

Organisation name	Bell Cambridge
Inspection date	10–13 July 2018

Section standards	
Management The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students, and in accordance with the provider's stated goals, values, and publicity.	Met
Premises and resources The premises provide students and staff with a comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. A range of learning resources is available, appropriate to the age and needs of the students. Guidance on the use of these resources is provided for staff and students where needed.	Met
Teaching and learning The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers receive sufficient guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Courses are structured and managed to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. The teaching observed meets the requirements of the Scheme.	Met
Welfare and student services The provision meets the needs of the students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities. Students benefit from well-managed student services, including, where offered, out-of-class activities and suitable accommodation.	Met
Safeguarding under 18s There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in any leisure activities or accommodation provided.	Met

Recommendation
We recommend continued accreditation. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in S4 have been addressed.

Summary statement
<p>The British Council inspected and accredited Bell Cambridge in July 2018. 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).</p> <p>This large private language school offers courses in general and academic English for adults (16+).</p> <p>Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, staff management, student administration, publicity, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, academic management, course design, learner management, teaching, care of students, accommodation, and leisure opportunities.</p> <p>The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.</p>

Introduction

Bell Cambridge opened in 1956 and was the founder school of the Bell Educational Trust. In 2012 all teaching activities were transferred to Bell Education Services Ltd, a trading subsidiary owned by the Trust. Charitable activities are carried out by the Bell Foundation, which is based in the Cambridge school. In 2018 there are two schools, Cambridge and London, for students aged 16+, and young learner courses with separate accreditation.

At the time of this inspection the CEO and the sales and marketing director were both quite new in post. Since the last full inspection in 2014 a new post of director of operations has been created and the two school principals report to this senior manager. In the Cambridge school a new student services manager (SSM) was appointed in 2015, and a new learning and teaching manager (LTM) in 2017. The principal has been in post for four years, and the school benefits from a core team of very experienced teachers, with additional teachers recruited for the summer courses.

At the beginning of 2018 an in-house online learning platform, *Bell Online*, was introduced. This is a resource for both students and teachers, and includes study materials and progress tracking, as well as local and school information.

The inspection took place over four days. The inspectors talked to the principal, the head of teacher development, the LTM, the deputy LTM, the learning centre co-ordinator, two advanced practitioners, the SSM, the school administrator, the sales and customer support team leader, the senior accommodation officer, the accommodation officer, the enrichment programme co-ordinator and the maintenance supervisor. All teachers timetabled to teach during the inspection were observed. Focus group meetings were held with students, teachers and group leaders. One inspector visited four homestays, three residences for adult students and one university residence catering for 16 and 17 year-olds in July and August only.

Address of main site/head office

Red Cross Lane, Cambridge CB2 0QU

Description of sites visited

Bell Cambridge is located in the southern outskirts of Cambridge, a short bus ride from the city centre. The school buildings are set in grounds with sports facilities and gardens and comprise a main building which is a three-storey family house built in the early twentieth century. Various extensions have been added over the years to form a square-shaped building surrounding an inner courtyard.

On the ground floor there is a reception area, a dining room with social area opening onto the gardens, a lecture room, the staffroom and a resources room, and offices. On the first floor there is a study centre with outside terrace, two computer rooms and offices. The school has a total of 30 classrooms, most in the main building but some in the 'cottage' attached to the main building. Two classrooms were being used in July in Hillscross, a house on the site a short walk from the main building.

The premises include offices for Bell Foundation staff, and Bell staff working in human resources and sales and marketing.

Course profile	Year round		Vacation only	
	Run	Seen	Run	Seen
General ELT for adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General ELT for juniors (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English for academic purposes (excludes IELTS preparation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English for specific purposes (includes English for Executives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher development (excludes award-bearing courses)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESOL skills for life/for citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Bell Cambridge offers general English courses (Effective English) of 15, 20 or 25 hours per week; students choosing 20 or 25 hours can customise their courses by selecting from one of three different language skills workshops, or business studies or one-to-one. IELTS preparation courses of 15, 20 or 25 hours per week run year

round. Preparation courses for external English examinations are also offered, including five-week fast-track courses in June/July. The maximum class size for these courses is 12. Business English courses of 15, 20 or 25 hours are offered, with a maximum class size of eight.

One-to-one is offered. At the time of the inspection 25 students were having one-to-one as part of their intensive general English courses.

Teacher development courses are run at the Bell Teacher Campus, held in Homerton College, part of the University of Cambridge, in July and August each year.

Students aged 16 and 17 are enrolled on adult courses.

Accommodation profile

The school offers accommodation in homestays and residences. One inspector visited two homestays accepting adults, two accepting under 18s, three adult residences and one, used only in July and August, which caters for adults and 16 and 17 year-olds.

The Garden House, on the Bell School site, offers six rooms (two ensuite) for adult students only. Mill Road Residence is privately owned, has five ensuite rooms and a sixth with sole use of a bathroom. There are self-catering facilities for adult students only. Sorrento Residence is behind a hotel and restaurant of the same name but the accommodation is entirely separate and reserved exclusively for the school. There are 24 ensuite rooms in newly built houses, with self-catering facilities for adult students only.

