



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**MONITORING VISIT**

**BELL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES LTD**

**(Company Registration No. – 07169627)**

Full Name **Bell Educational Services Ltd**

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Website www.bellenglish.com

Head of UK Operations Mr Frank Pinner

Proprietor The Bell Educational Trust

Age Range 16+

Total number of students 156

Numbers by age and type of study Under 18: 09  
18+: 147  
EFL only: 152  
FE only: 04

Inspection date **12 December 2023**

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges and, by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements.

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Bell Educational Services Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Bell Educational Trust, which grew from Bell International College, founded in Cambridge by Frank Bell in 1955. It aims to change lives by providing education, training and cultural experiences for students from around the world. Courses for adults are run at their premises in Cambridge and London. A year-round school for student groups is located at St Albans. Short summer programmes for children are run in centres in different locations rented for the summer. The scope of this inspection is limited to the provision in Cambridge and London.
- 1.2 The group's head office is located on the Cambridge school site. Both schools are governed by the Bell Educational Services Ltd board of directors. The senior management team of the organisation is composed of the chief executive, the finance director, the director of sales and marketing and the head of operations. The head of operations is also the principal of the Cambridge school. The principal of both the Cambridge and London schools are responsible for the day-to-day running of their institutions.
- 1.3 The schools offer courses in English as a foreign language (EFL) to adults. Students aged 16 and above can join adult classes. General English is offered at a range of levels, and preparation courses for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Cambridge main suite examinations are available to students who have reached an appropriate level. A range of specialist optional courses and one-to-one tuition is also provided. University foundation programmes (UFP) with a wide range of subject specialisms and a masters' degree preparation course are available at Cambridge. Also Cambridge offers teacher training courses leading to the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) and teacher development courses for teachers from overseas. The Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) is available online, with the face-to-face element delivered at the Cambridge school. Enrolment for EFL courses is continuous, while the other courses have specific start dates and entry requirements. Both schools offer accommodation in student residences and in home-stay.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 156 students were enrolled. The majority were female and most were over the age of 18. All spoke English as an additional language and four students were studying on Student visas. There were no students identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. Students come from a wide range of countries, including Saudi Arabia, the Ukraine, Indonesia, Belgium and Turkey.
- 1.5 The college was previously inspected on the 22–24 June 2021 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations. The recommendation from the previous report is:
- Systematically record regular checks made by the schools on externally operated student residences to ensure continued high standards of provision.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of the 22–24 June 2021 the college was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The schools have clear educational aims and objectives. They offer a well-developed curriculum whose provision includes a wide range of very high-quality courses that fully meet the language and academic needs of the students. English language courses are appropriately aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent and accurately places students on the most appropriate course in accordance with their language abilities, and where relevant, future higher education aspirations. Overall, teaching is excellent. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and have comprehensive subject knowledge. They use a wide range of effective teaching methods to ensure that students are engaged, build new knowledge and apply this effectively to new contexts. As a result, students make excellent progress across the range of courses and levels. Regular assessments are highly effective in checking and informing students of their progress. They provide teachers with up-to-date information to ensure that they effectively plan to meet individual students' needs and make sure that students are aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve. As a result, achievement rates are high and most students complete the qualification for which they are registered.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Health and safety is very well managed, with highly effective monitoring and oversight ensuring that any issues are very quickly addressed. Both the Cambridge and London school's buildings are very well maintained and provide high-quality facilities that effectively support learning. Comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all staff and the vast majority of students. However, a small minority of students at the London school report that they are not fully aware of the fire procedures. Student registration and attendance records are excellent. They are accurate, very well managed and are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure. The school's pastoral structure provides excellent support and guidance, with students reporting that they know who to go to if they have personal issues. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are excellent, fully implemented and reflect official guidance. Relationships between staff and students are outstanding. Students report that they are happy, safe and extremely well supported.

- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of Bell Educational Services Ltd are highly effective in ensuring that very high levels of education, welfare, health and safety are maintained and that sufficient financial support is available so that each school's development is well supported by high-quality resources. A clear vision for each school is shared by senior leaders and staff, who work very well together for the good of the students. A detailed management structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, ensures that the schools are well run and meet all their legal obligations. An effective process of self-assessment and evaluation informs improvement planning and ensures that the necessary resources are in place to meet the changing needs of the schools. Both of the schools are very successful in attracting highly-qualified and experienced administrators, teachers and managers. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. The process is accurate and ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate level of study in accordance with their language abilities, and where relevant, future higher education aspirations. As a result, students report that they are highly satisfied with their course and the provision offered by the schools.
- 3.3 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. The schools have clear educational aims and objectives. They offer a well-developed curriculum whose provision includes a wide range of very high-quality courses that fully meet the language and academic needs of the students. English language courses are appropriately aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. The four students currently enrolled at the school on Student visas are studying at an appropriate level on an approved full-time programme that includes at least 15 hours a week of classroom-based, weekday daytime study.
- 3.4 Overall, teaching is excellent. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and have comprehensive subject knowledge. They use a wide range of effective teaching methods to ensure that students are engaged, build new knowledge and apply this effectively to new contexts. Students work very well in groups, showing excellent co-operative learning and independence. Classroom resources are of a high quality, good quantity and range and are used effectively by teachers to support learning. As a result, students make excellent progress across the range of courses and levels.
- 3.5 Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for other people, including those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.6 Assessment is excellent. Regular assessments are highly effective in checking and informing students of their progress. They provide teachers with up-to-date information to ensure that they effectively plan to meet individual students' needs and make sure that students are aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve. As a result, achievement rates are high and most students complete the qualification for which they are registered.



#### **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Systematically record regular checks made by the schools on externally operated student residences to ensure continued high standards of provision.
- 4.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendation. Regular and appropriate checks are made on externally managed student residences used by the school to ensure high standards are being maintained. As a result, the vast majority of students report that the residential accommodation is suitable and managed effectively.
- 4.4 Health and safety is very well managed, monitored, with comprehensive oversight, ensuring that any issues are quickly addressed. Both the Cambridge and London school's buildings are very well maintained and provide high-quality facilities that effectively support learning. Classrooms are tidy, clean, with good lighting, heating, sound insulation and ventilation. Comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. An appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid are in place. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all staff and the vast majority of students. However, a small minority of students at the London school report that they are not fully aware of fire procedures. Free drinking water is readily available throughout both schools.
- 4.5 Systems for recording registration and attendance are excellent. Admission procedures are very well managed, detailed and strictly observed. Online student files are accurately maintained and provide a clear record of checks on identification, previous academic experience, and visa status. Attendance records are accurate and daily attendance is very closely monitored. Staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment and attendance requirements for students on Student visas. Overall, student attendance is high. Attendance for all of the four students on Student visas exceeds Home Office requirements, with an average attendance of 89%.
- 4.6 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Student welfare is a key priority for both of the schools and detailed policies and procedures ensure that they provide a safe and supportive environment where students can progress quickly. On arrival students receive a comprehensive induction which is effective in helping them settle quickly in their course, their school and the local area. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce an expected culture of good behaviour and conduct. Relationships between staff and students are outstanding. Students report that they are happy, safe, extremely well supported and know who to go to if they have personal issues.

- 4.7 The safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are excellent. Arrangements have proper regard to official guidance and the implementation of safeguarding and recruitment strategies are appropriately checked and regularly reviewed by senior managers. There is a designated child protection officer in place who is trained to the required level. All staff that have access to students under the age of 18 are subject to an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) suitability check prior to or on appointment.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The board of Bell Educational Services Ltd are highly effective in ensuring that very high levels of education, welfare, health and safety are maintained. A clear vision for each school is shared by senior leaders and staff, who work very well together for the good of the students. Both of the schools are very successful in attracting highly-qualified and experienced administrators, teachers and managers.
- 5.2 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. A detailed and well-developed management structure, with clear roles and responsibilities, ensures that both schools are well run and meet all of their legal obligations. Policies and procedures are well defined, appropriate and regularly reviewed. Systems to ensure consistent assessment and the monitoring of student progress and attendance are excellent. Clear channels of reporting throughout the organisation ensure that performance data is used effectively to evaluate the provision and to highlight key issues for leaders and managers. As a result, managers and teachers have a clear overview of the performance of the school's and their students.
- 5.3 Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken. As a result, all required employment and suitability checks are completed on staff before their employment is confirmed.
- 5.4 The provision of information is excellent. The school's website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and highly relevant information to inform their study choices. Students have access to a fee protection scheme.
- 5.5 The school was highly responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The school has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the school should:

- Review and revise the fire evacuation information provided to students at the London school to ensure that they are fully aware of the fire procedures.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with students. They held discussions with senior members of staff and attended registration sessions. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector
Ms Christine-Reba Edge	Team Inspector