



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

GRAFTON COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Full Name of College	Grafton College of Management Sciences	
Address	Union House, 65-69 Shepherds Bush Green, London W12 8TX	
Telephone Number	02087498367	
Email Address	info@graftoncollege.com	
Principal	Ms Debbie Lewis	
Directors	Mr Saeed Rehman Mr Mehboobali Saiyed	
Age Range	18+	
Total Number of students	321	
Numbers by age and type of study	19+:	321
	EFL only:	38
	FE only:	283
Inspection dates	31 January – 2 February 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 Grafton College of Management Sciences is a private limited company established in March 2004. The college is located in Shepherds Bush Green, London. The course offer and provision has developed over the years to include a range of further and higher education courses in business, information technology, travel and tourism and hospitality. The college has an established English as a Foreign Language (EFL) department, offering a range of courses and levels for general English and examination preparation, leading to recognised qualifications including Cambridge ESOL PET, FCE and CAE examinations and IELTS (International English Language Testing System). The teaching team of 12 subject specialists is supported by 19 administrative staff.
- 1.2 Grafton College strives to deliver high quality education appropriate to the students' needs and aspirations. The teaching and learning is aimed at developing skills and knowledge, ensuring equality and individual learning needs are met.
- 1.3 The key focus of the college is to offer work related vocational courses for qualification levels 4 through to level 7 to students aged 18 and over. Higher education provision is delivered through established collaboration with local universities.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection there were 321 students, 88 female and 233 male on roll representing 33 nationalities. The large majority are Asian and a few are from Europe. There were no students under the age of 18. No students have been identified as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.6 Vocational courses are operating this year but were not timetabled during inspection week.

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	1 Exceeds expectations
5.	The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	2 Meets expectations

- 2.1 As a result of a recent restructure of the curriculum offer, governance and management now provide clear educational direction. The college's aims are well met by the wide range of vocational and English courses, which successfully meet the aspiration of their students. It delivers a high level of educational provision supported by appropriate policies. Successful advice, guidance and initial diagnostic assessment result in students being selected for the correct course to meet their needs. Teaching is satisfactory and students learn and make sufficient progress. However, insufficient attention is given to the language needs of non-native English speakers on vocational courses. Qualification success rates were high last year only. Targets are well used in frequent progress reviews which provide students with excellent support.
- 2.2 The college buildings provide a good environment for learning and are maintained well with regard to the health and safety of the staff and students. The college has thorough health and safety policies and procedures and implements them very well. The college has a robust level of fire safety which conforms to legal requirements. Student registration and attendance records are very well managed and are exemplary. Pastoral support for students is excellent. Students report that relationships at the college are very positive.
- 2.3 Leadership and management are effective. The detailed and accurate college development plan and self-evaluation are monitored regularly. Frequent questionnaires collect feedback from students and resulting improvements are published on the notice boards. Students' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were positive. The college is improving their observation scheme and planning to standardise and improve the appraisal schemes to include all teaching staff. Data is not used well enough to secure improvements. The college has reliable arrangements for staff recruitment. Complaints are handled appropriately.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with standards for Private Colleges

- 2.1 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

- 2.2 The college is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve English language support for vocational students which targets the English required for academic work including assignment writing.

2. Facilitate the sharing of good practice amongst the EFL team.
3. Improve analysis and use of data to improve performance.
4. Provide targets in lesson observation and appraisal of teaching staff to improve teaching and learning.

