

Organisation name	Excel Academy Language Programmes, Head office Bromley
Inspection date	8–10 August 2017

Section standard	Met	Not met
<b>Management:</b> The management of the provision will operate to the benefit of its students, in accordance with its publicity and in accordance with the <i>Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance</i> .	$\boxtimes$	
<b>Resources and environment:</b> The learning resources and environment will support and enhance the studies of students enrolled with the provider, and will offer an appropriate professional environment for staff.	$\boxtimes$	
<b>Teaching and learning:</b> Teachers will have appropriate qualifications and will be given sufficient support to ensure that their teaching meets the needs of their students. Programmes of learning will be managed for the benefit of students. The teaching observed will meet the requirements of the Scheme.	$\boxtimes$	
<b>Welfare and student services:</b> The needs of students for security, pastoral care, information and leisure activities will be met; any accommodation provided will be suitable; the management of the accommodation systems will work to the benefit of students.	$\boxtimes$	

Care of under 18s section	N/a	Met	Not met
There will be appropriate provision for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 within the organisation and in any leisure activities or accommodation provided.			

#### Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation with the submission of documentation within six months to check that the weaknesses identified in publicity and recruitment procedures have been addressed. The required evidence was subsequently submitted.

# **Summary statement**

The British Council inspected and accredited Excel Academy Language Programmes in August 2017. 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 <a href="https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation">www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation</a> for details).

This private language teaching organisation offers courses in professional English for adults (18+) and vacation courses for under 18s.

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of publicity.

Strengths were noted in the areas of student administration, learning resources, course design, care of students, and leisure opportunities.

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

# Organisation profile: multicentre

# 1. COLLATED DATA FOR WHOLE ORGANISATION (INCLUDING ELIGIBLE CENTRES NOT INSPECTED)

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1997
Last full inspection	2013
Subsequent spot check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)	N/a
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) by this multicentre organisation	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Private sector	
Date of foundation	1994
Ownership	Name of company: Excel Academy Language Programmes Company number: 02941066
Other accreditation/inspection	N/a
Draminos mustila	
Premises profile Address of Head Office (HO)	51 Tweedy Road, Bromley BR1 3NH
Addresses of centres offering ELT at the time of the	From College College Bood From KT17.4 IO

Address of Head Office (HO)	51 Tweedy Road, Bromley BR1 3NH
Addresses of centres offering ELT at the time of the inspection	Epsom College, College Road, Epsom KT17 4JQ Langley Park School for Boys, South Eden Park Road, Beckenham BR3 3BP Rose Bruford College, Lamorbey Park, Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup DA15 9DF Tonbridge School, Tonbridge TN9 1JP Townley Grammar School, Townley Road, Bexleyheath DA6 7AB
Addresses of any additional centres not open or offering	Ewell Castle School, Church Street, Ewell KT17 2AW
Profile of sites visited	Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon CR9 7AT  Tonbridge School is a boys' boarding school located on the High street. Excel uses six classrooms on the second floor in main school classrooms, three workshop rooms, three boarding houses and gardens, the dining room and a tuck shop, sports hall, a computer room and playing fields.  Townley Grammar School is an academy school for girls and is located on the outskirts of the town centre. Excel
	uses three common rooms in the sixth form block as classrooms, a drama studio, a theatre for performances and rehearsals, a small kitchen for staff, an external seating area and a field behind the performing arts building.

Student profile at peak at all centres	Collated totals in peak week 7 August all centres running
Of all international students, approximate percentage on ELT/ESOL courses	100
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) 18 years and over	2
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged 16–17 years	17
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged under 16	305
Part-time ELT aged 18 years and over	0

Part-time ELT aged 16–17 years	0
Part-time ELT aged under 16 years	0
Overall total of ELT/ESOL students shown above	324
Predominant nationalities	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China

Staff profile peak at all centres and HO	Collated totals in peak week
Total number of teachers and academic managers on eligible ELT courses	28
Total number activity managers and staff	24
Total number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff	6
Total number of support staff (e.g. houseparents, matrons, catering)	0

# Academic manager qualifications profile at peak at all centres and HO

Profile at peak: collated totals at HO and all centres	
Professional qualifications	Total number of academic managers
Diploma-level ELT/TESOL qualification (TEFLQ)	1
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or without 3 years relevant experience	14
Total	15
Comments	

Comments

The principal is TEFLQ and all of the academic managers in centres (course directors and centre heads) are QTS and have worked for the Excel Academy for several years.

