Organisation name | Caledonian Language School
---|---
Inspection date | 25 November 2014

**BACKGROUND**

**Organisation profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection history</th>
<th>Dates/details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First inspection</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last full inspection</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent spot check (if applicable): N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable): N/a
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable): N/a
Other related schools / centres /affiliates: N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre: N/a

**Current accreditation status and reason for spot check**

Current accredited status: Accredited
Reason for spot check: Routine: newly accredited institution

**Premises profile**

Address of main site: Caledonian Language School, Palmerston House, 7 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh EH3 8HX
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection: None
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection: None
Sites inspected: Caledonian Language School, Palmerston House, 7 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh EH3 8HX

**Student and staff profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At inspection</th>
<th>In peak week (please give month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)</td>
<td>89 (37 FT, 37 PT eve, 15 closed group for 2 weeks)</td>
<td>92 (57 FT, 35 PT eve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)</td>
<td>16 (19 in FT, 16 in closed group)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical age range</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical length of stay</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant nationalities</td>
<td>Spanish; Italian</td>
<td>Spanish; Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of administrative/ancillary staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Background
The school is located in the city centre, 200 metres from Haymarket Station and approximately ten minutes’ walk from Princes Street. It is within easy access of the Edinburgh tram service which opened in May 2014. The school is housed in a historical New Town building dating from the early 19th century on the last street to be built in the New Town area. The school has spacious rooms with high ceilings. There are five classrooms, a self-access room, a student common room, a teachers’ room, and office space. The premises are held on a five-year lease with an option to renew. This will depend on student numbers, and the school may seek to move to a rolling lease, renewable annually. The current lease runs out in 2016.

There were three full-time student groups running on the day of the spot check inspection, alongside one closed group of fifteen students from Italy. The closed group were aged 16-17, and included three students aged 18.

The Caledonian Language School (CLS) was founded in 2011 by the principal and a group of teachers from a local further education college, which had significantly reduced its provision of English language courses. The principal had been the curriculum manager at Telford College for eight years. Their aim was to provide similar courses with similar fees and a similar commitment to quality learning. The first students arrived at CLS in September 2011 and student numbers have now risen to 88 (full-time and part-time). The original group of teachers are still employed at the school, and reported high levels of satisfaction with the management of the school and its provision.

The school targets students aged 18 and over but will accept 16 and 17 year-olds if they have a parent or guardian living in Edinburgh. The school provides homestay accommodation and the school has a total of around forty hosts currently registered with the school accommodation officer, although most students find their own accommodation. The school offers general English courses with additional options for examination preparation (FCE and IELTS) and communication skills. The academic year is divided into five eight-week terms (with fixed start dates) and a summer period when students can start any week. Courses are either full-time (16 or 20 class hours per week) or part-time (3 or 4 class hours per week). In addition, full-time students are expected to complete six self-study hours per week (two hours for part-time students).

Since June 2012 the school has had approval from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) as an assessment centre for SQA certificates in ESOL.

At the time of this spot check around 45 percent of the students were Spanish, and around 40 percent were Italian. Other nationalities included French, Brazilian, Turkish and Iranian students. Approximately 50 percent of the current students have jobs in Edinburgh, and as a result often convert to part-time courses in their second term – the school runs a programme of evening part-time courses to cater for this working adult market. The school sought accreditation originally with a view to being able to attract students from a wider range of markets and, to date, this has worked to a limited extent, resulting in a lower proportion of Spanish students than at the time of the 2013 full inspection. On the 2014 summer courses, around 50 percent of the students were Italian and 30 percent were Spanish. Summer courses have more flexibility with some students staying for two to three weeks.

The year-round social programme offers one event per fortnight, whereas on the summer courses, there are two social events per week, with an additional member of staff employed to run this expanded social provision.

By the end of November 2014, the school will be a full member of English UK Scotland and also participates in other marketing initiatives, with a view to increasing its market reach.

Preparation
The Accreditation Unit sent relevant documentation to the inspector. The inspector made telephone and email contact with the school in the week prior to the spot check visit, primarily to ascertain timetable, location arrangements and to check on the availability of key staff. Prior to the spot check visit, the school supplied the inspector with figures pertaining to the staff and student profile of the school. The inspector was also sent a full-time timetable for the week of the visit.

