

Organisation name	EC Young Learners, Brighton (Head Office)
Inspection date	2 August 2019
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in W26, S3 and S4 have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited EC Young Learners in July 2018 and August 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 for details).

This private language teaching organisation offers courses in general English for 10–17 year-olds.

Strengths were noted in the area of strategic and quality management.

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

New summary inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of both the students and the staff. The provider's stated goals and values are appropriate and inform all aspects of the operation. Communication channels are effective and there is a strong commitment to quality assurance. Publicity is clear and accurate. *Strategic and quality management* is an area of strength.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2018
Last full inspection	2018
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	2019 (this spot check)
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	EC Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Oxford, EC Summer.
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	EC centres outside the UK.

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	191	236
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	10	10
Typical age range	10–17	10–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Italian, Chinese	Saudi, Italian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	15	17
Total number of managers including academic	3	3

Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	11	13
Premises profile		
Address of main site	EC English, Dolphin House, 2–5 Manchester Street, Brighton BN2 1TF	
Additional sites in use	Brighton College, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 0AL 57–61 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ 168 Pitfield Street, London N1 6JP	
Additional sites not in use	N/a	
Sites inspected	Brighton College, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 0AL	

Introduction

Background

EC has schools in the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Malta and South Africa. There are six year-round EC schools in the UK: Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, London, Manchester and Oxford, all of which are accredited.

Junior summer courses were initially run from the individual year-round schools. In 2015 EC decided to manage centrally all UK-based summer courses in a new young learner division. The director of the new division, previously the centre director of EC Oxford, took up post in January 2016. It was agreed in 2017 that the provision could be accredited by extension from the Brighton school. A spot check took place in 2017, before EC Young Learners (ECYL) became accredited as a seasonal multicentre provider following a full inspection in July 2018. However, evidence had to be submitted at least four weeks before the start of courses in 2019 to demonstrate that weaknesses in M10, S3 and S4 had been addressed. ECYL subsequently submitted a detailed action plan.

In 2019, young learner courses for students aged 13–17 were run at Brighton, London and Cambridge, and summer camp courses for students aged 10–13 at Brighton. The director of ECYL ended his employment with the company the day before the spot check took place.

Preparation

The inspector contacted the ECYL director in May and discussed the issues that needed to be addressed before the start of the summer courses. The inspector was sent information about the courses running in the summer by the Accreditation Unit and by the provider and read the relevant EC website. ECYL was not informed in advance which centre would be visited and when the spot check would take place.

Programme and persons present

On the day of the spot check of the Brighton College centre, 191 students were being taught in 15 classes (13 young learner, two summer camp) by 15 teachers.

The inspector arrived at the centre at 08.30 and left at 18.20. He met the programme manager, the academic manager, the activities manager, and the young learners' logistics manager. He held meetings with a group of young learner students, three group leaders and eight teachers. The inspector examined various documents, which were provided in paper form or electronically. He observed seven of the teachers.

Findings

Management

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

Premises and resources

The centre is based in the premises of Brighton College, an independent school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18. ECYL uses up to 16 classrooms in a five-storey teaching block; additional rooms are used as an office, a teachers' resources room and a transport team office. Other facilities used include the college's dining room and external areas.

Teaching and learning

The academic manager is appropriately qualified and experienced. Before the summer he interviewed many of the teachers who taught at the Brighton and London centres.

Classes are timetabled so that the lesson breaks of young learner and summer camp students are at different times. Summer camp students classes consist of three 60-minute lessons. Young learner lessons comprise two 90-minute classes with a 15-minute break between them. In the young learner focus group, students complained about the length of the lessons and the short break.

Teachers praised the support that they received from the academic manager. He had completed short observations of the teachers, however, his written comments had not been seen by the teachers or discussed with them. There were no formal in-house training sessions for teachers. Two of those in the focus group had attended a workshop organised by a local director of studies association.

Course design is project based and linked to nine weekly themes. Teachers receive detailed lesson plans. They also keep class profiles that they update and provide weekly feedback on the content and resources used for lessons.

