



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

MONITORING VISIT

EMPIRE COLLEGE LONDON

(Company registration no. - 4725514)

Full Name Empire College London

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Company name Empire College

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Principal Ms Rita Sandhu

Proprietor Qurban Ali Kakar

Age Range 18+

Total number of students 145

Numbers by age and type of study 18+: 145
FE only: 145

Inspection date 5 June 2018

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations 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.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Established in 2003, Empire College London is based in Ilford. The college is privately owned and is led by the Managing Director. Operational control is delegated to the centre manager and a small team of senior staff. The College aims to provide career oriented education to students from diverse backgrounds through learner-centred teaching, support and guidance, representing value for money, whilst raising and widening participation in Further and Higher Education in the local area.
- 1.2 The college has approval from City and Guilds, Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE) and Pearson to offer courses. Currently the college offers courses at levels four and five in business management awarded by Pearson, and a level five diploma in education and training awarded by City and Guilds. Students are selected according to the college's admission criteria. Individual student support requirements are identified as part of the admission and induction process. No students have been identified with language and learning difficulties or disabilities.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 145 students were enrolled, of whom 86 are female and 59 male. There were no students attending on Tier 4 visas. The large majority of students are British, with others originating from Africa, Pakistan, India, Europe and the United Kingdom. All students are competent with English language skills. The college accepts students aged over 18 years.
- 1.4 The college was last inspected 14-16 June 2016 when it met all standards and the quality of education exceeded expectations.
- 1.5 The recommendations from the previous report are:
 - Ensure that information gathered for inclusion within staff personnel records is fully compliant with college policies and includes personal references.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 14-16 June 2016 the college was found to exceed and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The curriculum is well-organised and effectively meets the needs of employers as well as student aspirations. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance. Teaching is excellent with highly qualified and knowledgeable teachers who deliver stimulating and interesting lessons. Student work is reliably and consistently assessed by teachers although there is insufficient detail in the written feedback on assignment scripts. There is an excellent range of academic and learning support opportunities that develop students resilience and professional skills. Student achievement is very high.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. There are comprehensive policies that are written clearly and displayed across the college. There is scrupulous management of health and safety including fire safety and security. Meticulous records are maintained for all areas of this aspect. Student and staff receive plenty of information during their initial induction and this is reiterated at the beginning of each semester. The premises are safe and secure with well-resourced and comfortable classrooms and independent study areas. Student admission and attendance processes are well-organised and result in accurate records that are well-maintained. Pastoral care is excellent with friendly and accessible staff who provide high levels of academic and personal support.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Ownership and oversight is excellent and the college successfully achieves its mission aims through effective policies and well-monitored processes. There are highly effective relationships which, alongside exceptional communication, enables managers to have exceptional knowledge and understanding of the provision. Quality assurance processes including self assessment is outstanding with embedded and efficient processes to monitor the quality and maintain the highest standards. Staff selection processes are excellent with all pre-employment checks undertaken including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Staff receive excellent support through regular appraisals and reviews with their managers that result in a comprehensive range of training opportunities. Teachers are supported through regular observations however the information gathered through those undertaken by peers is not used sufficiently to support sharing good practice and or inform the teachers training programme. The college provides accurate information in printed materials and online.

