

Organisation name	Our World English Schools, head office St Bees, Cumbria
Inspection date	14 July 2022
Current accreditation status	Accreditation under review
Reason for spot check	Signalled: end period under review

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The period of review may now be ended and accreditation continued until the next full inspection, which falls due in 2024.

Changes to the summary statement

An updated summary statement can now be issued.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Our World English Schools in July 2019 and July 2022. 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 residential vacation courses in general English for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, and accommodation.

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

Updated summary inspection findings
Management

The provision meets the section standard. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students and in accordance with the provider's stated goals, values and publicity.

Premises and resources

None.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard. The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience, and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context, and the teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

Welfare and student services

None.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in the leisure programme and accommodation provided.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2002
Last full inspection	July 2019
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	N/a

Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	2021
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	Global Young Leaders. This is a debate course and has no EFL content
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Studio Cambridge (also owned by Full Circle)
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July <i>As at inspection</i>
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	62	62
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	Italian, Japanese	Italian, Japanese
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	5	5
Total number of managers including academic	5	5
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	10	10

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Dulwich College, Dulwich Common, London SE21 7LD
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Dulwich College remotely

Introduction

Background

Founded in 1989, Our World English Schools (OWES) runs vacation courses for under 18s during July and August. For some years, the only premises used for courses were those of Dulwich College. Two further centres were subsequently added: Caterham School in 2004, and Wycombe Abbey School in 2017.

Following the last full inspection in July 2019, accreditation was placed under review as the section standard for safeguarding under 18s was not met and there were weaknesses in staff management, academic management, and course design. Two of the three centres were inspected: Wycombe Abbey and Caterham School. Between 2019 and 2021 no courses ran due to the impact of the global pandemic.

In October 2021 an interim inspection was conducted while the language centre's regular activities were suspended. The findings were that the organisation had taken steps to resolve the points to be addressed in the 2019 full inspection report, and plans were in place to address all of them by the summer 2022 when courses resumed. It was recommended that the organisation's accreditation continued to be placed under review over the period of temporary closure, and that a re-inspection to end the period of review should take place once activities resumed. A full re-inspection in July 2022 was scheduled but this was scaled back to a spot check.

Only one, two-week course was running in July 2022 at Dulwich College.

Preparation

The inspector had two phone call briefing meetings to discuss the scope and content of the spot check. A date was agreed in first week of the course. Documentation and previous correspondence were provided by the Accreditation Unit and requested documents provided by the organisation.

Programme and persons present

During the one-day spot check, virtual tours were conducted of the main teaching, dining and activities block, and the boarding house. Meetings were held with the operations and HR manager, the centre manager, the centre director of studies, the activity leaders, group leaders and a group of students. Brief observations of the four teachers lasting five minutes each were conducted.

Findings

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

Safeguarding under 18s

Safeguarding under 18s	Met
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

S2 The centre manager, assistant centre manager and head office staff on site all have specialist level safeguarding training. All staff have basic level training.

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 or the 2021 interim spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.

Management

M2 The organisation plan is currently insufficiently detailed and does not pay sufficient attention to the ongoing planning and implementation of recruitment procedures and the updating of syllabuses and learning resources.

Addressed. Organisation plans include ensuring effective recruitment procedures and the review of course design. These plans had been successfully implemented.

M3 Management staffing at one centre was inadequate.

Addressed. Despite various challenges, continuity has been assured and management staffing levels at the centre were completely satisfactory.

M5 Initial feedback is not collected early enough.

Addressed. Evidence indicated that informal feedback with students and group leaders had been conducted verbally in the first two days and appropriate actions taken. Electronic feedback is taken at the end of the first week.

M9 Job descriptions do not match what some staff were observed to be doing or, in cases where staff were new to their roles, their understanding of their responsibilities.

Addressed. Job descriptions have been updated to reflect the content and scope of roles. These have been approved by an external HR company.

M10 References for staff recruited since 2016 were incomplete.

Addressed. All staff had two references, and these included suitability to work with under 18s.

M11 The time allocated for the induction of new teachers is insufficient.

