

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Wise Owl English Language Ltd

ADDRESS: 12 Elaine Avenue
Rochester
Kent
ME2 2YW

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Phil Monfor

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 25 July 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 1 October 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Wise Owl English Language Limited (Wise Owl/the Provider) is a privately-owned short course provider which runs English language summer schools for children aged 7 to 14 years and for whom English is a foreign language. Its aims are to bring together young people from around the world in a caring, stimulating and purposeful environment where English comes naturally. It was incorporated as a private limited company in 2012.

The Head of the Provider is the sole Company Director and is supported by a Director of Studies who oversees teaching and learning and, during the summer school, by a Boarding and Activities Manager.

The current teaching venue is an 18th century English country house, called Kinlet Hall, in Shropshire, previously used as an independent boarding school. Kinlet Hall offers accommodation, teaching rooms, and spacious grounds for activities, in a rural setting.

Classes are organised according to participants' English language ability with a maximum of twelve in each teaching group. The Provider also offers online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tuition. BAC accreditation is for the face-to-face training only.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Wise Owl offers a programme which includes five weeks of intensive face-to-face EFL teaching coupled with a variety of sporting and creative activities and excursions. The programme is aimed at participants who are aged 7 to 14 years. The age range will be changed to 9 to 16 years from September 2019.

The courses have a strong academic focus with 25 hours per week of EFL tuition. Students can enrol for between one and five weeks. The total capacity each week is 60. In the week of the inspection there were 32 participants. The majority are under the age of 14 and the number of boys and girls is roughly equal. Approximately half the current participants are from Europe and half from the rest of the world including China, Japan, Russia and Israel.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector, who attended the programme at Kinlet Hall over one day. A number of documents were reviewed and discussions were held with the owner and Company Director, the Director of Studies, teaching staff, and boarding/activities staff. The inspector also talked with participants and observed lessons and activities. The organisation co-operated well with the inspection.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Stage 2	4 April 2013
Stage 3	29 July 2013
Interim	31 July 2014
Re-accreditation	27-28 July 2017

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The duration of the summer course was increased from four to five weeks in 2018.

There is a new resident Director of Studies in place during the 2019 summer school with the previous post-holder acting as the consultant Director of Studies throughout the year. The staffing of the programme has been reorganised to allow clearer delineation between the responsibilities of teaching staff and boarding/activities staff. This has reduced teacher workload and allowed staff to have more free time which has contributed positively to the smooth running of the school.

Non-accredited online EFL tuition was launched in 2019 but there had not been any take-up at the time of this inspection. The age range of the participants will be changed from 7 to 14 years to 9 to 16 years from September 2019.

2. Response to actions points in last report

8.2.8.3 The Director must formalise the annual review and action planning process to include input from participant, staff and parental feedback. This will ensure the Provider is responsive to the needs of the stakeholders.

The annual review and action planning process, to include input from participant, staff and parental feedback, has been formalised. There are daily staff meetings where issues are raised, discussed and recorded and actions taken. Feedback is collected from participants, staff and, where possible, parents. Managers write an end of course evaluation and tutors fill in a self-evaluation form. Lesson observation takes place and feedback is given which includes areas for development. All this information is collated and areas for development are identified which feed into an action plan for improvement. However, an overall evaluation report, which analyses and gives an overview of the provision and identifies strengths as well as weaknesses is not produced. This limits the opportunities to celebrate good practice and to provide feedback to staff.

10.5 The Provider must ensure that participants are allocated to the class best suited to their needs, to ensure appropriate stretch and challenge for all participants.

Participants are assessed prior to arrival using a written test which previously constituted the main source of information for deciding participants' initial language level in English. This is now supplemented by one-to-one oral tests on arrival when the teaching staff carry out diagnostic assessment to clarify students' level and support needs. They are then allocated to an appropriate class. Changes are made, when necessary, with the agreement of the teacher into whose class they transfer. Information from the oral test includes background and interests and this information feeds into class profiles. To further ensure appropriate stretch and challenge for participants, differentiated activities form part of lesson planning. Weaker students receive more support and stronger students are given extension activities and are also used in peer support, which consolidates and reinforces learning. As a result, participants are challenged to develop their skills effectively and are making good progress.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should ensure effective version control of documentation so that evidence of review and updates is available.

Effective version control has been implemented for documentation and as a result there is appropriate evidence of updated materials and reviews.