Programme and persons present
The spot check inspection took place on one morning in November 2014. The inspector arrived at the school at 9:40 and left the school at 13:15. The inspector talked to the principal (who is also the director of studies), the marketing manager and the accommodation officer. The inspector held separate focus groups with a group of six students and three teachers.
The inspector was also given access to a wide range of documentation including staff files, student feedback and observation records.

FINDINGS

The school has taken a range of practical steps to address many of the points to be addressed (see below) from the full inspection of 2013. The premises, management structure and course provision have changed little since 2013, although it is clear that accreditation has had some limited, but positive impact on overall student numbers and the nationality spread within the school. Students reported a strong desire for a wider spread of nationalities and the school is keen to enhance its use of the internet to widen its marketing reach. A considerable number of current students come to the school through word-of-mouth promotion by former, or existing, students, and it is clear that the school website is the primary source of information and marketing. The website has had a significant overhaul since the 2013 inspection, with a considerable reduction in the amount of dense text. The updated website was developed by a former student of the school. As a result, the current website now has a ‘cleaner’ look, and is easily navigable, with a range of hyperlinks to key course and enrolment information. The school brochure still contains a lot of text and is used to provide detailed background information on the school, the city of Edinburgh and both school and local facilities and amenities. The brochure is accessible from the website as a PDF and can be a rich source of additional information for agents, prospective students and their families.

Given the presence in the school of twelve 16-17 year old students, at the time of the spot check, attention was paid to the care of under-18s criteria – see further below.

Care of under 18s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Not met</th>
<th>Met</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>See comments</th>
<th>N/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Safeguarding policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Guidance and training</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C3 Publicity</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C4 Recruitment materials</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C5 Suitability checks</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6 Safety and supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C7 Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C8 Contact arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments

C1 The school has a detailed safeguarding policy which specifies procedures and responsibilities for all staff dealing both with under-18s and with vulnerable adults. The policy provides a working definition of what is meant by safeguarding and how staff are expected to handle a range of potential scenarios. There is detailed information on how to handle allegations and make referrals. The named member of staff for implementing the policy is the school principal/director of studies. Safe recruitment procedures are outlined in detail.

C2 The school is in the process of rolling out the online Safeguarding 1 course for all staff and homestay hosts. Safeguarding issues are a regular standing item at weekly staff meetings.

C3 Closed group formal proposals for agents contain detailed information about the school safeguarding policy and procedures whenever such groups have under-18 students.

C4 See comment on M6 PTBA below.

C5 See comment on M6 PTBA below.

C7 The accommodation officer works closely with hosts to ensure they are all aware of curfew rules and how to respond to any emergencies. Under-18s are only placed in homestays who have all completed Disclosure Scotland checks.

C8 All student records for under-18s were checked and all student records included up-to-date contact information for parents and all agents and parents are supplied with school 24-hour contact details.
There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of any students under the age of eighteen at the school. The school takes a range of practical steps to ensure that the detailed safeguarding policy is procedurally implemented and communicated to all staff, hosts, students and parents.

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.

Within three months:
Management
M1 Since the school opened in 2011 there has only been one fire drill.
Since the 2013 inspection, there have been fire drills in September 2013; November 2013; and May 2014. Another fire drill is due to be undertaken before the end of 2014 with current students.
The terms of the CLA licence are not displayed near the photocopier.
The CLA licence terms are now displayed near the photocopier.
M6 The school does on occasions accept 16/17 year olds, but prospective employees are not informed in writing of the Scheme requirements for recruitment procedures in this area.
Under current criteria, this relates now more to C4 and C5. The school has not yet ever needed to advertise for any posts, as potential employees typically contact the school, sending CVs for instance.
Communication from the school to such potential employees informs them that all reasonable steps will be taken to verify qualifications and experience (M6). Applicants are informed that references will be taken up prior to any appointment, and that referees will be asked about the applicant’s suitability to work with under-18s. Applicants are also advised that appropriate suitability checks will be undertaken. All employees sign declarations, and most employees have undergone Disclosure Scotland checks. All current staff files were checked during the spot check, and all files contained clear evidence that such suitability checks had been appropriately undertaken and the evidence had been recorded.

