



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

ACE COLLEGE OF IT AND MANAGEMENT

Full Name of College	Ace College of IT and Management
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Email Address	info@acecollege.co.uk
Principal	Mr Wasey Syed Abdul
Proprietor	Mr Wasey Syed Abdul
Age Range	18+
Total number of students	15
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 15 EFL only: 15
Inspection date	21 – 23 May 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 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 Ace College of IT and Management is a private further education institution located in Ilford, London. The college recently moved to new premises, having previously operated from central Luton, Bedfordshire. The college was founded in 2010 as a limited company. The proprietor is also the principal of the college. The college's mission is to provide affordable and quality educational opportunities to individuals that give them career success and make them employable in today's competitive market.
- 1.2 The college currently offers short courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), preparing students for various examinations such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Enrolment is on-going throughout the year. Current students have been recruited locally and are selected following an interview and initial assessment. The college assesses students to determine their language capabilities and then enrolls them on the appropriate course.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 15 students enrolled, of whom the majority are male. All of the students live in the United Kingdom but originate from various countries including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan. They do not speak English as a first language. There are no students under the age of 18, and all have embarked on their studies very recently. No students have been identified as requiring support for special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLEGE

2.(a) Executive Summary

- 2.1 The quality of curriculum, teaching and learning is good. Staff conduct a thorough review of applicants' previous qualifications and experience prior to arrival and all students are interviewed to ensure they meet course requirements. Teachers use individual learning plans for all students to track their progress, from initial and diagnostic assessment to their final achievements. However, the targets are often not specific or measurable. Students receive a good quality of education which meets their objectives and fulfils the college's aims. Most students complete their course. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured to meet students' needs, and teachers have sound subject knowledge and are well qualified. There is a wide variety of activities and students express high levels of satisfaction with the interactive teaching and learning styles. Students' attainment and progress are good. Both lesson observations and work scrutiny demonstrate that students are progressing well.
- 2.2 The health, safety and welfare of students are satisfactory. The college provides a safe and secure learning environment. Health and safety policies are comprehensive and include a relevant first aid policy. The college is unable to admit students with mobility issues due to the layout and age of the building, however this information is not published on the website. The building is in good decorative order and is well maintained. Furniture is adequate, although the lack of separate desks in the classrooms occasionally prohibits effective group interaction. The college keeps an appropriate record of attendance and staff work together to monitor this efficiently. Appropriate systems are in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office in instances of continued non-attendance, should an occasion arise. The pastoral care and welfare of students are satisfactory. The college operates an effective open-door policy and students feel they can approach any staff member if they have a problem. All students receive a comprehensive induction. The college promotes integration and tolerance through their policies and during lessons.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory. The proprietor sets an appropriate educational direction for the college, in line with its aims and long-term goals. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. There are an appropriate range of policies, although these have not been adapted sufficiently for students on short-term courses. The college has adequate quality assurance mechanisms in place. Lesson observation takes place, but is informal and not recorded. Appropriate procedures are in place for the annual appraisal of staff performance. Self-evaluation is limited. Senior managers identify suitable priorities for improvement, but action planning is not specific and does not include clear, measurable targets. Staff obtain student feedback using appropriate questionnaires. The complaints procedure is adequate. The college recruits well-qualified staff and conducts the relevant checks. Provision of information is inadequate, and the college's website does not accurately reflect current course provision.

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. Develop the use of individual learning plans to negotiate specific targets with students and effectively track progress.
2. Ensure self-evaluation leads to clear action planning with specific and measurable targets for quality improvement.
3. Formalise the process for observing teaching and learning and monitor identified areas for development.
4. Improve the college website to ensure that all information is accurate and reflects the current course provision.

