

Organisation name	St George International School of English, London (Summer junior provision at Ardingly College, Sussex)
Inspection date	4 August 2015

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1992
Last full inspection	October 2014 – adult school in London
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 at Ardingly; certificated teacher training courses in London
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Schools in India and in Italy

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: check course not running at inspection

Premises profile

Address of main site	Main school: Kenilworth House, 79–80 Margaret Street, London W1W 8TA
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Ardingly College, College Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6SQ
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	Ardingly College

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	26	36
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	9	11
Typical age range	9–17	11–17
Typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Kazak	French, Spanish
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	4
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	5	

INTRODUCTION

Background

The London school of St George International (SGI) was inspected in October 2014. The report identified a number of issues relating to the *Care of under 18s* section in the context of 16 and 17 year olds being accepted on adult courses. In view of this, and the notification that, for the first time in a number of years, the school would be running a junior vacation course in the summer of 2015, and that this provision would be included under the accreditation of the main school, it was decided to carry out a spot check of the junior course. This report focuses exclusively on the provision at the junior vacation course centre.

Preparation

The inspector contacted the school director of the London school in early July to ask for background information about the junior course (student and teacher numbers, planned excursion days, publicity etc.). This was received and the school director updated it regularly. No indication was given of the date when the visit would take place.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 9.00 on 4 August (the Tuesday of the penultimate week of the course) and left at 14.45. During this time he had meetings with the centre director, the activities manager, the director of studies, and the operations manager of Ardingly projects (the host organisation). Classes given by all three teachers were observed and meetings were held with the teachers and with a group of students. The accommodation used by the students and staff was also inspected.

FINDINGS

Management

The junior provision is well managed. The centre director is a year-round teacher at the main SGI school and has a good working relationship with the school director. The team at the junior centre (centre director, activities manager and director of studies) all live on site and communicate well about all aspects of the course. The operations manager at Ardingly projects confirmed that from his perspective the course was well run and that communication with his team was excellent. Feedback is collected from students at the end of their stay; initial feedback is informal. Induction for staff was brief but given the relatively small scale of the operation, was satisfactory. Publicity is generally satisfactory, but insufficient information about the objectives and focus of the language classes is provided (M23).

Resources

These are adequate for the context. Courses are based on a coursebook, and there are supplementary materials available to support this.

Teaching and learning

The team of teachers/activity leaders all have appropriate TEFLI qualifications. The director of studies (DoS) is TEFLI but is part way through a course leading to a Level 7 diploma award in TESOL. A rationale was requested and in the context of the present inspection, it is recommended that this should be accepted. This recommendation is based on the relevant experience of the DoS, the small size of the course, and the support available from head office if required. (T4/T5)

The course design is coursebook based. Students have three sessions (of 60 minutes) each morning, and each session is led by a different teacher. Students work through a different unit of the coursebook with each teacher. This means that the work with each teacher is coherent across the week although there may be different focuses for the students during each day's lessons. It is felt by the school that the opportunity to work with a range of different teachers outweighs any potential difficulties for students with this arrangement, and feedback from the students indicated that they were very happy with this structure.

All teachers had been observed and there was evidence of useful feedback. Weekly CPD sessions had been arranged, and the members of the teaching team worked one week as full-time teachers, and the following week as full-time activity leaders. This meant that during their teaching week they had ample free time for lesson preparation, normally carried out jointly with the DoS.

Each of the three teachers working in this role during the week of the inspection was observed. The teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to good and met the requirements of the Scheme.

Welfare and student services

The safety and security of the students was well managed. The course and accommodation base in Woodard Hall has key-pad controlled access. Full risk assessments had been carried out, and the management team had received fire marshal training from the host school. A fire evacuation practice had been carried out. Pastoral care is of a good standard with a high ratio of staff to students ensuring that any problems are quickly picked up and addressed.

The residential accommodation is a mixture of double and single rooms, which are comfortably furnished. Rooms are cleaned every day. Bedsheets are changed every two weeks, but Scheme criteria require a weekly change (W9). Rooms are not ensuite but there are ample showers and toilets.

The leisure programme is overseen by the activities manager. There are two full-day excursions each week, with on-site activities every afternoon and evening. Afternoon activities are predominantly sport based, though non-sport options are also available. Evening activities include BBQs, a movie night, and a disco. Risk assessments for all activities had been prepared, and supervision arrangements for both on-site and off-site activities were satisfactory.

Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R6 Staff room(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

The course office and base was in Woodard Hall, where all staff and students were also accommodated. Classes were held in the modern languages block, a five-minute walk from the base. Meals were taken in the main school refectory, close to the teaching block.