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

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

- 3.1 The application process is highly effective in assessing students' suitability for courses. The college checks the suitability of applicants' qualifications for entry and internet interviews are used effectively to determine students' motivation and needs. International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) grades for entry are specified according to the level of course.
- 3.2 Good advice and guidance are given: the application process is designed to ensure students join the most suitable course, with transfers available within the first four weeks of the student beginning their course. Well-trained staff are available to counsel students who want to transfer. As a result, students are following appropriate programmes of study that meet their needs.
- 3.3 English language students are given a standard placement test on arrival and lesson observations show that placement is accurate. Results of these tests are not always made available to the tutors prior to the student's arrival in the classroom.
- 3.4 Where identified there is good availability of support for students. This includes a computer adapted for sight-impaired users, a two-week study skills course and English language support, offered in existing classes or on a one-to-one basis.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.5 The college offers a wide range of vocational courses which are well matched to students' needs and progression aspirations for higher education. There is a good range of EFL courses giving well planned progression routes including a high quality IELTS provision. Courses meet UK Border Agency (UKBA) requirements.
- 3.6 Since September 2011 the college has replaced many courses and is now running a range of Higher National Diplomas (HND) in business, travel and tourism and computing and systems development. These are offered for enrolment at any time of the year through the flexible design of the sequence of study units. These are clearly advertised on the college website and meet awarding body requirements.

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

- 3.7 Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the English Language Teaching (ELT) lessons observed. Students benefit from good relationships with their teachers and they enjoy their lessons. Lessons were of varying quality, ranging from outstanding to inadequate. In the better lessons the tutors have a clear understanding of the needs of individual students. This high focus on the student enables them to grow in confidence. The lessons are well prepared with activities that encourage interaction and discussion. In the weaker lessons there was insufficient planning for the level of course, with unclear learning objectives and limited support for learning. Question and answer sessions were productive, though at times students were too passive.
- 3.8 Targets are well used on student's individual learning plans. These targets are reviewed periodically, once every three weeks, and provide students with excellent support. Learning resources are good and used effectively by students, including a library for private study.

- 3.9 All courses are well planned. Assessment practice is appropriate with internal verification systems in place. The virtual learning environment is used effectively to support vocational learning and has an excellent feature which checks students' work for plagiarism. Students upload their assignments to the virtual learning environment where tutors respond with helpful comments.
- 3.10 One-to-one tuition is available in EFL and the college meets specific requests where possible. Approaches to marking EFL work are varied but appropriate, with well-focussed and detailed written feedback being given to those preparing for IELTS. Insufficient attention is given to the language needs of non-native English speakers on vocational courses. The abundance of language errors within student work demonstrates that students have problems with the language element of their course.

3.(d) Attainment and Progress

- 3.11 Success rates overall have improved and last year were high at 77 per cent. Courses with low success rates have been discontinued or replaced. The success rates of the accounting courses have not be adequately monitored and recorded.
- 3.12 Progression rates are high with 81 per cent of vocational students progressing to higher education and 11 per cent to employment. EFL students also progress well to higher level courses and vocational courses.
- 3.13 Students make good progress from their initial level of performance. Students' learning and progress is monitored very well at individual progress reviews where action plans are compiled and monitored. Students agree they are making good progress.

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 ensuring the health and safety of students and staff are very good and the premises are secure. An appropriate health and safety policy is in place with clearly allocated responsibilities. Fire action notices are appropriately displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments are carried out with clear follow-up actions. Students and staff are made aware of their responsibilities in regard to health and safety at induction and a very high proportion of students confirm their awareness of these. Trained first aiders and well stocked first aid kits are in place.
- 4.2 The premises are fit for purpose and well maintained and clean. Noise from neighbouring rooms disturbs some lessons because of the poor sound insulation. Improvement to this has already started on the ground floor. There is good access for wheel chair users via a lift to upper floors and suitable toilets for disabled students and staff.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.3 The college has robust and thorough systems for recording admissions and attendance data. The database holds comprehensive data on all students including electronic copies of certificates, Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) documentation, passports and all written communication between college and student.
- 4.4 Attendance was good during inspection at 92 per cent. The college has a policy of minimum 85 per cent attendance, which is stated in the initial learner agreement and effectively addressed by staff at all levels. Attendance registers are completed in an accurate and timely manner. The college is fully compliant with UKBA requirements on the reporting of students who fail to enrol or miss 10 expected contacts.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.5 Pastoral support for students is excellent. The general oversight and co-ordination of the welfare and pastoral support for students is well managed. The outstanding induction, which all students receive, contains high standard of information about welfare issues associated with living in the UK. A responsive booking system for welfare support is managed by highly qualified staff. Students remarked on the excellent pastoral support they receive. The policy 'Be safe, be healthy, be heard', is clearly understood by students who confirm they feel safe in the college and are not aware of any instances of bullying or harassment.
- 4.6 The college has a broad social programme and is very responsive to students' social needs for example, providing a classroom for students to meet outside of lesson time, putting on events in response to students' suggestions. Students have a good range of cultural opportunities exploring the local area and visiting speakers. Several field trips are arranged for students including visits to universities. The college is also promoting and developing work experience and community links which supports their vocational courses.

