



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

BILSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Full Name of College **Bilston Community College**

Address 1st Floor, 84 Bordesley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5PN

Telephone Numbers 0121 270 3999

Email Address vk@bccollege.co.uk

Principal Mr Vijay Kumar

Proprietor Mr Vijay Kumar

Age Range 18+

Total number of
students 50

Numbers by age and
type of study 18+ 50
 FE only 37
 EFL only: 13

Inspection date **15 March 2013**

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight 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 UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges, including 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 through Tier 4 of the points based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards for private colleges;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations to colleges 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 quality 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. Inspectors will also consider the impact of any material change reported since the last inspection.

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1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 Bilston Community College is a private further and higher education institution situated near the centre of Birmingham. The college was founded in 2008 as a limited company and converted to Limited by Guarantee in 2012. It is led by its senior management team and governed by its owner. There are five directors, all of whom take an active part in college leadership. One director is also the principal. The college's mission is to provide dynamic and convenient opportunities for education, tailor-made to the diverse demands and approaches of the students.
- 1.2 The college offers a range of courses at levels 4 to 7. These are a diploma in information technology at level 7, diplomas in healthcare management at levels 5, 6 and 7, diplomas in business management levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, diplomas in hotel management and Hospitality & Tourism levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, together with English language courses. At the time of the inspection there were 50 students, predominantly from India and aged between 20 and 61. There are equal numbers of male and female students, with none identified as having any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.3 This visit was an extended monitoring visit as the college reported a material change as the college had undergone a change of premises. Consequently, section four of the Framework concerning students' welfare, including health and safety was examined in detail.
- 1.4 The college was first inspected on 29 February to 2 March 2012 when it met all key Standards and the quality of education at that time was judged to meet expectations.
- 1.5 The main action points and recommendations from that report are:
 - Plan a wider range of class activities and teaching strategies to enhance the learner experience.
 - Use achievement data and learner feedback more consistently to inform quality improvement.
 - Teachers should share best practice internally so all are able to benefit from the positive experiences of some classes. This will support student achievement.
 - Ensure that the lesson observation process is linked to staff appraisal, including evidence of learner achievement. The appraisal should link to staff development and teaching skills development.
 - The college should set priorities within the quality improvement cycle for the whole curriculum, which can link to the appraisal and continuous professional development process.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations.** The previous inspection of 29 February to 02 March 2012 was judged to meet 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 satisfactory. All courses lead to outcomes which meet the definition of an approved qualification for UKBA purposes. The quality of the teaching is good, with a stimulating range of activities including group work, debates and presentations. Informal one to one tutorials are held, but are not effectively recorded. As a result, there is no targeted action planning to help learners to progress. Achievement data are being collected satisfactorily. However, no analysis has taken place to identify areas where improvement is needed. There is an effective system for module review. Students' evaluations of learning are collected and accurately analysed. However, feedback is not used for action planning. Opportunities to exchange best practice are effectively organised through peer assessment and lesson observations. However, there is no opportunity created for critical appraisal and only a small minority of the tutors indicated changes they may make to practice.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety are satisfactory. The security of the building is good, with effective signage including emergency evacuation. Classrooms are well resourced and there is open access to computers, a library and a well-resourced common room. Toilet facilities are appropriate in number and satisfactorily maintained. There are sufficient named and qualified staff responsible for first aid and fire evacuation. First aid boxes are well stocked and available to students and staff through reception. The accident record book is also available through reception. All electrical equipment has been tested satisfactorily. Appropriate general and fire risk assessments have been carried out, with high risk aspects rectified. Fire extinguishers are appropriately wall-mounted and have recently undergone the necessary checks. A fire blanket is available for use in the kitchen. There are effective policies and procedures for health and safety, which are included in the students' handbook. There are very effective procedures for assuring accurate admission and attendance registers, with appropriate action taken for students who do not fulfil the UKBA requirements for attendance. Pastoral care and support is effective, with the principal and senior staff pro-actively involved in the welfare of the students.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is satisfactory. Directors continue to effectively support the college's aims. They bring educational expertise to the college and provide secure oversight. They are closely involved in all activities of the college, effectively overseeing the planning of the curriculum and taking responsibility for the effective admissions and attendance system. Staff appraisal takes place annually. The outcomes of classroom observations are part of the agenda for discussion. However, the observation reports and learner achievement are not linked to the appraisal process. Continuous professional development is well planned with generic subject training organised for all tutors.

