

Organisation name	English in Exeter
Inspection date	8 July 2016

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1991
Last full inspection	February 2015
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	None
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	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: check course not running at inspection

Premises profile

Address of main site	42 Longbrook Street, Exeter, Devon EX4 6AE
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	St. Luke's College, Harts Lane, Exeter, Devon EX1 3RD
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	St. Luke's College, Harts Lane, Exeter

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	29	33
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	11	11
Typical age range	11–17	11–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Spanish	Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	2	3
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

INTRODUCTION

Background

English in Exeter is a year-round school offering general English to students aged 16 and over. The school was part of the Skola group. In June 2014 the ownership of the Skola group of companies changed and English in Exeter (under the registered company name of Marble Arch International Schools Ltd) separated from the rest of the group. It is still branded and marketed as part of the Skola group and retains informal operational links with the other companies in the group.

The school is running a vacation programme (ages 11–17) for the first time in 2016.

A full inspection took place in February 2015, and a supplementary inspection was scheduled to look at the vacation programme in summer 2015, but this did not run last year. This is the report of the spot check of the vacation programme running in summer 2016.

Preparation

The inspector, who had not been part of the original 2015 inspection team, was sent relevant reports and documentation by the Accreditation Unit to prepare for the spot check. The academic manager was contacted in June to establish if there would be any dates when key staff or students would not be on site. Based on this information, a date was selected for the visit. The school did not know the exact date. An organogram and the handbooks for students and teachers on the vacation programme were requested.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at St. Luke's College at 09.45 and was met by the principal and the academic manager, with whom the timetable was arranged. Meetings were held with the principal, the academic manager, the school manager, and the senior teacher for the junior programme. Focus group meetings were held with one teacher, the activities staff, the students and the group leader. One observation took place as the two classes were merged for project work. Documentation was examined, including staff files, the safeguarding policy, records of safeguarding training, signed parental consent forms, and risk assessments. The residence was visited. The inspector provided a short summary of her findings to the principal, the academic manager and the school manager before departing at 15.45.

FINDINGS

Management

There is a clear organogram in place for the summer school operation and arrangements for continuity at all times.

Communication between the management based at the main school and the summer school staff is informal but takes place on a daily basis through telephone calls and text messages. The two sites are a ten-minute walk apart. The academic manager and the school manager visit the summer school site twice a week, or as required.

The staff files are well organised with checklists, and generally contained all the relevant documentation, including signed and dated copies of certificates, ID and suitability checks. There were no references on file for the two activity staff.

Induction procedures are effective and staff members felt prepared for their roles.

Publicity

The publicity for the summer programme comprises a website and a brochure.

The website is written in accessible English and gives rise to realistic expectations. The information on courses, including minimum and maximum age, and maximum class size, is easy to find. Descriptions of accommodation and the social programme are accurate.

Teaching and learning

During the week of the spot check there were two teachers working on the junior programme including the appropriately qualified senior teacher. The academic manager had done pop-in observations as this was the first week of the programme.

There is a topic-based summer school syllabus that allows for flexibility and can be adapted to meet student needs and interests. Students attend the Forest School (an outdoor learning centre) once a week where, supported by their EFL teachers, they work alongside native-speaker children on projects including building an outdoor shelter, and preparing and cooking food on a camp fire. The projects at the Forest School are used as the basis for presentations or other collaborative tasks on Fridays.

The two classes were combined for part of the morning of the spot check to work on their presentations. The teachers were monitoring purposefully and drawing the students' attention to vocabulary work done in preparation for the activity. The teachers used language that was appropriate to the group. Teachers encouraged students to use English, but the students were predominantly Spanish speakers and a lot of L1 use was in evidence.

Welfare

Student induction is designed around quizzes and interactive activities to make the information more memorable.

Students wear wristbands with the emergency number, and the student handbook has photographs of the people to talk to if they have a problem. There is a clear policy on abusive behaviour and the school is addressing its responsibilities relating to the Prevent strategy. Students felt supported by both their teachers and the activity staff.

Leisure opportunities

The course includes five afternoon activities, two evening activities and a weekend excursion. The programme is very varied including kayaking, raft building, swimming, bowling, the Forest school, a ghost and legends tour of Exeter, a treasure hunt and a visit to the science museum on the Bristol excursion. Both the students and the group leader spoke very enthusiastically about the programme. There are risk assessments in place for all activities and these are read and signed by the activity staff.

Accommodation

Accommodation is offered in residence or in homestay. There were 21 students in the university residence and eight in homestay.

The inspector visited the residence, which is located a short walk from the college campus and where the school have been allocated one residential block. There is 24-hour security on reception and access to the building is controlled by digital keys. The rooms are arranged in 'flats' with five or seven bedrooms and a kitchen/lounge area. The bedrooms are all ensuite, of a good size, and have plenty of natural light and storage space. The students also make use of the common areas, which are equipped with pool tables and board games, and a room for screening films. The two activity staff, who are first aid trained, live in and supervise free time.

