

Just as we were putting together our feature on young learners, an email turned up from a lady called Clementina. It read, 'Good morning, I am writing from Rome, Italy. I am looking for the "perfect" school for my fifteen-year-old nephew's first English course in the UK. I am interested in a junior summer course, three or four weeks, home-stay accommodation. I saw that you published the list of the top UK schools, however I found several lists on the net plus some schools told me to be on the list, but I could not see their name on the lists I have. Is it possible to have a list of summer schools for my nephew?'

Clementina is not only a generous aunt but a careful and considered purchaser of language courses. She had found the *Gazette* list of top summer school providers (January edition) and noted that all but one, Brighton International Summer School, were residential only.

The discerning Italian wanted a home-stay summer course not only because they are half the price, which meant she could buy more weeks for her nephew, but because she believes living with a family is better for practising English. Why

Something for the summer

weren't there, she wanted to know, *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence offering junior homestays?

It's a very good question and one that a great many Italian aunts may well want answering, though they are more likely to ask an Italian agent than the ELT trade newspaper. But we did the research, and we found that of course they exist – though there are fewer than you might think. Most specialist summer school operators, the only ones we featured in the January issue, do not offer homestays, and a large number of the top-performing year-round private language schools never take under-16s. We also had to exclude – for Clementina's sake – the odd Centre of Excellence, including Sussex Downs, our top-ranking FE, which only takes under-16s accompanied by a group leader or other adult as we were not convinced that too many Roman aunts are interested in spending their summer in Eastbourne with a fifteen-year-old.

But we found eleven Centres of Excellence, all listed here, which offer home-stays for

under-16s, many of which also offer junior English year-round.

The biggest problem, though, is that the *Gazette* does not know how many of them check the criminal records of the adults in their host families, nor can we find out from a source other than the schools themselves, as most are not members of Young Learners

English UK, nor have they been inspected by the ISI (see above).

So when we sent finally sent our list, published here, to Clementina we included the warning: 'Please ask each school if they check criminal records.' I am sure that our estimable Roman aunt will do so. And so, if you are using this list, should you. ■

Centres of Excellence offering under-16s home-stays

- 1) English in Chester (summer only)
- 2) Sidmouth International (year round)
- 3=) International House Bristol (year round)
- 3=) Crest School of English
- 5) Melton College, York (year round)
- 6) Isca, Exeter
- 7) Kaplan Bath (year round)
- 8=) Globe, Exeter
- 8=) Scarborough International
- 8=) Brighton international Summer School

These rankings have been compiled by cross-referencing a number of databases and may not be comprehensive. If you think your school meets the appropriate criteria please contact the *Gazette* for future inclusion.

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