



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

**MONITORING VISIT**

**ABBAY ROAD TRAINING LIMITED**

**(T/A ABBAY ROAD INSTITUTE)**

**(Company Registration No. – 09201312)**

Full Name **Abbey Road Training Limited (t/a Abbey Road Institute)**

Address Angel Studios, 311-312 Upper Street, London N1 2TU  
Abbey Road Studios, 3 Abbey Road, London NW8 9AY

Parent Company name Universal Music Group

Telephone Number 020 7266 7397

Email Address london@abbeyroadinstitute.com

Website abbeyroadinstitute.co.uk

Campus Manager Mr Darren Suckling

CEO Mr Luca Barassi

Age Range 18+

Total number of students 63

Numbers by age and type of study 18+: 63  
FE only: 63

Inspection date **04 June 2024**

## 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 Abbey Road Institute is the trading name of Abbey Road Training Limited, a private limited company with share capital incorporated in 2014. Oversight is provided by a board of five directors who provide industry expertise and work closely with the Institute. The Institute is an FE learning provider of vocational music production and training in sound engineering and offers a 48-week course Advanced Diploma in Music Production and Sound Engineering from its Angel Studios in central London and a facility at Abbey Road Studios in St John's Wood, London. Associated Institutions based in other countries are separately licensed educational organisations. The campus manager acts as the principal and provides day-to-day management. He is supported by the programme director and a small team of staff.
- 1.2 The Institute aims to develop students as professionals with the technical skills, knowledge and expertise for a career as a music producer, sound engineer or self-producing artist through an intensive programme designed by industry to meet future needs of employment in this sector.
- 1.3 The college offers a full-time Advanced Diploma in Music Production and Sound Engineering, validated by NCFE, over 48 weeks commencing in February, June and October each year. Prospective students are assessed by a letter of application, curriculum vitae (CV) and a portfolio of four music productions they have produced. If they are successful at this stage, they are invited for an interview that includes a short performance, vocally or on their chosen musical instrument. Students who successfully complete this course can progress to the second year of a small range of audio BA (Hons) programmes at the University of West London.
- 1.4 A part-time, day class in Advanced Diploma in Audio Post Production for Film and TV over 22 weeks is also available, commencing annually in November. Enrolment for this course is by application and interview. The college also offers a 4-day Song Production Masterclass and a 2-day Music Theory Fundamentals course at weekends; however, these were not running at the time of inspection.
- 1.5 At the time of inspection, there were 63 students studying on advanced diplomas. The large majority are male and all are over the age of 18. Most students come from the UK. There are eight students who have declared additional learning difficulties or disabilities and 23 students are studying under Student visa arrangements. The college does not provide accommodation.
- 1.6 The college was previously inspected on 7 March 2023, when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to meet expectations. The recommendations from the previous report are:
  - Ensure that references are taken up and verified prior to the confirmation of appointment for all staff.
  - Revise the appraisal and lesson observation process so that it leads to clear and measurable targets for improvement and identifies training needs.

- Ensure that the learning of all students is thoroughly checked during lessons to ensure that the pace is appropriate for all.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 9–11 November 2021, the college was found 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 excellent. The college has clear educational aims, objectives and a well-planned curriculum. Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. It accurately places students on the most appropriate programme of study in accordance with their music technology skills, knowledge and English language level. The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. It is well organized, flexible and is highly effective in meeting the needs of those students aspiring to have a career in the music industry. Courses on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 2.3 Teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Teachers are well qualified, have comprehensive subject knowledge and considerable professional experience in the music industry. They use a wide range of effective teaching methods to ensure that students are engaged, build new knowledge and effectively develop their practical music technology skills. As a result, students make excellent progress. Assessment is regular and is highly effective in checking student progress and to provide teachers with up-to-date information to ensure that they effectively plan to meet individual students' needs. Achievement rates are high and nearly all students complete the qualification for which they registered.
- 2.4 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Health and safety are well managed, with any identified issues quickly addressed. Both the Abbey Road and Angel Studio premises are fit for purpose, well-maintained and of a high quality, providing a safe and secure learning environment. Classrooms and recording areas are very well equipped and furnished to a high standard. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place which reduce the risks from fire and other hazards and ensure high levels of health and safety are maintained. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all students and staff.
- 2.5 Student registration and attendance records are accurate, well managed and are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking any necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure and fully understood by relevant staff. Pastoral support and guidance for the students is excellent and in accordance with the colleges aims. Students report that they feel safe at the college and very well supported.
- 2.6 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of directors provides comprehensive oversight of all aspects of the colleges work and discharges their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future. As a result, they have been highly effective in building a strong academic and administrative team to ensure that high levels of education, welfare, and health and

safety are maintained. A clear vision for the college is shared by all staff, who work very well together for the good of the students. The college is highly successful in securing and retaining very well qualified staff with considerable music industry experience.

