



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

BRISTOL COLLEGE OF ACCOUNTANCY

Full Name of College	Bristol College of Accountancy
Address	Ashbourne House, 1 Fishponds Road, Eastville, Bristol, BS5 6SH
Telephone Number	0117 952 5500
Fax Number	0117 951 7313
Email Address	info@bristolcollege.ac.uk
Principal	Mr Mohammad Ashraf Choudhary
Proprietors	Mr Abdulqadir Chaudhary Mrs Sughra Begum
Age Range	18+
Total Number of students	111
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 111 FE only: 111
Inspection dates	30 October – 1 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE	2
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE	3
(a) Executive summary	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with standards	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) Assessment of learners prior to or on arrival	5
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	5
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	6
(d) Attainment and progress	6
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
(a) Health, safety and security of premises	7
(b) Student registration and attendance records	7
(c) Pastoral support for students	7
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	9
(a) Ownership and oversight	9
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	9
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	10
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	10
(e) Provision of information	11
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	12

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

- 1.1 Bristol College of Accountancy is a private college offering courses of further and higher education. The college is located in Eastville, part of the residential Fishponds area of Bristol, and occupies two floors of an office building. The college was established in 2005 as a company limited by shares with two shareholders.
- 1.2 In recent months the principal has reduced his time commitment to the college to undertake charitable work in Pakistan. The college is governed by the two proprietors, who are members of the principal's family. The college senior management team consists of three directors; the principal, his son who acts as managing director of the company, is the major shareholder and takes management responsibility for finance, and a recently appointed third director who takes operational responsibility for the college in the principal's absence. Another newly appointed member of staff is responsible for all reception, administration, registration and welfare duties.
- 1.3 Initially, provision consisted of professional courses in accountancy, business studies and information technology (IT), leading to internationally recognised awards. More recently changes in the regulation of these courses and a decline in student demand have resulted in the college seeking accreditation for Edexcel higher national awards and links with universities. No new students are being enrolled on the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) accountancy courses. The college's mission statement identifies the college's intention to facilitate overseas students' access to good quality yet reasonably priced education in the UK. By creating a learning environment to support students' personal development, the college seeks to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills leading to success in qualifications relevant to their career in their country of origin.
- 1.4 The college currently has a total of 111 students enrolled for all courses, which include the Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) professional scheme, the Certified Accounting Technician (CAT), the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) Diploma and Certificate, and the British Computer Society (BCS) Chartered Institute of IT Diploma and Certificate. There were 39 students studying at the time of inspection. A further 72 students on ACCA and CAT courses had not commenced the new term and were not inspected.
- 1.5 All students are over 18. The vast majority students are male and come mainly from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, with a significant minority from other countries including Turkey and Sri Lanka. English is a second language for all students, though they are required to reach the expected level of proficiency. All students are recruited through direct marketing overseas and there is minimal reliance on overseas agents, who are used for referral purposes only. The college reports that there are no students who currently require support for 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	3 Needs improvement

- 2.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement meets expectations. The satisfactory curriculum provision is effectively designed to prepare students for external examinations set by awarding bodies. Pre-course assessment meets expectations and ensures that all students fulfil the entry criteria set by the awarding body and satisfy the requirements for English language competence. However, the assessment of and support for students' English language skills are limited. Teaching meets requirements overall but is of variable quality and ranges from satisfactory to good. Lectures are well planned according to examination criteria, but there is little evidence of variation to meet students' differing abilities. Most students are attentive and conscientious, and believe that the teaching is good. Feedback provided to students on their written work is sometimes insufficient. Attainment and progress need improvement. Student progress is not formally recorded, though feedback on performance is provided by subject tutors on examination questions. Students are clear that they do make progress. Some assessed work and teacher feedback support this.
- 2.2 Students' welfare, health and safety meet expectations. Effective arrangements are in place for health and safety. Students receive information during induction, which is further reinforced in the student handbook. Regular inspections take place to identify hazards. There is a first-aid policy and staff are trained appropriately. Appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of students in case of fire and to reduce risk of other hazards. Registration and attendance reporting meets expectations. The college maintains accurate admissions and attendance registers; there is a clear process for advising students of lapses in attendance. Reports are made to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) where required. Pastoral care meets expectations and students receive suitable support. Relationships between staff and students are good.
- 2.3 Governance, management and leadership need improvement. The process of governance is informal and records of meetings and decisions are not kept. There is no strategic or written development plan for the college. Whilst proprietors are aware of their legal obligations, they are not effective in ensuring the quality of provision and the educational direction is not clear. Involvement of the proprietors in the operational management of the college is a strength and enables

understanding of important issues. Management needs improvement; self-evaluation does not identify key weaknesses or set targets for improvement. Quality assurance procedures need development. There is limited evidence of quality management systems which include monitoring of performance and strategies for improvement. The college does not collect data on student achievement in external examinations and is not able to assess either its own or students' performance against given criteria. The college meets expectations for the provision of information.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

2.4 At the time of the inspection, the college did not meet one of the key standards for private further education colleges. **The college needs improvement** and therefore it was required to:

- Implement a formal approach to monitoring and reviewing college policies, procedures and performance, which is reflected in the minutes of key meetings, self-evaluation and action planning.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above action point, the college is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Collect and use data to support strategic planning and quality improvement, and develop a framework by which student performance can be evaluated with reference to norms derived from external examinations.
2. Provide more opportunities for the assessment of English language skills and more structured support where needs are identified.
3. Develop an induction and social programme for all students at the college which supports students who are new to this country.
4. Create opportunities for staff to undertake continuing professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
5. Ensure that documentation on staff appointment files is complete, using a checklist which includes references, job descriptions and medical fitness.