Priorities for quality improvement have been satisfactorily identified, with a newly appointed quality manager effectively planning activities towards a cycle of improvement. Self-evaluation is well structured and focused on identified areas for improvement. Analysis of students' results, minutes of meetings and review of policies and procedures are not routinely carried out.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is good. All key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The recommendations in this area from the last inspection are:
- Plan a wider range of class activities and teaching strategies to enhance the learner experience.
 - Use achievement data and learner feedback more consistently to inform quality improvement.
 - Teachers should share best practice internally so all are able to benefit from the positive experience of some classes. This will support student achievement.
- 3.3 There has been satisfactory progress towards widening the range of class activities and teaching strategies now contain an interesting range of stimulating activities. Group work and preparation of debates and presentations are effective in improving spoken English and in building confidence. The introduction of one to one tutorials has allowed more time for individual attention. These are only briefly recorded on individual learning plans and do not provide a targeted action plan for progression.
- 3.4 There has been satisfactory progress towards the second recommendation. Achievement data is satisfactorily collected, with individual student progress and course success rates accurately tracked. As each module is completed, an appropriate review is carried out to identify areas of weakness. Students' evaluation of their programme of study is requested after completion of each module. Although the feedback is satisfactorily analysed, there is no process for utilising individual comments for on-going improvement.
- 3.5 There has been satisfactory progress towards the third recommendation. Exchange of best practice is effectively organised through peer assessment and lesson observations. New teaching staff are constructively monitored by experienced colleagues. These strategies have led to improved working relationships within the tutor group. There is, however, no opportunity for critical appraisal and whilst the pro forma comment sheet encourages tutors to indicate what changes they may make to their practice, this is not consistently used.
- 3.6 All courses lead to outcomes which meet the definition of an approved qualification for UKBA purposes. The quality of the teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, taught by experts within their field. Students gain knowledge whilst enjoying the learning experience. Their standard of spoken English is good.
- 3.7 Progression planning is effectively provided for each individual student, both for careers and further education.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is satisfactory. All key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 There were no recommendations in this area from the last inspection report.
- 4.3 The college recently moved premises to a site just outside the city centre of Birmingham. There is good signage around the building, which includes evacuation routes, and classrooms are well resourced, with digital projectors and whiteboards. There are sufficient named and qualified staff responsible for first aid and fire evacuation. First aid boxes are well stocked and available to students and staff through reception. There is open access to computers, with wireless connection throughout the building and an appropriate code of conduct for use of the equipment. As a result, research activities can take place within the timetable and out of teaching time. The security of the building is good, with the reception staffed at all times and students, staff and visitors required to sign in and out. There is no access for wheelchair users. This is detailed on the college website. Health and safety standards are satisfactorily met, supported by effective policies and procedures.
- 4.4 There is a well-resourced common room for student use. This area adjoins the library, which contains a good selection of academic books to support learning. There is a suitably sized area within the library for quiet study. Toilet facilities are sufficient in number and satisfactorily maintained.
- 4.5 There is a designated student welfare officer, but the responsibilities of this role are not yet fully outlined. The principal and senior staff are pro-actively engaged with the students in giving constructive information advice and guidance.
- 4.6 Student questionnaires confirm that they feel safe within the college and are receiving an effective education. Management and tutors' support is reported as helpful. It was commented that there is a lack of organised social activities and the inspection findings confirm this.
- 4.7 Records of student registration and attendance are accurate and well managed. Students are aware of the importance of attendance and punctuality and where the necessary, the college takes immediate steps to trace absent students and inform UKBA as required.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is satisfactory. All key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the last inspection report are:
- Ensure that the lesson observation process is linked to staff appraisal, including evidence of learner achievement. The appraisal should link to staff development and teaching skills development.
 - The college should set priorities within the quality improvement cycle for the whole curriculum which can link to the appraisal and continuous professional development process.
- 5.3 There has been satisfactory progress made towards lesson observations being linked to the appraisal process. Each tutor's lessons are observed quarterly without prior warning. Staff are appraised on an annual basis. Comments from the observations are brief and lack detailed suggestions for improvement and whilst this feedback forms part of the agenda for staff appraisal, there is little detail given and no clear link between the two documents. Learner achievement is not discussed. Continuous professional development is well planned, with generic training, for example in safeguarding, for all staff and a teaching certificate for the one unqualified tutor.
- 5.4 There has been satisfactory progress towards the second recommendation. Satisfactory prioritising within the quality improvement cycle has commenced, with a newly appointed quality manager effectively leading the process. A very effective self-evaluation has taken place, where areas for improvement had effectively been identified by a constructive internal inspection. However, the analysis of students' results, recording of minutes of meetings and updating of policies and procedures are not carried out effectively. Action planning and target setting is not sufficiently focused.
- 5.5 Governance, leadership and management continue to be satisfactory, with clear and effective support of the college's aims. The directors bring educational expertise to the college and provide secure oversight. They are closely involved in all the college's activities, effectively overseeing the planning of the curriculum and taking responsibility for very effective admissions and attendance monitoring. Staff have sufficient opportunity for professional development, but none hold a job description. The website is easily navigable and contains relevant information on courses available, on the local area and what students need to organise prior to attendance at the college. All relevant course information is included and English requirements for the different courses are described on the website. All information required for the inspection was provided by the college.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained the satisfactory Standards found at the last inspection.

Suggestions for further improvement

In order to improve the satisfactory quality provided, the college is advised to:

- Ensure the quality improvement cycle leads to on-going improvement and a closer relationship between policy and practice.
- Increase opportunities for social activities for all students.
- Ensure comprehensive job descriptions are available for all roles within the college.
- Ensure that feedback from lesson observations and students' achievements are included in staff annual appraisal.
- Ensure that students fully understand the services provided for their welfare.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor. The responses of staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mrs Jane Armitage	Lead Inspector
Mr Jason Merrill-Glover	Team Inspector