



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

ALEXANDER CROMWELL COLLEGE

Full Name of College	Alexander Cromwell College
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Principal	Mr Prithipal Singh Bhambra
Proprietor	Mr Prithipal Singh Bhambra
Age Range	18+
Total Number of students	2
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 2 FE only: 2
Inspection dates	27 – 29 November 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language colleges. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the college's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and English language colleges.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published 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.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 Alexander Cromwell College is a private further and higher education college in West London. Established in 2010, the college is a business limited by shares with two directors. The college occupies the second floor of a business centre with good transport links. The school is managed by one of the directors who is also the principal. The college aims to provide an educational experience that encourages students to strive towards excellence in reaching their potential and to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders and entrepreneurs.
- 1.2 The college offers Institute of Administrative Management (IAM) and ATHE (The Management Awarding Organisation) management courses from level 2 to level 7.
- 1.3 Courses are run termly and students are recruited through direct and online marketing media. Students are selected by personal interview and on the basis of their academic qualifications and skills relevant to the course entry requirements, as well as their career goals. They receive guidance from senior academics within the college to determine the appropriate courses of study.
- 1.4 The first students were recruited in November 2012. At the time of inspection there were two female students enrolled, both from European Union (EU) countries, both of whom have English as an additional language (EAL), and are studying the IAM level 6 diploma in business administration and management. There are no students under 18 years of age, nor has the college identified any students as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

2.(a) Executive Summary

	Section of the Standards	Grade awarded 1-4
3.	The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement	2 Meets expectations
4.	Students' welfare, including health and safety	2 Meets expectations
5.	The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	2 Meets expectations

- 2.1 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival at the college is effective. It includes oral and written assessment of English language skill and subject knowledge. Initial advice and guidance support effective recruitment and selection and help students to make informed choices. The college keeps satisfactory assessment records, including students' preferred learning styles and on-course attainment. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning meet expectations. Staff are well qualified, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and effective at engaging and motivating students. All lessons are well planned and the majority include a good variety of teaching techniques. Teachers make very good use of their experience and knowledge throughout lessons. Electronic resources are used effectively to support classroom delivery and develop students' independent learning skills. Students progress well in class, their standard of work is good and their learning and progress are monitored well. There are no external examination results as teaching has only recently started.
- 2.2 The arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff meet expectations. The premises are secure and the college provides a safe working and learning environment, supported by appropriate policies and risk assessments. Fire safety procedures are excellent. The premises, student facilities and furnishings are well maintained and clean. Access and facilities for students with physical disabilities are good. Student registration and attendance processes are well managed and monitored, supported by clear policies and a well-managed database. Effective systems to record and monitor admissions and attendance meet UK Border Agency (UKBA) requirements. Pastoral support is well planned and promoted, with plenty of opportunities for individual and academic support. The college also offers helpful advice on academic progression opportunities.
- 2.3 Ownership and oversight at the college are effective and meet expectations. Strategic leadership and management of the college are good, and both operational leadership and systems are growing to reflect the new course delivery. The proprietor, who is also the principal, is committed to the day-to-day running of the college and monitors all aspects of provision. The principal is effective in ensuring all staff contribute effectively to the development of the college. Communication is open and supportive between management and staff and there is effective communication and information sharing across the college, although this is largely

informal in character. Self-evaluation is accurate, successfully identifying areas for development, and there is a suitable initial improvement plan. Staff performance monitoring systems are in place but are not yet fully embedded within the quality assurance and management cycle. The college is successful in securing well-qualified and experienced staff, although pre-employment checks are not always done in a timely manner.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

2.4 At the time of the inspection, the college met all the key requirements of the standards for private further education colleges and quality is good. **The college meets expectations for the quality of education.**

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. As the college develops, ensure that it has formal means of gathering information about its operations, focusing on outcomes, as the basis for improvement.
2. Formalise the arrangements for decision making and its recording, so that all concerned know clearly what needs to be done and when.
3. Improve the delegation of operational tasks as the college grows to encourage and further embed a culture of ownership and accountability across the management at all levels.
4. Consolidate practices to ensure timely compliance with policy statements relating to staff recruitment and staff development.

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

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 Assessment prior to arrival meets expectations. Students undertake a range of assessment checks prior to admission, including multi-media video conferencing. The college does not offer English language support and students are expected to provide evidence of language competency in line with the expectations of their chosen programme.
- 3.2 Students undergo a range of assessment on arrival. This is used by tutors to support correct placement and to target work in the early days of the course.
- 3.3 Students are offered accurate information and good advice and guidance, which effectively support them in settling quickly into their courses.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The curriculum meets expectations. Students are well educated in accordance with the college's aims. The range of provision is good and courses running are as described in the prospectus. The range of levels meets the needs and objectives of students and supports their personal and professional aspirations.
- 3.5 In line with the curriculum levels offered and students' level of language competence, additional English language support is not offered.
- 3.6 It is too early to judge course completion rates as teaching only started in November 2012.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