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

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

- 3.1 Initial and diagnostic assessment systems are satisfactory. Staff are effective in reviewing applicants' previous qualifications and experience prior to arrival, and they conduct a suitable interview with every student. However, these interviews are not formally recorded. Upon arrival, staff conduct an appropriate initial assessment with students to judge their reading, writing and oral skills. Staff use assessment information well to place students on suitable learning programmes. After enrolment, teachers conduct relevant diagnostic assessments to confirm students' levels of English and to inform the planning and delivery of lessons.
- 3.2 Senior managers have recently piloted an appropriate system for the use of individual learning plans for all students. This system has enabled effective tracking of students' progress from their initial and diagnostic assessments to their final achievements. However, teaching staff do not negotiate learning goals with students. Furthermore, targets are not specific or measurable. As a result, the college does not effectively track student progress.
- 3.3 Students are invited to declare any learning or language difficulties at the time of application, and none of the current cohort has declared a need. However, a member of staff has the expertise to provide support if needed.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 Suitability of course provision and curriculum is good. The college plans to offer a range of full-time courses for international students which meet Home Office requirements. However, these courses have not yet started. Students receive a high quality education which meets their objectives and fulfils the college's aims. Learning programmes develop students' skills and knowledge, enabling them to progress on to further study or employment. All students report that they are happy with their courses and the progress they are making. Most students successfully complete the course they initially registered for and the number of withdrawals is very low.

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

- 3.5 Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured to meet students' needs. There is a good variety of activities and students express high levels of satisfaction with the interactive teaching and learning styles. Teaching is effective in enabling students to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and enable students to make suitable progress.
- 3.6 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are well qualified. Teaching staff actively promote an awareness of cultural and language diversity within lessons.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to identify and support students with specific learning difficulties or disabilities, however no such students have currently been identified.

- 3.7 Assessment of learning is rigorous. Students receive informative feedback on their written assignments, with constructive advice on how they can improve their work. In lessons, teachers comment comprehensively on oral work, enabling students to immediately improve their pronunciation and vocabulary skills.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.8 Students' attainment and progress are good. Lesson observations and scrutiny of student work demonstrate clearly that students are improving their knowledge and understanding of English grammar and vocabulary at a suitable pace. Students enrol at various starting points and make suitable progress. Course success rates show that the vast majority of students achieve their learning goals. Almost all improve their language skills by one level and outcomes for students are good. Interviews with students confirm that they are happy with the progress they are making.

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 health, safety and security of the premises are good. The college provides a safe and secure learning environment for students. College health and safety policies are comprehensive and include a relevant first aid policy. A suitable number of staff are trained first aiders and fire marshals. These staff ensure the accident and first aid log book is kept up-to-date. The director keeps a suitable record of staff health and safety training needs and regularly revisits this. The college has a satisfactory level of fire safety which conforms to all legal requirements. The landlord conducts regular fire alarm tests and drills, and maintains comprehensive records. Internal risk assessments are completed regularly. During induction, new staff and students are fully briefed on all aspects of health and safety, including first aid and evacuation procedures. Access to the college premises is fit-for-purpose. However, the college cannot admit students with limited mobility due to the layout and age of the building. This information is not included on the website, although staff do make it clear to prospective applicants when they enquire about studying at the college.
- 4.2 The building is well maintained and in good decorative order. Classrooms are light and well ventilated. Washrooms are sufficient for staff and students. Furniture is adequate, although the lack of separate desks in the classrooms occasionally prohibits effective group interaction.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.3 Admission and attendance registers are well maintained. The college keeps an appropriate record of attendance and staff work together to monitor this efficiently. The lateness policy is clearly understood and effectively implemented by staff. Hence, attendance rates are high. Students are made aware of the college's expectations of good attendance in the student handbook and this is stressed further during induction. Appropriate systems are in place to make the necessary reports to the Home Office in instances of continued non-attendance.
- 4.4 There are fair and clear procedures for the collection and refund of all fees and deposits. These procedures are made clear to all students via the college website and student handbook.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.5 Pastoral care and welfare of students are satisfactory. The college operates an effective open-door policy and students feel they can approach any staff member if they have a problem. Suitable records are not kept of students' issues or the resolution. Support for academic issues is the responsibility of the teaching staff and is sufficient for the small cohort. Relationships between staff and students are good. The college promotes integration and tolerance in their policies, and staff show an

awareness of different cultures during lessons. As a result, measures to guard against bullying and discrimination are effective. At the time of inspection, there had been no instances of bullying or harassment recorded at the college. The social programme is underdeveloped. Students do not engage in different activities to enhance their experiences of British culture and are therefore unable to practise their use of English in different situations with their peers, particularly in a social context. The college has plans for excursions and activities for students on longer courses, but these courses have not started yet.