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

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

- 3.1 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival meets requirements. Information, advice and guidance are sufficient for students to make an informed choice of course and to meet their needs for further study or employment. Students' prior qualifications and language assessment provide an effective basis to identify a suitable course of study before arrival. Students are interviewed, some through the internet and others face-to-face, and records of interviews are kept on student files. Students' academic qualifications are considered to ensure that they meet awarding body requirements and that English language qualifications meet UKBA specifications.
- 3.2 Documentary evidence relating to academic qualifications and language competence are confirmed on arrival, but no further testing takes place to determine qualifications or language skills. As a consequence, students do not receive clear targets based on the assessment of their English language skills, which can act as the basis for monitoring improvements in their performance. Tutors recognise that all students fulfil the requirements of the examining boards' entry criteria but have no further assessment information on their students to inform lesson planning.
- 3.3 In the pre-inspection questionnaire all students agreed that the college helped to place them on the course that was right for their ability.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The course provision and curriculum meet requirements. Students are satisfactorily educated in accordance with their objectives and the college's aims. College courses are well matched to students' needs and objectives and are effectively designed to prepare students for professional examinations in accountancy, business and IT to support entry into these occupations. Following enrolment, students may be moved to courses which more accurately match their ability. Any additional learning or language needs are identified informally early in the course and support is offered.
- 3.5 Students' feedback is unanimously positive about how well their courses meet their needs, both in the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion during the inspection. Course content is prescribed by the awarding bodies and the external examinations. Schemes of work and programmes of study are designed tightly around these. Courses are as described in the college's marketing information, although some information lacks detail and reflects current provision, which consists largely of professional accountancy programmes. New provision for higher national diploma and certificate is dependent on successful Edexcel accreditation.

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

- 3.6 Teaching meets requirements overall and has no major weaknesses. All teaching is satisfactory whilst some is good. Students are adequately engaged in developing their skills and understanding, although much of the teaching is focused on acquiring knowledge for examination purposes. Teaching staff are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subjects. Lectures are planned according to the examination criteria. There are insufficient instances where students' abilities are taken into account in planning, and lectures are not re-evaluated on the basis of student experience or their understanding. Examination practice sessions are used effectively to prepare students for examinations and to monitor learning and student progress. Students' attendance on the lower level certificate courses is unsatisfactory but is being addressed by the college. Assessment is variable. Some work is corrected, though students are provided with insufficient feedback, whereas other work has more detailed feedback. Students are aware of their progress but there is no formal progression monitoring. Discussion with staff shows them to be professional, dedicated and willing to provide assistance to students who experience difficulties.
- 3.7 Feedback from teaching staff allows students to recognise areas for development. Additional support is provided through tutorials for students who experience difficulty. Standards of English are not assessed systematically and targets are not set. The college reports that it offers free additional English classes to students who wish to improve their language skills.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.8 Attainment and progress need improvement. Student success rates in external examinations are not recorded. National norms are not used to measure the performance of the college overall. There is no assessment by the college of entry levels in subjects or of English, which can be used to set targets for improvement.
- 3.9 Students are clear that they do make progress; this is supported by work carried out in class and by written assignments which indicate some improvement. Student assessments in different subjects are recorded and monitored by teaching staff. Skills, knowledge and understanding meet the awarding body standards for the level of courses, judged on the basis of students' performance in class.

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 Health, safety and security of the premises meet requirements. There are effective arrangements for health and safety. Staff and students receive information during their enrolment and are alerted to further details in student handbooks. Staff maintain records of accidents centrally and these are used to implement improvements in practice. Regular health and safety inspections take place to identify potential hazards. There is a written first-aid policy which is implemented by trained staff. Appropriate action is taken to ensure fire safety and to reduce risks of other hazards. Appropriate signage identifies exit routes. Fire extinguishers are located strategically, alarm systems are tested frequently and evacuation drills are held on a regular basis. College premises are fit for purpose and well maintained. Access for students with mobility issues is limited as there is no lift; prospective students are informed of this. Specialist advisors for health and safety and fire safety are retained by the college. Inspections and risk assessments are regularly carried out to ensure compliance.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

4.2 Student registration and attendance records meet requirements. A fair and clear policy for the collection and refund of fees is detailed in the student handbook and on the website.

4.3 The college has clear admissions and attendance policies and maintains appropriate admissions and attendance records. Student details are held on file, including information on identity, visas, academic records, contact details and financial information.

