

Organisation name	English Language Centre, Bristol
Inspection date	20 July 2016

**BACKGROUND**
**Organisation profile**

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1983
Last full inspection	November 2014
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	None
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	None

**Current accreditation status and reason for spot check**

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: inspect new or additional premises Signalled: monitor effect of change of provision

**Premises profile**

Address of main site	Pembroke House, 44 Pembroke Road, Bristol BS8 3DT
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Abon House, 25 St John's Road, Bristol BS8 2HD
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	4-5 Worcester Road, Bristol BS8 3JL
Sites inspected	Pembroke and Abon House are two large, mid-nineteenth century houses located in the district of Clifton, close to the centre of Bristol. Both Pembroke and Abon House have nine classrooms, a multimedia centre, a student common room, a garden area and a teachers' room. In previous summers, the school had use of the Coulson Centre at Clifton College, an independent boarding school close to the school buildings. In 2016 the Coulson Centre is being refurbished and the school is making use of large, newly refurbished Clifton College premises in Worcester Road, very close to Pembroke House. Students from the whole school have continuing access to the extensive sports facilities at the college. The school refers to the Worcester Road site as its 'Summer Centre'.

**Student and staff profile**

	At inspection	In peak week August
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	243	250
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	16	16
Typical age range	17-26	17-26
Typical length of stay	6 (summer); 10 (year round)	6 (summer); 10 (year round)
Predominant nationalities	Spanish, Italian, Swiss, Turkish	Swiss, Saudi, Spanish, Korean
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	25 teaching (+ 5 'floaters')	25 teaching (+ 5 'floaters')
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	13	13

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

English Language Centre (ELC) Bristol was established in 1969. Year round the school operates as one school working on two sites – Pembroke House and Abon House. During July and August, the school opens up a third site for seven weeks in Clifton College, which is located very close by. The school regards all three sites as one school and each is managed by year-round staff.

ELC has a policy of only offering general English courses, which may include preparation for external general English and IELTS examinations. Lessons are every morning and on four afternoons a week. On two afternoons there is a continuation of the morning programme, while on the other two, higher level students can follow an elective option in Business English, British Culture etc. The school does not accept groups and teaching is for twenty-one hours a week. There is little difference between the school's summer programme and its year-round programme, except that student numbers are higher and the average length of stay is shorter.

At the time of the last inspection the school did not accept under 18s but the decision was taken to extend the offering to individual 16 and 17 year-olds from June 2016, and as a consequence overall student numbers have been maintained. At the time of the inspection there were 26 students aged 16 and 17, 17 students at the 'Summer Centre', seven at Pembroke and two at Abon.

### Preparation

The focus of this inspection was on the care of under 18s, the new college premises being used by the school, the publicity and the academic student profile. A one-day inspection was agreed for two inspectors, and a date and an inspection timetable confirmed with the school after the school had submitted relevant documents. One of the inspectors was the co-inspector at the last full inspection.

### Programme and persons present

The inspectors arrived at 08.30 and departed at 16.45. The new college premises were inspected and there were drop-in observations of the six classes taking place there (all but one contained 16–17 year-olds). There were meetings with the owners and the management teams at all three sites. Three focus groups (16–17 year-olds; 18+ and teachers) were held at the 'Summer Centre'. Staff files, publicity and documentation related to care of under 18s were examined. A final round up was given to senior managers.

## FINDINGS

The school has addressed concerns about publicity and put in place excellent safeguarding measures. The premises in Clifton College are of a very high standard.

### Publicity

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
M21 Accessible accurate language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M22 Realistic expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M23 Course descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M24 Course information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M25 Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
M26 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M27 Leisure programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M28 Staff qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M29 Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Comments

The publicity consists of a website and a brochure. Updated information about the school's social programme is provided in social media. The school's main selling points and its terms and conditions are translated into a number of languages. The school has produced a totally new brochure since the last inspection and the website has been updated, based on inspectors' comments. A new website is under construction.

M21 The school's revised brochure is admirably clear and very accessible. The text is written in short sentences in plain English. There is a good balance between text and visual content.

M22 The inaccuracies in the brochure current at the last inspection have been corrected. Some photos on the website in relation to sites used would benefit from captions.

M23 Courses are mainly clearly described but a more detailed description of the objectives at different levels would be an advantage.

M24 The imprecise statement about class size noted at the last inspection has been amended.

M25 Costs and terms and conditions are clear and easily accessible. Terms and conditions are translated into several other languages.

M26 The website gives good information about the residences, giving number of students, types of rooms, walking distances and site-specific photos.

### Publicity

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. Publicity is clear and gives an accurate description of the provision. *Publicity* is an area of strength.

### Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R6 Staffroom(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Comments

These comments relate solely to the additional summer premises at Clifton College. This section was an area of strength at the last inspection.

R1 The refurbished premises are of a very high quality and the school has sole use of this part of the college site for its summer course. Most classrooms are large; there is a good-sized student lounge, an attractive canteen, and very well-maintained grounds and gardens.

R2 The premises have been newly refurbished and are spotlessly clean. The whole area is very well maintained.

R3 The premises comfortably meet the elements of this criterion. One classroom used was much smaller than the rest but the students were happy to stay there after they were offered an alternative room.

R4 There is a large, attractive student lounge with games and Wi-Fi access. The canteen provides snacks and reasonable prices and is very popular with students. Students are advised to pre-order their meals. The atmosphere and the décor make for a very welcoming environment.

R5 Display areas are very good and each classroom has been personalised for the students.

R6 There is a spacious staffroom with tables and comfortable seating and a wide range of appropriate resources.

