

Organisation name	Centre for English Language Learning, De Montfort University, Leicester
Inspection date	25 November 2016

BACKGROUND

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	October 2008
Last full inspection	June 2016
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	BA and MA in English Language Teaching (some staff from the centre teach on these courses)
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	A pre-sessional course is taught in Beijing as part of the overseas operation of De Montfort University (DMU).

Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

Current accredited status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Signalled: inspect new or additional premises

Premises profile

Address of main site	Centre for English Language Learning, De Montfort University, Third Floor POD, Vijay Patel Building, Mill Lane, Leicester LE1 9BH
Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection	Morning classes for students on one of the full-time courses take place in a number of different buildings on the campus, and some in-sessional courses are taught in the Clephan Building.
Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection	In summer, an additional staff base room is established in the nearby Hugh Aston Building. Use is also made of classrooms in other buildings across the campus.
Sites inspected	De Montfort University (DMU) occupies a large site in the centre of Leicester. The Centre for English Language Learning (CELL) is located on the third floor of a large and newly constructed building in a central location on the campus. The building is light and spacious and care has been taken to provide ample relaxation areas and open-access workspace on each floor. CELL's dedicated premises comprise a reception desk, four classrooms, a computer laboratory with 20 computers, four staff offices, a meeting room and a staff kitchen. There is a large dining area (the Village) on the ground floor of the building.

Student and staff profile

	At inspection	In peak week (August)
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	437 (incl. 391 in-sessional)	600
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	18	18
Typical age range	18–40	18–45
Typical length of stay	4 months	6 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Saudi Arabian, Chinese	Chinese
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	14	40

Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	2	4
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INTRODUCTION

Background

CELL moved to its new premises on the third floor of the newly built Vijay Patel building in late September. The purpose of the spot check was to inspect the new premises.

Preparation

The inspector received copies of the most recent report and other relevant documents well in advance of the inspection. He looked at the provider's website immediately before the spot check.

Programme and persons present

The inspector arrived at 09.50, when a fire drill was under way and all personnel were outside the building. He was subsequently given a tour of the premises. He then had a meeting with the director of language learning and short meetings with the academic manager, a group of teachers and a class of students. He left at 12.40.

FINDINGS

Premises

The new premises in the Vijay Patel building provide a convenient, appropriate and comfortable working environment for students and staff. Classrooms, staff offices and a well-equipped computer room are in a self-contained area on the same floor and there is easy access to relaxation areas and food outlets within the same building. CELL has four dedicated classrooms and pressure on classroom space across the university means that some groups of students have been timetabled in rooms elsewhere on the campus.

Courses, students, teachers

At the time of the spot check, two full-time courses were running: the Intensive General English course (IGEC), with 20 students divided into two classes, and a pre-sessional course for students moving on to mainstream studies in January 2017 (PSE B), with 26 students in two classes. A total of 391 students were following in-session courses. Of the 14 teachers teaching on eligible courses, 12 were diploma-qualified and two were TEFLI. The two TEFLI teachers were teaching on the general English course. Since the focus of the spot check was on premises and the teaching observed at the time of the last inspection had met the requirements of the Scheme, teaching was not observed.

Action on Points to be addressed from last report

The report on the June inspection had been received in late September. Plans have been made to address the points made in the report and the actions taken are indicated in the relevant section below.

Accommodation

At the time of the last inspection, the offer of homestay had been suspended. The decision has now been taken that homestay will no longer be offered.

Students under the age of 18

CELL does not accept students under the age of 18. There are no plans to change this policy.

Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R2 Condition of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R3 Classrooms and learning areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R5 Signage and display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R6 Staffroom(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

R1 CELL's dedicated premises provide a well-designed and very comfortable environment for students and staff.
R2 All areas inspected were clean, tidy and in a very good state of repair.
R3 Classrooms within CELL are light, of an appropriate size, and suitably furnished.