- 2.7 A detailed management structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, ensures that the college is well run and meets all its legal obligations. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are good and 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.



### **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 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure that the learning of all students is thoroughly checked during lessons to ensure that the pace is appropriate for all.
- 3.3 Good progress has been made against the recommendation. Lesson observations show that the pace of lessons is appropriate and teachers effectively use small group activities and directed questions to regularly check all students learning.
- 3.4 Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent. The process is accurate and ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate programme of study in accordance with their music technology skills, knowledge and English language level. As a result, students report that they are highly satisfied with their course and the provision offered by the college.
- 3.5 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. The college has clear educational aims and objectives and a well-planned curriculum. Courses are well organized, flexible and are highly effective in meeting the needs of those students aspiring to have a career in the music industry. Programmes of study on offer to students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. The 23 students currently enrolled at the college on Student visas are studying at an appropriate level on an approved full-time programme which includes at least 15 hours a week of classroom-based, weekday daytime study.
- 3.6 Teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Teachers are well qualified, have comprehensive subject knowledge and considerable professional experience in the music industry. They use a wide range of effective teaching methods to ensure that students are engaged, build new knowledge and effectively develop their practical music technology skills. Students work well independently and in small groups to complete project work; showing good co-operative learning and independence and developing the knowledge and skills they will need in employment. Classroom resources are of a very high quality, good quantity and range and are used effectively by teachers to support learning. As a result, students make excellent progress.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Assessment is excellent. There are clearly defined processes in place to monitor students' progress to ensure that they are successfully progressing towards their

learning aim. As a result, the progress of each student is carefully tracked and allows managers, teachers and students to monitor their progress effectively. As a result, achievement rates are high and nearly all students complete the qualification for which they 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 Health, safety and the security of premises are excellent. They are well managed, with any identified issues quickly addressed. Both the Abbey Road and Angel Studio premises are fit for purpose, well-maintained and of a high quality, providing a safe and secure learning environment. Classrooms and recording studios are tidy, clean, with good lighting, heating, sound insulation and ventilation. They are very well equipped and furnished to a high standard. Detailed health and safety, first aid and fire safety policies and procedures are in place and consistently implemented. All necessary measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards have been taken. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all students and staff. An appropriate number of fire marshals and staff trained in first aid are in place. Free drinking water is readily available throughout both studios. Access to the college allows all students, including those with disabilities, to enter and leave the premises safely, including for emergency evacuations.
- 4.3 Systems for recording registration and attendance are excellent. Admission procedures are detailed and strictly observed. Staff work closely with managers to maintain clear and accurate admission registers and records. 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 23 students on Student visas exceeds Home Office requirements.
- 4.4 Pastoral and personal support for students is excellent. On arrival, students receive a comprehensive induction which is effective in helping them settle quickly into their course, the college and the local area. Students meet regularly with their tutors to discuss their individual learning plans (ILP), which effectively ensures that any educational support needs are met and any personal issues discussed. However, formal systems for offering student support are at times underdeveloped.
- 4.5 Relationships between staff and students, and amongst the students themselves, are excellent with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and the expectations of appropriate behaviour and conduct. Students report that they feel safe at the college and very well supported.

## **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 that references are taken up and verified prior to the confirmation of appointment for all staff.
  - Revise the appraisal and lesson observation process so that it leads to clear and measurable targets for improvement and identifies training needs.
- 5.3 Good progress has been made against the first recommendation. An appropriate system to take up and verify references for all new staff has been successfully implemented. As a result, two references are taken up and verified by the centre manager before they are appointed.
- 5.4 Good progress has been made against the second recommendation. Procedures for staff appraisal have been effectively reviewed and an appropriate new system implemented to include the setting of clear and measurable targets for improvement and lesson observations for teaching staff. Consequently, staff report that they have a clear understanding of their set objectives and how to achieve them.
- 5.5 The board of directors provides comprehensive oversight of all aspects of the colleges work and discharges their responsibilities well for financial planning and investment in the future. As a result, they have been highly effective in building a strong academic and administrative team to ensure that high levels of education, welfare, and health and safety are maintained. A clear vision for the college is shared by all staff, who work very well together for the good of the students. Relationships between the proprietor, managers and staff are excellent.
- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. A detailed and well-developed management structure, with clear roles and responsibilities, ensures that the college is well run and meet all its legal obligations. Policies and procedures are well defined, appropriate and regularly reviewed.
- 5.7 Procedures for the recruitment of staff are good, 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.
- 5.8 The provision of information is excellent. The college's website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and relevant information to inform their study choices. The college was highly responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

## **6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

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

- Continue to develop and enhance formal systems for offering student support.

## **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 college.

### **Inspectors**

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mr Saul Hyman	Team Inspector

## **7. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY CHECK**

A financial sustainability check was not carried out.