



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Ardmay House International Summer School

ADDRESS: Ardmay House
Arrochar
Argyll
G83 7AH

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Gail Ritchie

DATE OF VISIT: 8 August 2017

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 19 October 2017

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Ardmay House International Summer School (AHISS/the Provider) was established by Ardmay Limited. Ardmay Limited was incorporated as a private limited company in 2000 and AHISS is one of its trading names. AHISS was launched in the summer of 2011.

It is a family-run business with four directors, who are part of the family. These are the husband and wife, who are both Centre Directors and joint Managing Directors, an Operations Director and a Course Director. The responsibilities of the Centre Directors include the overall management of the Provider's operations as well as the finance and budgetary management. The Course Director's responsibilities are the overall management of the summer school, including management of the academic programme and of teaching and administrative staff. The Operation Director's responsibilities include the organisation and management of the activity and excursion programme.

AHISS provides residential academic and activity programmes for participants aged between 8 and 16.

AHISS is situated in the Trossachs National Park in the West of Scotland

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider runs two programmes, which are the Ardmay Adventure and Adventure English. Both course run at the same time. Ardmay Adventure can be booked for one or two weeks. Adventure English can be booked for one, two or three weeks.

Ardmay Adventure is an activity course, which is designed primarily for recreation and improving sporting skills. It also provides an opportunity for participants to improve their English language skills as they are immersed in speaking English during all activities. There is a minimum English language requirement for this course of an Intermediate (B1) level of English, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This is so that participants can understand instructions and communicate effectively with staff and peers. There is a suggested minimum age of 12 for joining the Ardmay Adventure course, on the grounds that an activities-only programme may be too physically demanding for some younger participants.

Adventure English does not have a minimum suggested age, although all AHISS participants are at least eight years old. Adventure English provides 15 hours of English Language (EL) tuition per week as well as adventure activities. The EL academic component is a combination of topic-based lessons and project work, typically in two 90-minute sessions each day. Participants' language competence ranges from beginner to upper intermediate level so that they are able to understand complex text and interact fluently with native speakers. The Adventure English programme begins with an evaluation of each participant's English language proficiency and classes are then tailored to reflect language ability and age.

Ardmay Adventure participants have two activity sessions per day and Adventure English one activity session. Outdoor activities for participants from both programmes include canoeing, kayaking and mountain biking. Participants from both courses have many opportunities to interact with each other through a good mix of daytime activities and varied evening activities. There is also a wide range of excursions to Scottish cities as well as scenic and cultural landmarks for a minimum of two and a half days per week for all participants.

The typical length of stay for AHISS participants is two or three weeks. A combination of two weeks of Adventure English and one week of Ardmay Adventure is a popular choice.

When it was launched it had 11 participants. The number of participants has grown from 139 participants in 2015 to 187 in 2017. At the time of the inspection, there were 28 participants enrolled of whom a small majority were male. Twenty-one participants were enrolled on Adventure English and seven on Ardmay Adventure.

3. Inspection visit process

The inspection was conducted for half a day by one inspector. Meetings were held with the four directors and there were discussions with two teaching staff, instructors and the teaching assistant and group leader. A tour of the residences, dining room and recreation areas as well as the classrooms was undertaken. Discussions were also held with a class of Adventure English participants.

4. Inspection history

Accreditation inspection:	21-22 July 2016
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PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

One of the EL teachers has been appointed as senior teacher. The post holder provides a focal point for communication, including with the activities team and brings local experience gained from Ardmay Ltd.

A teaching assistant and group leader now helps teachers as and when required, particularly with testing participants' English levels.

Some logistical changes have been made to excursion procedures, as part of a review and continuous improvement process.

An access database has replaced spreadsheets to consolidate information and streamline administration related to recruitment and participant information.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The annual review report should include a summary of participant feedback.

The report includes an appropriate summary of participant feedback, in terms of overall satisfaction and broken down into satisfaction rates for English language classes, outdoor activities, evening activities, excursions, and board and lodging.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments There are daily meetings between the Course Director and the teachers, the Operations Director and the instructors and the Activities Coordinator and the group leaders. These meetings provide a good forum for raising any issues about participants and planning. All staff meetings, which are held on Fridays enable staff to review the week and make suggestions for improvements. These are examples of the exemplary communication processes evident at AHISS. The directors held a management review session in autumn 2016. This included an evaluation of the summer season and development of an action plan. This is evidence of the directors' commitment to systematic quality improvement.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The programmes are delivered by a team of qualified and experienced EL teachers, qualified activity instructors and trainee activity instructors. The staff handbook makes it clear that staff are expected to be flexible and to contribute to a range of AHISS activities and responsibilities.</p> <p>The organisation and content of EL classes reflects accurately participants' language ability and ages and, therefore, promoting effective learning very well.</p> <p>Each Adventure English participant receives an end of course report as to their strengths and areas for development. This is helpful for their future learning.</p>				

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>Group leaders assist the teaching and instructional staff effectively throughout the programme. They ensure that participants' day to day needs are well met and that the participants are appropriately supervised and that they enjoy the evening activities.</p> <p>The organisation has comprehensive safeguarding procedures, including an appropriate Child Protection Policy, designated Child Protection Officers, who are two of the directors, thorough safe recruitment and induction processes for staff, a code of conduct for staff, risk assessment and standard operating procedures and 24-hour supervision of participants.</p> <p>Group leaders are typically students with experience of working with children and young people. Rotas ensure that the participants are supervised 24 hours a day.</p> <p>The evening programme of social activities is varied, planned around the interests of participants and well-supervised.</p>				

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The location of Ardmay House in rugged countryside provides an excellent learning environment including for water sports and outdoor activities.</p> <p>The rural and hilly location of AHISS can cause occasional wireless access problems and the directors are recommended to try to address this.</p>				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
<p>High-quality provision, of which the participants speak very highly. Most participants would recommend AHISS to a friend.</p> <p>Teachers and instructors are experienced and qualified.</p> <p>Effective communication, including a comprehensive staff handbook and daily and weekly staff meetings that promote an effective exchange of information.</p> <p>The effective incorporation of participant and staff feedback into the quality improvement process.</p>

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
None	

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>The rural and hilly location of AHISS can cause occasional wireless access problems and the directors are recommended to try to address this.</p>

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	