

Organisation name	EC Young Learner Division (Head office Brighton)
Inspection date	10–11 July 2017

BACKGROUND
Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1986 (EC Brighton)
Last full inspection	August 2015 (EC Brighton)
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
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	EC Cambridge, EC London, EC Bristol, EC Oxford, EC Manchester
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	EC schools in Malta, South Africa, USA and Canada

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited by extension
Reason for spot check	Signalled: first inspection of new extension

Premises profile

Address of main site	EC Brighton, Dolphin House, 2–5 Manchester Street, Brighton BN2 1TF
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Ovingdean Hall, Greenways, Brighton BN2 7BA EC Cambridge, 57–61 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ Frensham Heights School, Rowledge, Farnham GU10 4EA Hackney Community College, Falkirk Street, London N1 6HQ University of Portsmouth, University House, Winston Churchill Avenue, Portsmouth PO1 2UP
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a
Sites inspected	Ovingdean Hall, Greenways, Brighton BN2 7BA

Student and staff profile (Ovingdean Hall)

	At inspection (peak week)	In peak week July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	354	354
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	Italian, French	Italian, French
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	13	13
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	25	25

INTRODUCTION

Background

For a number of years, EC schools in Brighton, Cambridge, Oxford, Bristol and London have been running summer courses for under 18s as part of their individual, year-round accreditations. Nearly two years ago, the EC board took the strategic decision to bring all the UK-based, summer provision for juniors (under 18s) into a new Young learner division (YLD), and to manage it centrally. The director of the new division (previously the principal of EC Oxford) took up post in January 2016, together with the young learners logistics manager (previously the operations manager of EC Brighton). After a pilot phase in 2016, this year's young learners' programme is the first to be fully operated by the new division. It was agreed that the current year's activities could be accredited by extension from the Brighton school. This spot check took place in order to monitor the workings of the new systems, prior to a full inspection in the summer of 2018 with a view to offering accreditation to the YLD in its own right as a seasonal multicentre provider.

The inspection took place over two half days, and was carried out by one inspector.

Preparation

The inspector was provided with background correspondence between EC and the Accreditation Unit, and a copy of the 2017 EC Young learners' brochure. He subsequently made phone contact with the director of the YLD, and arranged to make a half-day visit to the head office on 10 July; it was also arranged that a half-day visit to a centre would take place on 11 July – but no indication was given of which centre would be visited.

Programme and persons present

At the head office the inspector had separate meetings with the director of the young learners division, the young learners logistics manager, and the young learners accommodation officer. He also had a phone discussion with the EC group academic director. The inspector arrived at 12.30 and departed at 16.15.

At the Brighton course centre, meetings were held with the programme manager, the young learners logistics manager (who was making a scheduled visit to the site), and the academic manager. Informal discussions were held with two international group leaders, and one of the two team leaders in charge of the social activities team. A campus tour included visits to the on-site residential blocks and the sports and entertainment facilities. Drop-in visits were made to six classes. A round-up discussion was held with the young learners logistics manager. The inspector arrived at 08.50 and left at 13.15.

FINDINGS

Head office: The head office team are responsible for all aspects of the planning and delivery of the UK programme of summer young learner courses. In doing this, they are able to call on the resources and expertise of the EC group, including the experience gained by individual EC schools in running these courses over a number of years. Marketing and sales, enrolments, and airport transfers are all handled by, or supported by, central EC teams; IT resources and systems; recruitment and safeguarding policies and procedures are all based closely on existing EC models.

Ovingdean Hall centre: The Ovingdean Hall centre is on the eastern edge of Brighton, set in its own extensive grounds. Two courses are run there – a 'summer camp' for 10–13 year-olds, and a 'classic' programme for 13–17 year-olds; the summer camp is completely residential, while on the classic programme, students have the option of homestay or residential accommodation. The programmes for the two courses are similar, but the younger students are taught in special groups and are more closely supervised. For the week during which the inspection took place, a double-banked programme was in operation, with some students having classes in the morning and activities in the afternoon, and others having activities in the morning and classes in the afternoon. EC has sole use of the premises, facilities, and grounds.

Management

There is a clear structure of management both within the YLD head office and at the centres. Communication with other departments within the EC structure is handled by head office, and it is clear that the YLD is well embedded and well supported. A striking feature of the communication channels within and between all areas of the operation is the sophisticated use of technology to share, track, and record communications.

All staff and on-site managers spoken to felt that they had been thoroughly inducted into their work, and had access to support as needed.

Student feedback is collected initially (relating to accommodation and transfers), and at end-of-stay. Feedback on the academic work is collected each week at the end of the module.

Publicity is clear and sets up realistic expectations about the facilities and the services provided. Minor issues were identified about the use of an out-of-date version of the Accreditation Scheme marque, and the failure to include in the publicity mention of the fact that some homestay accommodation is provided through an agency.

Teaching and learning

The on-site academic manager is TEFLQ, and the 13-strong teaching team has a qualifications profile that is broadly satisfactory. In the context of a full inspection, qualifications evaluations or rationales would have been required in three cases.

