

Why excellence rises to the top

Melanie Butler introduces the *Gazette's* latest Centres of Excellence ranking and explains our new system of calculating marks out of ten



Courtesy Cambridge Academy of English

CALMLY CONFIDENT Cambridge Academy of English scored an impressive thirteen points of strength from BC inspectors

The *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence listed on the three pages of this feature are all abnormally good, at least in the judgement of British Council inspectors. We can say that with statistical certainty because, as we explain in our statistical analysis on the previous page, they all scored above the normal range of points in their last British Council inspection.

In this feature we list the centres in rank order. To do so, we have had to merge the results of the two British Council systems. Around 120 centres were last inspected under the old system, which was in effect until January 2012 and under which centres were awarded points of excellence, with nine being the maximum number of points ever scored. The majority of centres, however, have

now been inspected under the new system, which scores them on fourteen points of strength, rising to fifteen for those taking students under the age of eighteen.

To bring the scores into alignment we calculated the percentage of total scores available and divided by ten. For example, the Wimbledon School of English scores ten because it was awarded fifteen out of a possible fifteen points under the new system, the only centre so far to gain a perfect score under the new system. English in Chester and ELC Bristol also score ten because they both scored nine under the old system – the maximum ever awarded. Although all three centres, which make up the top 0.5 per cent of centres according to inspection reports, received equal scores, Wimbledon appears in a red box to show it was inspected under the new system, the other two appear in a blue box signifying they were inspected under the old system.

This page lists the top 4 per cent of language centres based on inspection results, with seven centres making the cut with a score of 7.3 or above. The centres in the top 5–10 per cent appear on the next page. Half of the entries on this page come from year-round private language schools. The leading chain is Eurocentres, with four out of five centres scoring thirteen points and all five in the top 10 per cent. There are four private-sector summer school specialists, led by Discovery Summer, one further education

Top 4 per cent

10.0
Wimbledon School of English *

English in Chester
English Language Centre Bristol

9.3
Beet Language Centre (Alpha language centre)
Lake School of English Oxford
St Edmund's College, Ware

8.9
D'Overbroeck's College, International Study Centre
Language Specialists International
Leeds Beckett University
London School of English

8.7
Bell International Cambridge
Cambridge Academy of English ~
Discovery Summer
Eurocentres Bournemouth ~
Eurocentres Cambridge ~
Eurocentres Eitham ~
Eurocentres London Central ~
Hilderstone College

8.0
Excel English Language School Ltd
Sussex Downs College *
Windermere International Summer School

7.8
Bell Young Learners

7.3
Accent international language consultancy
Anglo Continental School of English
Churchill House School of English Language
English Study Tours (Skola)
International House Newcastle and Edinburgh
Kaplan International Manchester
Kingsway English Centre for Professionals
St. Clare's, Oxford ~
Thames Valley Summer

college, Sussex Downs, and one university, Leeds Beckett.

The most successful sector in proportion to its size, however, is the boarding-school-run segment. Headed by St Edmunds College – 14 per cent of all boarding-school-run operations are in the top 4 per cent and half are in the top 10 per cent based on inspection results. ■

Centres of Excellence listing continues on page 10

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that lists in the *EL Gazette* are as comprehensive and up to date as possible. However, we are reliant on published reports from the British Council, and we can only use the latest published information (30 July 2015). Sometimes the information is updated several months after an organisation has been inspected, and this may mean that the data here is based on information from before the last inspection or spot check.

Key

Red box = centre inspected under new British Council system
Blue box = centre inspected under old British Council system
~ = new entry
* = reinspected under new system