

Organisation name	LAL Torbay
Inspection date	16 July 2019
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: monitor effect of change of provision

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2022; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection and updating the reference to adults 16+.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited LAL Torbay in June 2018 and July 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 school offers courses in general and professional English for adults (18+) and young people (16+), vacation courses for under 18s and closed group courses for under 18s.

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

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

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1989
Last full inspection	2018
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
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	Courses leading to certificate and diploma-level qualifications
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	LAL London, LAL UK Summer Schools
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	LAL Fort Lauderdale, LAL Cape Town, IELTS Malta, Apollo – Ireland (partner school)

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: <i>July</i>
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	298 (young learners) 124 (adult) = 422	298 (young learners) 144 (adults) = 442
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	7	7
Typical age range	13–16/17–28	13–16/17–28
Typical length of stay	2–3 weeks	2–3 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Italian, Spanish, German, Saudi	Italian, Spanish, German, Saudi
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	24	26
Total number of managers including academic	6	6
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	12	12

Premises profile

Address of main site	LAL Torbay, Conway Road, Paignton, TQ4 5HL
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	LAL Torbay, Conway Road, Paignton, TQ4 5HL

Introduction

Background

LAL Torbay is part of a group with schools in London, Malta, South Africa and the USA, as well as a partner school in Dublin which is independently managed. LAL also runs a separately accredited seasonal multicentre operation.

The school offers general English and business English courses for adults (16+) of 15 and 22.5 hours per week. Short courses for closed groups of young learners (10–17) are run year round. Vacation courses for young learners (10–17) take place from late June to August and consist of 15 hours tuition and a full programme of activities. At the time of the 2018 inspection the minimum age was ten. The school subsequently informed the Accreditation Unit that in 2019 they would be running courses for students aged five to nine years old to study at the same time as their parents ('family school programmes'), triggering the current spot check.

Preparation

The inspector, who had not previously inspected the school, received documentation before the visit and checked the website and social media sites. The date of the visit was not known by the school.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 09.35 and left at 13.30. Meetings were held with the general manager, the operations manager and the academic manager, and an informal discussion took place with an agency representative accompanying the children and parents on the family programme. One class of seven to eight year-olds was visited for about ten minutes and documentation was examined. A new residence was also visited briefly. Feedback was given to the general manager.

Findings

Management

There have been no changes to the management structure and the management team. Staff files were spot checked and were found to be complete and conforming to Scheme requirements.

Publicity is contradictory in several areas: minimum age and age ranges, and which programmes offer out-of-school supervision. The term 'out-of-class' supervision is used to mean 'out-of-school'.

Premises and resources

The school uses a classroom on the first floor for the children on the family programme. The cafeteria is shared between adults and juniors and times are staggered. There is a separate lounge for adults.

Extra materials had been made available for young learners, including a LAL-produced course series.

The school has acquired and refurbished a sea-front hotel for use as a students' residence. During the summer it is occupied by juniors only; from the autumn it will be used by adults only and replace the existing student residence.

Teaching and learning

Observation notes and the summer continuing professional development programme were spot checked and conformed to Scheme requirements.

Welfare and student services

No welfare concerns were noted during this inspection.

The last inspection report states that all students under 18 are placed in homestay accommodation, which is not the case this summer. Some are housed in the new residence with live-in management staff and catering. Risk assessments are thorough and very good safety measures are in place.

Safeguarding under 18s

There were 298 students under the age of 18 enrolled at the time of the inspection.

The family course had five children enrolled. They came as a single group, together with two parents who chose not to study but were present in the school, a representative of the agency who was in an English class at the same time and had a supervisory/liaison role, and another supervisor who arrived on the first day to help settle the families in, and then left. The situation has been risk assessed and no safety concerns were identified during this inspection.

Publicity	Met
M22 All publicity and information is accurate, and gives rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.	Met
M23 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Met
M24 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Not met
M25 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Met
M26 Publicity or other information made available before enrolment gives an accurate description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.	Not met
M27 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	Met
M28 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Met
M29 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met

Comments

The publicity consists of a website, brochures for adult and young learner courses, and social media. Both the website and the brochures have embedded pages relating to the Torbay school. The website is the main form of information and the brochures are supplied to the school's agents.

M24 There is a discrepancy in the junior course publicity as to the minimum age. There is only minimal information about learning outcomes, and it is not level specific.

M26 There is lack of clarity about the level of out-of-school supervision on the different courses.

M27 Publicity currently makes no reference to the new residence.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Management

M6 Some returning seasonal teachers stated they had never completed an exit questionnaire.

Addressed. All staff will have exit interviews from September 2019.

M12 Staff not employed in the autumn do not have an opportunity for a review.

Addressed. The exit interviews from September 2019 will include an appraisal.

M24 For many courses there is a lack of clarity as to the actual class size, as these are expressed as a range. On the dates and fees page it is not clear which courses increase their maximum class size to 15 in the summer period. There is a discrepancy on junior course pages, both on the website and in the brochure, as to the minimum age. There is no reference to objectives at the different levels.

Partially addressed. The 2019 price list has been reworded to make the maximum class size clearer. However, the discrepancy as to the minimum age remains in different parts of the publicity and the reference to learning outcomes is minimal.

M29 In the adult brochure on the Torbay page, teacher training courses that are validated by another body were listed next to the Accreditation Scheme marque.

Not yet addressed. However, the point is under review for the 2020 brochure.

Welfare and student services

W9 One recently recruited host appeared not to have embraced the school's advice and expectations sufficiently to be hosting young learners.

Addressed. There has been more engagement with hosts, including more open evenings, more frequent newsletters, and telephone checks after the first couple of students have been accommodated.

Conclusions

The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of students aged five to nine in the school.

The school has a clear action plan to address the points to be addressed, and some had been satisfactorily addressed.