Addressed. Some training was completed online, and all staff had a one-day face-to-face induction. There is a clear course structure now available for teachers in their handbook.

M12 The policy does not accurately reflect current procedures.

Addressed. Monitoring procedures were in place, and appraisals due to take place until the end of the course.

M18 Student records do not indicate whether the emergency contact speaks English.

Addressed. The amended parental consent form contains a field to capture this information.

M20 Procedures leading to students being removed from a course are not made explicit.

Partially addressed. This is now included in the prospectus and there are plans to include it in the parental consent form.

M24 In the description of the English plus soccer course at Caterham, there is no indication that English classes for students aged 13–17 will take place in the mornings and those for younger students (8–12) in the afternoons.

No longer relevant as this course is no longer offered.

M26 There is a mismatch between the description of supervision arrangements in the publicity and actual supervision procedures. The brochure states that on excursions students aged 14+ are 'closely supervised', whereas they are allowed unsupervised free time in groups of three.

Addressed. The supervision policy has been updated, text in the 2022 prospectus has been amended and relevant information is included in the parental consent form.

Premises and resources

P12 There is no policy for the formal review and development of resources.

Addressed. Resources have been reviewed and developed in line with the new course structure. Teachers now have access to a shared online resources drive.

Teaching and learning

T6 Observation of the younger students (aged 8–12 years) at the Caterham School centre, who have activities in the morning and classes in the afternoon, showed that they were too tired to benefit fully from afternoon classes.

N/a. This course was not running.

T7 There is no formal system for other than emergency cover.

Addressed. An agency provides teachers for non-emergency cover.

T9 The ST at Caterham was also acting as CM and was therefore not able to give as much time to supporting the two teachers, both of whom were new to the organisation, as had originally been planned.

N/a. This course was not running. At Dulwich there was a director of studies and a centre manager. It is policy not to have any dual roles. The director of studies was offering effective day-to-day guidance to the teachers as well as leading weekly continuing professional development sessions.

T10 Formal observations by the TEFLQ academic manager had not been carried out of all new teachers within the first two weeks of their contracts.

Addressed. Brief observations of all teachers had been conducted by the DoS and feedback had been given. Formal observations were planned for the end of the week.

T11 The guidance documents provided do not represent a sufficiently explicit course structure and teachers at Caterham, who were used to teaching with a coursebook, stated that they were required to spend too much time creating lessons.

Addressed. There is a clear course design and teachers are now given explicit schemes of work covering the younger and older age groups at all levels with links to recommended resources and lesson plans.

T12 No evidence was provided of recent review of course design or materials.

Addressed. The course design and materials have been fully reviewed and revised. Schemes of work cover six new topics and learning resources have been developed.

T13 Students are not given a written course outline with intended learning outcomes.

Addressed. Students are given student-friendly versions of the weekly schemes of work and outcomes are presented at the beginning of every lesson.

Welfare and student services

W2 There is no comprehensive plan in place to respond to an emergency or major incident on or off site.

Addressed. There is a comprehensive plan for on-site and off-site activities and excursions. Staff and students are made fully aware of measures as appropriate and relevant.

W26 Risk assessments for full day excursions are not made known to staff leading the trips.

Addressed. There is a meeting the evening before the excursion, and staff leading the trips are given a full briefing. Risk assessments are specific to the outing and shared with staff and group leaders.

Safeguarding under 18s

S2 The named designated lead on each site does not have safeguarding training to an appropriate level.

Addressed. The centre manager, assistant centre manager and head office staff on site all have specialist level safeguarding training. All staff have basic level training.

S3 Parental consent does not accurately reflect the level of supervision given to students.

Addressed. The parental consent form has been amended.

S4 A large number of recently recruited staff members do not have two references.

Addressed. All staff have two references.

Conclusions

Action has been taken in relation to all points to be addressed. Some of the points to be addressed from the 2019 inspection regarding Safeguarding under 18s had already been resolved by the time of the interim inspection and the successful implementation of these measures and remaining points was seen during this spot check. Points to be addressed from areas with a need for improvement in other sections have all been addressed.