Homerton College residence is available in July and August only, for students aged 16+. There were 67 students (28 aged 16–17 and 39 aged 18+) at the time of the inspection. Younger students are located together on one floor. Evening meals are provided from Monday to Friday in the college hall and breakfast every day. Two other student residences, the Railyard and Tripos Court, were not visited. There were 40 students in Tripos Court, which had been seen at the last inspection; none were staying in the Railyard.

Summary of inspection findings

Management

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The management of the provision operates to the benefit of the students and in accordance with its publicity. There are well-developed systems in place for strategic and quality management, communication is good, and staff management is effective. Student administration is carried out efficiently. *Strategic and quality management, Staff management, Student administration and Publicity* are areas of strength.

Premises and resources

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The premises are attractive and well maintained and provide a comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. The range of learning resources is very good and guidance on their use for staff and students is readily available. *Premises and facilities and Learning resources* are areas of strength.

Teaching and learning

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The academic staff profile is excellent, and teachers receive very good guidance from a competent academic management team to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Course design is clearly structured and students' progress is monitored well. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme. *Academic staff profile, Academic management, Course design, Learner management and Teaching* are areas of strength.

Welfare and student services

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The needs of students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities are very well served. They benefit from well-managed student services provided by experienced key staff. A good range of appropriate out-of-class activities and a variety of suitable accommodation are provided. *Care of students, Accommodation and Leisure opportunities* are areas of strength.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard. There is appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the school and in the leisure activities and accommodation provided and the supervision of younger students is good, but the system for collecting staff and homestay references needs further improvement.

Evidence**Management**

Strategic and quality management	Area of strength
M1 There is a clear statement describing the goals and values of the organisation, which is made known to all staff.	Strength
M2 The management has clear objectives for the future of the organisation and has realistic plans to achieve them.	Strength
M3 There is a documented and clearly understood structure for the ELT operation. There are sufficient staff to manage and deliver the provision, and to ensure continuity at all times.	Met
M4 There are effective channels of communication between all involved in the ELT operation, and between the ELT operation and any wider organisation of which it is a part.	Strength
M5 The provider regularly obtains and records feedback from students on all the services offered. Feedback is circulated to relevant staff and appropriate action is taken and recorded.	Strength
M6 The provider regularly seeks and records feedback from all staff on the services offered. Appropriate action is taken and recorded.	Strength
M7 The provider reviews systems, processes and practices with a view to continuing improvement. Appropriate action is taken and recorded in an annual self-evaluation.	Strength

Comments

M1 The goals and values of the organisation are presented in a clear statement and the six principles inform the approach to teaching and learning in the school. The statement is in publicity, staff and student handbooks, and on noticeboards around the school. Staff receive 'education highlights', updates on academic issues framed within the principles every month. Some teachers in the focus groups referred to the ethos of the school, as defined in the principles.

M2 The organisation has a five-year strategic business plan, with clearly set out objectives. A related education plan defines objectives for developing teaching and learning, with measures defined to monitor progress; this is updated every two years. Certain key areas of development are identified, and staff referred to the progress of these during the inspection.

M4 Communication in the school is very good. Regular meetings take place involving staff at different levels, business updates are provided by school management, and there is also much informal communication among the members of the close-knit team. Staff said they felt well informed.

M5 Feedback from students is taken very seriously and is collected in a variety of ways, including first week, six-weekly and end-of-course questionnaires, as well as in tutorials and a regular student council. Focus groups or specific questionnaires are used to focus on particular issues, for example, student views on the food in the dining room. There was clear evidence of action being taken in response to students' views.

M6 Staff have opportunities to give feedback in regular staff meetings, in a monthly staff employee forum, via a representative from each department, and in annual appraisals. Action taken is fed back to staff, and recorded.

M7 There is much evidence of the importance given by school management to reviewing all aspects of the work of the school, with a clear focus on continuing improvement. This includes two-weekly meetings of the education steering group to review progress on teaching and learning practices, assessing the school's operations as part of inspections by external bodies, and internal reviews by staff members in other parts of the organisation.

Staff management and development	Area of strength
M8 The provider implements appropriate human resources policies, which are made known to staff.	Strength
M9 The provider specifies the duties of all staff working with ELT students, and regularly reviews these.	Met
M10 There are effective procedures for the recruitment and selection of all staff.	Met
M11 There are effective induction procedures for all staff.	Strength
M12 There are effective procedures for monitoring and appraising all staff, and for handling unsatisfactory performance or conduct. These procedures are made known to all staff.	Strength
M13 There are effective procedures to ensure the continuing professional development of all staff to meet the needs of the individual, the students and the organisation.	Strength

Comments

M8 The organisation's human resource policies are comprehensive, set out clearly and made known to staff by means of confidential access to the school's intranet. Policies are reviewed regularly and updated whenever company policy or employment legislation changes.

M10 The school's recruitment policy sets out safer recruitment guidelines. For staff references see S4.

