

Organisation name	Go Languages, Head Office Hoddesdon, Herts
Inspection date	20 July 2017

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	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Centres in the UK and the USA run by MLA, the parent company of Go Languages Ltd

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	1 st Floor, 87/89 High Street, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8TL
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Brunel University, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3PH University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 6AH
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	Dulwich College, Dulwich Common, London SE21 7LD
Sites inspected	University of Reading The school is located in a teaching building on the main University of Reading campus. The school has the use of up to 13 classrooms and also has a large office for the centre administrators, as well as the local academic managers, teachers and activity leaders. The school uses the university canteen and the university sports facilities. Staff and students are accommodated in a residence a short walk away.

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	294	377
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	12	12
Typical age range	12–17	12–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Italian	Italian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	11	13
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	20	20

INTRODUCTION

Background

Go Languages is a subsidiary of MLA, a language course tour operator and agent based in Italy, with offices in Naples and Milan. MLA was set up in 1976 and sends up to 12,000 students on overseas language courses every year. In 2017, Go Languages is running English language summer vacation courses for under 18s at two centres in the UK – at the University of Reading and at Brunel University (Uxbridge). It also ran two one-week residential mini-stay courses at Dulwich College, London earlier in the year. The Uxbridge course was first run in 2015, the Reading course and the Dulwich course in 2016.

The Go Languages head office is situated in Hoddesdon, Herts, and is staffed year round by a director of operations, an academic manager and an assistant academic manager. During the summer, these three managers move to Uxbridge to monitor the provision there and at Reading more closely.

Students at Reading and Uxbridge all study for two weeks, with a total of 30 hours' tuition. At Reading lessons are held either in the mornings or afternoons; at Uxbridge lessons are held in the mornings. Some full-day excursions take place during the week and, in order to deliver a total of 15 hours' tuition per week, some teaching days are extended to four hours and lessons may also be held on Saturday mornings. All students are accommodated in residences on campus. Activities and excursions are included in the cost of the standard programme (Top course). Students can also book an enhanced programme with additional visits (Top Plus course).

Preparation

Contact was made with the school to enquire if there were any days that should be avoided for the visit. The actual date of the visit was not known by the school. The inspector received documentation before the visit and checked the website and social media sites.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 12.00 and left at 16.45. Separate meetings were held with the centre manager, the centre DoS, four group leaders, four teachers and four students. The inspector observed three classes for ten minutes each, had lunch in the canteen and had a brief tour of the residence. The UK academic manager and her deputy arrived towards the end of the visit (from the Uxbridge centre) and were present for the roundup.

FINDINGS

Management

There have been no changes in the management structure. Day-to-day operations are handled by the operations director, the academic manager, and the assistant academic manager. Communication, both formal and informal, remains good and there is regular contact between the Reading site management and the permanent managers. The Reading centre manager holds weekly meetings with university staff. Go Languages staff were very appreciative of the induction days provided for them prior to the commencement of courses – two days for activity leaders and senior staff, and a full day for teachers.

A new online system enables the welfare manager to note absences and follow them up immediately. This same online system also allows teachers to inform parents and guardians of students' classroom performance daily.

Publicity, in the form of a website, does not allow access to information about fees without a password, which means that an individual searching for information about Go Languages courses cannot find it without contacting an agent or head office. This was not considered a major problem as all students come through agents.

Resources and environment

The Reading site remains an entirely suitable site for a course of this nature. Classrooms, residences, canteen and the campus as a whole are clean, tidy and kept in very good condition.

The new coursebook is far better suited to the ages of students and to the nature of the courses they attend than the coursebooks used in the past. However, teachers commented that the lower level books were at times too demanding for students, but, as this is seen as a pilot year for the new books, all feedback collected is intended to lead to alterations for next year. Teachers now have a good range of methodology books and supplementary materials to draw on.

Teaching and learning

Although the inspector visited three classes, each visit was only for five minutes, so he was unable to make any observations on the points to be addressed listed in the last report.

