

Organisation name	Choices International, Manchester (at Roehampton)
Inspection date	1 August 2015

**BACKGROUND**
**Organisation profile**

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	July 2016
Last full inspection	July 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	Sports training courses, including football, golf, tennis and dance
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Berlitz Manchester
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Sports camps in the Manchester area and overseas

**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	Froebel College, Roehampton University, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PU
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Chelsea FC Training Ground, 64 Stoke Road, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham KT11 3PT Europa House, 55 Mosely Street, Manchester M2 3HY
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	Froebel College

**Student and staff profile**

	At inspection	In peak week JULY
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	16	36
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation) <sup>2</sup>	9	9
Typical age range	10–17	10–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	multinational	multinational
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	2	3
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	2	3

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

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Choices International was founded in 2009 and has been running residential intensive sports courses at Roehampton University, in a partnership with Berlitz Manchester, since 2012. Although Choices International and Berlitz Manchester are part of the same group of companies, Choices has its own identity and it is independently operated. In previous years Berlitz Manchester has been subcontracted to provide the English language component of the courses, including the provision of a DoS, teachers with appropriate TEFL qualifications, and resources for teachers and students. This year, Choices International carried out its own recruitment, including the centre manager and teachers, and the DoS from Berlitz Manchester has been working to support the programme on a part-time basis.

Choices International was inspected and accredited in 2016, and this was a routine spot check within the first 12 months.

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### Preparation

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The inspector telephoned the centre prior to the inspection to establish details of the timetable and any potential staff absences. The director provided a course programme in advance, and was aware that the spot check would be taking place within a specified period, but not the exact date. The necessary documentation was supplied by the Accreditation Unit.

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### Programme and persons present

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The inspector arrived at 1400 and left at 1845. Meetings were held with the director, the centre manager, the DoS, the welfare and programme coordinator, the director of activities, two teachers, and six students from one of the two classes running. A brief observation of one class was conducted, and the residence was visited. A range of documents was reviewed on site, and several more were sent after the inspection.

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## FINDINGS

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### Courses

Courses on offer are for students aged nine to 17, and include a range of sports options – predominantly football, but also tennis, golf and dance. Sports generally take place in the mornings, and an English language component is optional. Those students who do not do English classes in the afternoons do additional sport followed by a supervised activity programme. There are also residential and day-camp options. Courses attract a very wide range of students, and on average, juniors from 50 to 55 different nationalities attend during the six-week summer programme.

### Management

A high level of continuity has been maintained in staffing arrangements. The director continues to be a regular presence at Roehampton, and if elsewhere she is continually in touch with the team. The centre manager has previous experience with the operation, having been an activity leader in the past and deputy manager/welfare officer last year. The welfare and programme coordinator has similarly worked as both an activity leader and welfare coordinator at the centre, and the director of activities is in his second year with the centre. The two teachers were both new to this operation.

### Publicity

Courses are promoted on the website and through a range of printed flyers outlining different sports options. Publicity is generally very clear, but some confusion can arise from the Choices/Berlitz partnership, as the Choices publicity includes promotion of English language options, some with sports, for closed groups in locations other than Roehampton. The inspector was informed that none of these had actually run during the past year, but that if they did, the English language teaching would be contracted out to Berlitz. This is unclear in the publicity as only some descriptions mention Berlitz as the provider, while others do not, and the relationship between the two companies is not explained.

Terms and conditions make it clear that no change of course is possible once a booking is made. However, many students try to change, or persuade their parents to change, when they realise that some other students are doing additional sport rather than English. Feedback indicates that some disappointment and/or dissatisfaction can result from this and this was also mentioned by students in the focus group meeting. This particular aspect of terms and conditions, although clear, is not very easy to find and should be more clearly highlighted during the booking process.

### Premises

The operation is temporarily housed in a different building for this summer only while Roehampton university carries out refurbishments to the usual accommodation. The residence is the same as that in use at the last inspection, and Choices have had confirmation from the university that they will return to their usual accommodation next year.