M11 Induction procedures for all staff are very thorough. Checklists covering all aspects of a post are used, some completed pre-employment and some continuing to be covered during the first three months. New teachers are paired with a mentor. All staff receive a comprehensive staff handbook.

M12 Procedures for monitoring and appraising staff are set out in the performance management handbook and the performance improvement planning policy and are introduced at induction. Guidelines for management stress the need for fairness and support throughout. Regular appraisals for all staff allow for setting targets and identifying training needs which are addressed through the school's continuing professional development (CPD) programme.

M13 There is a very strong focus on CPD in the school, and all staff spoke in positive terms of the opportunities afforded them, and the proactive approach taken during appraisals to ensure every member of staff engages in this area. The head of teacher development and the academic managers are responsible for regular in-house sessions for teachers; teachers take up other opportunities such as upgrading their qualifications, for which financial support is available, attending and presenting at external conferences, and training to become teacher trainers or teacher mentors. Management and administrative staff have taken part in a range of relevant training, including customer support and mental health, food hygiene and safeguarding refresher training.

Student administration	Area of strength
M14 Staff are helpful and courteous to students and their representatives, and provide satisfactory levels of customer service.	Strength
M15 Students or their representatives receive sufficient information and advice on their course choices before arrival and during their stay.	Strength
M16 Staff carry out enrolment, cancellation and refund procedures efficiently, fairly, and with appropriate sensitivity.	Met
M17 There are effective systems in place to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of student enrolment, payment and course details. These records are accessible at all times to authorised staff.	Met
M18 There are effective systems to maintain up-to-date and accessible records of local contact details for students, and their designated emergency contacts.	Met
M19 There is a clear and effective policy on student attendance and punctuality that is known to all staff and students and is applied consistently.	Strength
M20 All staff and students are made aware of conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course.	Strength
M21 All students and, where appropriate, group leaders and parents/legal guardians, receive information in writing about how to make a complaint.	Strength

Comments

M14 School staff work effectively and efficiently together to provide a high level of customer service. Students spoke positively of the friendliness, helpfulness and patience of all staff in the school.

M15 Students have access to a wide range of information and advice from the multilingual sales team and the customer support team during the enrolment process, and in school from reception staff, teachers in tutorials, the academic managers and the principal. There was evidence of students receiving good support to help them change or add to their course choices after arrival.

M19 The school's policy on attendance and punctuality is made known to students at induction, in the student handbook, and on posters in classrooms. There is a rigorous system of checking and following up on absence and monitoring any welfare issues. Any absence of under 18s is reported and followed up immediately.

M20 The conditions and procedures are detailed in accessible language in the terms and conditions on the website, are made clear at induction and are reinforced in the student handbook, along with school rules.

M21 The school management takes the views of its students seriously. The school's complaints policy and procedure is written in clear, accessible language and includes the option of ultimate recourse to an external body. Students are informed by means of a pre-course information booklet, the student handbook and a poster in classrooms with photographs of staff to turn to for support in dealing with any issues early on.

Publicity	Area of strength
M22 All publicity and information is accurate, and gives rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.	Strength
M23 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear,	Strength

accurate and accessible English.	
M24 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Strength
M25 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Met
M26 Publicity or other information made available before enrolment gives an accurate description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.	Strength
M27 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	Met
M28 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Met
M29 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met

Comments

The school's publicity comprises a website, a printed brochure which is also downloadable from the website, and social media pages.

M22 The publicity materials, including photographs and video clips, are attractive and present a very clear and realistic picture of the school's premises, location, its services and resources. The website is well organised and very easy to navigate.

M23 All publicity materials are expressed in accurate, well-written and very accessible English.

M24 Information about all courses is clear and detailed, and presented consistently in tabular form and bulleted lists. Sample timetables illustrate ways in which students can customise their intensive courses.

M26 Comprehensive information about all aspects of the level of care provided for 16 and 17 year-olds in the school is in a dedicated section of the website. This includes the school's welfare policy for students aged under 18.

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.	Strength
P3 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Strength
P4 Free drinking water is available. A choice of appropriate food at affordable prices is available to students on site, if not available locally.	Strength
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 The premises are very clean, and maintained to a high standard, although the two overspill classrooms in the Hillscross house are in need of refurbishment, and this is planned. The spacious common areas, along with the extensive and attractive gardens, combine to produce a very comfortable place in which to work and study, even in the middle of a busy summer month.

P2 The classrooms have good natural light, and are quiet; they vary in size but all seat the maximum class size. Most of the 30 classrooms are air conditioned, and comfortable chairs and tables provide a very suitable environment in which to study.

P3 Students have very good facilities for relaxation. As well as the gardens with seating for good weather, there is a large indoor social area with comfortable seating, games and television. The dining room is spacious, and is a popular meeting place, and there are tables and chairs outside, too.

P4 Free water is available from the dining room, which is open from 08.00 to 17.00. A varied range of food is served at lunchtimes, with hot and cold choices and different diets catered for, fruit and salads, meal deals at special prices, and barbeque options on days when the weather permits. The latter was very popular in the very hot weather during the inspection. Action taken in response to student feedback about the food is detailed on a dining room noticeboard.

