

Organisation name	Professional Linguistic and Upper Studies (PLUS), Head office London
Inspection date	31 July, 1 August 2025
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: follow up on Points to be addressed

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation.

Changes to the summary statement

A need for improvement in the areas of publicity, academic management, and course design can now be removed.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited PLUS in July 2024 and July 2025. 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 large private language teaching organisation offers vacation courses for under 18s.

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of academic staff profile.

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

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. The structure of the organisation is clear, communication is suitable, and student administration is carried out effectively.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard. The premises provide students and staff with a comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. A range of learning resources is available to students.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the provision meets the section standard. However, most teachers do not have appropriate teaching qualifications. Most but not all teachers had been observed, and professional development had been provided to them. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme. There is a need for improvement in the area of *Academic staff profile*.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard. The needs of the students for security and pastoral care are met and students benefit from satisfactory student services, including leisure activities and accommodation. The use of risk assessments requires a more detailed approach.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 at school and in the leisure activities and accommodation provided. Staff are all informed about their responsibilities and appropriately trained. However, on occasion there was insufficient supervision outside the scheduled programme.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	July 2015
Last full inspection	July 2024
Subsequent checks/visits (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Centres in Bath, Epsom, Kingston, Harrow, Loughborough, Bury St Edmunds, Windsor, York.
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Centres in Ireland and Malta.

Student and staff profile	At inspection	Estimate at peak: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	203	406
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	10	10
Typical age range	10–17	10–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Turkish, Italian	Italian, Turkish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	9	17
Total number of managers including academic	6	6
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	10 (activity leaders)	10

Academic manager qualifications profile

Profile at inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of academic managers
TEFLQ qualification and at least three years' full-time relevant teaching experience	1
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualifications or three years' relevant experience	1
Total	2

Comments

The academic managers were not teaching at the time of the inspection.

Teacher qualifications profile

Profile in week of inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of teachers
TEFLQ qualification/profile	1
TEFLI qualification	3
ATEFL registered portfolio in progress*	0
Non-ELT-related qualified teacher status only (for short courses for under 18s)*	0
Holding specialist qualifications only (for ESP/CLIL)*	0
Alternative professional profile*	5
Total	9

Comments

None.

Premises profile

Address of main site	8 Cellbridge Mews, London W2 6EU
Additional sites in use	Kingston University, Kingston Hill, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7LB Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Leicestershire LE11 3TU York St John University, Lord Mayors Walk, York, YO31 7EX
Additional sites not in use	Royal High School of Bath, Lansdown Rd, Bath BA1 5SZ, University of Westminster, Watford Road, Northwick Park, Middlesex HA1 3TP Epsom College, College Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 4JQ Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG46 7PU Culford School, Bury St Edmunds IP28 6TX
Sites inspected	Brunel University, Bishop Hall, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3PH

Introduction

Background

PLUS (Professional Linguistic and Upper Studies) organises short English language study holidays for under 18s in a range of locations in the UK, as well as operating in Ireland, Malta, Canada and the USA. In 2025, nine centres were due to be used in the UK. All business is conducted through agents and sales representatives, with whom PLUS has longstanding working relationships and communications. All students attend in groups accompanied by group leaders, who are the main providers of support and pastoral care for the students in their groups.

The purpose of this spot check was to follow up on a number of points to be addressed in last year's full inspection report. The previous report identified a Need for improvement in the areas of publicity, academic staff profile, academic management, and course design.

Preparation

The inspector read the previous report and held a video call with the PLUS Director of Studies. He also requested and received a number of documents in advance of the spot check site visit.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took place at the Uxbridge centre when lessons were being offered in the morning and the afternoon. The inspector arrived at the Brunel University campus at 09.15 am and left in the afternoon at 16.45. During his visit he held meetings with the centre manager, the course director, who is responsible for academic management, the welfare officer, the activity manager and the assistant course director. Focus group meetings were held with teachers and group leaders. The inspector also accessed additional information on the following day through a video call with the head of leisure and welfare, and further email exchanges.

Findings

Management

There is a clear and stable structure at the Brunel centre with all managers in post since the beginning of the summer courses. The original team was supplemented by the arrival of a second activity manager for the busiest period of the summer. Feedback is gathered regularly from students through weekly feedback forms and focus groups. Staff were aware of the emergency plan and where to access further information (see M7 reference in the previous report). Publicity is generally accurate, although the claim that there is a course for someone who is 'practically Shakespeare' is incorrect (M23).

Premises and resources

The Uxbridge centre is located on the large, busy Brunel University campus (Bishop Hall, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3PH) to the west of London. PLUS has use of up to 10 teaching rooms (classrooms and lecture theatres). There is a staff office for the campus manager (CM) and activity team with the office for the course director (CD) and teachers next door. The canteen and sports facilities are nearby, and the halls of residence are five to ten minutes walking distance away. The campus, including the teaching building, is shared with several other language school providers.

Course resources have been improved since last year with the introduction of new schemes of work and teaching resources given to teachers on USB sticks. However, teachers reported that some materials, particularly at lower levels, were not level or age appropriate, with some lessons focusing on work themes (P7). There is still insufficient attention paid to the safety and security needs of younger students in risk assessments and procedures given that the site is an open and shared campus (P1).