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The current accommodation consists of a large staffroom/office, with three classrooms, two of which were in use on the day of the inspection. The rooms are on the first floor of a university building in a quiet part of the campus. Rooms are in an adequate state of repair, and classrooms have good natural light although corridors are slightly dark. Overall the premises provide appropriate space for both students and staff. In addition, Choices has access to additional space for afternoon leisure activities and assemblies, and access to the dining room as in previous years.

No signage is allowed by the university and this makes Choices International difficult to find on a large and – in summer – empty campus. Visitors can be directed by staff at the main college reception; however, on the day of the inspection there was nobody in attendance for some time, and then they were unaware of the change of location and directed the inspector to the wrong building. The inspector was told that emergency services had been called this summer and had been able to make their way directly to the appropriate building through instructions provided by the director.

### **Academic management**

The DoS from Berlitz had helped set up the summer centre, carried out teacher inductions, and subsequently visited in order to carry out observations and provide support. Outside the summer period he and other Berlitz staff had been working on course review and development.

Student numbers have reduced as the summer progressed and English classes have been reduced from three at peak to two in the week of the inspection. Smaller numbers obviously make it more difficult to balance students' level with their ages, and in one class a nine year-old was studying with a 17 year-old.

Both teachers are TEFLI – one does not have a Level six qualification but a rationale was on file for his employment.

### **Welfare**

The organisation takes welfare and security extremely seriously and all staff are aware of the requirement to keep students under supervision at all times. Staff live in the residence with students, who are never unaccompanied, and there are strictly observed arrangements for the drop-off and collection of day-camp students. Although the students in the focus group, who were very recent arrivals, were clear about the need and reasons for the rules they had been told about, feedback suggests that some students find the level of supervision difficult. The same rules apply across the nine to 17 age range.

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## **POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED**

*Points from the previous full inspection and/or subsequent spot checks or interim visits with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed. Only points reviewed during this spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.*

### **Points to be addressed**

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#### **Management**

M3 The designated safeguarding lead does not have this responsibility indicated in his job description.

**Addressed. The job description has been amended.**

M18 There is no record of action taken as a result of student feedback.

**Addressed. There was evidence of a recently introduced system to record action taken.**

M21 There are some typographical errors, on the website and in the printed flyers.

**Addressed. No typographical errors were found.**

M23 Descriptions of the English language component are not included in any of the publicity.

**Partially addressed. A brief description of the language component now appears on the website and on most, but not all, printed flyers.**

M24 The minimum enrolment age is given as 10, but does not include the fact that nine-year-olds may be accepted if accompanied by an older sibling.

**Addressed. Publicity now indicates the difference between day camp students, who may be accepted at nine, and residential, for whom the minimum age is 10.**

#### **Teaching and learning**

T14 Although written course outlines are displayed in the classrooms, they do not include intended learner outcomes.

**Addressed. Weekly course outlines, as well as a course overview, provide details of language areas to be covered.**

T15 There was no evidence that any study and learning strategies were included in the courses.

**Partially addressed. A significant amount of work has been done to improve course design and information, and teacher observations have focused in part on fostering independent learning. A detailed course overview has been produced, but this does not systematically incorporate or specify strategies to support**

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**independent learning.**

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### **Points to be addressed arising from this visit**

M22 Publicity does not make it clear that English language provision for some courses advertised will be contracted to another provider. The business relationship between Choices International and Berlitz Manchester is not clearly explained.

M25 The fact that courses cannot be changed after booking, although clear in terms and conditions, is not very easy to find and should be more clearly highlighted during the booking process.

R5 Choices International is difficult to find in the absence of signage.

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### **CONCLUSIONS**

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Choices International continues to operate a well managed summer operation to the benefit both staff and students. Academic management is appropriately supportive and course design has been reviewed and improved. Arrangements for supervision are extremely robust, and may not suit all students. Publicity has been reviewed and improved and is generally appropriate.

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

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The next inspection falls due in 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

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### **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

#### **Changes to summary statement**

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The need for improvement in publicity can now be removed.

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#### **Summary statement**

##### **Original summary statement**

The British Council inspected and accredited Choices International in July 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](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This private language school offers vacation courses in general English for under 18s.

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of publicity.

Strengths were noted in the areas of care of students, accommodation, leisure opportunities and care of under 18s.

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

##### **Amended summary statement**

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