



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

EXTENDED MONITORING VISIT

BILSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Full Name	Bilston Community College
Address	Bilston Community College, 1st Floor, 366-372 Soho Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9QL
Telephone Number	0121 270 3999
Email Address	info@bccollege.co.uk
Website	www.bccollege.co.uk
Principal	Mr Vijay Kumar
Proprietor	Mr Vijay Kumar
Age Range	18+
Total number of students	64
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 64 EFL only: 4 FE only: 60
Inspection date	11 March 2014

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 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;
- 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.

An extended 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. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Bilston Community College is a private further and higher education institution situated a short distance from Birmingham city centre. The college was founded in 2008. It is governed by the owner who is its principal. He is assisted by a board of directors acting in an advisory role. The aim of the college is to provide high quality education that will equip each student to succeed.
- 1.2 The college offers its international students a range of full-time diploma courses in business management, health care management and information and communication technology (ICT). Each course is offered at Levels 4 to 7. Courses last from six to twelve months. Local students are offered courses in customer care at Level 2 as well as a course of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Places are offered on the basis of the suitability of courses to meet the needs of the students, their demonstrated academic ability, face-to-face interviews and proof of qualifications and other evidence required for application. The date for taking up a place at the college is flexible because the structure of the programmes allows for different dates of entry.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 64 students, 29 of whom are female. Forty-nine students are Tier 4 visa holders. These students are drawn mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria with some students from other African countries and Philippines. Almost all students have English as an additional language (EAL). There were no students with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The college cannot offer places to students with mobility difficulties because the nature of the building does not allow access for wheelchair users.
- 1.4 The ICT, ESOL and customer care programmes were not taught on the dates of the visit and were not inspected.
- 1.5 The college had re-located from their city centre premises into the current premises four weeks before the inspection. This change of location was the reason for this extended monitoring inspection and required a detailed inspection of Section 4 of the Inspection Framework dealing with Students' Welfare, including Health and Safety.
- 1.6 At the previous inspection in March 2013 the college was judged to meet expectations.
- 1.7 The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - 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.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of March 2013 the college was found to meet expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been improved.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Qualifications satisfy Home Office requirements. The range of courses meets the needs and abilities of the students. Teaching is very good with a strong focus on learning and student involvement. The subject expertise of the teachers and the enthusiastic manner of their teaching creates a positive atmosphere that promotes learning and progress. Initial and on-going assessment are used effectively to support learning and to show students the progress they are making. Very few students fail to complete their course and the success rate of students in achieving diplomas is high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Due consideration is given to all aspects of health and safety including first aid and fire safety. Policies guide these activities and proper procedures are in place to ensure compliance and to monitor performance. The layout of the new building and the way it is furnished and equipped support teaching and learning. Admission records and registers of daily attendance are kept in accordance with Home Office requirements. Monitoring and evaluation of attendance are carried out regularly and frequently. The level of pastoral support is of a high standard. Satisfactory progress has been made on improving the opportunities for social activities for all students as recommended in the last inspection although no risk assessments have yet been carried out on venues identified as part of the social enrichment programme. Students talk knowledgeably about the high level of services provided for them so demonstrating that excellent progress has been made on this recommendation from the last inspection.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Clear educational direction and a high standard of education ensure that the college meets the requirements of the students and achieves its stated aim. Legal requirements and permissions are met. Appropriate policies and guidelines govern the activities of the college. The high level of quality assessment and improvement reflects the excellent progress in this area as required by the previous inspection. As part of the quality assurance programme, due consideration is given to clarifying staff job descriptions and using all the data on staff performance, including that from lessons observations and student achievement, as part of their annual appraisal. In doing so the college has made excellent progress on these two recommendations from the previous inspection. Development planning is well managed. The website has not yet been updated to reflect the change of premises and to give accurate lists of the courses now on offer.

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 Qualifications on offer are in line with the requirements of the Home Office and the courses being taught are detailed accurately on the college website. The range of provision is highly effective in catering for the age, aptitudes, language capabilities and differing aspirations of the students who attend the college.
- 3.3 Initial assessment, both before and on arrival, is thorough, well organised and addresses all necessary aspects of the application process. The assessment and induction procedures are highly accurate in identifying need and ability and provide the basis on which students are able to make excellent progress. The information from initial assessment is used very well; the attention and the time given to designing, and then monitoring, personal development plans were identified by students as one of the key activities that help them make progress.
- 3.4 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are effective in encouraging each student to achieve the highest possible results and to succeed in line with the college's aim. Very good planning, clear lesson objectives and challenging expectations of students set a high benchmark that promotes achievement. The teaching is characterised by clear exposition, challenging tasks and a supportive learning environment. The wide variety of teaching methods suits different learning styles, caters for the levels students have reached in the programmes and reflects the assumption that students should be actively involved with and take responsibility for their learning. Teachers foster interest and active involvement and generate an atmosphere in which students feel confident to question, raise issues and seek help. Along with excellent subject knowledge, teachers bring to their task a high level of enthusiasm and develop an excellent rapport with their students that fosters a positive atmosphere, encourages learning and promotes progress and achievement. Posting lessons plans on the college's web portal in advance of lessons was identified by the students as a most useful aid to their learning.
- 3.5 Students' progress is very well monitored. The records of the monitoring are comprehensive and are used well in designing interventions and in giving feedback to students. Assessment is regular, frequent and is thorough in the way it identifies strengths and areas in need of improvement. The quality of written assessment is particularly good as are oral interventions in lessons. Teachers make good use of the outcomes of the assessment to guide students and to plan lessons. This is one of the ways the college promotes excellent success rates. Students report that they are more than satisfied with the progress they make.
- 3.6 Students make very good progress in lessons, reach a high level of attainment in their written work and show very good levels of achievement in examinations with very few students not completing their courses.