Other points to be addressed:
Management
M11 There is no effective database, either in print or electronic formats, and therefore some administrative procedures are inefficient and records, such as class registers, are not always complete.
At the time of the spot check, an Access-based database was under development. Student records are kept in print form, within labelled files. The inspector checked an extensive range of student records and all were complete, with all relevant information fully recorded.
M14 There were some gaps in the sampled next-of-kin contact details, and the re-enrolment form for returning or extending students does not include a space for next-of-kin. There is no mechanism in place for updating and checking a student’s local contact details. The school does not issue any form of ID, which is a concern given the fact that they do sometimes have 16/17 year olds.
There were no gaps in any of the extensively sampled next-of-kin contact details, and the re-enrolment form now does include a space for next-of-kin details. The school still does not issue any form of ID. Closed groups of under-18s are issued with emergency contact numbers for the school and key staff, such as the accommodation officer.
M15 The stages for dealing with poor attendance are not stated and accurate records and the action taken are not noted.
The 80% minimum attendance policy is presented to all students during their induction and is printed in the Welcome Handbook for students. Class reports are a standing item at the weekly teacher meetings, and these include updates on attendance from all class teachers. Minutes are taken and follow-up actions are recorded and reported.
M16 The conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course have not yet been produced.
An outline of the conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course has been added to the Student Rights and Responsibilities document, and this is displayed on noticeboards in all the classrooms.
M19 There are no effective formal measures for the early capture of feedback from students, including on accommodation services (see W14).
An early feedback form has been developed and is administered at the end of week one, or the beginning of week two. An accommodation feedback form is now given to all students at the end of week one. Key issues identified through this early feedback process are now a standing item at weekly minuted teacher meetings.
M21 The policy statement on the procedure for dealing with complaints is not available to the students either on
The school complaints procedures are now displayed in all classrooms and are printed in the Welcome Handbook for students.

M22 Some of the blocks of text appear rather dense and would benefit from some grading of language and a better visual layout.

The school website has been completely revised and there are now no dense blocks of text. The appearance is clean, with hyperlinks to all pertinent information. Short text blocks are in accessible language.

M25 The times of classes, including breaks, are not given. The occasional non-teaching dates that fall within the terms are not given.

Term dates are given on the school website. At the time of the spot check, no sample timetables were available online.

M26 The approximate cost of the leisure programme not included in the course fees is not given. The approximate cost of course-related examination fees not included in the course fees is not given.

Information on cost and fees is now available on the new website.

M27 No information is provided on the level of care and support given to students.

The new website provides information on the level of care and support given to students, but there is a need for more information on the level of care and support given to under-18s at the school.

Teacher qualifications are now listed on the school website. Teachers are described as ‘experienced’ and ‘qualified’.

Resources and environment

R5 Signage is adequate. Display of information is mostly clear but in some places has become untidy.

All school noticeboards, both in classrooms and around the school premises, are now kept up-to-date and tidied on a regular basis.

R8 There are not many teaching methodology materials and the school does not subscribe to any ELT journals or professional publications.

Teaching methodology materials have been purchased to expand the stock available for teachers, and the school subscribes to a limited number of professional publications.

R11 The student handbook does not give much information on what is available in the self-access room and how it can be used.

The self-access room and available materials are included as part of the induction tour for students. There is student-friendly advice on how to use self-access materials in the self-access room.

Teaching and learning

T12 Two teachers in the focus group said they had never been observed. Those observations that have taken place have not always involved the full use of the in-house observation form which would ensure the observations had a directed purpose and identified areas for improvement and action. Newly-qualified teachers do not receive appropriate levels of observation.

At the time of the spot check, all teachers had been observed by the director of studies, both in December 2013 and in June 2014. Detailed feedback and records of these observations were seen by the inspector, as were records of peer observations. Teachers are aware that the DoS will observe them on a regular twice yearly basis. New teachers had all been observed within the first two weeks of their start date.

T16 The syllabus and course outline are not linked to actual materials either in the coursebook or in the supplementary and in-house resources that are available to teachers.

Course outlines now refer teachers to specific, appropriate learning materials in-house. The syllabus was developed by the teachers as a group and reflects a common understanding of what is needed at each level. Both the syllabus and course outlines are updated on an ongoing basis, to reflect changing student needs.

T17 Advice on how to use effective study and learning strategies is mentioned in the student handbook but is not very specific or useful.

This remains the case and the need to develop specific advice and resources for teachers and students is ongoing.

T25 There was very little planning for anticipated problems or interaction patterns, the inclusion of which would have reminded teachers to pay attention to these aspects of lesson delivery.

T27 In the weaker segments instructions were poor and rarely checked, appropriate tasks for skills work were not set, and grammar was explained rather than demonstrated with no checking of meaning. In several lessons students were asked to read aloud from the coursebook with no pedagogic purpose or value.