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

- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2 The curriculum is excellent. The college's mission aims are well-promoted and fully supported by well chosen modules and responsive courses and programmes that successfully meet the demands of local employers and the individual aspirations of students. Course planning is of the highest standard, regularly reviewed and is used by teaching staff to reflect on teaching practice and learning outcomes. Courses on offer to Tier 4 visa students meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance.
- 3.3 The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers have excellent theoretical and current knowledge of their subjects resulting in lessons of the highest quality. Teachers use class profiles very well to plan lesson activities. Cultural diversity is recognised and used effectively in lessons. Encouraging awareness of cultural differences prepares student for working with employers with an international reach. Students are guided and supported to learn theoretical concepts, practice their application and present their knowledge to their peers in class, in written assignments and in guided tutorials. Work assessment is reliable and consistent and students know what they need to do to improve.
- 3.4 Students make excellent progress in their studies and as a result they are highly satisfied with their development through the study programmes.
- 3.5 Students are able to access an excellent range of academic and learning support activities. Tutorials are regular and frequent and result in clear direction and improvement targets. This process develops students' confidence in their academic skills development and effectively monitors students individual academic and personal support needs. Classes are supplemented with targeted skills workshops, one-to-one learning support, study workshops and opportunities to interact with local employers. This level of support is highly effective, impacts on raising student confidence and results in outstanding learning outcomes. Students consider the support they receive is outstanding and inspectors agree with them.
- 3.6 The curriculum fully enables students to aim high for their aspirations and coupled with the excellent teaching students make excellent progress and qualification achievement levels are very high.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 There is an evident high regard for security, safety and well-being in the college. Policies are comprehensive, clearly written and information is eminently visible across the premises. The management of this aspect is meticulous with regularly updated policies, revised procedures and thorough records. Students and staff receive comprehensive health and safety information as a part of their induction which is reiterated at the beginning of each semester. Fire safety protocols and procedures are well-promoted, practiced and reviewed for effectiveness and accurate records maintained. The arrangements to support unwell or injured students is excellent and students confirm they know where to go for assistance.
- 4.3 The premises benefit from excellent security procedures that are supported by robust college practices. The premises are adequately maintained and provide a comfortable and clean environment. Classrooms are well-ventilated and light, well-resourced and provide a good environment for learning. There is an extensive library providing a broad range of resources which alongside the computer laboratory, provides plenty of opportunities for students to undertake independent study.
- 4.4 Student admission and attendance processes are excellent. Student records are comprehensive, very well maintained and accurate. Attendance monitoring is excellent with very high expectations for attendance that are underpinned at induction and supported by robust monitoring practices. The system for managing lateness is established, well-understood and rigorously maintained. The arrangements for managing students attending on Tier 4 visas are excellent.
- 4.5 Pastoral care is excellent. There are effective protocols and systems to support the care and support offered to all students. College staff and teachers are accessible, friendly and highly supportive. Students consider they are well cared for and this view is confirmed by inspectors.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure that information gathered for inclusion within staff personnel records is fully compliant with college policies and includes personal references.
- 5.3 There has been excellent progress made against the recommendation. Staff files are fully compliant with college policies and are scrupulously maintained. Staff selection and recruitment processes are excellent including DBS suitability checks are undertaken prior to appointment.
- 5.4 Ownership and oversight is excellent. The college successfully achieves its mission through clear educational direction and comprehensive and well established policies and processes. The owner is actively engaged in all aspects of college life and the centre manager is fully supported in her strategic and operational roles to promote and achieve the high standards achieved. The college has an active and dynamic approach to oversight that results in high standards in line with the college's mission aims.
- 5.5 The management team is highly effective and make excellent use of the views and opinions of students and college staff. There is a highly efficient and effective meeting process that is regularly scheduled and includes representatives from across the college. This collegiate approach provides opportunities for views to be aired, issues discussed and remedial actions agreed. This honest approach successfully supports the college's ethos as well as supplying exceptional levels of information on the strengths and areas for development.
- 5.6 Self-assessment is accurate and provides clarity of focus for improvement planning. Data is rigorously analysed and successfully translated into prioritised targets for improvement. Formal student feedback is gathered each semester, is analysed and used as the foundation for the effective self-assessment and quality assurance process.
- 5.7 The systems to support staff development including regular appraisals are excellent. All staff receive regular reviews that result in individual targets being set and creates the basis for individual and whole staff training programme. Teachers receive regular observations of their teaching through external consultants, managers and their peers. This process is highly effective. However the information gathered through peer observations is not currently used to inform good practice sharing or opportunities for the college's training programme. Staff consider they receive excellent support and guidance from this process and inspectors confirm this view.

- 5.8 The range of information online and in printed materials accurately reflects the college and courses.
- 5.9 The college responded promptly to all requests for information in support of the inspection.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the college should:

- Ensure the information from external and peer teaching observations is co-ordinated to identify common teaching strengths and training requirements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, student presentations, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mrs Jacqueline Lawrence	Lead Inspector
Mr Simon Bellamy	Team Inspector
Dr David Gutmann	Team Inspector