R3 The classrooms were well equipped and provided a good learning/teaching environment.

R4 The student common room in Woodard Hall provided excellent facilities for relaxation, with comfortable seating and facilities for watching TV or DVDs. Part of the room was fitted out as a dance floor for parties and discos, and there were patio doors leading to a secure paved area where barbecues could be held.

R5 Signage around the host school is not very clear, but students are helped to find their way to the areas they need to use and Woodard Hall was identified with an SGI banner. The classrooms are part of the modern languages department and SGI were not allowed to use the classroom noticeboards to display their own material. In Woodard Hall information about the course programme and other areas relevant to the students was clearly displayed.

Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Suitability checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

All students on the junior course are under the age of 18.

C1 The safeguarding policy shown to the inspector covered many of the required areas. However, particularly in the sections on 'Monitoring' and 'Social activities', it was clearly written with a focus on the context of 16 and 17 year olds studying on the adult courses at the main school. No reference was made to the specific requirements of dealing with much younger students (as young as nine on the junior course), or to the supervision required in a residential context.

C2 The centre manager is the designated safeguarding officer for the junior course site. She has received advanced training. All other members of staff have received basic awareness training.

C5 All staff apart from one teacher/activity leader had received clearance after DBS checks. An application had been made for the person concerned, but clearance had been delayed. A number of steps had been taken to ensure that this person was monitored and that one-to-one contact with the students was avoided; however, these steps had been taken on the basis of the centre manager's discretion, and were not supported by a formal risk assessment of the situation.

C8 Examination of the files revealed a number of gaps in the emergency contact details for parents.

Care of under 18s summary

The provision meets the section standard. There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 on the junior course, including the associated leisure activities and accommodation. However, the organisation's safeguarding policy needs to be extended to include a focus on the specific requirements of a residential course for learners as young as nine, and a formalised procedure needs to be developed for dealing with cases where suitability checks on members of staff are delayed. Steps must be taken to ensure that emergency contact details for all parents are available.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Points to be addressed from the previous inspection report with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

The previous inspection report covered the provision of courses for adults at the main school site in London. The following urgent points to be addressed were identified and checked:

Care of under 18s

C3 The *Consent form for under 18s* that the school requires parents to sign states that no special supervision for under 18s is provided on activities and excursions and that 'SGI is not responsible for the actions or safety of the student while they are on an excursion or activity'. The inspectors explained that signing a form does not remove the school's duty of care to its students and asked for the sentence to be removed.

Addressed: this comment is relevant only to the main school where 16 and 17 year olds are enrolled on adult courses, and documentation was produced to show that the form has been amended.

C4 The requirements of this criterion are not made clear to potential employees in writing.

Addressed: examination of documentation relating to the appointment of staff on the Ardingly course showed that the requirements of this criterion had been fully met.

C5 The school does not currently require evidence of a police certificate of good conduct for foreign teachers accompanying their students in closed groups.

Addressed: evidence was seen of emails to agents and sponsors requiring accompanying group leaders to have a police certificate.

C6 At present no special attention is paid to the supervision of 16 and 17-year-olds on excursions and other off-site activities.

Addressed: this comment is relevant only to the main school where 16 and 17 year olds are enrolled on adult courses, and documentation was presenting setting out new guidelines for their supervision on off-site activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The junior vacation course was well managed and was operating in accordance with Scheme requirements. A small number of points to be addressed were identified.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2018; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. Documentary evidence should be submitted within six months to show that the weaknesses in C1 and C5 in relation to the junior vacation course have been addressed.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

Vacation courses for under 18s can be added.

The reference to a need for improvement in the Care of under 18s can be removed.

Summary statement

Original

The British Council inspected and accredited St George International in October 2014. 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 large private language school offers courses in general, academic and professional English for adults (16+).

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of care of under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of academic staff profile, academic management and teaching.

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

Revised

The British Council inspected and accredited St George International in October 2014 and August 2015. 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 large private language school offers courses in general, academic and professional English for adults (16+) and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of academic staff profile, academic management and teaching.

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

Points to be addressed outstanding from the previous inspection or arising from this visit

M23 Insufficient information about the objectives and focus of the language classes is provided.

T4 The DoS was not TEFLQ.

W9 Bedsheets are changed every two weeks, but Scheme criteria require a weekly change.

C1 No reference was made in the safeguarding policy to the specific requirements of dealing with very young students (as young as nine on the junior course), or to the supervision required in a residential context.

C5 Steps taken to cover the employment of a member of staff whose DBS clearance had been delayed were not supported by a formal risk assessment of the situation.

C8 Examination of the files revealed a number of gaps in the emergency contact details for parents.
