



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

Birmingham Management College

Full Name of College	Birmingham Management College
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Principal	Mr Yiyong Wang
Proprietor	Mr Yiyong Wang
Age Range	25+
Total number of students	2
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 2 FE only: 2
Inspection dates	10 – 12 September 2013

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 Home Office 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 Birmingham Management College is a private further and higher education college in Birmingham. Established in 2011, the college is a business limited by shares with one director. The college occupies a suite of rooms on the third floor of a business centre in the city centre. The college is managed by the principal, who is also the proprietor. The college aims to be recognised for its high quality, excellent performance and to foster the success of the college community, through consistent and effective management.
- 1.2 The college offers management courses through a variety of awarding bodies from level 2 to level 7. 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, taking account of the course entry requirements and their career goals. They receive guidance from senior staff within the college, to determine the appropriate courses of study.
- 1.3 The first students were recruited in August 2013. At the time of inspection, there were two female students enrolled, both from China, both of whom have English as an additional language (EAL) and are studying for an award in Programme Leadership. There are no students under 18 years of age, nor has the college identified any students as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

2.(a) Executive Summary

- 2.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievement is satisfactory. Assessment of students prior to and on arrival at the college provides accurate information about academic knowledge and English language skills, but relies on self declaration to identify any learning difficulties or disabilities. Initial advice and guidance, support effective recruitment and selection and help students to make informed choices. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are satisfactory. Teachers are knowledgeable and effective at engaging and motivating students. Lessons are well planned usually include a good variety of teaching techniques, although in some cases too much time is spent on exposition at the expense of active involvement for the students. Class assessment activities are effective in identifying student understanding and progress; however some tutor feedback lacks detail to support learning. The college has clear assessment plans in line with awarding organisation requirements, to ensure students meet the required learning objectives.
- 2.2 The arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff are good. The premises are secure and the college provides a safe working and learning environment; which are supported by appropriate policies and risk assessments. The premises, including student facilities and furnishings are well maintained and clean. Effective systems to record and monitor student admissions and attendance meet Home Office requirements. Learners are provided with good individual and academic support. Pastoral support is very effective. The college provides helpful advice on academic and career progression opportunities.
- 2.3 Ownership and oversight of the college is satisfactory. Strategic leadership and operational management of the college are effective. The college is successful in securing well-qualified and experienced staff. Pre-employment checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a suitable staff appointment and performance monitoring system, although staff appraisals are not embedded within a quality assurance and management cycle linked to systematic professional development. College information systems are developing to reflect the new course delivery. Communication is open and supportive and the largely informal information sharing is adequate in so small a college. In the absence of formal communication, some areas requiring monitoring and improvement are not being identified or addressed in a timely manner. Ownership and management share a clear vision for development and improvement, but this is not underpinned by rigorous target setting and monitoring. There is a suitable business development plan and self-evaluation, which identifies some areas for improvement. Relationships between staff and students are positive and supportive. Students are complimentary about the responsiveness of staff and guidance they receive.

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. Formalise arrangements for gathering information about its operations, communication and decision making.
 2. Support improvement planning with rigorous targets, underpinned by specific dates for completion and criteria for success.
 3. Establish a formal system to identify, support and monitor students with particular learning needs.
 4. Ensure that all teaching strikes a good balance between exposition and activities which encourage students to engage with and apply their learning.

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 is satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance support effective recruitment and selection and help students to make informed choices. Students undertake an accurate oral assessment of English skills and subject knowledge checks prior to admission. Students are expected to provide evidence of language competency, in line with the expectations of their chosen programme. Students undergo a suitable range of assessment on arrival. Identification of any specific learning needs is limited to self-declaration in the application.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.2 The curriculum is satisfactory and students are well educated, in accordance with the college's mission and vision. The range of provision offered is good and the course running is as described in the prospectus. The qualification taught at the time of inspection, meets the requirements for Tier 4 sponsorship and the objectives of students and supports their personal and professional aspirations. Students demonstrate good levels of written, reading, listening and oral English skills in class activities and initial assessment. It is too early to judge course completion rates, as teaching has only recently started.

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

- 3.3 The quality of teaching and its impact on are satisfactory. Teaching is supported by appropriate policies and procedures. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and effective at engaging and motivating students. All lessons are well planned and the majority of lessons include a good variety of teaching techniques, that reflect the needs of the learners and makes use of well-chosen resources. At its best, teaching places topics in a specific context, familiar to the students such as the organisation of a wedding and so enabled students to grasp and discuss concepts in a practical situation. Occasionally, the teaching concentrates too much on exposition, limiting opportunities for independent learning. The students themselves were highly motivated and took an interest in their work, and so, overall, were able to make satisfactory progress in understanding and applying new concepts. Student evaluation praised the quality of teaching in helping them to meet their personal aspirations and goals.
- 3.4 Class assessment activities are effective in identifying student understanding and progress, although occasionally feedback lacks specific detail to support learning. The college has clear assessment plans, in line with awarding organisation requirements, to ensure students meet the required learning objectives. Students work is correctly marked and assessed. This provides tutors with a good knowledge of the learning needs of their students.