- 4.6 All students receive both a suitable induction that helps them settle into the college and accurate advice about their course options to ensure they are placed on the programme most appropriate to their needs. Teachers provide students with sufficient guidance on careers and options for further study. Students expressed high levels of satisfaction regarding the college's welfare arrangements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are satisfactory. The proprietor sets an appropriate educational direction for the college in line with its aims and long-term goals. The education provided is of a good quality, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. The proprietor and managers all have a clear oversight of the college's strategic direction. Relationships between the proprietor and staff are good. The proprietor fulfils all his legal duties and all legal permissions are in place. The proprietor ensures the sufficiency of resources through suitable financial management.
- 5.2 The principal, in his role as proprietor, retains effective control of financial planning, including the sound investment in staff and resources. Academic management and student welfare are appropriately delegated to other managers, whilst the principal retains full control over health and safety. The principal undertakes relevant training to develop his understanding of teaching and learning, allowing him to gain an informed overview of the quality of education in the college. The principal has regular meetings with his management team to discuss the day-to-day running of the college. As a result, he has a suitable oversight over all aspects of the college.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 The college has satisfactory management structures and responsibilities in place. Each member of the management team has a variety of different roles in the organisation and they are clear about their responsibilities. Senior managers appropriately recruit and secure suitable staff. Staff meet regularly, both informally and formally, to discuss the general running of the college.
- 5.4 The college has an appropriate range of policies and procedures. However, a few of these policies have not been adapted sufficiently to ensure their relevance to students on current short-term courses.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.5 Quality assurance is satisfactory. The college has adequate quality assurance mechanisms in place. Lesson observation takes place, but as it is informal and not recorded the college cannot accurately measure the quality of teaching. Teachers find the lesson observations helpful in identifying key areas for development in their teaching and use managers' feedback to plan their lessons more effectively. Areas for development derived from lesson observation are not monitored well by senior managers, resulting in ineffective evaluation and action planning.
- 5.6 Appropriate procedures are in place for the annual appraisal of staff performance, though this does not draw on evidence from lesson observation. Staff have attended suitable professional development and training to ensure that they are

suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all students, particularly in relation to teaching, welfare, and health and safety.

- 5.7 Self-evaluation is limited. Staff and managers contribute to the evaluation process and sufficiently reflect on the quality of education at the college. Senior managers identify suitable priorities for improvement, but action planning is not specific with clear measurable targets. As a result, senior managers are not able to implement decisions and actions cogently to bring about changes in an effective way.
- 5.8 Students confirmed during interviews that they are very satisfied with the teaching and are making sufficient progress in their course. Inspection findings support this view. Staff obtain student feedback using appropriate questionnaires, and students are also invited to use the compliments and complaints box in reception and to speak to any member of staff about their experiences at the college. The college listens to students and uses their feedback in course planning. However, senior managers do not use the information gained from student feedback or achievement data effectively to monitor student progress or to set measurable targets related to student outcomes.
- 5.9 The complaints procedure is adequate and allows for external adjudication at the last stage of the complaint process.

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

- 5.10 The college has satisfactory procedures for the recruitment of staff. Senior managers conduct the relevant checks to ensure staff are suitable. Staff files are well organised and contain information to confirm a staff member's identity, right to work in the United Kingdom and previous employment history. As a majority of staff have been sourced via personal recommendations, reference checks are often informal and are not kept in staff files.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.11 The provision of information is inadequate and needs improvement. A majority of the information, including policies, are specific to full-time courses that the college does not yet run. Therefore, the website does not accurately reflect the current course provision. The college has a suitable handbook that is distributed to students during induction. The college was very co-operative in providing documentation before and during the inspection.

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

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