### Premises and facilities

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The off-site premises used for the school's summer course are of a very high quality. *Premises and facilities* is an area of strength.

### Academic staff profile

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
T1 General education (and rationales)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
T2 ELT/TESOL teacher qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
T3 Rationales for teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T4 Profile of academic manager(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T5 Rationale for academic manager(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### Comments

T1 The school employs thirty seven teachers throughout the year. Two do not have Level 6 qualifications. Rationales were seen and accepted in the context of this inspection. Both teachers had an HND qualification and extensive ELT experience.

T2 All teachers are TEFLI or TEFLQ. Year round there are 25 teachers, thirteen of whom are TEFLQ. At the time of the inspection there were thirty teachers, eleven of whom were TEFLQ.

T4 All three year-round academic managers are TEFLQ. The two year-round assistant directors of studies (ADoSs) working as directors of studies (DoSs) at the summer centre are also TEFLQ. All managers have many years' appropriate experience.

### Academic staff profile summary

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. Academic staff at all levels are very well qualified. *Academic staff profile* is an area of strength.

### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Safety and supervision during scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

There were 26 students aged 16 and 17 enrolled on the summer course at the time of the inspection. The school takes 17 year-olds on all year-round courses, and accepts 16 year-olds on the summer course. All 16 and 17 year-old students stay in homestay accommodation.

C1 There is a clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy in place which specifies a wide range of procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students under the age of 18. It is reviewed every six months by the school's safeguarding team. The vice-principal, as the designated safeguarding lead, (DSL), and child protection officer, (CPO), is responsible for implementing the policy.

C2 The full policy document is available in staff and teacher manuals. A condensed version of the policy is sent to prospective employees, educational tour operators, parents or guardians of under 18s and to homestay hosts. All are required to confirm they have read the documentation. All staff have received basic training. There are six members of the safeguarding team: the vice-principal, principal, director, homestay manager and admissions officer, all of whom have received specialist training. The social programme manager has received advanced training.

C3 A full and accurate statement of the level of care and support given to students under 18 is available before enrolment. Parents or guardians are required to sign agreements for unsupervised time outside class times and for unsupervised journeys from students' homestays to the school. A separate section of the website describes the pastoral care available for under 18s.

C5 Under 18s are identified in class registers and their photographs are entered on the ELC database. They attend weekly meetings with the principal and they are required to wear identifying wristbands, which have the school's emergency number. Students at the focus group stated that all the school staff were concerned with their welfare and safety.

C6 An 'Excursions/Activities Guidelines' card is issued to all under 18s each time they go on scheduled activities or excursions. The card has two emergency contact numbers and reminders about safety during their free time. There are risk assessments in place for all activities, excursions and unsupervised time. Teachers and other staff who accompany students are required to read the risk assessment for each activity and sign that they have read them. They do not routinely sign them on the day the activity takes place.

C7 Under 18s are required to stay in homestay accommodation and hosts are made aware of additional responsibilities. The homestay manager maintains close contact with the hosts. Students at the focus group were very satisfied with their homestay experience.

C8 The contact arrangements outside office hours are satisfactory. The principal holds the emergency phone and has remote access to the contact details of students and their parents, guardians or agents.

---

## Care of under 18s summary

---

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. Appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place for students under 18 accepted by the school. *Care of under 18s* is an area of strength.

---

### 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.*

---

#### Management

M22 The personal study programme with four hours supervised self-study is optional and does not form part of programme as stated in the brochure. The mapping of IELTS scores to the CEFR levels is inaccurate. It is also stated that the standard of homestay accommodation is unusually high as Bristol is a prosperous city with very few language schools. However, there is no evidence to substantiate this claim.

**Addressed. See comments in Publicity section above. The brochure now says *Personal study programme with 4 hours optional self-study a week*, which is accurate. The mapping of IELTS scores to the CEFR levels has been updated. The brochure no longer makes the claim about homestay accommodation.**

M24 The maximum class size given is imprecise. There is reference to it being 'occasionally up to 14'.

**Addressed. See comments in Publicity section above. It now says *Average class size 10. Maximum: 14.***

M26 Information on the accommodation provision is not consistent. Sometimes it is classified as being within walking distance and sometimes 'usually' within walking distance.

**Addressed. See comments in Publicity section above. It now says *We can arrange your accommodation in single rooms, usually within walking distance of the school and Almost all accommodation is located within walking distance.* Both claims are accurate.**

---

#### Points to be addressed arising from this visit

---

M22 In some photos on the website it is not clear which school buildings they illustrate.

C6 Staff do not routinely sign risk assessments on the day a leisure activity takes place.

---

### CONCLUSIONS

---

The school has taken effective action to address the concerns about publicity. As from June 2016 the school has accepted 16 and 17 year-olds and has put in place excellent safeguarding measures to ensure the safety of its students. The premises in Clifton College now used for the school's summer school are of a very high standard. The school remains very well managed by a highly experienced team.

---

### RECOMMENDATION

---

The next inspection falls due in 2018; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

---

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

#### Changes to summary statement

---

Courses for 16+... can be added.

Areas of strength can be added for publicity, academic staff profile and care of under 18s.

---

#### Summary statement

---

The British Council inspected and accredited the English Language Centre, Bristol in November 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](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This large private language school offers courses in general English for adults (18+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, student administration, quality assurance, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic management, course design, learner management, teaching, care of students, accommodation and leisure opportunities.

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

---

---

## **Revised summary statement**

The British Council inspected and accredited the English Language Centre, Bristol in November 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](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This large private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of staff management, publicity, student administration, quality assurance, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, academic management, course design, learner management, teaching, care of students, accommodation, leisure opportunities and care of under 18s.

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

---