Welfare and student services

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

Safeguarding under 18s

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

Teaching and learning

Since the last inspection, a number of improvements have been made in this area, particularly in relation to course design. More detailed findings are reported in the following section and in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile		Need for improvement
T1 There is a clear recruitment and support policy for the academic team relevant to the stated course objectives and student profile.		
T2 The academic manager/academic management team has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership.		
T3 The teaching team has ELT/TESOL qualifications, general level of education, experience, knowledge and skills relevant to the courses they are teaching.		
Comments		
Overall, the academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications and experience) that is not appropriate to the organisation's context. Although the academic profile of managers was suitable, the proportion of teachers with professional profiles requiring additional support was too high for the level and type of support provided. Although the recruitment and support policy is appropriately devised, it was not effectively implemented in line with the stated course objectives and the staff and student profiles.		
Academic management		Met
T4 Teachers are matched appropriately to courses and there are effective procedures for the appropriate timetabling of students, courses and classrooms.		Met
T5 There are formalised arrangements for covering for absent teachers which are satisfactory to students and staff.		Met
T6 Where enrolment is continuous, explicit attention is paid to all aspects of academic management affected.		Met
T7 There are effective arrangements for the academic induction of new teachers appropriate to their needs.		Met
T8 There are effective arrangements, led by an academic manager, to ensure appropriate day-to-day guidance and support for all teachers.		Not met
T9 There are effective arrangements for the observation and monitoring of teachers' performance by a TEFLQ academic manager based on clear standards known to teachers.		Not met
T10 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) of all teachers to meet the needs of the individual teachers, the students, and the organisation.		Met
Comments		
Teachers are timetabled to classes appropriately and receive suitable inductions. Insufficient assistance is given to the large number of teachers who need additional day-to-day support (T8). Most but not all teachers had been formally observed. There was insufficient attention paid to action planning and follow-up. (M9). Regular staff development sessions were available to teachers.		
Course design and implementation		Met
T11 The course design is comprehensive and is based on the provider's stated approach to learning or educational philosophy and is appropriate to the learning context.		Met
T12 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.		Met
T13 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.		Met
T14 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students and referred to in class.		Met
Comments		
The course design is appropriate for the young learner summer course provision. Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the written course outlines and the schemes of work available for both teachers and students.		

Action taken on points to be addressed

Management

M3 Three of the senior management team at Uxbridge had to be changed or replaced, resulting in an absence of continuity, which impacted on the smooth running of the course.

Addressed. The Uxbridge management team had remained the same throughout the summer, with additional support being provided by a second activity manager at the busiest time of the summer.

M7 Although work has started on updating the course design and improving supervision of students, there is still significant work to be done.

Addressed. Course design has been improved in a number of ways. Teachers and students have access to written course outlines and detailed schemes of work.

M11 It was apparent that staff were unfamiliar with key information, such as aspects of the emergency plan and the expected content of lessons. In focus groups, teaching and activity staff reported that induction sessions were insufficiently practical.

Addressed. Staff were aware of the emergency plan, and the staff inductions had been sufficiently practical.

M22 Much of the information provided is not written in accessible English at B1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference*.

Addressed. The information is written in appropriate English.

M23 Outline descriptions of each course, in plain English, including objectives and levels, are not provided.

Addressed. These are in place.

M28 The Accreditation marque is not used in line with Scheme requirements, for example, the marque without 'for the teaching of English in the UK' is used in numerous documents and handouts.

Addressed. The Accreditation marque is used appropriately.

P7 Many of the set materials are outdated and not relevant for younger students. Teacher and student focus group comments supported the inspectors' findings.

Partially addressed. The new schemes of work and materials are more up to date. However, teachers reported that some of the materials were too advanced for lower-level students and contained references to work themes.

Teaching and learning

T2 There was no member of the academic management team with the required level of qualifications at Chelmsford or at head office.

Addressed. There are staff at the head office with appropriate qualifications and PLUS had used a TEFLQ roving DoS to visit some of the centres for the first part of the summer.

T7 The induction does not currently prepare academic staff to deliver the curriculum effectively within the school's stated design principles as laid out in the recruitment and support policy.

Addressed. The teacher inductions are sufficiently detailed and practical in most respects.

T10 CPD sessions are not targeted and or practical enough to meet the needs of the teacher profile.

Addressed. Weekly staff development sessions had taken place.

T11 The course design rationale is currently insufficiently clear, and the schemes of work do not support delivery. Intended learning outcomes are not included nor are study and learning strategies that support independent and post course learning.

Addressed. Course design has been redesigned and now includes course outlines and detailed schemes of work.

T14 Written course outlines appropriate to the course type are not provided and are not referred to in class.

Addressed. Written course outlines are given to students and displayed in classrooms.

T15 Many classes had a wide range of levels and at Uxbridge the age range was often more than three years.

Addressed. The age range in classes at Uxbridge was appropriate at the time of the inspection.

Welfare and student services

W20 The content of the programme onsite was sometimes limited, with only one activity being offered to a wide range of student ages and backgrounds.

Addressed. A range of activities was provided at Uxbridge.

Safeguarding under 18s

S4 There was evidence that, occasionally, not all the required references for new staff are being collected systematically.

Addressed. References were on file for all the staff whose records were sampled.

Conclusions

PLUS, has addressed many of the points raised in last year's report for example, and considerable progress has been made in relation to publicity and course design. Although the teaching profile remains unsatisfactory, there are no grounds for bringing forward the next full inspection.

Items requiring early action

Evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in P1, W22 and S6 have been addressed.