In homestay accommodation, students are in shared rooms and are taken to and from school by the hosts.

Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
R6 Staffroom(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments

R1 The school has the use of two classrooms on the second floor of one of the teaching buildings, two cafeterias and an outside grassed area with tables, all of which are situated close by. The students have some of their social activities in the sports hall and the swimming-pool, which are adjacent to the teaching site and supervised by trained college staff. The premises are appropriate to the provision and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.

R2 The premises are clean, well maintained and in a very good state of repair.

R3 The classrooms have good natural light, are quiet and furnished with desks that allow for flexibility of layout. One of the classrooms is large enough to comfortably accommodate the whole group for project work.

R4 The students are able to use one cafeteria or the grassed area to eat their packed lunches. For those students in the residence, breakfast and dinner are taken in the second cafeteria.

R5 The school is not allowed to put up any branded signage or general information on noticeboards.

R6 The area that had been allocated as a teachers' room was being renovated by the university. The teachers spend their free time in the larger classroom, where they prepare lessons. This arrangement is satisfactory in the context.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

The school's vacation programme is for 11 to 17 year-olds.

C1 There is a clear safeguarding policy in place with a named designated safeguarding lead, and two named designated safeguarding persons. The policy includes safer recruitment, dealing with allegations and a code of conduct signed by all staff.

C2 The policy is made known to new staff at induction and to existing staff at update meetings held at least once a year or as necessary. It is sent to homestay hosts, and is discussed with group leaders on their arrival. The designated staff have received advanced training. In addition, the academic manager has attended a safer recruitment course, and all other staff have completed basic training.

C3 The website outlines the level of care provided to students under a section on frequently asked questions. This covers most areas but there is insufficient detail on what students are allowed to do in their free time.

C4 Safer recruitment procedures are in place. Police checks had been obtained for staff who live overseas and for the group leader. Suitability checks for senior managers had not been carried out in the last three years. In homestays only the main care-giver is checked.

C5 Appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision of students during scheduled lessons and activities. Attendance is checked at the start of each lesson and activity staff monitor breaks and lunchtimes. Head counts are taken at the start of activities, but the register is not always called.

C6 Rules are generally clear for supervision and safety of students outside scheduled lessons and activities. Students are accompanied from and to the residence and are supervised at the residence. Students in homestay are collected by their homestay hosts after evening activities, though one student in the focus group had travelled home with her room-mate after one evening activity. Students have limited free time, but rules do not specify clearly what they are allowed to do, and there is no sliding scale according to age. The guide for hosts hosting under 18s does not make it clear whether the vacation course students are allowed to go out unaccompanied.

C7 The students in residential accommodation have all their meals on the college campus and are accompanied by activity staff. There is a suitable ratio of staff to students in the residence. Students in homestay are supplied with a packed lunch and have all other meals with their hosts.

Care of under 18s summary

The provision meets the section standard. There is a clear safeguarding policy in place; all staff receive suitable training and other adults in contact with under 18s are given guidance. The procedure for suitability checks needs reviewing in the light of best practice. There is generally appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students within the organisation, in leisure activities and accommodation.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Care of under 18s

C3 There is insufficient detail in publicity on what students are allowed to do in their free time.

C4 Suitability checks for the senior managers had not been carried out in the last three years. In homestays only the main care-giver is checked.

C5 At the start of activities the register is not always called.

C6 One student had travelled to the homestay with her room-mate after an evening activity, rather than being

collected by her homestay host. Students have limited free time, but rules do not specify clearly what they are allowed to do, and there is no sliding scale according to age. The guide for hosts hosting under 18s does not make it clear whether the vacation course students are allowed to go out unaccompanied.

CONCLUSIONS

English in Exeter is an established school teaching general English to adults (16+). This summer the school is running vacation courses for students aged 11–17 for the first time. The programme of learning is designed to allow for flexibility in responding to student needs and interests. The day spent at the Forest School enables the students to interact with native-speaker children and to practise their English in a meaningful context. The residential accommodation is of a good standard, the students receive an appropriate level of care and the leisure opportunities are varied and appreciated.

The premises are suitable to the provision and provide an appropriate environment for both students and staff.

The care of under 18s meets the requirements of the Scheme, but suitability checks for staff and homestay hosts are not currently in line with best practice. Further guidance is needed on what students are allowed to do in their free time.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2019, there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, an action plan should be submitted within six months to indicate how the issues identified under C4 and C6 are to be addressed.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

Vacation courses for under 18s can be added.

Summary statement

Summary statement from the 2015 report

The British Council inspected and accredited English in Exeter in February 2015. 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 adults (16+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, academic staff profile, academic management, teaching, care of students and leisure opportunities.

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

Updated summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited English in Exeter in February 2015. 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 adults (16+) and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, academic staff profile, academic management, teaching, care of students and leisure opportunities.

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