R4 There are spacious relaxation areas and water dispensers on each floor. A wide variety of food, including halal cuisine, is available in the large dining hall (the Village) on the ground floor of the building; there is an outdoor terrace on an upper floor, and a café is planned.

R5 Internal signage and facilities for the display of information are satisfactory, and students are advised in pre-arrival information which entrance of the Vijay Patel building they should use to access CELL. However, there is no external sign indicating the location of CELL. Students also commented to the inspector that signage on the campus as a whole is unsatisfactory, and teachers stated that this had led to students arriving late for class.

R6 Staff offices are appropriately spacious and suitably equipped, and there is a separate meeting room. The staff kitchen is equipped with a table and chairs, and staff can also make use of the public relaxation areas on each floor.

POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Only points reviewed during this spot check are included here. Any points outstanding will be checked at the next full inspection.

Management

M5 The staffing relies on a significant number of temporary teachers. Some teachers have been employed as temporary hourly paid for several years leading to feelings of poor morale and insecurity. Some staff complained of the late arrival of their contracts through HR. This was mentioned in the previous report. Problems of poor morale and insecurity among staff and the late arrival of contracts have not been adequately addressed.

Partially addressed. HR have been asked to carry out a review of CELL staffing needs, the roles and responsibilities of the CELL management team (director of language learning, director of CELL, academic manager) and the management of administration. It is hoped that this will lead to a member of the HR team being based in CELL, which would permit contracts to be issued more quickly, and that it will be possible to offer pro-rata contracts in order to give staff greater security. The review is due to be completed by May 2017.

M6 Some staff files sampled in HR did not have copies of degree or TEFL certificates. Records of verbal references of some more recently employed staff were produced but this was not universal.

Addressed. The respective responsibilities of HR and CELL have been clarified. HR will continue to take up references for permanent appointments and CELL will now take up references for part-time appointments, as well as keeping copies of staff qualifications and CVs.

M8 Although appraisal is available for hourly paid staff, none had taken advantage of this.

Partially addressed. Since the inspection two part-time teachers have opted for appraisal.

M24 The number of class hours is accurate but the information does not mention that there is usually a break in the middle.

Addressed. The break is now mentioned in publicity.

M27 There is very little reference to the existence of a leisure programme on the website although the university has a wealth of activities for students to interact with native speakers in many different ways.

Partially addressed. The international student support area of the website describes the 'Explore UK' programme and contains a downloadable international student guide, which has brief details of university-wide leisure opportunities.

Welfare and student services

W4 The policy for dealing with abusive behaviour would benefit from a clearer explanation of what constitutes abusive behaviour and the specific steps that will be taken to deal with perpetrators and to support victims.

Addressed. The international welfare team have been made aware of this issue. The policy is explained on the website and discussed with students during the international welfare week.

W12 There are no checks made on fire risk assessments and homestay providers have not been informed that this is a requirement.

N/a. The university no longer offers homestay accommodation.

W17 The documents which give information on rules, terms and conditions are on separate pieces of paper and are not complete in that they do not include reference to the areas covered by Scheme criteria W16, W18-W21, and do not specify cancellation terms.

N/a. The university no longer offers homestay accommodation.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit

Resources and environment

R5 There is no external sign indicating the location of CELL. Students also commented that signage on the campus as a whole is unsatisfactory, and teachers stated that this had led to students arriving late for class.

Teaching and learning

T7 CELL has only four dedicated classrooms in the Vijay Patel building. As a result of pressure on classrooms across the campus, morning classes for two groups are timetabled across several different buildings in the course of a week, with some changes also being necessary from week to week. Students said they found this disorientating.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the premises provide a convenient, appropriate, and comfortable environment for students and staff.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited the Centre for English Language Learning, De Montfort University in June 2016. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation for details).

The large English language teaching department of this large university offers courses in general, academic and professional English for adults and for closed groups.

Strengths were noted in the areas of premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, and care of students.

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