- 3.7 Teaching meets expectations. Teaching reflects the college's clear curriculum statement, and is supported by an appropriate policy and awarding body endorsed delivery and monitoring systems.
- 3.8 Teachers are very well qualified and demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Their planning is outstanding and makes use of well-chosen resources and teaching methods that reflect the needs of the learners. At its best, teaching is lively and inspirational, enabling very effective skills and knowledge development. Although teachers seek to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning, low numbers mean that there is little opportunity for peer interaction. Teachers make good use of opportunities to refine students' use of specialist vocabulary during sessions.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.9 To date, no student has completed the course, and so no performance data is available. However, inspectors observed good levels of participation and attainment

in class, demonstrated through the acquisition and application of new knowledge and skills. Student evaluation praised the quality and pace of skills development in meeting their personal aspirations and goals. Progress to date, judged from observation and discussion, is good in relation to the students' starting points.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises (in line with expectations of educational institutions)

- 4.1 Arrangements for health, safety and student welfare meet expectations. Suitable policies are in place and effective systems ensure the college is a safe and comfortable environment for all. The college takes care to minimise the risk of fire and other hazards. There is a particularly good fire evacuation procedure based on a range of different scenarios to ensure staff and students are focused on complying with the college's evacuation policy and procedures. The principal is the trained fire marshal and first aider.
- 4.2 Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support students who are unwell or injured. Whilst there are currently no students with SEND, there are appropriate access, support and specialist facilities for students with physical disabilities.
- 4.3 The college premises are comfortable and well maintained. Classrooms are a good size, well ventilated and well furnished.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.4 Recording arrangements meet expectations. There are appropriate and well-communicated policies and procedures for the collection of fees, deposits and management of refunds.
- 4.5 The college has appropriate and well-maintained admission and attendance procedures, using paper-based and electronic systems for recording attendance and the production of management reports. Management information software provides staff with reports that include attendance and lateness reporting, records of contact with students and, where required, reports to the UKBA.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.6 Pastoral care meets expectations and reflects the college's aims, ethos and mission. All staff provide effective support and guidance for students, and students are given a very good range of information during induction to support them in settling into the college quickly. This is complemented by a very effective student handbook that includes a good range of academic and welfare support information.
- 4.7 The college promotes integration and tolerance and has suitable policies and procedures to be used in cases of bullying or harassment. At this early stage, the college has no formal arrangements to provide guidance on careers and continuing education. However, students are confident that tutors will provide help when needed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight meet expectations and are in line with the college's aims. The principal, who is a co-owner, is directly involved with both the strategic and operational management of the college and provides clear strategic leadership and direction.
- 5.2 The principal takes personal responsibility for health, safety and security and for statutory compliance, where he discharges his responsibilities for health, safety and welfare well. The college has all required permissions from relevant bodies.
- 5.3 The principal has a good knowledge of the college's workings, and through regular informal meetings is kept fully informed of all aspects of the provision, enabling him to maintain suitable standards of education and care. The implementation of a comprehensive strategic development plan is being monitored carefully. The principal and finance director, who is also co-owner of the college, are effective in managing financial responsibilities and the college's physical assets.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management and leadership of the college meet expectations. Members of the senior management team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, although there is only limited delegation of management functions due to the present small size of the college. There are appropriate policies and clear procedures to ensure that the educational vision of the college is achieved. There is a strong management emphasis on educational achievement and offering learning programmes to meet individual needs; in the opening weeks of the first course, much has been achieved.
- 5.5 The self-evaluation report indicates a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. The development plan is good and includes measurable and formal targets to assist in monitoring its implementation.
- 5.6 Communication between the senior management team and staff is good. Team meetings, although regular, are mostly informal and decisions are not always recorded.
- 5.7 The college is successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. Staff are highly qualified, with an emphasis on academic achievement and experience. There are staff appraisal and continuous professional development policies and procedures, although these have not yet been systematically implemented. A process for lesson observations is in place and is partially implemented. In both the pre-inspection questionnaire and during interviews staff indicated they are happy working at the college.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.8 Quality assurance meets expectations. The well-planned quality assurance process is underpinned by appropriate systems and procedures. As course delivery is very new, these systems have not completed a first cycle nor gained maturity. Inspection evidence demonstrates these systems to be appropriate at this stage.
- 5.9 There is a good range of feedback systems for students, including two suggestion boxes and unit and course evaluation forms. The principal takes the views of students seriously and undertakes effective management of student feedback. Students consider the college to be effective in meeting their demands. Inspection evidence supports their views.
- 5.10 There is an appropriate system for handling complaints from students, although it has yet to be required.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

- 5.11 The college is successful in recruiting well-qualified and experienced staff, and has appropriate arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, governors and proprietors. However, some recruitment checks have not been carried out in a timely manner.
- 5.12 Staff retention is good and arrangements for appraisal and professional development are beginning to be implemented.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.13 The provision of information is excellent. The college has an attractive website that covers the required content such as location, courses on offer and key policies. The website is managed externally and is updated quickly.
- 5.14 The college was extremely helpful in preparing for the inspection, providing the necessary documentation for inspection in a timely manner.

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 proprietors, and attended registration sessions. The responses of staff to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mr Ray Brogden	Lead Inspector
Mrs Jacqueline Lawrence	Team Inspector