

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Organisation name | Atlas Language School (Head office: Dublin) Seasonal Junior Centre Chichester |
| Inspection date | 21 July 2023 |
| Current accreditation status | Accredited |
| Reason for spot check | Routine: newly accredited institution |

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2024; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

The need for improvement in the area of publicity can now be removed.
An area of strength can be added for premises and facilities.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Atlas Junior Centre Chichester in July 2019 and July 2023. 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 private language school offers vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, teaching and leisure opportunities.

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

Updated summary inspection findings**Management**

The provision meets the section standard. Strategic and quality management is satisfactory and there are good communication systems in place. Staff management and development is effective overall. Student administration is efficient. There are robust procedures for obtaining and analysing feedback from students. Publicity is for the most part accurate and useful.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The premises provide students and staff with an exceptionally comfortable, well equipped and professional environment for work and relaxation. A range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students. Satisfactory guidance on the use of these resources is provided for staff. *Premises and facilities* is an area of strength.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The Atlas team generally collaborates effectively to meet the needs of students for security, pastoral care, and information and now has a robust emergency plan in place. Policies and practices promote tolerance and respect. Accommodation in the halls of residence is of a good standard. A very good range of well-organised leisure and sporting activities both on and off campus is available. *Leisure opportunities* is an area of strength.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. Policies and procedures to safeguard students under the age of 18 are generally sound. Atlas has amplified its safeguarding policy and reviewed its parental consent form for children enrolled in groups.

Organisation profile

| Inspection history | Dates/details |
|---|---|
| First inspection | 2014 |
| Last full inspection | 2019 |
| Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable) | 2023 (this spot check) |
| Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable) | N/a |
| Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable) | N/a |
| Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre | N/a |
| Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates | N/a |
| Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates | Atlas Language School Dublin, Atlas Junior Centres Dublin and Malta |

| Student and staff profile | At inspection | In peak week: July |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT) | 176 | 176 |
| Minimum age (including closed group or vacation) | 11 | 11 |
| Typical age range | 14–16 | 14–16 |
| Typical length of stay | 2 weeks | 2 weeks |
| Predominant nationalities | Spanish, Italian, Mexican | Spanish, Italian, Mexican |
| Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses | 7 | 7 |
| Total number of managers including academic | 4 | 4 |
| Total number of administrative/ancillary staff | N/a | N/a |

Premises profile

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Address of main site | Bishop Otter campus of the University of Chichester (College Lane, Chichester PO19 6PE) |
| Additional sites in us | None in the UK |
| Additional sites not in use | N/a |
| Sites inspected | University of Chichester |

Introduction

Background

Atlas Language School is based in Dublin, Republic of Ireland. There is a year-round school for adults which also runs 'Atlas Junior' centres in Dublin, Malta and Chichester. The junior course in Chichester was held for the first time in 2015. Residential courses for young learners between the ages of eleven and 17 are offered in a programme of 15 hours of tuition a week with activities.

The course is held over four weeks in premises on the University of Chichester campus in Chichester; students enrol for two, three or four weeks, starting in week one, two or three. Students are usually enrolled through agents and come with group leaders, although at the time of this inspection there were twelve students who had booked through an agent but were not accompanied by a group leader; Atlas had nominated one of its activity leaders to act as their group leader. Students and group leaders stay in residential accommodation on the university campus.

The last full inspection was in 2019. Strengths were noted in the areas of teaching and leisure opportunities, but the report noted a need for improvement in the area of publicity.

Preparation

The spot check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. The Accreditation Unit established when a junior course would be running but, apart from that, did not indicate to the school when the spot check would take place.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at the school's main building at 13.15 and left at 16.45. He met the centre manager, the director of studies (DoS) and the Activity Manager. He had a meeting with nine group leaders. He asked to see

various documents, which were provided in paper form or electronically. He attended indoor and outdoor activities and observed a project class. He did not observe any other teaching.

Findings

Management

There have been no significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. Findings in other aspects of this area are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Premises and resources

There have been no significant changes in resources since the last inspection. Findings in relation to Premises are reported below.