T28 There were instances of poor board usage and a general absence of aids to learning such as stress-marking, intonation lines and substitution tables. There was also evidence of the board being overused, often as a substitute for direct teaching and modelling of language.
In weaker segments teachers were reluctant to model and drill target language in the controlled practice stage. There was little evidence in the weaker segments of a willingness or ability to work on the specific language needs of the largely mono-lingual student group.

In some cases teachers merely echoed the corrected form and did not attempt to get the student to produce the correct form for themselves. No lesson segments were observed as part of this spot check. There is evidence that teacher meetings have included development sessions on most of the PTBAs above.

Welfare and student services
W1 There is a safeguarding issue in that the school accepts 16/17 year-olds but has no CCTV, visitor’s book or other means of recording who is entering the building, which is open from the street (although the front office is near the front door and is always staffed).
This remains the case.
W4 The school has an equality and diversity policy which needs to be made more accessible to students by, for example, inclusion in the Welcome Handbook.
The equality and diversity policy is now displayed on the student noticeboard.
W5 The 24-hour emergency number is not issued to students in writing and student cards have not yet been issued. The 24-hour emergency number is now given out to all students in the welcome pack and is displayed on school noticeboards.
W7 All items in this criterion are covered apart from registration with the police, which is not applicable to the type of students currently recruited, and information about local places of worship and advice on procedures in case of arrest.
These items are now included in the student welcome pack.
W8 Students in homestay accommodation are informed about their rights regarding dental treatment but this information is not made available to students in other types of accommodation.
Clear information about access to dental treatment is displayed on student noticeboards.
W9 In the self-catering private home the student had not been provided with a lockable cupboard or drawer. In the self-catering flat the student had not been given a key to her room.
No accommodation was visited.
W13 The confirmation of booking form does not include information about the approximate time and cost of travel between the accommodation and the school.
The accommodation letter now gives students specific travel and bus information that is appropriate for the location of their accommodation. Students are also sent information from Lothian Buses which includes cost details.
W14 The accommodation questionnaire is administered in the second or third week of a student’s stay rather than in the first week.
The accommodation questionnaire is now administered in the first week of students’ stay.
W15 Students at the focus group were satisfied with the quality of the food in their homestay accommodation but some complained about lack of variety.
The school has developed a recipe folder for hosts, with a wide variety of recipe ideas, catering for different student needs. Students in the focus group were all happy with their homestay and the food provided.
W18 Hosts have not been informed about the need to carry out risk assessments.
All forty homestay hosts have been informed of the need to carry out risk assessments and a follow-up leaflet has been sent to all hosts.
W31 A document which advises parents or legal guardians of the need to confirm their agreement in writing to alternative arrangements in relation to this criterion has not yet been drawn up.
This document has been developed and is now sent to all student families prior to departure.
W35 The school has not yet included the information in relation to this criterion in its booking form.
All parents of under-18s are now routinely sent information regarding rules and supervision for under-18s outside class times.

CONCLUSIONS
The school has taken steps to address the vast majority of points to be addressed from the 2013 inspection. Weaknesses in publicity and student administration are no longer in evidence.

RECOMMENDATION
The next inspection falls due in 2017; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.
PUBLISHABLE STATEMENT

Changes to publishable statement
The need for improvement in the areas of student administration and publicity can now be removed.

Publishable statement

Existing publishable statement:
The British Council inspected and accredited Caledonian Language School in May 2013. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching and welfare and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation for details).

This private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+).

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the areas of student administration and publicity.

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

Revised publishable statement:
The British Council inspected and accredited Caledonian Language School in May 2013. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching and welfare 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 adults (16+).

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

Points to be addressed outstanding from the previous inspection(s) or arising from this visit

Management
M25 The times of classes, including breaks, are not given. The occasional non-teaching dates that fall within the terms are not given.
No sample timetables were available online.
M27 No information is provided on the level of care and support given to students.
There is a need for more information on the level of care and support given to under-18s at the school.

Teaching and learning
T17 Advice on how to use effective study and learning strategies is mentioned in the student handbook but is not very specific or useful.
This remains the case and the need to develop specific advice and resources for teachers and students is ongoing.

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W1 There is a safeguarding issue in that the school accepts 16/17 year-olds but has no CCTV, visitor’s book or other means of recording who is entering the building, which is open from the street (although the front office is near the front door and is always staffed).
This remains the case.