also been introduced.**

W25 Group leaders complained that information about excursions was often provided late, and that accompanying staff had not been appropriately briefed. However, the last two were almost identical. No evidence was seen of risk assessments specific to a particular venue, destination, or activity.

**Addressed. Group leaders and BLS staff accompany young learners on off-site activities where this is included in the closed group programme. Group leaders reported that communications and briefing from the school was helpful and appropriate.**

W26 Three types of risk assessment were presented to inspectors: travelling; activities, and town and city.

**Addressed. More detailed risk assessments, specific to the activity, have been introduced since the 2018 inspection.**

#### Safeguarding under 18s

At the time of the inspection, there were 150 students under the age of 18, out of a total student body of 162. At peak, the number of under 18s rises to around 185 out of a total of 230.

S1 The safeguarding policy makes no reference to action to be taken in the event of delayed suitability checks, or to the contact details of the Local Area Designated Officer or the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

**Addressed. The requisite information is now included.**

S3 The parental consent form in use does not include examples of situations parents/guardians are consenting to, or specifics about unsupervised time. It does not ask for parental consent for emergency medical treatment.

**Addressed. More detailed parental consent forms, including medical consent, have recently been introduced. The documents inform parent and carers succinctly with an appropriate level of detail.**

S5 No risk assessment had been carried out of the arrangements at the Angel Hill site, where young children are allowed to go off site during breaks.

**Addressed.**

### Conclusions

All points that were checked have either been addressed or partially addressed. The school has clearly taken the previous report seriously and has taken appropriate actions.