P5 Signage is very good throughout, and the branded style creates a sense of identity. Attractively designed information sheets with relevant and up-to-date information are displayed on noticeboards in areas where students can access them easily.

P6 Facilities for staff are excellent. As well as the main teachers' room with work places for everyone, storage facilities and access to technology, teachers can also work in the adjoining quiet room with the teaching resources. All staff use the nearby kitchen, where there are tables and chairs for working/eating.

Learning resources	Area of strength
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P7 There are sufficient learning resources for the number of students enrolled, appropriate to their age and the level, length and type of courses offered.	Strength
P8 There are appropriate resources for teachers, which are adequate in number, accessible, and well maintained and organised.	Strength
P9 Any educational technology inside the classroom and elsewhere is well maintained with adequate technical support. Staff receive appropriate training in using the available technology to support learning.	Strength
P10 Any facilities provided for additional or independent learning are appropriately equipped and organised.	Strength
P11 Students receive guidance on the use of any resources provided for independent learning.	Strength
P12 There is a policy for the continuing review and development of teaching and learning resources, and evidence of its implementation.	Met

Comments

P7 The school has a very good stock of learning resources for all the different course types offered, including supplementary and photocopyable materials, and digital resources. Every student receives a coursebook. The resources are very well organised.

P8 Teachers have access to an excellent range of well-organised resources for teaching, including up-to-date reference materials, skills materials and examination-related resources. Teachers are encouraged to share their materials and these are accessible on a shared drive. The library of books on teaching methodology is impressive and an interesting range of professional journals is available. Teachers have access to technology in their workroom, and there is Wi-Fi throughout the school.

P9 All classrooms have interactive whiteboards (IWBs), with the exception of three rooms used in summer, and two sets of tablets are available. The on-site team of four IT staff provide immediate and ongoing technical support when necessary, and staff spoke highly of the team. Training in the use of the IWB is provided, and the CPD programme has had a focus on exploring ways of using educational technology to its fullest extent.

P10 The learning centre is an excellent resource for independent learning. A wide range of materials is available, including a good selection of graded readers and DVDs, and there was evidence these are popular with students. Students can work with language practice programmes on the computers in the two adjoining computer rooms.

P11 The learning centre is open from 08.00 to 17.45 and staffed by the experienced learning centre co-ordinator from 11.00. She is able to advise students on suitable work to do on *Bell Online*, as well as with the full range of learning centre resources. Teachers bring their classes on a regular basis, and the facility was being well used by students doing project work at the time of the inspection.

Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile	Area of strength
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.	Strength
T3 The teaching team has a range of experience, knowledge and skills appropriate to the courses offered and the needs of the learners.	Strength
T4 The academic manager/academic management team has an appropriate professional profile to provide academic leadership.	Strength

Comments

T2 The qualifications profile of the teaching team is very good. Of the 34 teachers working at the time of the inspection, 15 were TEFLQ. Of the 16 teachers with permanent contracts, 15 are TEFLQ. Three teachers on temporary contracts are completing their diploma-level qualifications. One teacher does not have an ELT qualification which meets Scheme requirements. The rationale provided was accepted in the context of this inspection. The teacher has been at the school for 18 years and has engaged fully in all aspects of CPD, developing expertise in teaching academic English skills, and using her experience as a mentor to new teachers.

T3 The teaching team has a wide range of experience including as teacher trainers, teachers of business English and academic English, and as advanced practitioners. Many teachers have expert knowledge and experience of external examinations. The academic managers are very aware of the strengths in the teaching team, and also have access to a local pool of teachers with specialist skills so that the full range of courses offered can be delivered effectively.

T4 The head of teacher development is well qualified and very experienced, an acknowledged expert in the field of teacher training. The learning and teaching manager (LTM) and the deputy learning and teaching manager (DLTM) are both TEFLQ, have further specialist qualifications and experience in a wide range of teaching sectors.

Academic management	Area of strength
T5 Teachers are matched appropriately to courses.	Strength
T6 There are effective procedures for the appropriate timetabling of students, teachers, courses and classrooms.	Strength
T7 There are formalised arrangements, satisfactory to students and staff, for covering for absent teachers.	Strength
T8 Where enrolment is continuous, explicit attention is paid to all aspects of academic management affected.	Strength
T9 There are effective arrangements, led by an academic manager, to ensure appropriate day-to-day guidance and support for all teachers.	Strength
T10 There are effective arrangements for the observation and monitoring of teachers' performance by a TEFLQ academic manager.	Strength

Comments

T5 The LTM and DLTM have an in-depth knowledge of their teaching team and are able to take account of preferences, experience and qualifications to ensure that the most effective team is deployed. Teachers are required to extend their experience by teaching new course types and are timetabled to work alongside more experienced colleagues.

T6 Timetabling is handled very efficiently by the academic management team. A weekly overview is produced and individual timetables prepared for new students and new teachers. Group sizes are timetabled according to the relative size of classrooms, and in summer classes are rotated so that access to IWBs is fair.