4.4 There is a clear procedure for contacting students who are absent. Staff are fully aware of their obligations for monitoring student attendance. The college makes the necessary reports to the UKBA when required; records of actions are kept on file.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

4.5 Pastoral support for students meets requirements. There are good relationships between staff and students and amongst the students themselves. Tutors and other staff are accessible and provide good support on academic and personal issues. The student welfare officer is the main point of contact for the provision of support for students, although much other pastoral support for students is provided by the teaching staff. The high expectations for standards of behaviour and respect are realised.

4.6 Students responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the college's planned social and extra-curricular activities are limited. The college has no social

programme and no orientation programme for new students. Students mostly interact with each other in the college, where relationships are good.

- 4.7 Integration between students of different nationalities is satisfactory, though there is no evidence that the college actively promotes this. There were no indications of bullying or harassment, and responses from the student questionnaire indicated that students feel safe and believe that the college would take appropriate action to deal with bullying or harassment.
- 4.8 Students receive advice from tutors to support their decisions for further study or employment.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight need improvement. Governance is informal and although responsibility for financial control is exercised, there is no evidence of decisions about major expenditure being systematically reviewed to check their impact.
- 5.2 The proprietors have limited oversight of the college. The college has no records of formal processes of governance and there is no documentation to support strategic planning. The result is an absence of agreed timescales, expected outcomes and accountability. Although the college's aims are expressed in the mission statement, the extent to which they are achieved is not clear and there is no indication that the responsibilities for educational standards are fully discharged. In addition to his governance role, the managing director is a member of the senior management team. Although involved in the strategic development of the college at management level, his participation is informal. The proprietors fulfil their legal responsibilities for the operation of the college and the company and hold relevant legal permissions, including lease, planning permission, copyright licence and examinations approvals. However, they do not challenge staff in a way that will promote growth or quality improvement.
- 5.3 The proprietors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety throughout the college.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities need improvement. The principal has reduced his time commitment to the college and was absent for most of the inspection. The managing director also acts as a key member of the senior management team with responsibility for resources and finance, and has satisfactory insight into the working of the college. A third member of the senior management team has been newly appointed as operations director to deputise in the principal's absence. The revised management structure identifies key roles in the college and is designed to provide a basis for the college's expansion into new courses. At the time of inspection staff were performing well in their new roles.
- 5.5 Leaders and managers implement policy and safeguard students in accordance with the aims of the college. Appropriate policies are developed although they lack regular review. Educational direction is not wholly clear and strategic planning is informal. Leaders and managers do not effectively ensure that the education provided is consistently of sufficiently high quality. Student achievements in external examinations are not recorded and national norms are not used to measure the performance of the college overall. The college supports staff development but does not always ensure that staff are appropriately trained for their roles.

- 5.6 Self-evaluation, whilst generally accurate, does not identify some key weaknesses and includes little staff or student participation. It is not clear where responsibility lies for identifying priorities for action and leading developments.
- 5.7 Management is successful in securing, supporting and motivating high quality staff. Four full-time staff are employed by the college including the principal, operations director, administrator and one teacher. The remaining teachers are established part-time staff who are very supportive of the college. The college undertakes some staff appraisals, though outcomes are not used systematically to plan staff development opportunities.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.8 Quality management needs improvement. There is evidence that teaching observations have taken place for some staff and that records have been kept on staff files. Feedback is reported but there is no clear link to staff development. Student questionnaires and informal discussions are used to assess the performance of the college. There is no documented, coherent quality management system.
- 5.9 Monitoring, evaluating and planning of provision are weak and there is no indication that they lead to improved outcomes for students. There is no strategic planning from the senior management to assess or guide improvements. The college does not access or collect data which could be used for planning and informing quality, or enable the progress of individual students.
- 5.10 Informal systems exist to elicit staff and student feedback but are insufficiently robust to support improvement. Staff meetings and meetings between students and staff are informal and occur intermittently; they are not minuted and have no demonstrable impact. Students' concerns are few but are managed effectively at an informal level, in line with the college's complaints procedures. The opportunity for independent arbitration, if a student's complaint remains unresolved, is not clearly stated in the procedure. Students have a very positive view of the college in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Those students who responded all agreed that they are making good progress. Students agreed that the work they are doing is interesting and challenging and the tutors are knowledgeable and supportive.

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

- 5.11 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks need improvement. The college has adequate arrangements for staff recruitment and checking the suitability of staff. Checks are made to confirm identity, qualifications, previous employment and eligibility to work in the UK prior to appointment. Staff files are maintained with application details and supporting evidence that relevant checks have been carried out. Staff files are incomplete because they do not include evidence of medical fitness, references, or job descriptions.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.12 The provision of information meets expectations. The website contains most of the information required in the Educational Oversight Standards. However, the information on some courses lacks detail. Information provided for the inspection was sufficient and as required by inspectors.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed classes, 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

Mr Peter Wood	Lead Inspector
Mrs Janet Simms	Team Inspector