# Teacher qualifications profile at peak at all centres

Profile at peak: collated totals at all centres				
Professional qualifications	Total number of teachers			
Diploma-level ELT/TESOL qualification (TEFLQ)	0			
Certificate-level ELT/TESOL qualification (TEFLI)	0			
Holding specialist qualifications only (specify)	0			
YL initiated	0			
Qualified teacher status only (QTS)	13			
Teachers without appropriate ELT/TESOL qualifications	0			
Total	13			

# Comments

Many of the curriculum teachers also have academic management responsibilities, so are included in the figures for the *Academic manager qualifications profile*. Also the *Teacher qualifications profile* above excludes activity teachers, who are also QTS.

Course profile (across all centres covered by this accreditation)

Eligible activities	Summer		Other times of year		Other - N/a	
	Run	Seen	Run	Seen	Run	Seen
General ELT for adults						
General ELT for juniors (under 18)						

English for academic purposes (excludes IELTS preparation)					
English for specific purposes (includes English for Executives)			$\boxtimes$		
Teacher development (excludes award-bearing courses)					
ESOL skills for life/for citizenship					
Other	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$			
Comments					

The school offers closed group cultural enrichment programmes in the summer (July and August) to Hong Kong school children aged between 8 and 17. The children come from English medium primary and secondary schools and are accompanied by Hong Kong teachers. Programmes normally last for around 16 to 18 days and include writing, literature, drama and public speaking, cultural activities and excursions. The precise content of courses is negotiated with each school. Excel also offers set programmes for different age groups:

Young citizens' programmes for 8 to 12 year-olds; World citizens' programmes for 11 to 15 year-olds; World leaders' programmes for 14 to 17 year-olds.

At the time of the inspection the school had not run any executive one-to-one courses in 2017. However, an intensive one-week one-to-one course was due to take place in August based at the head office in Bromley.

#### 2. DATA ON CENTRES VISITED

1. Name of centre	Townley Grammar School
2. Name of centre	Tonbridge School
3. Name of centre	
4. Name of centre	
5. Name of centre	

Student profile	Totals at inspection: centres visited			sited	To	tals in pea	ık week: c	entres vis	sited	
Centres	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Of all international students, approximate percentage on ELT/ESOL courses	100	100				100	100			
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	At inspection				In peak week					
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) 18 years and over	0	2				0	2			
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged 16–17 years	0	17				0	17			
Full-time ELT (15+ hours per week) aged under 16	37	53				37	53			
Part-time ELT aged 18 years and over	0	0				0	0			
Part-time ELT aged 16–17 years	0	0				0	0			
Part-time ELT aged under 16 years	0	0				0	0			
Overall total of ELT/ESOL students shown above	37	72				37	72			
Junior programmes: advertised minimum age(s)	11	11				11	11			

Junior programmes: actual minimum age(s)	12	11			12	11			
Junior programmes: advertised maximum age(s)	14	17			14	17			
Junior programmes: actual maximum age(s)	14	18			14	18			
Adult programmes: advertised minimum age	N/a	N/a			N/a	N/a			
Adult programmes: actual minimum age	N/a	N/a			N/a	N/a			
Typical length of stay (weeks)	2	2			2	2			
Predominant nationalities	Hong Kong, SAR			Hong Kong, SAR					

Staff profile at centres visited		At inspection					In peak week			
Centres	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Total number of teachers and academic managers on eligible ELT courses	4	6				4	6			
Total number of activity managers and staff	2	5				2	5			
Total number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff	1	0				1	0			
Total number of support staff (e.g. houseparents, matrons, catering)	0	0				0	0			

Academic manager qualifications profile at centres visited

Profile in week of inspection: at centres visited	Total number of academic managers				i
Centres	1	2	3	4	5
TEFLQ qualification and 3 years relevant experience	0	0			
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or 3 years relevant experience (NB Rationales need to be prepared for academic managers in this category at centres visited)	2	4			
Total	2	4			

# Comments

The *Academic manager qualifications profile* figures above include course directors and centre heads. Course directors have no teaching responsibilities; centre heads teach approximately 15 hours per week.

Teacher qualifications profile at centres visited

Profile in week of inspection at centres visited	Total number of teachers				
Centres	1	2	3	4	5
TEFLQ qualification	0	0			
TEFLI qualification	0	0			
Holding specialist qualifications only (specify)	0	0			
YL initiated	0	0			
Qualified teacher status only (QTS)	2	2			
Teachers without appropriate ELT/TESOL qualifications. (NB Rationales need to be prepared for teachers in this category)	0	0			
Total	2	2			

# Comments

These figures exclude course directors, centre heads and activity teachers.

**Accommodation profile** 

Numbers at time of inspection: at centres visited										
Types of accommodation	Adults					Under 18s				
Arranged by provider/agency										
Centres	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Homestay	N/a	N/a				37	7			
Private home	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Home tuition	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Residential	N/a	2				0	63			
Hotel/guesthouse	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Independent self-catering e.g. flats, bedsits, student houses	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Arranged by student/family/guardian										
Staying with own family	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Staying in privately rented rooms/flats	N/a	N/a				0	0			
Overall totals adults/under 18s	0	2				37	70			
Centres			1	2	3	4	5			
Overall total adults + under 18s			37	72						

#### Introduction

Excel Academy Language Programmes was founded in 1994 and first inspected in 1998. The school originally offered one-to-one courses for business and professional clients. However, nearly all of the school's current students are under 18 and study on cultural enrichment programmes for groups of Hong Kong primary and secondary students in schools and colleges to the south of London. Students stay in residential or homestay accommodation.

The head office of the school is based in Bromley, where the principal and director and the two programme managers work throughout the year. Summer course directors help in planning, setting up and winding down programmes. Each course programme is led by a centre head, who also teaches, along with other curriculum teachers and activity teachers, who run workshops as well as trips and excursions. Because of the content of courses, the school has a clear policy of appointing mainstream teachers with BEds or PGCEs, both as curriculum and activity teachers. All of the curriculum teachers have QTS in English or Drama, or are primary trained, and none of them has TEFL qualifications.

In 2017 the school ran programmes in seven different locations. One course was for a group from mainland China, in addition to the others from Hong Kong. This summer Excel Academy had to make last minute changes to the schools used and their programmes in response to security concerns in the London area.

The inspection took place over three full days. The inspection was due to start with a visit to head office but this was postponed until the last day due to the illness of one of the project managers. The first day was, therefore, spent in the 'wildcard' centre, Tonbridge School, and the second day in Townley Grammar School. During the visits to the centres, the two inspectors held interviews and focus group meetings with course directors, centre heads, curriculum and activity teachers, students and Hong Kong teachers accompanying students. One of the inspectors visited residential accommodation in Tonbridge and homestay accommodation in the Townley area. She also met the Townley homestay co-ordinator. Most but not all of the curriculum teachers were observed; at Tonbridge two of the six teachers were supervising the students' preparation of their final project, while at Townley the morning's teaching programme consisted of one teacher organising students to produce a magazine with the assistance of the two other teachers. At head office the inspectors held meetings with the two directors and the two programme managers.

# **Management**

Legal and statutory regulations

Criteria	See comments
M1 Declaration of compliance	$\boxtimes$
Comments	
M1 The items sampled were satisfactory	•

Staff management

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
M2 Management structure		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
M3 Duties specified			N/a	$\boxtimes$	
M4 Communication channels		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
M5 Human resources policies		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
M6 Qualifications verified			N/a	$\boxtimes$	
M7 Induction procedures		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
M8 Monitoring staff performance		$\boxtimes$			
M9 Professional development		$\boxtimes$			

### Comments

M2 The management structure is clear at head office and in the centres. The principal and the director are assisted by two year-round project managers, one of whom has specific responsibilities for teacher recruitment and the other for homestay recruitment. Summer course directors are responsible for one or more centres, and are employed for a period of approximately five days, working at the beginning, middle and end of particular course programmes. Each separate programme is managed by a centre head who also teaches. The organisation clearly benefits from having a stable head office staff and very experienced course directors. However, staff are stretched to cover all duties at the busiest times of the year.

M3 Duties are specified for all roles in the centres. However, the principal and director do not have job descriptions and the job descriptions for the programme managers are out of date. In general, job descriptions do not refer to safeguarding responsibilities.

M4 Communication works well between head office staff both informally and formally. Minuted meetings take place four times a year as part of the organisation's formal quality assurance procedures. Head office staff communicate with centres through visits, emails, phone calls and texts. Reports are written to head office staff. Informal meetings take place regularly in centres, but there are very few minuted formal meetings.

M5 Human resource policies are thorough. Applicants complete an application form and are interviewed by head office and returning course directors. Selected candidates are invited to attend an induction day as part of the selection process, during which they complete a lesson plan.

M6 Copies of qualifications are kept on file and security checks are conducted. However, the organisation does not have effective procedures for ensuring that they have two references on file. Records sampled indicated that there were none or only one reference for several summer staff (see C4).

M7 Induction procedures for summer staff are thorough. Staff attend induction days and centre planning days. Centre heads also receive an additional day's training focusing on how to manage centres and guide staff. Staff also receive useful guidelines and relevant information documents, as well as teaching resource packs. Lesson plans are scrutinised throughout the summer.

M8 Summer staff performance is monitored through checks of lesson plans and observations. Head office staff receive written annual appraisals.

### Student administration

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
M10 Administrative staff and resources		$\boxtimes$			
M11 Information on course choice		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
M12 Enrolment procedures		$\boxtimes$			

M13 Contact details			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$						
M14 Student attendance policy				$\boxtimes$						
M15 Students asked to leave course										
Comments										
M11 Each course is customised to the n presentations in schools in Hong Kong to detailed itinerary for their course, a copy M13 All students receive UK SIM cards a students and their parents are transferre access remotely. Hong Kong teachers a M14 It is made clear to everyone that all extremely rare and any ill students are to Kong.	wice during the of the brochure and these number donto the scho re also on hand lessons, works	year. Schools a and an enrolm ers are sent to ol's easy-to-use to contact pare hops and activit	nd students recent form. their parents. The control of the control	eive a 'project s he contact detai atabase, which s sory. Student ab	ummary', a  Is of all staff can sences are					
Quality assurance										
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a					
M16 Action plan			N/a							
M17 Continuing improvement		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$						
M18 Student feedback and action		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$						
M19 Staff feedback and action										
M20 Complaints and action	$\boxtimes$									
Comments										
Any issues are recorded and responded M19 Staff make suggestions throughout summer they complete exit questionnair next.  M20 At the time of the inspection Excel of the organisation circulated a document is make or a complaint and does not const	courses throug es. Staff feedba did not have a c n centres, but th	h comments in one ck is used to im omplaints processis merely states	prove programmedure known to	mes from one yes	ear to the					
Publicity				See						
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	comments	N/a					
M21 Accessible accurate language				$\boxtimes$						
M22 Realistic expectations										
M23 Course descriptions										
M24 Course information			N/a							
M25 Costs										
M26 Accommodation										
M27 Leisure programme										
M28 Staff qualifications			N/a							
M29 Accreditation		$\boxtimes$	N/a							
Comments										
Publicity consists of a website and a bro Kong to staff and parents. Course descr M21 Most of the publicity is written in ac sufficiently simplified for non-native spea	iptions are prod curate, accessib	uced for schools	s once program	mes have been	finalised.					

M22 Most photographs accurately represent the provision. However, a photo on page three and another on the back of the brochure might indicate the school has multi-national classes, when they are all mono-national. M24 Current publicity does not make clear the total number of hours of tuition per week or per programme. It is also not clearly stated what the maximum class size is.

M28 The website states: 'Our teachers are very talented, knowledgeable, committed and highly successful educators.' Not all of the teachers can be described as highly successful educators.

#### Management summary

The provision meets the section standard. The school is generally well managed and administrative and quality assurance systems are effective. There is a need for improvement in *Publicity*.

#### Resources and environment

### Premises and facilities

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R1 Adequate space					
R2 Condition of premises					
R3 Classrooms and learning areas				$\boxtimes$	
R4 Student relaxation areas and food				$\boxtimes$	
R5 Signage and display				$\boxtimes$	
R6 Staffroom(s)					

#### Comments

R3 In Tonbridge the school uses classrooms in teaching blocks and in Townley, they use common rooms in the sixth form block. In both cases the rooms were free from extraneous noise, adequately lit and furnished. Visibility of boards is hampered in Townley, where rooms either have small whiteboards or in one room, no board at all. R4 At Tonbridge students can relax in the common rooms in boarding houses and in external areas. At Townley students can relax in classrooms, in the drama studio and on external benches. Students at Tonbridge eat three meals a day in the school dining room. Students at Townley eat packed lunches in the performing arts building or outside on benches.

R5 Host institutions place restrictions on signage. Excel signage is minimal both outside and inside classrooms at both sites. At Townley there were no Excel branded notices on display boards.

R6 There are teachers' common rooms in the boarding houses in Tonbridge. There is no dedicated staffroom at the Townley site, but teachers can use a kitchen with a kettle, fridge and microwave in the performing arts building.

Learning resources

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
R7 Learning materials for students			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
R8 Resources for teachers			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
R9 Educational technology					
R10 Self-access facilities					$\boxtimes$
R11 Library/self-access guidance					$\boxtimes$
R12 Review and development			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	

#### Comments

R7 The school uses its own materials that have been specially designed for the types of lessons and activities offered. Booklets are designed to help students to develop their English through speaking, writing and drama. There are also sets of core texts and excursion booklets for certain lessons and activities.

R8 Teachers are provided with very detailed teaching resource packs. Teachers have access to teachers' notes for all lessons. Staff can arrange for additional materials to be photocopied in head office. The teachers spoken to were very positive about the quality of the materials they were given.

R12 There are good mechanisms for reviewing and developing teaching and learning resources. At the end of their contracts, summer staff are asked to comment on the learning resources. Course materials are reviewed and revised or replaced whenever necessary.

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The learning resources and environments support and enhance the studies of students, and provide an appropriate professional context for staff. *Learning resources* is an area of strength.

# Teaching and learning

Academic staff profile

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
T1 General education (and rationales)		$\boxtimes$	N/a		
T2 ELT/TESOL teacher qualifications					
T3 Rationales for teachers		$\boxtimes$	N/a		$\boxtimes$
T4 Profile of academic manager(s)		$\boxtimes$			
T5 Rationale for academic manager(s)		$\boxtimes$	N/a		
^ '	_	_	_	_	

#### Comments

T2 All of the curriculum teachers have QTS to teach at primary, or English or drama at secondary level. These qualifications are appropriate for the type of courses that they are teaching.

T4 The principal is the school's lead academic manager and is TEFLQ. She has a detailed knowledge of the needs of Hong Kong learners and has devised and managed curriculum enrichment programmes for many years. All of the course directors and centre heads have QTS and have worked on previous Excel programmes.

T5 Rationales were submitted for the course directors and centre heads for the programmes inspected in Tonbridge and Townley. These were accepted within the context of this inspection, given the type of programmes that the school offers. The course directors work closely with the TEFLQ principal and receive guidance on all aspects of programmes. Overall this criterion is met, as the principal supervises any changes to inductions, syllabuses and course materials. However, non-TEFLQ staff were carrying out some tasks that would normally be conducted by TEFLQ managers (see T11).

**Academic management** 

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
T6 Deployment of teachers		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
T7 Timetabling		$\boxtimes$			
T8 Cover for absent teachers		$\boxtimes$			
T9 Continuous enrolment					$\boxtimes$
T10 Formalised support for teachers		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
T11 Observation and monitoring	$\boxtimes$			$\boxtimes$	

### Comments

T6 Teachers are carefully chosen according to their experience and facility with the school's teaching method. Curriculum teachers teach public speaking skills, drama and writing. Every effort is made to ensure that teacher personalities match those required for a particular group.

T10 Formal support for teachers begins with induction days. Course directors provide observation feedback and teachers continue to receive feedback on their lesson plans throughout courses. Centre heads provide daily informal support.

T11 This criterion is not met as observations are conducted by non-TEFLQ course directors. Also some of the teachers at Tonbridge had not been observed at the time of the inspection. Not all of the teachers receive oral feedback as well as written feedback on observed lessons, and not all of the feedback includes clear action planning to improve and develop teaching.

Course design and implementation

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
T12 Principled course structure			$\boxtimes$		

T13 Review of course design		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					
T14 Course outlines and outcomes		$\boxtimes$							
T15 Study and learning strategies		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					
T16 Linguistic benefit from UK		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					
Comments	Comments								
T12 Courses are based on clearly articulated principles outlined in documentation on Excel's teaching method and schemes of work. Students are encouraged to communicate effectively in spoken and written English, building on their existing knowledge. Courses are structured to help learners to become more confident and think and work creatively in English. Courses are also designed to enable learners to experience the British way of life within a structured and caring environment. Courses include ten morning lessons of approximately three hours' length, with afternoon workshops, and lead to final oral and written tasks such as performances and magazines.  T13 The school has been refining its programmes over the last 20 years. Changes are made to course design in the light of feedback from schools, teachers and students.  T15 Courses are designed to help students learn study skills and become more autonomous learners. Lesson activities such as memory storming and techniques for generating and organising ideas, help students to develop their own learning strategies.  T16 Courses include many activities that ensure students develop their language skills outside the classroom. Workshops lead to students performing mock trials and plays, and editing their own television programmes. Students prepare for excursions extensively and carefully designed tasks ensure they use English in a variety of ways when they are on trips and excursions.									
Learner management									
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a				
T17 Placement for level and age		$\boxtimes$							
T18 Monitoring students' progress		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					
T19 Examination guidance									
T20 Assessment criteria									
T21 Academic reports			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					
T22 Information on UK education									
Comments									
T18 Although students stay in the same class throughout their stay, their progress is monitored closely by teachers who assess their performance in all lessons. Courses lead to learning outputs such as plays and magazines. T21 All students receive detailed, personal academic reports together with the contents and objectives of the learning programme, an achievement certificate, a publication such as a magazine and a video of their end-of-course performance.  Classroom observation record									
Number of teachers seen	6								
Number of observations	l essons on pi	ihlic speaking s	kills revising in	terview technic	les writing				
Parts of programme(s) observed	Parts of programme(s) observed Lessons on public speaking skills, revising interview techniques, writing personal statements for universities and producing a course magazine.								
Comments									
The visit to Townley coincided with a whole-morning workshop led by one of the teachers on creating a course magazine in which all of the students were working in the same room. The other two teachers were assisting. Inspectors also informally observed afternoon workshops on drama, rehearsing for a mock trial, and rehearsing for final performances. In two of the six lesson segments observed, there was very little input from teachers.									
Classroom observation				See					
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	comments	N/a				
T23 Models and awareness of English in use		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$					
T24 Appropriate content		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$					

T25 Learning outcomes	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
T26 Teaching techniques			
T27 Classroom management		$\boxtimes$	
T28 Feedback to students	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
T29 Evaluating student learning		$\boxtimes$	
T30 Student engagement			

- T23 In general teachers displayed a sound knowledge of and awareness of the linguistic systems of English.
- T24 The content of lessons was clearly linked to the language programmes agreed in advance with schools and the educational needs of students.
- T25 Lessons were clearly staged, although lesson aims were not always expressed as learning outcomes made known to students.
- T26 Teachers were good at setting up activities so that learners worked effectively in pairs and groups on collective tasks, and good use was made of nomination in some classes. Teachers did not check students' understanding of concepts or instructions in the lessons observed.
- T27 Teachers used interactive whiteboards appropriately in Tonbridge. The teachers observed in Townley were hampered by having to use a small whiteboard.
- T28 Some teachers provided good positive feedback to students and made constructive comments about written feedback they had marked. Students receive credits for good work or positive behaviours. Opportunities to provide feedback on speaking were sometimes missed.
- T29 Students are set mini-tasks in lessons and receive regular checks on their progress. However, very few instances of this were seen in the lessons observed.
- T30 Students were fully engaged in all of the sessions observed and teachers used appropriately graded language in most lessons.

# **Classroom observation summary**

The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme, ranging from good to satisfactory, with the majority of the segments observed being satisfactory. Lessons had been carefully planned and had appropriate stages. Teachers competently set up pair and project work activities. Feedback was provided to students on written tasks, but less effectively on some speaking tasks. Teachers had created an atmosphere conducive to learning.

#### **Teaching and learning summary**

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. Teachers are suitably qualified for the types of courses offered. Teachers receive support to meet the needs of their students. However, teachers are not observed by TEFLQ academic managers and not all of the feedback they receive is appropriate. Courses are well designed and help students to become independent learners. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme. *Course design* is an area of strength.

### Welfare and student services

#### Care of students

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
W1 Safety and security onsite		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
W2 Pastoral care		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
W3 Personal problems		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
W4 Dealing with abusive behaviour		$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$	
W5 Emergency contact number		$\boxtimes$	N/a	$\boxtimes$	
W6 Transport and transfers		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
W7 Advice		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
W8 Medical and dental treatment		$\boxtimes$	N/a	$\boxtimes$	

W1 Students and staff are kept safe on the various sites. The organisation prepares its own generic risk assessment for all its premises and visits all the buildings before the summer courses begin. Fire drills are held with each student cohort; there is keypad entry to the residential site, and ten members of staff have first aid training. However, Excel staff do not hold copies of the risk assessments prepared by the host schools, and the Excel risk assessment lacks some detail regarding the allocation and timescale of responsibilities.

W2 The pastoral responsibilities of all staff are made clear in their briefing documents and at induction. Every aspect of the students' stay is considered from a welfare point of view with detailed guidelines provided. 'Circle time' at the beginning of each day and 'worry boxes' in the classrooms are ways of checking the students' pastoral needs are being met.

W3 Students have various people they may contact, including their accompanying Hong Kong teachers, though their first point of contact is usually their main teacher. All staff work together to deal with any personal problems students might have. There was evidence of this during the inspection.

W4 Information on dealing with abusive behaviour is contained in the school's safeguarding policy. It is implicit in much of the school's dealings with students, but an anti-bullying policy is not made explicit to students.

W5 Students are given the school's emergency contact information on their student cards, handed out on the students' first day. Students are also provided with UK SIM cards on arrival and the numbers are then sent to their parents.

W6 Airport transfers are arranged for all students and their teachers. A minimum of two Excel teachers travel to the airport to meet the students and wait if there are flight delays. Each travelling group is met separately, so no students have to wait for another group before being taken to their residences or homestay meeting points. W7 Students are given a great deal of relevant information on various aspects of living in the UK. Specific topics, such as using cutlery, UK currency and crossing the road are covered in workshops conducted on the students' first day in their centres.

W8 All students must take out medical insurance when enrolling. Each Excel centre has a list of local medical centres and a clear policy of what do when children need medical attention. Recent evidence at both centres visited showed the systems to be working well.

# **Accommodation profile**

#### Comments on the accommodation seen by the inspectors

During the week of the inspection, Excel was using two centres with residential accommodation and five centres with homestay provision. One inspector visited three boarding houses in Tonbridge School and three homestay providers used by the Townley centre.

Accommodation in the boarding houses is in single, twin or four-bedded rooms. There are adequate storage and shower facilities and boys and girls are in separate houses. Each house has a common room for student relaxation, where soft drinks and biscuits are provided. There is also a separate cinema room where students occasionally watch TV or DVDs. One of the boarding houses is across the road from the main school, and another across one of the school fields, but students are always accompanied to and from their boarding houses by Excel staff. The three homestays visited are within a five or ten-minute drive of the school. All students are taken to and from school by their homestay providers. All rooms are twin, as this is Excel policy and part of the 'buddy' system to ensure students are never on their own. In two of the homestays visited there was a shower/bathroom for the students' sole use.

Accommodation: all types

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
W9 Services and facilities				$\boxtimes$	
W10 Accommodation inspected first			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
W11 Accommodation re-inspected			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
W12 Accommodation registers				$\boxtimes$	
W13 Information in advance				$\boxtimes$	
W14 Student feedback					
W15 Meals in homestay/residences					

#### Comments

W9 All the accommodation visited provided students with the required facilities. The residential accommodation offered a great deal of open space, and an attractive dining hall as well as the required sleeping and washing facilities. One of the homestays offered accommodation of a good standard, the other two were satisfactory. All

three providers were welcoming and friendly, clearly enjoyed hosting their Hong Kong students, and went to considerable lengths to provide them with interesting days out at the weekends. W10 New homestay providers undergo a rigorous process of selection, using a very detailed form. References are checked, household DBS checks obtained and Gas Safe certificates and fire risk assessments are requested. Three homestay co-ordinators are employed to liaise between Excel and homestays in different geographical areas. These co-ordinators inspect the provision, grading the providers in a number of areas before sending these assessments to head office, which then acts on the reports. W11 One of the homestay co-ordinators re-inspects the families in her area every year, the others within two years. It was evident that there is a very good relationship between the homestay co-ordinator the inspector met in Townley and the homestays in her area. She has been working in this field for approximately 40 years, and had been a homestay provider herself in the past. W12 Registers are comprehensive, but sampling revealed homestay providers without Gas Safe certificates. W13 Students' parents are sent the name of their child's accommodation/homestay 'buddy' in advance, together with brief notes about the homestay provider. W14 Student feedback about accommodation is collected in the first week and any issues identified are resolved as quickly as possible. Feedback from the students in the focus group meetings was positive about both residential and homestay accommodation. W15 All meals are provided, whether in residential or homestay accommodation. A choice of hot or cold food is served in the residential accommodation; packed lunches are provided by homestay providers with a cooked meal in the evening. **Accommodation: homestay** See N/a Criteria Not met Met Strength comments W16 No more than four students П  $\square$ N/a 11  $\boxtimes$ X W17 Rules, terms and conditions П X  $\boxtimes$ W18 Shared bedrooms N/a  $\boxtimes$  $\boxtimes$ W19 Students' first language N/a П W20 Language of communication X N/a  $\boxtimes$ W21 Adult to welcome N/a П Comments W17 Homestay providers receive the school's safeguarding and Prevent policies, as well as a copy of the terms and conditions. These give considerable detail about what is expected of them, as well as useful suggestions and

advice. However, there are no set bedtimes in homestay accommodation; the homestay providers visited commented on the difficulty of knowing when this should be.

W18 It is Excel policy for students to share bedrooms. Usually this is in pairs, but if there is an odd number, three students share a room.

W19 The students arrive in closed groups, so are always with a 'buddy' of the same language. Students do not share accommodation, whether residential or homestay, with other language school providers.

## **Accommodation: residential**

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
W22 Cleaning		$\boxtimes$			
W23 Health		$\boxtimes$			
Comments					
None.					_

### Accommodation: other

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
W24 Information and support					$\boxtimes$
W25 Other accommodation			N/a		$\boxtimes$

None.								
Leisure opportunities								
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a			
W26 Information and access		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$				
W27 Leisure programmes			$\boxtimes$					
W28 Health and safety			$\boxtimes$					
W29 Responsible person		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$				

Comments

W26 Students receive a great deal of information about places of interest in the UK. The information is detailed and interesting, and forms the subject of specific cultural lessons.

W27 Workshops and excursions form an integral part of the provision and as such are compulsory. Activities and events are carefully chosen, and planned in meticulous detail to ensure students derive maximum benefit from the experience.

W28 Each activity or excursion is led by a qualified teacher, who prepares a detailed risk assessment, vetted by head office. Teachers and students then receive specific briefings at least one day before the excursion or event, to make sure that everyone knows the itinerary and what to expect.

W29 Several workshops are led by specialist instructors, hired for their particular expertise. These tend to be cultural, rather than sporting, and specialists, such as actors or public speakers, are used.

#### Welfare and student services summary

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The safety and security of students is a priority for the organisation. The accommodation is carefully chosen and accommodation systems are well managed in general, although some Gas Safe certificates were missing. Leisure opportunities are varied and stimulating and form a central part of the students' language and cultural provision. *Care of students* and *Leisure opportunities* are areas of strength.

# Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy				$\boxtimes$	
C2 Guidance and training			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
C3 Publicity				$\boxtimes$	
C4 Recruitment procedures			N/a	$\boxtimes$	
C5 Safety and supervision during scheduled lessons and activities		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
C6 Safety and supervision outside scheduled lessons and activities			$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
C7 Accommodation		$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$	
C8 Contact arrangements			N/a	$\boxtimes$	

#### Comments

Nearly all of the students are under 18s on closed groups on short summer courses.

- C1 The school's safeguarding policy, referred to as their 'Child Protection Policy', is clear, covers all key areas and reflects the school's needs. All staff and homestay providers receive a copy.
- C2 All teaching and activity staff receive safeguarding training as part of their duties as mainstream teachers.

Nevertheless, safeguarding is covered at induction and all homestay providers are made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

- C3 Parents and guardians are made aware of the level of care offered through presentations given by the directors. The website and brochure are not as clear about the very good level of care students are given.
- C4 Considerable attention is paid to the recruitment of staff, with a rigorous two-stage interview procedure, and

evidence of DBS and police checks for all teachers, including the accompanying teachers from abroad. However, a sampling of data revealed that only one reference was requested and that there were no references on file for some staff.

C5 Students are very well supervised during all lessons, workshops and excursions. The school has a good staff to student supervision ratio of 1:12. Activities such as excursions have an even higher ratio (usually 1:4/5).

C6 Supervision of students between and after lessons is also very good. A range of procedures ensures students are never left unsupervised. Whether in homestay or boarding houses, students are taken to and from their accommodation. Staying with their 'buddy pair', students are drilled in measures such as calling out their numbers for the frequent roll calls, and crossing the road safely.

C7 All meals are provided. Supervision ratios in residential accommodation are good and the ratio of accompanying teachers to students is never less than 1:10.

C8 Students' parents are given the emergency contact details for the school and the directors. They also have their child's UK mobile telephone number. Head office holds the contact details of all the students and these are accessible remotely.

## Care of under 18s summary

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. The care of under 18s is taken very seriously. Policies and procedures are generally robust, but there are not two references on file for many teachers. Several extremely thorough measures ensure that all students are tightly supervised throughout their stay. The cultural component of the provision is an integral part of the course and is very well organised and managed.