T7 Arrangements for cover are comprehensive, both for planned cover and emergency cover. In summer there is always at least one cover teacher available, and a pool of local teachers can be called on year round. Relevant notes and materials are available to support the cover teacher.

T8 Carefully thought-through arrangements for placement testing and the structure and content of lessons on Mondays and Tuesdays facilitate optimal integration of new students and ensure a coherent programme for continuing students. Tutorials further support new students.

T9 Teachers receive very good guidance and support. The LTM and DTM are available and approachable and can draw on their extensive experience to support their team; they deal with practical issues in a short daily meeting, and issues discussed are summarised and circulated by email. Teachers also have the support of the advanced practitioners and teacher mentors, as well as support from their peers in the staffroom. Weekly teacher meetings encourage the exchange of ideas. Teachers spoke positively of the support from their academic managers.

T10 New teachers are observed within their first two weeks, and all other teachers are observed once a year. There is a rigorous in-house standardisation and moderating process to ensure that observations are carried out in a consistent and reliable way. Observation notes on file were seen to be very perceptive with explicit reference to the criteria being used. Action plans resulting from observations are discussed at appraisals, and related issues feed into the CPD programme.

Course design and implementation	Area of strength
T11 Course design is based on stated principles. There is a coherent and appropriate course structure described in writing for teachers' guidance.	Strength
T12 Course design is regularly reviewed in light of the different and changing needs of students and feedback from teachers and students.	Met
T13 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students.	Met
T14 Any activities additional to English classes, and which form part of the language curriculum, encourage the acquisition of language and the development of relevant language skills.	N/a
T15 Courses include study and learning strategies that support independent learning and enable students to benefit from their programmes and continue their learning after the course.	Strength
T16 Courses include strategies which help students to develop their language skills outside the classroom and benefit linguistically from their stay in the UK.	Strength

Comments

T11 Helpful guidance for teachers is provided on the learning management system (LMS) on *Bell Online* in relation to the design and structure of courses offered in the school, including afternoon skills modules. The Bell syllabus supports the use of the coursebook, coursebooks are mapped on the LMS for teachers' reference, and syllabus checklists are a practical support for course planning. Students on 20- and 25-hour courses can customise their courses by selecting one or two additional course components.

T15 Assessment as learning is a key principle in the school's approach to learning and there was evidence in

lesson planning and lesson observations of the importance given to supporting students to become more independent learners. This included prompting students to reflect on how they learn, remember and revise new vocabulary. Further support for independent learning is provided in tutorials and in the learning centre, and on *Bell Online*. Students have access to *Bell Online* as soon as they enrol, and for three months following the end of their course.

T16 The school's Language in Action programme offers students a range of opportunities for using language outside the classroom, including workshops, clubs and cultural and social activities. The activities are supported by fact sheets and language preparation activities.

Learner management	Area of strength
T17 There are effective procedures for the correct placement of students, appropriate to their level and age.	Met
T18 There are effective procedures for evaluating, monitoring and recording students' progress.	Strength
T19 Students are provided with learning support and enabled to change courses or classes where necessary.	Strength
T20 Where relevant, students are guided to select the examinations and examination training best suited to their needs and interests.	Strength
T21 Academic reports are made available to students on request and, in the case of under 18s, to their parents/guardians.	Strength
T22 Students wishing to progress to mainstream UK education have access to relevant information and advice.	Strength

Comments

T18 Students' progress is monitored closely with weekly progress tests and end-of-course tests, with results logged on the LMS on *Bell Online* and mapped to Common European Framework levels. This progress data is available to students and teachers for regular tutorials when learning goals are discussed, and also recorded on the LMS. Students are encouraged to complete a learning journal online to reflect on their learning and progress.

T19 Learning support for students is very good. Students' progress is monitored by teachers and academic managers so that any need to change levels is identified promptly, and any change facilitated. The procedure is clear. Students receive expert learning support in tutorials and from the learning centre co-ordinator.

T20 The academic managers and many of the teachers have in-depth experience and knowledge of the examinations students can prepare for in school so students are given tailored advice about their options. Those already in classes at appropriate levels are advised of the benefits of switching to an examination course, in terms of maintaining motivation on a long course, and the usefulness of an examination certificate.

T21 Reports are produced on a six-weekly basis and on the student's departure and copies are sent to parents, guardians and/or sponsors. The report and end-of-course certificate are professionally presented, with results clearly linked to can-do statements, and a personalised comment from the class teacher on the student's achievements.

T22 The school has an experienced university counselling manager who is available two days a week for appointments with students on all types of courses. She is able to give expert advice on applications to UK universities. Further support is available from the Bell pathways team.

Classroom observation record

Number of teachers seen	34
Number of observations	34
Parts of programme(s) observed	Morning general English (Effective English), examination and IELTS preparation, skills modules, one-to-one

Comments

None.