The assistant director of studies left the course a short time after it began and a suitably qualified replacement was not found for a further week. This left the DoS under considerable pressure but she said she was well supported by the UK academic manager and her assistant during this period.

All academic managers, both permanent and summer appointments, are TEFLQ and all teachers have appropriate Level 6 and ELT/TESOL qualifications. Teachers were happy with the support they were receiving from their academic managers and appreciative of the developmental observations they had all had.

Teachers are required to take part in one full day excursion every two weeks to lead what the school calls 'inside out lessons'. They prepare tasks related to these excursions and are responsible for getting the students to carry out these tasks during the excursions. There was insufficient support and guidance from the academic management in the preparation and execution of the tasks, and teachers found them particularly difficult when the excursion took place on the last day of a course.

Teachers give students a mark for both effort and attainment each day and the online system allows them to inform parents and guardians of students' classroom performance daily.

Welfare and student services

The students continue to be very well supported and cared for. Group leaders, staff and the students themselves commented on how safe they felt on the campus and in Reading. Students enjoy the carried and well-organised social programme.

Care of under 18s

The care of under 18s continues to be very good. It was noticeable, during the period between one set of lessons ending at lunchtime and the next set beginning in mid-afternoon, how well the activity staff checked that the students were safe at all times.

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.

Management

M5 The school does not routinely obtain two references for all new employees.

Addressed. The school now obtains two references for all new employees.

M8 Senior staff are not formally appraised. There is no formal procedure for handling unsatisfactory performance.

Addressed. All senior staff are now appraised, both the permanent staff and the summer senior staff. There is now a formal procedure for dealing with unsatisfactory performance.

M17 There is no formal review of systems and procedures.

Addressed. Meetings with centre managers at the end of courses lead to a report, which also takes feedback from students, teachers, activity leaders and group leaders into account.

M18 There is no note of any action taken in response to feedback from students.

Partially addressed. Note is not always taken of the action taken in response to issues that require immediate resolution.

Resources and environment

R7 The coursebooks and supplementary materials provided are not suitable for younger students on the course.

Addressed. The UK academic managers have produced a series of task-based course books for use on the two-week courses. Books for five different levels are designed to involve students in tasks the results of which they record in their books. They take these books home as a record of what they have done in class. These books are well-suited to younger students.

R8 Teaching resources are limited. There are no teaching methodology materials. There are no resources for teachers relating to excursion destinations.

Partially addressed. There is a good supply of teaching methodology materials. The school has introduced what they call 'inside out lessons', where teachers accompany students on some excursions, involving students in language tasks designed by the teachers. Although the UK academic managers have provided some sample materials, production of excursion-specific materials is a task that takes significant amounts of time and requires skills inexperienced teachers may not have.

Teaching and learning

T2 One teacher had an ELT qualification which did not meet Scheme requirements.

Addressed. All teachers at Reading have ELT qualifications that meet Scheme requirements.

T14 Schemes of work displayed in the classrooms are of limited value to students as they are very brief and not

written in accessible English.

Partially addressed. A simple syllabus outline is posted on a general noticeboard in the entrance hall. Students now have the new coursebook which provides an outline of the work they will do in the two weeks of their stay.

T15 There is no guidance for teachers on including study and learning strategies in the course.

Partially addressed. Guidance given to academic managers at induction is passed on to teachers. Observations and feedback pay attention to this area but no evidence for this was seen.

T16 There is currently no detailed guidance and there are no specific resources to help teachers ensure that students benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.

Partially addressed. The introduction of the 'inside out lessons' goes some way towards providing teachers with guidance and resources to help students to benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

R7 The new Go Languages coursebooks are not always well-suited to lower level students.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the points arising from the first inspection have been fully addressed. The management provides continuity and stability and the school has continued to review and improve their systems, policies and procedures. The students receive a very good level of care from all the staff. The teachers continue to receive ongoing support, monitoring and guidance from the academic managers. However, the new coursebook and the newly introduced 'inside out lessons' have some teething problems that need to be addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

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

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Go Languages 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 for details).

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

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

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