

Organisation name	The Leeds School of English
Inspection date	29 October 2019
Current accreditation status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: follow up on points to be addressed

Recommendation

We recommend that the school should be allowed to resume enrolling under 18s to the main school. Accreditation remains under review pending a spot check when under 18s are enrolled to verify that all policies are being implemented and safeguarding criteria are met.

Subsequently the provider decided against recruiting under 18s and so the period of review is ended.

Changes to the summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited The Leeds School of English in 2018 and again in July and October 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 English for adults (18+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, premises and facilities, academic management, course design, learner management, teaching, care of students and leisure opportunities.

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

Changes to the summary inspection findings

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision does not meet the section standard. Although the safeguarding policy is clear and detailed, it has not been updated to cover the change of designated safeguarding lead. In addition, procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with under 18s are inconsistently applied, and investigation revealed a number of gaps in DBS checks, overseas police checks, where relevant, and the securing of two satisfactory references.

The criteria in this section are now met. However, due to a change in minimum enrolment age (to 18), this section is no longer applicable.

New summary inspection findings

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. The safeguarding policy is clear and has been updated to cover the changes in the nominated principal safeguarding officer and the deputy safeguarding officer. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with under 18s have been clarified and are now consistently applied. All staff currently employed have been DBS checked and have two satisfactory references. Other aspects of safeguarding are satisfactory. **This section is no longer applicable.**

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	February 2014
Last full inspection	April 2018
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	July 2019
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	July 2018
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	N/a

Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
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Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	46	Juniors 51; Main 109
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	Juniors 10; Main 16
Typical age range	18–45	Juniors 10–17; Main 18–54
Typical length of stay	8–12 weeks	Juniors 4 weeks; Main 8 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian, Colombian, Brazilian	Saudi Arabian, Colombian, Italian
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	7	Juniors 3; Main 8
Total number of managers including academic	2	Juniors 3; Main 5
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	4	4

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Stewart House, St Andrews Court, Leeds LS3 1SY
Additional sites in use	St Andrews House, 2 nd Floor, Leeds LS3 1SY
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Stewart House, St Andrews Court, Leeds LS3 1SY

Introduction

Background

The Leeds School of English main school was inspected in April 2018. It ran a summer school for juniors for the first time in the summer of 2018 on separate premises and requested an extension of accreditation to include the summer school. A supplementary inspection took place in July 2018, which resulted in accreditation being extended to include the summer school. While the summer school was running in 2019, however, the Accreditation Unit was informed that not all staff working there had been DBS checked. An unannounced spot check visit took place in July 2019 and a number of weaknesses were discovered in the areas of safety and safeguarding and the Safeguarding under 18s section was found to be not met. As a result of these findings, in August 2019, a decision was taken by the Accreditation UK Executive Board to suspend accreditation. The school responded by withdrawing provision for under 18s; the suspension was lifted and accreditation placed under review. The school wished to resume taking under 18s, however, and particularly to run its junior summer courses so it was asked to produce documentary evidence in the form of an action plan of how it was addressing the points to be addressed in the spot check report. Once this was received by the Accreditation Unit, the school was told that a spot check would take place to check how far weaknesses had been addressed and that safety and safeguarding systems were sufficiently robust for them to begin preparation for running a junior summer school again.

Preparation

The inspector from the July 2019 spot check was asked to return to the school to carry out this spot check. The inspector was given a very clear brief: to assess compliance with the Safeguarding under 18s criteria and readiness to accept under 18s at the main school and to check planning and preparation for the school to be able to run a safe off-site course for juniors in the summer of 2020. All relevant documentation was sent by the Accreditation Unit and the website was checked. The school was contacted to check the availability of key staff and to request details of staff, students, a teaching timetable and some additional documents.

Programme and persons present

The unannounced inspection took place on 29 October 2019 starting at 09.20 and finishing at 13.00. Meetings were arranged with the CEO, the academic manager, the administrative assistant/human resources manager, and the student services manager. A staff focus group was held. A number of documents were scrutinised, the action plan was discussed, and personnel files were checked.

Findings

Findings are recorded in the section below and in the points to be addressed from the last inspection.