Teaching: classroom observation	Area of strength
T23 Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge and awareness of the use of English and the linguistic systems underlying it, and provide appropriate models of both spoken and written English.	Strength
T24 The content of the lessons shows that the course objectives, the learning needs and cultural backgrounds of the students have been taken into account.	Strength
T25 Lessons lead to relevant learning outcomes, made known to students and achieved through a coherent sequence of activities.	Strength
T26 Teaching techniques are appropriate to the focus of the lesson and to the needs of the group and individual learners.	Strength

T27 Teachers promote learning by the effective management of the classroom environment and resources.	Met
T28 Students receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance during the lesson.	Strength
T29 Lessons include activities to evaluate whether learning is taking place.	Met
T30 Teachers demonstrate the ability to engage students and create a positive learning atmosphere.	Strength

Comments

T23 All teachers demonstrated good knowledge of linguistic systems and gave clear explanations with relevant examples. They provided accurate models of both spoken and written English, and most wrote up new vocabulary with helpful information, such as phonemic script and stress markings.

T24 Class profiles provided showed that teachers knew their students well, and the content of lessons was closely linked to their learning needs. Lesson topics were well chosen to reflect the students' interests and cultural backgrounds. Differentiation was planned for and handled skilfully in lessons.

T25 Lesson outcomes in plans were specific and realistic; teachers shared them with students on the whiteboards, and some ticked them off as the lesson progressed. Lessons were well staged, with frequent and useful references to work completed in previous lessons, and a coherent sequence of activities. Teachers of exam preparation classes used their expert knowledge skilfully to help students acquire and practise the techniques required.

T26 A variety of techniques relevant to the focus of the lesson was observed. These included elicitation, nomination, pair and group work, checking of meaning and careful prompting of new and/or shy students. There was expert teaching of new vocabulary at higher levels with a focus on precision of meaning, collocation and register. Teachers allowed students time to process new language and produce longer utterances.

T27 Teachers generally managed the classroom environment well, although in some one-to-one lessons seating arrangements were not always optimal. A good range of resources was used including the coursebook, video, audio and mini boards. Some teachers relied heavily on coursebook exercises, while others exploited the material and brought it to life. The IWBs were used competently by all teachers, and creatively by many; students in the overspill classrooms in the Hillscross house were disadvantaged by there being no IWBs there.

T28 A variety of correction techniques was seen, including self, peer and teacher-led correction, as well as gesture and delayed correction. Active use of dictionaries was observed in some classes. Teachers were encouraging, particularly at individual level, and praised students for genuine achievements.

T29 Lessons included activities that checked whether students had learnt new target language. These included writing an article, information gap exercises and dialogues in pairs.

T30 In a few classes where lessons centred on coursebook work, students were not always fully engaged, but in most classes the good pace set by teachers, together with their energetic manner and genuine interest in their students, resulted in a very positive and purposeful learning atmosphere. Students worked well in pairs and groups. They spoke in very positive terms about their teachers, and their appreciation of being challenged in their learning.

Classroom observation summary

The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme and ranged from very good to satisfactory, with the majority of the segments observed judged to be good or very good. Knowledge of linguistic systems was good, and lesson content and outcomes were relevant to students' learning needs. A good range of teaching techniques was observed, and generally skilful use of resources. Correction techniques and feedback were handled very well, and in most classes teachers were able to create a positive and purposeful learning atmosphere.

Welfare and student services

Care of students	Area of strength
W1 Providers ensure the safety and security of students on their premises by measures appropriate to their age and background, and the location.	Strength
W2 There is a comprehensive plan to respond to any emergency. This plan is known to all staff, and relevant elements are known to students.	Strength
W3 Students receive pastoral care appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. All staff and students know the name(s) of the person or people who deal with students' personal problems.	Strength
W4 There are policies to promote tolerance and respect, and procedures for dealing with any abusive behaviour. All staff and students are aware of these.	Met
W5 Where relevant, students receive a 24-hour emergency contact number for the provider, in writing.	Met
W6 Students receive in advance information on the most appropriate forms of transport between the point of entry to the UK and the provider or accommodation, including	Met

approximate costs.	
W7 Students receive advice on relevant aspects of life in the UK.	Strength
W8 Students have access to adequate health care provision.	Strength

Comments

W1 Priority and close attention is given to all aspects affecting the safety and security of students on school premises. There are regular risk assessments of all premises and an annual health and safety review by external consultants. Fire evacuation drills are conducted at least twice a year, staff appointed to evacuate any disabled students, and weekly tests of fire equipment take place. The site is monitored by external and internal CCTV. Students, staff and visitors have colour-coded identity cards. Security guards monitor the premises and car park during the night and at weekends.

W2 A major incident policy and procedure is in place and is communicated appropriately and sensitively to staff and students at their induction. The policy was reviewed in October 2017 by the principal and director of operations.

W3 Students receive a high level of pastoral care and appropriate supervision throughout their stay. The new-student induction talk and orientation tours are conducted by the student services manager and enrichment programme co-ordinator and are supported by a 30-slide presentation. Recognising the danger of information overload, a reminder of who to contact for help and support in different areas is sent to all new students on their second day. There is both an Islamic prayer room and a separate reflection room on site, and catering takes account of different faith and other dietary needs. A welfare log records any concerns about or issues raised by students, and actions taken in response.