The academic content of the junior course programme is uniform across all centres in the UK and internationally, and consists of online materials at three levels to support a set of weekly, self-contained, theme-based modules. A key feature is the integration of classroom-based work with out-of-class activities. Drop-in visits were made to six classes. The classrooms were all large enough for the size of the class, and were well equipped with internet access and display facilities. Students were all engaged with the material, although students in the two classes for the youngest students were clearly tired by the end of the morning, and their attention was flagging. The policy of having the same timetable structure (2 x 90-minute blocks with a 15-minute break) for both ten year-olds and 17 year-olds should be reviewed.

Welfare and student services

Risk assessments for students' safety and security in relation to fire and other premises-related risks in the teaching and residential premises are in place. However, these are often based on the risk assessments of the host institution, and need review to ensure that they are adapted to the specific needs of the students on these courses.

Many students on the courses are accompanied by international group leaders, who take first-line responsibility for the pastoral care of their students. The social team leaders take responsibility for ensuring a named contact is available to each individually enrolled student.

A full and varied activities programme is provided, with contingency plans for wet weather. Facilities include a theatre area, an indoor swimming pool, a multi-sport area, tennis courts, and a very large playing field.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 Staffroom(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

R1 The campus and the buildings used by the course are spacious, and provide plenty of circulation space.

R2 The condition of the buildings varies, but all are in an acceptable state of repair and decoration. Some of the accommodation blocks are recently built and are in very good condition.

R3 Classrooms fully meet the requirements of the Scheme.

R4 There are good facilities for student relaxation, with a designated "chill-out zone" in a dedicated building. The dining hall is small for the number of students enrolled, and better arrangements are needed to stagger lunchtimes in order to minimise the very long queues noted during the inspection.

R5 Signage is adequate, but could be improved to create a more coherent information display, and a more professional image.

R6 All staff have access to a large staff kitchen, and teachers have a designated workroom.

Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C3 Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Safety and supervision during scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision outside scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

All students are under 18, ranging from ten to 17.

C1 There is a centrally produced safeguarding policy for all EC schools, which is adapted to take account of any specific local requirements. All centres have a DSL trained to specialist level, and there is a structure for referral from the local DSL to the director of YLD (specialist level trained), and if necessary on to central HR (also specialist level trained).

C2 All staff are required to undertake at least basic awareness training, and they have access to a training portal offering certificated courses in a wide range of safeguarding and child-protection courses.

C3 While EC staff members are accessible through emergency telephones 24 hours a day, programmes for 13 to 17 year-olds do not provide 24/7 supervision. This information is only included the Terms and Conditions, and is not made explicit in the section of the website on Support and Safety.

C4 Recruitment procedures are fully in line with safer recruitment requirements.

C5 Frequent checks are made during the day to ensure that all students are accounted for.

C6 For residential students, there is little time that is not taken up with scheduled activities; homestay students are given clear guidance about travel to and from the centre, and are subject to a curfew.

C7 Onsite residential accommodation is carefully supervised. Most homestay accommodation is provided by an agency registered by the British Council, and some is provided through the accommodation office at the EC Brighton school.

C8 Contact details for parents/guardians are collected on the first day of the course, as well as from the enrolment forms; parents have access to a dedicated area of the website where they can monitor the activities their child is taking part in, and which displays the emergency contact number. The number is also given in pre-departure information sent to the 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 within the organisation and in the leisure activities and accommodation provided.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Relevant points from the previous full inspection of EC Brighton 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.

Welfare and student services

W9 The residential campus does not offer a laundry service to students, some of whom are as young as ten.

Addressed: Residential supervisors provide help with laundry.

W28 Social leaders do not routinely review specific risk assessment forms before excursions and activities, take them with them on trips or refer to them after events.

Addressed: Risk assessments are now "live documents", reviewed before and after all excursions and activities.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Management

M26 It is not made clear that some homestay accommodation is provided by an agency.

M29 An out-of-date version of the Accreditation Scheme marque is used.

Resources and environment

R4 Better arrangements are needed to stagger lunchtimes in order to minimise the very long queues noted during the inspection.

R5 Signage is adequate, but could be improved to create a more coherent information display, and a more professional image.

Teaching and learning

T13 The policy of having the same timetable structure (2 x 90-minute blocks with a 15-minute break) for both ten

year-olds and 17 year-olds resulted in younger students being clearly tired by the end of lessons.

Welfare and student services

W1 Risk assessments are often based on the risk assessments of the host institution, and need review to ensure that they are adapted to the specific needs of the students on these courses.

Care of under 18s

C3 Information about the level of supervision provided for 13 to 17 year-olds is only included the Terms and Conditions, and is not made explicit in the section of the website on Support and Safety.

CONCLUSIONS

The Young learners division is well managed, and is supported by services, policies and procedures developed within the EC group.

RECOMMENDATION

The extension of accreditation can be continued pending a full inspection of the provision within twelve months.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

N/a

Summary statement

N/a