Teaching and learning

Findings are reported below (academic staff profile) and in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

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.

Premises and resources

| Premises and facilities | Area of strength |
|--|------------------|
| P1 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff. | Strength |
| P2 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment. | Met |
| P3 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food. | Met |
| P4 Free drinking water is available. A choice of appropriate food at affordable prices is available to students on site, if not available locally. | Met |
| P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display of general information. | Strength |
| P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions, and for teachers to carry out their preparation and marking. | Strength |

Comments

P1 Premises, including any external areas, are in a very good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide an exceptionally comfortable environment for students and staff. Many of the larger communal areas have recently been renovated.

P5 All signage is very clear. A colour-coding system directs students very effectively to classrooms. All routes are clearly signposted. Student noticeboards are colourful, well organised and prominently placed.

P6 There is more than sufficient space for all staff, for meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions, and for teachers to carry out their preparation and marking.

Teaching and learning

| Academic staff profile | Met |
|---|-----|
| T1 All academic staff have a level of education normally represented by a Level 6 qualification on the Ofqual register of regulated qualifications. | Met |
| T2 The teaching team has ELT/TESOL qualifications relevant to the courses they are teaching. | Met |
| T3 The teaching team has a range of experience, knowledge and skills appropriate to the courses offered and the needs of the learners. | Met |
| T4 The academic manager/academic management team has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership. | Met |

Comments

T2 One teacher was not TEFLI. A rationale was provided for her and was accepted in the context of this spot check.
T4 The academic management team comprises the DoS, who is TEFLI, and the TEFLQ centre manager. A rationale was presented for the DoS and was accepted in the context of this spot check. The DoS has relevant experience to support teachers and the centre manager carries out, alone or jointly with the DoS, all the duties that require a TEFLQ qualification.

Action taken on points to be addressed

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

Points which were to be addressed within three months

Management

M22 On the website the statement that the junior courses are 'famous for their excellent quality' is not supported by any evidence. The terms and conditions state inaccurately that homestay accommodation is based on a seven-night stay: homestay is not provided. The complaints procedures refer students misleadingly to an Irish quality assurance agency.

Addressed. The shortcomings listed above have now been corrected.

M24 There are inconsistencies in the information about the total number of taught hours per week. On the website publicity requires students to multiply the number of lessons and 45 minutes to get a total number of tuition hours per week. In the group leader handbook the number of hours is stated incorrectly as 13.5 hours per week.

Addressed. These inconsistencies have now been removed.

M26 Publicity does not provide a description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.

Partially addressed. While publicity still does not provide the necessary description, it is included on the parental consent form.

Welfare and student services

W2 The emergency plan is not sufficiently wide ranging. It is for off-site emergencies only and takes account of a very restricted range of possibilities, and does not cover practical procedures. An on-site plan which reflects that of the university is also required.

Addressed. The new emergency plan is broader in scope and much more detailed.

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 The safeguarding policy does not provide guidance on handling delayed suitability checks.

Addressed. This information is now included.

S3 The consent forms that parents of children who are enrolled as members of groups sign are not designed for the Chichester junior school. The form also contains a disclaimer which seems to deny Atlas' duty of care. In addition, one Spanish agent translates the form, but fails to replicate the detail of the English original.

Addressed. The parental consent forms are now Chichester-specific and recognise the duty of care. No translated forms are used.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M3 The Atlas organogram does not include reporting lines.

Addressed. The current version does include reporting lines.

M9 Teachers' job descriptions are insufficiently detailed.

Addressed. They are now satisfactorily detailed.

M10 There is a need for more robust teacher recruitment procedures.

Addressed. Recruitment procedures have been strengthened.

Teaching and learning

T1 One member of the teaching staff did not have a Level 6 qualification.

Addressed. All the teachers had a Level 6 qualification.

T2 One member of the teaching staff did not have a TEFLI qualification.

This was also the case during this spot check but an acceptable rationale was provided.

T15 There is no systematic guidance to support independent learning.
Addressed. Such guidance has now been provided.

Conclusions

Atlas has dealt satisfactorily with the issues identified in the 2019 report.