W7 Students receive comprehensive relevant advice, appropriate to their ages, on all aspects of life in the UK before arrival, at their induction, in the accessible student handbook and on well-designed posters displayed around the school.

W8 A very good provision of health care is arranged by the school. There are three appropriately qualified first aiders and a quiet medical room with a bed. The school has an arrangement with a nearby medical practice. The city's hospital is close by. Medical insurance is provided for all students as part of their fees.

Accommodation (W9–W22 as applicable)	Area of strength
<i>All accommodation</i>	
W9 Students have a comfortable living environment throughout their stay.	Strength
W10 Arrangements for cleaning and laundry are satisfactory.	Met
W11 A responsible representative inspects all accommodation (for safety and suitability) before students are placed, and at least every two years after that.	Strength
W12 Students receive written confirmation of accommodation booked, giving clear and accurate information.	Strength
W13 There are effective procedures for identifying and resolving any problems students have with their accommodation.	Strength
W14 Accommodation providers receive written confirmation of the rules, terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services.	Strength
W15 Students receive meals as agreed; these offer a well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements students may have.	Met

Comments

W9 All the accommodation visited was suitable and of a good standard. Students' bedrooms in homestays and residential accommodation were of good size. Many had ensuite facilities or sole use of a bathroom. All hosts provide Wi-Fi. Of the four homestays visited, the first accepted up to three students in single rooms: two ground-floor garden rooms with a shared bathroom and a third in the house. The second host, with 30 years' hosting experience, had three male adult students. Their bedrooms and bathroom were together on the first floor. The third homestay accepted girls only and had two staying in very comfortable rooms. The fourth was a smart newly built house where two 17 year-old friends were sharing a twin room at their request. All the hosts clearly knew their students and were interested in providing them with a good experience while they were in Cambridge.

W11 The accommodation supervisor or her assistant visit all new and existing accommodation every year. Feedback on all accommodation is closely monitored and followed up where necessary. Most homestays are exclusive to Bell but if not the nationalities and ages of any students from other providers are monitored. The next dates due for visits, fire risk assessments, annual gas safety checks and DBS checks are recorded and highlighted on the accommodation database.

W12 Written confirmation of booking to students choosing homestay accommodation provides a pen portrait of the hosts and other information, including phone number and email address, and invites them to make contact before arriving. A separate information sheet gives details of what they can expect in terms of meals, facilities and the homestay environment, and how to contact the accommodation team. For students choosing residential accommodation, factsheets for each provide pictures and details of the facilities, locations and transport links.

W13 The accommodation supervisor and her assistant are identified during induction and contacted easily in their office or through reception, and at a regular 'accommodation clinic' held in the dining room once a week. During induction, students are encouraged to speak to the accommodation team if they have any problems and a first-week feedback survey is sent to all new students via *Bell Online*.

W14 Very clear, comprehensive information is provided to providers in the homestay handbook, terms and conditions and other documents. There are regular newsletters to hosts, they are emailed the social programme every month so they can encourage students to participate, and are invited to two or three social functions at the school every year. All hosts visited confirmed they felt valued by and had very effective communications with the school.

<i>Accommodation: homestay only</i>	
W16 Homestay hosts accommodate no more than four students at one time.	Met
W17 Homestay hosts do not accommodate more than one student with the same language, unless the students, their agents, parents or legal guardians specifically request this in writing.	Met
W18 No more than two students share the same bedroom, unless the students, their agents, parents or legal guardians specifically request this in writing.	Met
W19 English is the language of communication within the homestay home.	Met
W20 Hosts ensure that there is an adult available to receive students on first arrival.	Met
Comments	
All criteria in this area are fully met.	

<i>Accommodation: other</i>	
W21 Students receive information about the implications of their living in private rented accommodation and advice in case of difficulties.	Met
W22 The provider monitors any other accommodation recommended, and booking and payment arrangements are clear.	N/a
Comments	
W21 The school has a sheet with names and addresses of a few accommodation agencies able to arrange short-term lets, and giving thoughtful, accessible advice on all aspects of renting ranging from Council Tax to viewing property safely.	

Leisure opportunities	Area of strength
W23 Students have appropriate information about and access to social, cultural and sporting events and activities which enhance their experience of studying in the UK.	Strength
W24 The content of any leisure programme is appropriate to the age and interests of the students.	Strength
W25 Any leisure programmes are well organised and sufficiently resourced.	Strength
W26 There are effective systems to ensure the health and safety of students on all on-site and off-site activities.	Met
W27 Staff supervising sporting and leisure activities on or off-site have appropriate experience and training.	Met
Comments	

W23 A very good range of activities, trips, clubs and workshops is offered. As well as local events, the programme includes regular free trips outside Cambridge. In the 'Activity Zone' where the enrichment programme co-ordinator (EPC) is based, posters and leaflets give information about local attractions, and trips organised by independent travel companies. The EPC and her assistant provide advice and help book tickets. The school's leisure programme is emailed to students on Mondays and they sign up on *Bell Online*.