3.(d) Attainment and Progress

- 3.5 To date, no student has completed the course; so no performance data is available. Inspectors observed satisfactory levels of participation and attainment in class, and progress to date, judged from observation and discussion, is satisfactory in relation to the students' starting points; demonstrated through the acquisition and application of new knowledge and skills.

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 The arrangements for health, safety and student welfare, are good. Suitable policies and risk assessments are in place and effective systems ensure the premises are secure and that the college provides a safe working and learning environment. The premises, student facilities and furnishings are well maintained and clean. The college takes care to minimise the risk of fire and other hazards. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support students who are unwell or injured. A member of the senior management team is the trained first aider. Whilst there are currently no students with SEND, there is appropriate access, support and facilities for students with physical disabilities.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.2 Recording arrangements are good. The college has appropriate admission and attendance policies and procedures, which are accessible and understood by staff and students. Effective systems to record and monitor admissions and attendance meet Home Office requirements. Student registration and attendance processes are well managed, using paper-based and electronic database systems for recording attendance and the production of management reports. Management information software, provides staff and students with reports that include attendance, lateness reporting and records of contact, plus where required, reports to the Home Office. At the time of the inspection, students were punctual and attendance was excellent.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.3 Pastoral care is good and reflects the college's mission, vision and ethos. Learners are provided with good opportunities for individual and academic support. All staff provide effective support and guidance. Students are given a good range of information during induction and this is complemented by a clear and helpful student handbook, to support them in settling into the college quickly. The college promotes integration and tolerance effectively and has suitable policies and procedures, to be used in cases of bullying or harassment. Pastoral support is very effective. The college provides helpful advice on academic and career progression opportunities. Relationships with students are good. Students are very satisfied with the quality of teaching, describing tutor assessment feedback as "very helpful" and the staff as "very responsive". Inspectors agree.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight of the college is satisfactory. Strategic leadership and operational management of the college are effective and are in line with the college's mission and vision statements. The principal, who is also the proprietor, has a clear vision and is directly involved with both the strategic and operational management of the college. He provides satisfactory strategic leadership and direction. The principal takes personal responsibility for health and safety, security and statutory compliance and discharges his responsibilities well.
- 5.2 The college has all required permissions from relevant bodies. The ownership has a good knowledge of the college's strategic and operational workings, and has ensured that management is effective in establishing, developing and maintaining the college curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. The provision is effectively supported by sound financial management. Through regular informal and formal meetings with staff, the ownership is kept informed of all aspects of the provision; enabling suitable standards of education and care to be maintained.
- 5.3 The Business Development Plan and Self-evaluation report indicates a satisfactory understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement, although formal target setting and monitoring are underdeveloped.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Management and leadership of the college are satisfactory. Members of staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which are understood and appropriately carried out. There are appropriate policies and clear procedures to ensure that the educational vision of the college is achieved. The college has a shallow management structure and communication between all staff is open and supportive. Because communication is informal, decisions and targets are not always recorded in a way that ensures they are rigorously followed up. Some areas requiring monitoring and improvement, are not being identified, nor addressed in a timely manner.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance is satisfactory. The quality assurance process is underpinned by appropriate systems and procedures. College information systems are developing appropriately to reflect the new course delivery. Even though inevitably these systems have not completed a first cycle or gained maturity, they are fully sufficient for the present small scale of provision.
- 5.6 A process for lesson observations is in place and is partially implemented. Staff appraisals are not embedded within a quality assurance and management cycle,

limiting the development of appropriate opportunities for systematic professional development.

- 5.7 There is a feedback system for students, which include a suggestion box, course evaluation forms and tutorials. There is an appropriate system for handling complaints from students; although it has yet to be required. The principal takes the views of students seriously and undertakes effective management of student feedback. Students consider the college to be very responsive in meeting their needs. Inspection evidence supports their view.

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

- 5.8 The college is successful in recruiting well-qualified and experienced staff and has appropriate arrangements for checking their suitability. Pre-employment checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a suitable staff appointment, probationary review, performance monitoring and appraisal system in place, supported by appropriate policies and procedures.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 The provision of information is satisfactory. The college has an attractive website, which covers the required content; such as location, contact details, key policies. It provides access to the college prospectus and course information. The college was 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 proprietor and attended registration sessions. 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 Ray Brogden	Lead Inspector
Ms Beth Maloney	Team Inspector