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 recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Increase opportunities for social activities for all students.
 - Ensure that students fully understand the services provided for their welfare.
- 4.3 Satisfactory progress has been made on the first recommendation. The celebration of festivals and entry and exit points to programmes are now part of the planning of the college. In addition, lists are being prepared of visits to recreational places and to places of cultural and religious interest. Risk assessments for these visits do not exist yet but are identified as a necessary part of the preparations.
- 4.4 Excellent progress has been made in making sure all students know what services are available to them. Students talk freely about the services they can use. They describe with ease how to access the procedures or the people managing these services and are confident that when in need there is always a speedy response to their request. One of the main elements most appreciated by students was the willingness of the college to go beyond expectations in supporting them in times of confusion or need. The induction programme, which begins before the students arrive, is detailed, well recorded and provides all the information students need. The student handbook is a comprehensive collection of all the information students need to make their stay at the college a success.
- 4.5 The move to the new building has been managed with care. In the short time in residence the college has demonstrated a proper regard for health and safety issues, including first aid and fire safety. Suitable policies are in place, staff and students are informed on all health and safety issues, key personnel are trained as first aiders and fire marshals and risk assessments on the building have been carried out. Security of the building is appropriate.
- 4.6 The building was extensively refurbished in preparation for the move and offers a well designed place in terms of space and sufficient rooms for a variety of teaching, research, study and recreation purposes. The teaching areas are well lit, suitably furnished and equipped so that teaching and learning are conducted in a positive atmosphere. Students said they were impressed with the appearance and facilities of the building and said it was a delight to work and study there. The inspectors agree with this judgement.
- 4.7 Admission and attendance records are accurate. Attendance is closely monitored at all times and action taken before absence becomes a problem. Procedures for dealing with and reporting absences unaccounted for are spelled out clearly for staff and students. Home Office requirements in this area are met.

- 4.8 Pastoral support for students is of a high quality. Academic as well as personal support are provided quickly by named personnel either at the request of the student or following observations by tutors or teachers. Students spoke confidently of the ease with which they can approach any of their tutors or members of the college for advice, guidance or support.
- 4.9 The availability of experienced staff means that careers advice is on hand and is tailored to the needs of individuals.

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.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this area from the previous inspection report are:
- Ensure the quality improvement cycle leads to on-going improvement and a closer relationship between policy and practice.
 - 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.
- 5.3 Excellent progress has been made on developing quality improvement. The cyclical process of planning, monitoring, evaluating and improving is now soundly structured, effectively managed and ensures the appropriate participation of all parties. As a result, the improvements in teaching, learning, attainment and management and leadership of the college have progressed significantly since the previous inspection. The review of policies is on-going in the collection of information but is subject to formal review at given times of the year, when the quality control manager makes reports on progress to the principal and the board of directors. The judicious involvement of teachers, staff and students in the quality control cycle has brought benefits to the process and has helped raise attainment and achievement by addressing the key elements in teaching and learning. Development planning is well organised, based on carefully collected data and is structured to further the development of the college on all fronts.
- 5.4 Excellent progress has been made on providing job descriptions for staff. The teachers appreciate the way they were involved in the preparation of these descriptions. They are equally happy with the process of accountability enshrined in their role and understand the standards by which they are assessed using the job description as a framework.
- 5.5 Excellent progress has been made on using the feedback from lesson observations and students' achievements in staff annual appraisal. The collection of a wide variety of data is well managed and effectively used to give information that is a useful base for review and for designing improvements.
- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is of a high standard and provides clear educational direction. The effects of this high standard are seen in the quality of education, the care of students and the degree to which the college fulfils its aims. The close and positive working relationships between staff and the principal allow for sharing of information and involvement of all staff in decision making activities.

- 5.7 Required policies are in place and all legal requirements are met. Well qualified and experienced staff are appointed and supported in improving their performance through training and well targeted support. The appointments procedure meets requirements.
- 5.8 The complaints policy meets requirements but no formal complaints have been registered. The ease of access to key staff, the role of the student representatives on the student/staff committee enable any issues to be dealt with quickly before they have needed recourse to formal procedures.
- 5.9 All required information is provided. The website as it currently stands is reflective of the previous premises occupied by the college. The courses listed there are not all being delivered at this time. The college complied with all requests for information in connection with the inspection.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has improved the quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Implement the planned risk assessment of places to visit as part of the social enrichment programme.
- Update the website to reflect the new premises and the courses on offer.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with the principal, with key members of staff and with the Chair of the Directors and observed the taking of registers at the start of sessions. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mr E. Dunphy	Lead Inspector
Dr N. Chambers	Team Inspector