W24 The content of the varied Language in Action programme of workshops and clubs, social activities, sports and trips is entirely appropriate to the needs and interest of the students, and is responsive to requests and feedback.

W25 The EPC, her assistant and several teachers lead activities and weekend trips. Staff have regular meetings to refresh their knowledge on how to lead and manage activities. Leaders are equipped with trip packs including session plan folders, activity plans and risk assessments. Various pieces of sports equipment are available for students to borrow.

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.	Not 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.	Strength
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

S3 The parental consent forms in use at the time of the inspection did not cover areas such as emergency medical treatment, independent travel between homestay and school, or consent to take part in activities outside school. However, the school has subsequently introduced a new form which meets all the requirements of this criterion and it is, therefore, no longer a point to be addressed.

S4 The required two references for staff and homestay hosts were missing in some of the records sampled.

S6 Very careful well-considered arrangements for students' supervision and safety outside the scheduled programme are in place. Rules for under 18s are sent in advance to students and their parents or guardians and are displayed around the school. They are repeated at new student inductions, when older students are present and are therefore aware of the rules for under 18s. Relevant stakeholders such as homestay hosts, group leaders and all staff are made aware of the under-18 rules.

S7 There are thoughtful, careful arrangements made for the accommodation of under 18s in homestays. In the residence used for under 18s, they are placed separately on one floor. Six houseparents are resident for their supervision.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

D1 The organisation certifies that it operates at all times in accordance with the declarations in the *Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance*.

The Accreditation Scheme requires accredited providers to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Providers must take steps to ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, all existing and new legal requirements.

On initial application and annual renewal of accreditation, providers are required to confirm that they are complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

Inspectors will check a random sample of items during inspection, in relation to criterion D1; if they find evidence of a breach of statutory or other legal requirements, the provider will be required to submit evidence of compliance confirmed by the appropriate regulatory body.

Any breach of the law or regulations will be viewed seriously by the Scheme and may result in the withdrawal or withholding of accreditation.

Any sustained breach of the law or regulations which an accredited provider fails upon reasonable notice to remedy will result in accreditation being withdrawn.

Comments

D1 The items sampled were satisfactory.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1984
Last full inspection	February 2014
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a

Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	January 2017
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	University Foundation Programme, Master's Preparation Programme, externally validated pre-service and in-service teacher training courses
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Bell London, Bell Young Learners
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Bell school Geneva

Private sector

Date of foundation	1955
Ownership	Name of company: Bell Educational Services Ltd Company number: 7169627
Other accreditation/inspection	ISI

Premises profile

Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection but not visited	Homerton College, University of Cambridge, 184 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PH Used for Bell Teacher Campus: teacher training courses in July/August.
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	N/a

Student profile

	At inspection	In peak week: July (organisation's estimate)
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	At inspection	In peak week
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) 18 years and over	154	171
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged 16–17 years	109	137
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged under 16	0	0
Part-time ELT aged 18 years and over	1	1
Part-time ELT aged 16–17 years	0	0
Part-time ELT aged under 16 years	0	0
Overall total ELT/ESOL students shown above	264	309
Junior programmes: advertised minimum age	N/a	N/a
Junior programmes: advertised maximum age	N/a	N/a
Junior programmes: predominant nationalities	N/a	N/a
Adult programmes: advertised minimum age	16	16
Adult programmes: typical age range	16–35	16–5
Adult programmes: typical length of stay	2 weeks	2 weeks
Adult programmes: predominant nationalities	Italian, Argentinian, Saudi Arabian, Thai	Italian, Argentinian, Saudi Arabian, Thai

Staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week (organisation's estimate)
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	34	34
Number teaching ELT 20 hours and over a week	21	
Number teaching ELT under 19 hours a week	13	
Number of academic managers for eligible ELT courses	2	2
Number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff working on eligible ELT courses	6	
Total number of support staff	6	

Academic manager qualifications profile

Profile at inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of academic managers

TEFLQ qualification	2
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or three years relevant experience	0
Total	2

Comments

The head of teacher development and the learning and teaching manager do not have teaching commitments on their timetables.

Teacher qualifications profile

Profile in week of inspection	
Professional qualifications	Number of teachers
TEFLQ qualification	18
TEFLI qualification	15
Holding specialist qualifications only (specify)	0
Qualified teacher status only (QTS)	0
Teachers without appropriate ELT/TESOL qualification	1
Total	34

Comments

None.

Accommodation profile

Number of students in each at the time of inspection (all students on eligible courses)		
Types of accommodation	Adults	Under 18s
<i>Arranged by provider/agency</i>		
Homestay	54	46
Private home	N/a	N/a
Home tuition	N/a	N/a
Residential	76	58
Hotel/guesthouse	N/a	N/a
Independent self-catering e.g. flats, bedsits, student houses	0	0
<i>Arranged by student/family/guardian</i>		
Staying with own family	0	5
Staying in privately rented rooms/flats	25	0
Overall totals adults/under 18s	155	109
Overall total adults + under 18s	264	