The lessons observed ranged from good to less than satisfactory with the majority being satisfactory. Lessons had been appropriately planned and in the better lessons students were engaged in preparing presentations or delivering them in groups. Teachers ensured that groups were working productively and that during presentations all of the students were attentive and some of them asked follow up questions. However, teachers did not correct student errors in most of the classes observed. In some lessons, instructions were unclear and teachers did not check if they had been understood by students. A few teachers did not manage groups effectively, particularly in classes where students with the same first language had not been separated. Some students were speaking in their first language and not in English. In several classes, students did not ask follow-up questions after presentations. In some lessons, there were classroom management issues; in one class students were sitting on desks and in another they were walking around the room for no pedagogical purpose.

Safeguarding under 18s

The safeguarding policy was known to all staff and the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy were clearly identified. Appropriate guidance and training had been provided to all staff. However, of the three group leaders interviewed, two had not attended a briefing about their responsibilities. None of them had read the international leaders' reference manual or signed that they had understood its contents. Recruitment procedures for all roles are well managed and are in line with safer recruitment good practice and the organisation's safeguarding policy. The accessibility of parental consent forms was checked and found satisfactory before the summer, however, forms for students from two groups sampled were not available to staff at the time of the spot check. The parental authorisation form uses unnecessarily complicated language and is poorly designed. Although the college is a secure site, the supervision of students in lessons, breaks and lunch was inadequate during the inspection. Two students were found together during lessons by the inspector.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points which must be addressed at least four weeks before courses begin

Management

M10 Academic staff files are not systematically organised. References were not complete, and there was insufficient verification of non-standard qualifications.

Addressed. Academic staff files are well organised on a Single Central Register (SCR) database.

Safeguarding under 18s

S3 The information contained on parental consent forms is not readily available to centre staff in the event of an emergency.

Not yet addressed. Although systems were checked before the summer, centre staff were not able to access the emergency contact details of some group students at the time of the inspection. The parental authorisation form is poorly designed and includes unnecessarily complicated language.

S4 Two references were not on file for some members of staff.

Addressed. All the necessary references were on file.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M9 Job descriptions are not dated and do not have a review date. There is very little reference to safeguarding roles. Contracts do not specify in sufficient detail possible extra duties such as house supervision and being on call.

Addressed. Job descriptions have been revised and dated and include safeguarding roles and any additional duties.

M24 The minimum enrolment age at Cambridge is given as 13, but there was one student aged 12.

Not yet addressed. A student under the stated minimum age was studying at the Brighton centre at the time of the spot check.

Teaching and learning

T1 There are three teachers across the group who do not have a Level 6 qualification.

Not yet addressed. Two of the teachers at Brighton had not completed their university degrees.

T2 There are two teachers across the group who do not have relevant ELT qualifications.

Addressed. All of the teachers at the centre visited had appropriate ELT qualifications.

T23 Teachers often did not model spoken and written forms effectively for the students. Focusing on language forms and structures was not a priority.

Addressed. Teachers modelled language adequately in most segments observed.

T24 Lesson plans, including class profiles, were limited and did not identify the learning needs and learning styles of students, and how to accommodate them.

Addressed. Teachers completed and updated class profiles to assess the needs of their students.

T25 Objectives were often expressed in terms of what the teacher was planning to do rather than the intended learning outcomes for the students.

Not yet addressed. Many objectives in lesson plans do not consist of learning outcomes.

T26 In the weaker segments, activities had not been properly planned, instructions were not clear and students were unsure of what they were supposed to do.

Not yet addressed. Some teachers gave unclear instructions to students and did not check students' understanding of tasks.

T27 In some lessons students were not seated to maximise speaking to a student with another language.

Not yet addressed. In some classes, students were sitting next to students with the same first language and they were not always speaking in English.

T28 There was little evidence of teachers giving correction or providing feedback on the use of target language. In the weaker segments, wrong answers and poor models were accepted.

Not yet addressed. Teachers did not correct student errors in most of the classes observed.

T29 There was very little evidence of the evaluation of whether learning had taken place in the individual lessons.

Addressed. Lessons observed included students making presentations of projects and reviewing the week's learning.

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 The section on private fostering lacks detail.

Addressed. The website includes a link to the relevant private fostering arrangements.

Conclusions

Overall ECYL has appropriately rectified most of the Points to be addressed with the exception of S3 and certain teaching criteria. Not all parental consent forms were accessible to centre staff (S3) and there were also some issues regarding the supervision of students in lessons and in breaks.