The Provider should obtain feedback from all participants early in the course so that any identified actions can be taken quickly and improvements made.

Feedback is now obtained from every student on their first Tuesday, which is the second day, as well as at the end of each week. As a result, the Provider responds quickly to any issues that arise and improvements are made of which the participants are made aware. However, there is no official feedback mechanism to report to students as to what has been changed as a result of their feedback.

The Provider should include information on provision for participants with disabilities in its documentation and publicity materials.

Information on provision for students with disabilities has been included in documentation and publicity materials including the website. It is now clear what adjustments can, and cannot, be made bearing in mind the limitations of an historic building.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider is managed effectively by the Director who is well supported by a Director of Studies, a Boarding and Activities Manager, and a team of qualified teaching and boarding/activities staff.

Communication is clear and daily staff meetings, with agendas and action points, together with daily logs on the intranet ensure all staff are aware of any issues and what is needed.

Appropriate managerial and administrative staff are employed, and staff are well qualified and experienced for their roles. Administration is organised efficiently and policies are reviewed regularly.

Data collection and collation systems are effective and feedback from participants, parents and staff is collated and analysed. Areas for development are identified and action planning is effective in bringing about improvements. Lesson observations take place regularly and teachers are supported to develop their practice more effectively.

Publicity material is accurate and gives a comprehensive up to date picture of the provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Programme management is very effective. Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.

Courses are delivered in a way that allows participants to succeed. Learning outcomes are clear and relevant to developing participants' skills. The new oral tests which have been introduced have been effective in identifying individual participant needs. Participants are tested every week and a report is made available to their parents.

Teaching is effective and students are engaged and enjoying their learning. Lessons are interactive, and students participate well. Participants confirmed that they had learnt a lot and inspection findings confirmed this.

Lesson observations take place each week and teachers benefit from feedback and one-to-one meetings which include professional dialogue. Teachers confirmed that they very much valued this input into their professional development.

Trips, excursions, and daily activity sessions enable participants to use their new language skills in a variety of contexts, in a fun way, which reinforces their learning.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Pastoral support is very good. Well implemented safeguarding provisions are in place. All staff have received enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with Level 3 certification. All staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding at induction, in line with advice from the local safeguarding board. However, a minority of staff members do not have evidence of certification at the required level and there is no-one with an appropriate level of certification who could deputise for the DSL if necessary.

Participants receive clear pre-course information and an induction on arrival which enables them to settle in quickly. Students confirmed they feel safe and know who to go to if they have a problem. International participants receive support through staff, and they are encouraged to use another student to translate if they need extra language support to communicate a problem.

Participants are supported, and constantly supervised, by teachers and boarding and activities staff, all of whom come to know the students well. Communication systems are very good. There is a daily log on the intranet accessible to all staff and to which they all contribute, and participants' pastoral or behavioural issues are recorded. As a result, all staff are aware of any participant issues and are able to support them appropriately.

Participants are accommodated in former boarding school accommodation, which is fit for purpose and well maintained, and they are well supervised by residential staff. There is a comprehensive activities programme with a range of activities from which participants can choose, together with twice weekly excursions.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Accommodation is secure and fit for purpose, clean, tidy and of an adequate standard. Classrooms are bright and airy and conducive to effective learning.

The facilities for activities are attractive and include playing fields and a tennis court. The use of an historic country house, in very scenic rural surroundings, is an enriching experience for participants.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Students enjoy their learning and participate well. As a result, they make good progress in relation to their starting points and many recommend the summer school to others and return themselves.

Learning sessions, activities and trips are fun and enable the participants to use their language skills in a range of contexts.

Management is effective and communication is clear. Use of the intranet to share information ensures all staff are aware of potential issues and participants' individual needs and are better able to provide the necessary support.

Staff development and support are very good and include lesson observations, identification of good practice and areas for development, oral and written feedback, and regular one-to-one meetings. Staff confirmed that they valued the input and felt it facilitated their professional development.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that the Provider produce an overall self-evaluation report which analyses and gives an overview of the provision, and identifies both strengths and weaknesses, in order to celebrate good practice and provide feedback to staff.

The Provider should consider using a more formal mechanism to feedback to students the actions taken in response to what they have said so that they can see the Provider values their input.

The Provider should consider appointing an appropriately qualified deputy DSL and ensure all staff have appropriate certificated safeguarding training.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE