

Organisation name	Bell Young Learners Centres, Head Office Cambridge
Inspection date	7–9 August 2019

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.

Summary statement

The British Council inspected and accredited Bell Young Learners in August 2019. 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).

This private language teaching organisation offers residential vacation courses in general English for under 18s.

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, leisure opportunities, and safeguarding under 18s.

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

Introduction

Bell Educational Services (Bell) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bell Educational Trust. It has been organising residential courses for young learners for over 40 years. The young learner (YL) courses are managed by a team in head office in Cambridge. A new head of YL was appointed to this team in June 2018.

The summer courses take place in July and August in well-established boarding schools (Bloxham School near Oxford, The Leys in Cambridge, Wellington College in Berkshire). The Bell school in St Albans, a year-round school for young learner residential courses, was accredited in a separate inspection in June 2019 as it offers courses throughout the year.

The inspection took place over two days, a half day and a part day, with two inspectors. They spent a day at The Leys School, a day at Bloxham School (which was not signalled beforehand) and a half day and a part day at head office in Cambridge.

In each centre they talked to the centre manager, the assistant centre manager, the director of studies (DoS), the assistant directors of studies (ADoS), the student services director (SSD), the activity director, the assistant activity director (The Leys School), and representatives from the host schools. Focus group meetings were held with teachers, students, activity leaders, group leaders and house parents. All teachers timetabled during the inspection were observed. One inspector visited the residential accommodation in each centre and one inspector observed some activities.

At head office the inspectors talked to the head of young learners, the academic and activities manager, the admissions team leader, the recruitment co-ordinator, and the marketing manager.

Address of main site/head office

Bell Educational Services, Red Cross Lane, Cambridge CB2 0QU

Description of sites visited

The Leys School (Fen Causeway, Cambridge CB2 7AD)

The Leys School (Leys) is an independent co-educational boarding school set on a 50-acre site in the centre of Cambridge. Bell has exclusive use of the site for its summer programmes. Bell was using eight classrooms in a teaching block, with the school hall, dining hall and residential accommodation close by. There are student common rooms and rooms for the management team, teachers and activity staff. There are separate toilets for staff and students. Bell has use of the sports hall, various sports pitches and studio spaces, including a cookery room and a drama studio.

Bloxham School (Banbury Road, Bloxham, Banbury OX15 4PE)

Bloxham School (Bloxham) is an independent boarding school with a 60-acre site in a village 25 miles from Oxford. At the time of the inspection Bell was sharing the site with another organisation. Six classrooms were in use, with more available if needed, and students and staff take their meals in the dining hall. There are student common rooms, as well as rooms for centre staff, and separate toilets for staff and students. Residential accommodation is onsite. Bell has use of studio spaces, including an art room and drama studio, and scheduled use of a range of on-site sports facilities, including a sports hall, tennis courts, football pitches and an indoor swimming pool.

Head office staff work in offices in a house on the main site of the Bell school in Cambridge.

Course profile	Year round		Vacation only	
	Run	Seen	Run	Seen
General ELT for adults (18+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General ELT for adults (18+) and young people (16+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General ELT for juniors (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
English for academic purposes (excludes IELTS preparation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 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

The Bell two-week English Explorer course comprises 30 hours of project-based lessons, run for all levels and with a choice of project themes, together with 25.5 hours of afternoon electives and evening activities and three full-day 'study tours' (excursions to places of interest). Two versions of the course are run, a Summer Explorer and a Junior Explorer, for two different age groups.

The Summer Explorer course is run at both Leys and Bloxham for students aged 11–17; a Junior Explorer course is also run at Bloxham for students aged 7–10. In addition, students can prepare for, and take, an externally validated speaking exam at the end of their course.

A two-week Young Cambridge Scholars (YCS) course is run at Leys for students aged 14–17 who are interested in progressing to an English-speaking university. The course is offered at levels B1–C2 and comprises 54 hours of lessons, including academic skills, 32 hours of lessons in academic subjects, a 12-hour lecture programme with external speakers, and three full-day study tours.

A two-week (or four-week) Intensive Academic English (IAE) course is run at Bloxham for students aged 12–17. The course comprises 48 hours of lessons, including afternoon examination preparation lessons for externally validated English language examinations or IELTS, 25.5 hours of activities and three full-day study tours.

All four course types were running at the two centres visited.

Management profile

The head of young learners, who is based in Cambridge, reports to the chief executive officer and line manages the head office project manager (the academic and activities manager) for the three summer centres. Each centre has a centre manager, an assistant centre manager, a DoS, two ADoSs, an SSD and an activities director.

Accommodation profile

The company provides on-site accommodation to all students. At the sites visited the rooms range from single occupancy to dormitory rooms with ten beds. The majority of rooms contain between one and four beds. Each student house has a large, comfortably furnished common room for relaxation, and this is where the resident house parents conduct daily house meetings. Accommodation on both sites has shared bathroom and toilet facilities, and offers a laundry service to all students.

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 the provider's clearly stated goals and values. Communication is good, student administration very efficient and staff management procedures effective. Publicity is well produced and accurate. *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 provide students and staff with a very comfortable and professional environment for work and relaxation. A good 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. *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 team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers receive good guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Courses are structured and managed well to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. 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 welfare and security of students is ensured in a practical and sensitive manner; accommodation is of a good standard and well managed. The leisure programme provides an excellent balance of sports, arts, drama, and academic options. This programme is staffed by a conscientious and appropriately experienced team. *Care of students* and *Leisure opportunities* are areas of strength.

Safeguarding under 18s

The provision meets the section standard and exceeds it in some respects. There are sensitive and effective policies and procedures in place to safeguard students under the age of 18. Policies have benefited from expert input, and implementation is thoughtfully executed. *Safeguarding under 18s* is an area of strength.

Declaration of legal and regulatory compliance

The items sampled were satisfactory.

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.	Strength
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 explicit in the 'Bell Way' statement, which is documented in information for staff and informs practices across the organisation, including staff induction and appraisals. Some returning staff referred to the organisation's values as part of their motivation for returning.

M2 The management's objectives for the future of the organisation are very clear. They are stated in the organisation's five-year strategic business plan and the Bell 'education plan', which is updated every two years and focuses on the development of teaching and learning. Objectives are SMART and the review cycle is set into the annual calendar.

M3 The management structure at head office and at centre level is very clear. An organogram for the YL management team includes photographs and clear job titles. Staff are able to cover each other's roles and strategies are in place to ensure continuity of management during busy periods and between courses.

M4 Communication within the centres and with head office staff is very effective. A range of daily meetings takes place in the centres to ensure everyone is well informed. Centre management teams operate an open-door policy. Head office staff visit the centres regularly and are on call for support in any emergencies.

M5 Systems for taking and recording student feedback are comprehensive. In addition to written feedback, students can contribute to school council meetings and add comments to the suggestion box. All feedback is discussed with relevant teams and in operations meetings. Feedback is analysed before being added into the review cycle.

M6 Mechanisms for gathering feedback for staff are very effective and include daily meetings, online feedback and an end-of-contract review with the line manager. Feedback is analysed promptly at HO and action is documented.

M7 A regular quality review cycle is evidenced in the education plan, which is informed by multiple sources of data including feedback, observations, appraisals and end-of-course reviews. The annual self-evaluation is a very detailed collaborative document compiled by the management team.

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.	Strength
M11 There are effective induction procedures for all staff.	Met

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.	Met

Comments

M8 A wide range of policies detailing terms and conditions of employment is available to all staff in handbooks and in electronic form. Staff in the centres feel well informed and generally well supported by the organisation.

M10 Procedures for each stage of the recruitment process are thorough and consistent and carried out by trained and experienced staff at head office. Records of recruitment documentation are exemplary. Centre managers commented on the excellent teams recruited for 2019.

M11 Induction programmes are thorough. Less experienced teachers said they would welcome an increased focus on project planning in their inductions to help them plan their weekly programmes.

M12 Procedures for appraising staff are robust and supportive. Head office staff have annual appraisals. All YL centre staff, including activity leaders, are monitored initially by oral observations and by end-of-contract written appraisals. There was evidence of a firm and sensitive approach to staff requiring additional support.

M13 A comprehensive policy for continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff is in place. The need for CPD is identified through a range of methods, including observations and requests. Teachers at Leys appreciated the relevant range of CPD provided; at Bloxham teachers felt too few of the CPD sessions related specifically to YL teaching for them to develop their skills in this area further.

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.	Met
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 The multilingual head office sales team delivers a high standard of customer service to agents and parents. Students and group leaders praised the efficiency and helpfulness of staff.

M15 Very detailed, practical pre-course information and advice is provided to agents, students and their parents, including centre-specific information about the location, the course and life in the UK.

M19 The attendance policy is comprehensive and made very clear to students and parents. It is implemented by the whole team from house parents to teachers. Evidence was seen of the procedure being followed in the case of a student who did not come to class on time.

M21 The complaints procedure, including the option of recourse to an external body, is written in very clear, accessible language and is available in pre-arrival information, as well as being displayed around the centres. All complaints are taken seriously, handled sensitively and logged with details of action taken.

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.	Met
M23 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Strength
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

Publicity comprises a website, brochure and social media. The website and brochure are for the UK Bell group as a whole. The main medium of publicity is the website.

M23 The website is attractive and easy to navigate. Information is written in highly accessible, plain English with translations available in Italian, Spanish and Chinese.

M24 Information on the courses is presented simply and clearly, with a consistent use of simple icons in the brochure to indicate facilities available. Sample timetables make comparison of courses very straightforward.

M26 A parents' section on the website gives comprehensive information about arrangements for pastoral care, including travel information and frequently asked questions.

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 Both the Leys and Bloxham sites are maintained to a very high standard, extremely clean throughout, and are entirely suitable for courses for young learners. Common rooms, dining areas and the extensive outdoor facilities are very attractive and welcoming.

P2 Classrooms are spacious, benefit from natural light and have flexible furniture.

P3 Both sites have good facilities for students to relax in, including common rooms, communal areas and extensive outdoor areas, popular in break times. The dining halls seat all students and staff comfortably.

P4 The meals provided in both centres are excellent, both in terms of choice and quality. Healthy options are available and special diets are catered for. There was evidence of catering staff responding to student feedback.

P5 Signage in both centres is clear and helpful. Noticeboards are attractive, well organised and display up-to-date information and students' work.

P6 Staff at both centres are well provided for with spacious offices and rooms where they can relax. Both teachers' rooms have ample work spaces, easy access to resources and facilities for storing personal possessions.

Learning resources	Area of strength
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.	N/a
P11 Students receive guidance on the use of any resources provided for independent learning.	N/a
P12 There is a policy for the continuing review and development of teaching and learning resources, and evidence of its implementation.	Strength

Comments

P7 A wide range of up-to-date learning resources, appropriate to the age groups, is available to supplement in-house materials. Students have folders in which to keep handouts.

P8 Resources for teachers are well organised and plentiful; they include specific resources for specialist course components. Teachers have access to project-specific resources on the in-house management system, including 'project planners' which suggest lesson ideas and sources of materials based on a weekly topic.

P9 Provision of educational technology is generally good. Many classrooms in both centres are equipped with interactive whiteboards (IWB) and every teacher is given their own laptop. Training is provided and IT support is available from the host schools. Classes have access to IT suites for project research and development.

P12 An ongoing review cycle ensures that resources are continually updated. Feedback from staff and students influences the planning and review of materials in development at the end of the summer. A budget is available to supply new materials requested by teachers.

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.	Met
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

T1 One teacher did not have a Level 6 qualification. The rationale provided was accepted in the context of this inspection as the teacher is currently completing a number of university-level short courses.

T3 There was evidence of a good range of relevant experience, knowledge and skills in the teaching teams in both centres, including business experience, academic subject-specific and primary experience. The balance between very experienced and newly qualified teachers, several recruited from Bell initial teacher-training courses, is well judged.

T4 The DoSs in both centres, the TEFLQ ADoS in Leys and the two TEFLQ ADoSs in Bloxham are well qualified and very experienced. The ADoS for the YCS course in Leys is not TEFLQ. The rationale provided was accepted in the context of this inspection. He is TEFLI and responsible for academic administration on the course, while support, including the conduct of quality assurance observations of the teachers, is provided by the TEFLQ DoS. His MBA qualification is relevant to the academic nature of the course.

Academic management	Area of strength
T5 Teachers are matched appropriately to courses.	Met
T6 There are effective procedures for the appropriate timetabling of students, teachers, courses and classrooms.	Met
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.	Met

Comments

T7 Provision for teaching cover is very good. A number of non-teaching staff are TEFLI and the DoS and ADoSs are also available to teach if necessary. If a specialist teacher is absent, timetables are adjusted so that the ADoS can cover and the specialist lesson is rescheduled.

T8 The course design takes account of weekly arrivals; courses are planned in weekly blocks and classes are rotated and reallocated every week/two weeks. Specialist courses, the YCS course, for example, are sold as two-week packages to avoid repetition.

T9 Teachers are well supported in their roles. The academic management teams provide day-to-day guidance, often on a one-to-one basis, teachers can access online support such as video tutorials and also do 'walk arounds' to observe the outcomes of projects in other classes. Teachers appreciated this support.

T10 Teachers are observed regularly by TEFLQ academic managers. As well as formal graded observations, less formal buzz observations take place frequently. Feedback from formal observations was seen to be supportive and developmental. Not all teachers in Bloxham had been observed and given feedback in their first two weeks.

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.	Strength
T13 Written course outlines and intended learning outcomes, appropriate to the course length and type, are available to students.	Strength
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.	Strength
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 The principles of the YL course design are communicated very clearly via the 'Bell Way' statements. Courses are based on project work, with a choice of four themes, and a bank of 'project planners' with links to sources of materials provide broad guidance for teachers.

T12 Courses are reviewed continually. New project themes are piloted and feedback from teachers and students at the end of each course informs their development.

T13 The syllabus, with a summary of each project, is made clear to students at induction and in their handbook. Teachers write lesson objectives and outcomes on the board.

T14 Courses make very good provision for the acquisition of language through activities additional to English classes. The weekly 'study tours' include pre-, during and post-tour language-learning tasks designed by the teachers. Activity staff are given training in how to introduce new vocabulary into activities on study tours and in the afternoon electives.

T15 Courses give very good guidance in the development of study skills. Each 'project planner' suggests 'learning to learn' strategies for teachers to incorporate into the lessons and students are required to produce a portfolio of work during their stay. This involves organising and storing new vocabulary and completing 'can do' statements at the beginning and end of their course.

T16 The courses provide a good range of opportunities and strategies for language development outside the classroom. As well as the study tours, these include the activity programme, daily meetings and interaction with house parents, and a weekly 'English challenge day' where students are challenged to spend the whole day speaking English.

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.	Met
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 Progress is monitored continually in a number of ways, from students' initial assessment to their self-assessment using 'can do' statements at the end of the course. Assessment for learning strategies is built into guidance for teachers.

T20 Students on the English Explorer courses prepare for an externally validated speaking examination. Expert guidance towards their taking the most suitable level is provided by academic managers with detailed knowledge of the exam requirements. Results seen were excellent.

T21 Reports are very detailed, yet written in simple, clear English. They comment on the students' skills with statements linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), as well as on more personal and social aspects such as course participation and attitude. They are very professionally presented.

T22 Advice on mainstream UK education can be provided by the Bell University Counselling Manager. She delivers a lecture on the YCS course where the students are particularly interested in access to UK university education.

Classroom observation record

Number of teachers seen	18
Number of observations	18
Parts of programme(s) observed	Junior Explorer, English Explorer, IAE, YCS (Leys)

Comments

Two teachers on the YCS course were not teaching on the day of the inspection.

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.	Met
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.	Met
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.	Strength
T30 Teachers demonstrate the ability to engage students and create a positive learning atmosphere.	Strength

Comments

T23 Most teachers demonstrated sound language knowledge and provided clear explanations and examples. Models of spoken and written language were mostly clear and accurate and some teachers wrote models on the board with helpful information such as stress marks.

T24 Course content was appropriate to course objectives. All plans included detailed student profiles showing good awareness of the needs of the group and of individuals. Activities and materials were relevant to the age group and to the range of cultural backgrounds of the students, and there were opportunities for personalisation.

T25 Lesson plans included varied sets of activities, with clear links to the outcomes of project work. Outcomes were clearly expressed in most plans and written on the board; some teachers referred to them as the lesson progressed.

T26 A good range of teaching techniques was seen. Appropriate elicitation and questioning, concept checking, pronunciation drilling and nomination to encourage participation were all used confidently. With few exceptions, teachers gave clear instructions and demonstrated activities first for additional clarity.

T27 Classroom technology was used effectively and handouts were attractive and professionally presented. Whiteboard work was sometimes well organised but in some classes was less well planned. Seating arrangements did not always facilitate student-student interaction.

T28 A variety of correction techniques was seen, including prompted self- and peer-correction, delayed correction and collaborative whole-class activities based around identifying and correcting errors in written work. Teachers were always encouraging and acknowledged individual and group achievements.

T29 Planned evaluation activities included focused and well-written post-study tour activities, as well as productive activities based on practising new language presented.

T30 In all classes teachers achieved a purposeful learning atmosphere, with their students responding well to effective changes of pace, well-managed competitive activities and strong voice projection. Appropriate use of pair work and groupwork ensured that there was ample student-talking time and students were fully engaged.

Classroom observation summary

The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme and ranged from excellent to satisfactory, with the majority being good or very good. Teachers showed sound language awareness and gave clear explanations. Class profiles were detailed and lesson plans contained a series of varied and relevant activities. A good range of teaching techniques was seen. Classroom resources were generally used confidently, although in a few instances seating arrangements were not optimal. Feedback and correction techniques, pair work and group work, together with good teacher presence, resulted in students being engaged in their lessons.

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

Comments

W1 An external provider is employed to carry out an extensive health and safety audit of premises before the programme begins. Practical supporting information is available to staff, such as site-specific risks, included in the safeguarding policy, and welfare is a major feature of the staff induction process. Fire drills are regular and the results recorded.

W2 A crisis management team is in place at head office, with detailed policies and procedures in place to respond to a wide range of emergencies. There is a clear crisis communication procedure, and key information is disseminated to staff during the induction process. Relevant elements are made known to students at induction.

W3 Pastoral care for students is prioritised across the organisation. House parents hold daily meetings with their students, and concerns are escalated where necessary via the SSD. All staff have access to the online incident reporting procedure, which is monitored at head office.

W4 Respect features prominently in the organisation's ethos, and this is made visible from student and staff induction presentations, to board displays in the classrooms. It was clear from speaking to staff that this is taken seriously, and there is a three-stage process in place for dealing with unacceptable student behaviour.

W6 Student transport from point of entry is handled well. A free service for all students is provided, with a maximum wait time of two hours at the airport. Student feedback rated the organisation's transfer provision as very good.

W8 Medical provision is good. There is a nurse on site a few days each week, and the organisation has good links with local doctors. A high proportion of staff are first aid trained.

Accommodation (W9–W22 as applicable)	Met
<i>All accommodation</i>	
W9 Students have a comfortable living environment throughout their stay.	Met
W10 Arrangements for cleaning and laundry are satisfactory.	Not 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.	Met
W13 There are effective procedures for identifying and resolving any problems students have with their accommodation.	Met
W14 Accommodation providers receive written confirmation of the rules, terms and conditions applied by the provider with respect to the provision of accommodation services.	Met
W15 Students receive meals as agreed; these offer a well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements students may have.	Strength

Comments

W10 All accommodation is very clean, but on one site, laundry is only changed once every two weeks.

W11 An external provider inspects all accommodation for suitability before the start of the course, and this is followed up with an on-site check by staff upon arrival.

W15 Food provision is good. The meals on site are varied with healthy options, and student feedback was positive. Dietary requirements are catered for, and evidence was seen of the canteen management responding to student requests.

Accommodation: homestay only	
W16 Homestay hosts accommodate no more than four students at one time.	N/a
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.	N/a
W18 No more than two students share the same bedroom, unless the students, their agents, parents or legal guardians specifically request this in writing.	N/a
W19 English is the language of communication within the homestay home.	N/a
W20 Hosts ensure that there is an adult available to receive students on first arrival.	N/a

Comments

All students are in residential accommodation arranged by the school.

Accommodation: other	
W21 Students receive information about the implications of their living in private rented accommodation and advice in case of difficulties.	N/a
W22 The provider monitors any other accommodation recommended, and booking and payment arrangements are clear.	N/a

Comments

All students are in residential accommodation arranged by the school.

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.	Strength
W27 Staff supervising sporting and leisure activities on or off-site have appropriate experience and training.	Strength

Comments

W23 All students attend well-planned 'study tour' outings to places of cultural interest every week. Teachers include preparation for these trips during preceding lessons, and there are often follow-up activities the next day leading to colourful board displays in the classrooms.

W24 There are varied programmes with sports, games, cookery, and drama activities, as well as academic options. Planning includes consideration for returning students, and those staying for more than one two-week course.

W25 The site facilities are excellent, with a range of sports halls, pitches and studio spaces. The leisure programme is run by a strong team of individuals who draw up detailed plans for every activity.

W26 Systems to ensure the health and safety of students are very effective. A risk assessment is drawn up for each activity along with the plan for that session, and is checked by a member of the senior management team. A number of the activity staff are first aid trained, and appropriate medical kits are in place.

W27 The teams running the programmes have entirely appropriate backgrounds and profiles for their roles, and are offered further training and support from the activity directors throughout the course.

Safeguarding under 18s

Safeguarding under 18s	Area of strength
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.	Strength
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.	Strength

S3 The provider has written parental/guardian consent reflecting the level of care and support given to students under 18, including medical consent.	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.	Met
S5 There are suitable arrangements for the supervision and safety of students during scheduled lessons and activities.	Strength
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

All students enrolled on the residential vacation courses are under 18. The ages range from 7–17 to 11–17 depending on the centre. At both centres visited, all students fell within the site-specific age ranges.

S1 There is a comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure in place, which has benefited from expert input. A wide range of practical supporting documents is in place such as safeguarding information in each register, welfare cards for every staff member to carry, and incident reporting forms.

S2 Training for staff is very good. As well as completing an online safeguarding course before arrival on site, all staff are given face-to-face training during induction. Every member of staff signs to show their agreement to the relevant policies and procedures, and it was clear from speaking to staff that they take their responsibilities seriously.

S5 Supervision of students during lessons and activities is handled very well. Staff to student ratios are good, and increased on visits to busier places. On sites which provide courses for both younger and older students groups, this is managed by way of a separate dining room, accommodation blocks and activity programme.

S6 Good procedures are in place to enable staff to manage this sensibly. There is very little unsupervised free time, but where this is possible, detailed risk assessments are in place.

S7 The accommodation has been inspected for suitability by an external provider, and is well-managed by the SSD along with a team of dedicated house parents. The accommodation is appropriately organised, separating genders and ages, while good use is made of noticeboards to make important information clear to all students.

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: multicentre

1. COLLATED DATA FOR ALL ELIGIBLE CENTRES (INCLUDING THOSE NOT INSPECTED)

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1981 (Bell Young Learners)
Last full inspection	2015 (Bell Young Learners)
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	Bell Young Learners St Albans, Bell Cambridge, Bell London
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Private sector

Date of foundation	1955 Bell Educational Trust; 2012 Bell Educational Services
Ownership	Name of company: Bell Educational Trust Company number: 01048465
Other accreditation/inspection	N/a

Premises profile

Address of Head Office (HO)	Bell Educational Services, Red Cross Lane, Cambridge CB2 0QU
Name and location of centres offering ELT at the time of the inspection but not visited	Wellington College, Duke's Ride, Crowthorne RG45 7PU
Name and location of any additional centres not open or offering ELT at the time of the inspection and not visited	N/a

Student profile at peak at all centres

	Collated totals in peak week: <i>03/7 Leys; 30/6 Bloxham</i> all centres
ELT/ESOL students (eligible courses)	
18 years and over	0
17 years and under	439
Overall total of ELT/ESOL students shown above	439
Predominant nationalities	Russian, Italian, Argentinian

Staff profile at peak at all centres and HO

	Collated total in peak week: HO and all centres
Total number of teachers and academic managers on eligible ELT courses	44
Total number activity managers and staff	29
Total number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff	16
Total number of support staff (e.g. houseparents, matrons, catering)	17

2. DATA ON CENTRES VISITED

1. Name of centre	The Leys School, Fen Causeway, Cambridge CB2 7AD
2. Name of centre	Bloxham School, Banbury Road, Bloxham, Banbury OX15 4PE
3. Name of centre	N/a
4. Name of centre	N/a
5. Name of centre	N/a

Student profile	Totals at inspection: centres visited					Totals in peak week: centres visited				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Centres										
ELT/ESOL students	At inspection					In peak week				
18 years and over	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
17 years and under	106	95	N/a	N/a	N/a	185	146	N/a	N/a	N/a
Overall total	106	95	N/a	N/a	N/a	185	146	N/a	N/a	N/a
U18 programmes: advertised minimum age(s)	EE: 11 YCS: 14	EE: 11 Juniors: 7 IAE: 12	N/a	N/a	N/a	EE: 11 YCS: 14	EE: 11 Juniors: 7 IAE: 12	N/a	N/a	N/a

U18 programmes: advertised maximum age(s)	17	17 Juniors: 10	N/a	N/a	N/a	17	17 Juniors: 10	N/a	N/a	N/a
Predominant nationalities	Chinese, Italian, German					Spanish, Argentinian, Brazilian				

Staff profile at centres visited	At inspection					In peak week				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Centres	14	12	N/a	N/a	N/a	20	13	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total number of teachers and academic managers on eligible ELT courses	8	9	N/a	N/a	N/a	11	10	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total number of activity managers and staff	3	3	N/a	N/a	N/a	6	6	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total number of management (non-academic) and administrative staff	5	8	N/a	N/a	N/a	7	6	N/a	N/a	N/a

Academic manager qualifications profile at centres visited

Profile in week of inspection: at centres visited	Total number of academic managers				
Centres	1	2	3	4	5
TEFLQ qualification and 3 years relevant experience	2	3	N/a	N/a	N/a
Academic managers without TEFLQ qualification or 3 years relevant experience	1	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total	3	3	N/a	N/a	N/a

Comments

The DoSs do not have teaching timetables. The ADoS on the YCS course (Leys) teaches five hours of academic skills per week. The ADoS for junior courses (Bloxham) teaches juniors for 15 hours per week. Academic management is overseen by the Academic and Activities Manager based in head office in Cambridge.

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	2	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
TEFLI qualification	8	9	N/a	N/a	N/a
Holding specialist qualifications only (specify)	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
YL initiated	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Qualified teacher status only (QTS)	1	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Teachers without appropriate ELT/TESOL qualifications.	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total	11	9	N/a	N/a	N/a

Comments

None.

Accommodation profile

Numbers in each type of accommodation at time of inspection: at centres visited

Arranged by provider/agency	Adults					Under 18s				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Centres										
Homestay	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Private home	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Home tuition	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Residential	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	103	93	N/a	N/a	N/a

Hotel/guesthouse	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Independent self-catering e.g. flats, bedsits, student houses	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Arranged by student/family/guardian	Adults					Under 18s				
Staying with own family	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	3	2	N/a	N/a	N/a
Staying in privately rented rooms/flats	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Adults					Under 18s				
Overall totals	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	106	95	N/a	N/a	N/a

Centres	1	2	3	4	5
Overall total adults + under 18s	106	95	N/a	N/a	N/a

Points to be addressed

Management

M11 Less experienced teachers said they would welcome an increased focus on project planning in their inductions to help them plan their weekly programmes.

M13 At Bloxham teachers felt too few of the CPD sessions related specifically to YL teaching for them to develop their skills in this area further.

Teaching and learning

T10 Not all teachers in Bloxham had been observed and given feedback in their first two weeks.

T27 In some classes whiteboard work was not well planned. Seating arrangements did not always facilitate student-student interaction.

Welfare and student services

W10 On one site, laundry is only changed once every two weeks.

Action plan

It is now a requirement of M7 that an Action plan showing progress on all points to be addressed is submitted with the Annual declaration in the year following an inspection. Please submit this to the Accreditation Unit by 15 February 2020. [Action on any points to be addressed with a specific earlier deadline must be submitted by the deadline given in the results letter.]

Once submitted the Action plan should be kept up to date (but not submitted unless requested) ready for future inspections.