

Organisation name	Padworth College, Reading
Inspection date	4 June 2019
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: monitor effect of change of ownership

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2022; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement, apart from adding the date of this inspection.

New summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Padworth College in May 2018 and June 2019. 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 boarding school offers residential courses in general English and other academic subjects for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of academic staff profile, learner management, teaching, care of students, accommodation, and leisure opportunities.

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

New summary inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals and values. Communication is good and student administration efficient.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. There is a detailed safeguarding policy and all staff receive appropriate training. Staff undergo suitability checks, but two staff suitability checks are more than three years old. Supervision of students during lessons and activities, and outside scheduled activities, is good, with a number of procedures to ensure their safety.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1983
Last full inspection	May 2018
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	June 2019
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	Mainstream education years 9–13
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Bishopstrow College
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: N/a
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	32	N/a
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	13	N/a
Typical age range	13–19	N/a
Typical length of stay	12 months +	N/a
Predominant nationalities	Chinese, Japanese	N/a
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	3	N/a
Total number of managers including academic	1	N/a
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	9+ outsourced catering	N/a

Premises profile	
Address of main site	Padworth College, Sopers Lane, Reading RG7 4NR
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Padworth College, Sopers Lane, Reading RG7 4NR

Introduction

Background

Padworth College is an independent co-educational boarding school established in 1963. On October 10, 2018, Padworth College Trust Limited sold the assets, business and operations of Padworth College to Padworth College Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Inspiring Futures Limited which owns Bishopstrow College, a British Council accredited school. As a result of this transaction, the Directors of Inspiring Futures Limited and Bishopstrow College became Directors of Padworth College Limited.

Padworth College offers EAL teaching and a curriculum leading to (I)GCSE and A-Level examinations in a range of subjects, and a one-year Business Foundation course leading to university entry. This provision remains unchanged.

Preparation

The spot check was carried out by one inspector who contacted the deputy principal in May to check if there were any dates which would not be suitable and to ensure key staff would be present. The Accreditation Unit sent school documentation to the inspector who also looked at the website, the previous report, annual declaration and other relevant documentation.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 12.00 and departed at 17.00. He had meetings with the deputy principal who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the deputy DSL and with the new proprietors. In addition, focus group meetings were held with the two EAL teachers working in the school and a group of students. All relevant documents were provided for the inspector.

Findings

Management

The operational management of the school has not changed following the change in ownership. The senior leadership team at the school was not changed at the time of the acquisition, although a new principal and director of studies have been recruited for August 2019. The new proprietors are based mostly at the school and communicate with the senior leadership team formally at leadership team meetings and informally on a day-to-day basis. In addition, they communicate informally with the school staff.

Members of the senior leadership team reported that nothing significant had changed operationally since October 2018, although in terms of governance, communication with the proprietors was more frequent than it had been previously.

The new owners explained that they had been spending time observing and learning in order to develop their strategy for the school. They intend to share resources and best practice between Padworth College and Bishopstrow and the new principal at the school is the current head of Bishopstrow. The proprietors have developed a long-term strategic plan for the school, with the short-term priority being the marketing of the school. A new director of external relations has been appointed. The teaching staff interviewed reported that they felt valued and listened to by the new proprietors.

Findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Welfare and student services

Following the change of ownership, the welfare structure and provision remains unchanged. Findings in other aspects of this area are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Safeguarding under 18s

Findings are reported in the following section.

Safeguarding under 18s

Safeguarding under 18s	Met
S1 There is a safeguarding policy which specifies procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students under the age of 18. A named member of staff is responsible for implementing this policy and responding to child protection allegations.	Met
S2 The provider makes the policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation, and provides guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation.	Met
S3 The provider has written parental/guardian consent reflecting the level of care and support given to students under 18, including medical consent.	Met
S4 Recruitment procedures for all roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s are in line with safer recruitment good practice and the organisation's safeguarding policy.	Not met
S5 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students during scheduled lessons and activities.	Met
S6 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students outside the scheduled programme.	Strength
S7 There are suitable arrangements for the accommodation of students.	Met
S8 There are suitable arrangements to ensure contact between the provider and parents, legal guardians or their nominated representatives concerning the welfare of students.	Met

Comments

Following the 2018 inspection the safeguarding team was reviewed and restructured. This team remained in place following the sale of the school, with the addition of one of the new owners as the safeguarding proprietor. The safeguarding policy and structure is otherwise unchanged.

The majority of students are under 18s, with the youngest being 13 years old. The oldest student at the time of the inspection was 19 years old.

S1 Comprehensive policies and procedures for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are in place, and there is a named member of staff/DSL and a deputy DSL known to all through handbooks, notices, and assemblies. The policy contains all the required components, including information on recognising abuse, and appropriate behaviour with students under the age of 18.

S4 Recruitment procedures are in line with safer recruiting guidelines, including carrying out suitability checks for all staff. The Accreditation Scheme requires DBS checks to be renewed every three years; two of the EAL teachers currently have DBS checks dating from 2013.

S6 Suitable arrangements are in place for the supervision of students outside the scheduled programme, including detailed information regarding what students can do in their free time. There is a clear procedure for students wishing to leave the site for an extended period, such as a weekend, through a leave out procedure, which must be agreed and signed by parents and the principal. Permission for this is linked to behaviour and the academic performance of the student. Students wishing to leave the site briefly to visit the local shop are allowed to do so in pairs, and must sign in and out.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points from the previous full inspection 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.

Points which must be addressed within three months

Safeguarding under 18s

S1 There is currently no suitably qualified support or cover for the DSL.

Addressed. The school now has a suitably trained deputy DSL.

S4 Suitability checks for two teachers are more than three years old.

Not addressed.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M5 Any action taken in response to student feedback is not recorded.

Not addressed.

M6 Any action taken in response to staff feedback is not recorded.

Not addressed.

M9 Job descriptions are not discussed in appraisals, or reviewed in any other way.

Not addressed.

Welfare and student services

W2 The crisis management policy does not have a plan in place for emergencies beyond the college site.

Not addressed.

Conclusions

The change of ownership has been implemented smoothly and the transition has had minimal immediate effect on the structure of the school or its daily operations. Padworth College continues to maintain high standards in all aspects of its work. Action taken on the majority of previous points to be addressed has not yet been effectively implemented. No significant issues have arisen from this spot check and all documentation viewed was satisfactory.
