

Organisation name	Bell St Albans
Inspection date	24 January 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. However, evidence must be submitted within three months to demonstrate that weaknesses in S1 and S4 have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

## 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 Bell St Albans in June 2019 and January 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](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This private language school offers residential courses in general English for under 18s and for closed groups of under 18s and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the areas of strategic and quality management, staff management, student administration, publicity, learning resources, academic management, course design, and leisure opportunities.

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

## Updated summary inspection findings

None.

## Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	June 2019
Last full inspection	June 2019
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
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	Bell Cambridge, Bell London, Bell Young Learners multi-centres
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: January
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	158	158
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	11	11
Typical age range	11–17	11–17
Typical length of stay	4 weeks	4 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Argentina, Peru, Brazil	Argentina, Peru, Brazil

Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	13	13
Total number of managers including academic	4	4
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	11	11

### Premises profile

Address of main site	Bell St Albans Shenley Lane London Colney St Albans AL2 1AF
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	Main site

### Introduction

#### Background

Bell St Albans offers year-round residential courses for students aged 11–17. All courses combine 15 hours of general English with activities and study tours. Additional courses for closed groups of under 18s run on request throughout the year. Following a first full inspection in December 2019, Bell St Albans was awarded accreditation, with a routine spot-check inspection due within 12 months. However, due to the global pandemic and limited students numbers and operations, it was decided to delay the follow-up inspection until early 2023.

Since the last inspection the school suspended courses in early 2020, reopening in January 2023. The school has now taken on the lease of the majority of the premises, and no longer shares them with other schools. At the time of inspection there was shared use of the premises with a film-making company. During the period of closure, the previous group-wide academic manager became head of young learners. A new academic manager was appointed in January 2023. The on-site leadership team has completely changed since 2019.

This was a routine spot-check inspection, and the focus was on the provision in general, as well as pertinent points to be addressed.

#### Preparation

The spot-check inspector was sent relevant documents by the Accreditation Unit and looked at the school's website. The inspector contacted the head office in advance to request some further documentation and to establish when key staff would be on site in order to plan when the inspection would take place. The inspector did not indicate to the school the date of the spot-check inspection.

#### Programme and persons present

During the week of the spot check, there were 13 teachers teaching on site. Courses running were all general English for students aged 11 to 17.

The inspector arrived at the school's building at 11.30 and left at 16.45. He met the head of young learners, centre manager, student services director, director of studies, group academic manager and the activities manager. In addition, he met with a group of teachers, a group of students and two group leaders. The inspector was given a tour of the site by house parents, and was given access to various additional documents, which were provided in paper form or electronically.

### Findings

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

### Action taken on points to be addressed

#### Welfare and student services

W1 The premises risk assessment does not assess fully the shared use of the site with other organisations during the day.

**Addressed. There is now an additional risk assessment which is focused on the shared use of site. It is recommended that members of the centre management team have access to this risk assessment in addition to the briefing that they receive in regard to it.**

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**Safeguarding under 18s**

S3 Although the new 2019 enrolment form includes appropriate parental consent, some students in school at the time of the inspection had enrolled using an earlier version of the form and no parental consent, therefore, was on file for them.

**Addressed. All students are enrolled using a form which asks for parental consent, and it is given for all students.**

**Premises and resources**

P6 The teachers' room is not large enough for all staff on site to prepare lessons. Teachers reported that they are unable to work effectively in their own bedrooms because there is no reliable internet connection and classrooms are often unavailable in the afternoons.

**Addressed. The teachers' room is now of a good size with sufficient space for teachers to prepare and classrooms are available to teachers for preparation.**

**Welfare and student services**

W9 The dormitory rooms, accommodating five or six students, are very cramped and have insufficient hanging and drawer space, and nowhere to store luggage.

**Partially addressed. While the maximum number of students per dormitory has been reduced to four, there is insufficient hanging and drawer space for students to keep their clothes and personal items.**

**Safeguarding under 18s**

S1 The procedure for dealing with any staff whose suitability check has not been received before they start work was not being followed adequately in the case of one teacher.

**Not addressed. Risk assessments are carried out for staff whose suitability checks have not been received before they start work. However, the risk assessments and procedures for dealing with staff are still not followed adequately. In addition, risk assessments do not adequately take into account staff's specific roles, including their residential or pastoral duties.**

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**Conclusions**

The school has taken appropriate action in response to some of the points to be addressed, and satisfactory progress has been made. However, with the school reopening in January 2023 with a new staff and management team, some systems are not yet up to speed, particularly in relation to S1. Evidence that this point has been addressed must be submitted within three months.

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