Safeguarding under 18s

Safeguarding under 18s	Met
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S1 There is a safeguarding policy which specifies procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students under the age of 18. A named member of staff is responsible for implementing this policy and responding to child protection allegations.	Met
S2 The provider makes the policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation, and provides guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation.	Strength
S3 The provider has written parental/guardian consent reflecting the level of care and support given to students under 18, including medical consent.	Met
S4 Recruitment procedures for all roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s are in line with safer recruitment good practice and the organisation's safeguarding policy.	Met
S5 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students during scheduled lessons and activities.	Met
S6 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students outside the scheduled programme.	Met
S7 There are suitable arrangements for the accommodation of students.	Met
S8 There are suitable arrangements to ensure contact between the provider and parents, legal guardians or their nominated representatives concerning the welfare of students.	Met

Comments

The school normally enrolls young people (16+) on adult courses and runs a summer school for juniors aged 10–16 on separate premises.

S2 All staff have had basic training, one has had advanced training, two have been trained to specialist level and a third is about to undergo specialist training. Certificates were checked. There was also evidence of refresher sessions. The school is preparing a small list of homestay providers to host under 18s from the main school; the handbook and the interview/visit covers some awareness raising but training has not yet been provided.

S4 Suitability checks are in progress but not yet complete for homestay hosts being prepared to accommodate under 18s.

Action taken on 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

M10 There are significant weaknesses in the recruitment and selection of staff, especially with regard to safeguarding under 18s.

Addressed: All staff currently working in the school have been DBS checked and all have two references. Other checks are also in place. Management is aware of the need to apply for DBS clearance in good time for any additional staff who may work in the summer school.

M20 Information on the conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the college are insufficiently explicit.

Addressed: The student disciplinary policy has been updated to clarify the process and to give examples of situations that would result in a student being dismissed from the college.

M24 There is ambiguity about the minimum age of students attending the summer school.

Addressed: The summer school will be for students between 10 and 16 years old.

Teaching and learning

T7 Arrangements for cover for absent staff are inadequate.

Addressed: The cover policy is clear. The academic manager will be the main source of cover for the summer school, and cover will be augmented by staff from the main school if the need arises.

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 The safeguarding policy has not been updated to cover the change of DSL. There is no designated person with safeguarding responsibilities at the summer school. There was no evidence that arrangements for dealing with delayed DBS clearance were in place and staff consulted were unaware of them.

Addressed: The safeguarding policy has been updated and names the principal safeguarding officer and his deputy. The policy covers arrangements for dealing with delayed DBS checks which will be fully implemented if such a situation arises. One of the managers at the summer school will be named as the person with on-site responsibility for safeguarding.

S4 The application of safer recruitment procedures is inconsistent. Not all staff have confirmation of DBS clearance or overseas police checks where relevant. There was no evidence of satisfactory references for some staff.

Addressed: The safer recruitment policy is clear and covers all safeguarding requirements. Personnel files showed clear evidence that it was being implemented at the time of the inspection. Records are comprehensive.

S5 Arrangements for the safe supervision of students during scheduled lessons and activities is inconsistent as not all staff have been thoroughly checked. (See S4 above.)

Addressed: The firm application of the recruitment policy will ensure that there is safe supervision of students during scheduled lessons and activities. The staff:student ratios are satisfactory.

S6 Arrangements for the safe supervision of students outside the scheduled programme is inconsistent as some members of staff with supervision duties have not been thoroughly checked. (See S4 above.)

Addressed: There is very little free time for students on the summer school and that will be on campus and will be supervised by staff who have been fully vetted.

S7 Accommodation arrangements are unsuitable as some residential staff have not been thoroughly checked. (See S4 above.)

Partially addressed: All residential staff at the summer school will be thoroughly vetted.

A registered accommodation agency has previously been used to provide homestay accommodation for any under 18s at the main school. The school is now developing a list of homestays; initially, four are being prepared for hosting under 18s.

Conclusions

The school has worked hard to rectify the weaknesses identified during the July spot check and has addressed them positively. All safeguarding criteria are now met, so they should be permitted to recommence recruitment of under 18s to main school and to prepare for running a summer school for juniors.

Since the inspection, the school has notified the Accreditation Unit that the junior summer school will not be run. **The school subsequently confirmed that the minimum enrolment age will be 18 for all courses when the school re-opens in 2021.**