- 4.7 Students wishing to progress to higher education receive very helpful guidance. Representatives from various universities visit the site and the college is actively forming links with institutions of higher education.
- 4.8 Students consider the very positive relationships which they have with each other and staff to be an outstanding feature of their time at the college. They strongly value the respect from each other regardless of their ethnic background, religion, level of English or circumstances.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 The governance, leadership and management are strong and effective in providing high educational direction. The aims of the college are well managed and delegated responsibilities are implemented clearly through the recent successful restructure.
- 5.2 The directors plan and monitor the college budget well. Relationships with the college management are strong and there is close monitoring of operations and effective delegation of responsibilities. The strong focus on health, safety and welfare of the students is driven by the directors and this priority is reflected throughout the work of the college. They are effective in discharging their legal responsibilities and all required permissions are in place.
- 5.3 Governance is very effective in discharging responsibilities for welfare, health and safety throughout the college.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.4 Effective curriculum planning and development ensures progression opportunities for vocational students to university. Much staff development has taken place to support staff to implement the new vocational courses. The college is successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff.
- 5.5 Managers at all levels have a good insight into the workings of the college. Management of the recruitment and welfare functions is exceptional where a strong team implement good operational practices to support students.
- 5.6 A wide range of policies is in place and well known by staff and students. The complaints procedure is detailed, however all issues have been resolved before needing to become a complaint.
- 5.7 There is a detailed and accurate college development plan which is monitored regularly. This is in line with the self-evaluation report which follows the inspection framework. It provides an accurate account of the college's key strengths and areas for development with which inspectors agree.
- 5.8 The management has good links with some universities in England with progression agreements as well as educational establishments abroad.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.9 Quality assurance is satisfactory. The development plan is used well to monitor improvements. Good use is made of student feedback which is routinely gathered and reviewed. From this feedback action plans are produced and improvements are published on the notice boards.
- 5.10 Overall the students' views of the college are very positive. All the students who responded to the confidential questionnaire thought that they were making good progress and would recommend the college to others. All said they found the work interesting and challenging; that they were encouraged to work independently and that tutors treated them as individuals.

- 5.11 Data is not used well enough to set success rate targets to monitor and secure improvements. The quality of teaching and learning is insufficiently monitored. Observations are mainly based on management of lessons rather than on the students' learning and lack sufficient recommendations and targets for improvements. The college is developing a new observation scheme and also plans to standardise and improve the appraisal schemes to include all teaching staff.

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

- 5.12 Staff recruitment arrangements are effective and all the required checks are made. The college attracts highly qualified specialist tutors. Many tutors have been associated with the college for a number of years. All staff have up-to-date job descriptions which reflect their current responsibilities. Not all teaching staff have teaching qualifications.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.13 The arrangements for the provision of information are very good. The college website and student handbooks provide extensive and useful information for students. The information provided to outside bodies is also good.
- 5.14 The college provided all the information requested in connection with the inspection and made available all the necessary documentation both 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 directors. The responses of staff and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory and curriculum documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mrs Prue Amner	Lead Inspector
Ms Dawn Hart	Team Inspector
Mr John Rooney	Team Inspector