



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

**HOVE COLLEGE**

Full Name of College	<b>Hove College</b>
Address	Stuart House 48 Cromwell Road Brighton BN3 3ER
Telephone Number	01273 772577
Fax Number	01273 748149
Email Address	jeff@hovecollege.com
Principal	Mr Jeffrey Taylor
Proprietor	Mr Simon Cleaver
Age Range	Over 18
Total Number of students	47
Numbers by Age and type of study	18+: 47 FE only: 47
Inspection dates	<b>8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b>

## 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 Hove College is a private not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee with two directors. The college is located on the south coast of England, and has UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor status. It was founded in 1977 offering courses in secretarial skills. In 1988 it started to offer information and communication technology (ICT) and travel courses. Since 1999 the college has offered a range of courses in creative media and internet studies.
- 1.2 Hove College aims to: provide high quality teaching through the use of accredited courses delivered by qualified and experienced tutors; support students in career, course or higher education related issues whilst they are studying and beyond; and to continuously update and develop learning experiences. They also seek to provide a safe and relaxing environment for students, and to work closely with awarding and other bodies to ensure the quality of the provision.
- 1.3 The college specialises in new media and business subjects and offers students over 18 small class sizes. Courses are designed to offer the students vocational and/or onward higher education programmes of varying lengths. There are currently 47 students, 30 female and 17 male, of whom 14 are UK Nationals, 14 are from EEA countries, and 19 are from outside the EEA. There is no predominant nationality and the college recruits students from all parts of the world. Some students require support with English and two other students have dyslexia but do not receive any special provision or support. Many international students are studying with the intention of moving on to university.

## 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	2 Meets expectations

- 2.1 The college's declared aims are well met by the range of new media and business qualifications, which successfully meet the aspiration of their students. It delivers a high level of educational provision supported by appropriate policies. Students make good progress and achievement rates are high. Initial and diagnostic assessment of students is appropriate and teachers use this information effectively. The majority of classes include good teaching and learning which ensure students develop their skills through realistic work-related activities. Students' work is of a high standard and assessment practices are well organised. Students' individual learning needs are assessed and very well met, which ensures they develop self-confidence. Students who have English language needs are supported very well. Pastoral support is very good, which the students appreciate. Classrooms are very pleasant environments and well equipped, with learning resources which are up-to-date and of a high quality, enhancing learning.
- 2.2 The college has prepared and effectively implemented a range of policies to underpin health and safety and welfare of students. Security is good and students feel safe. Fire precautions are well publicised and evacuation procedures are clear. Admissions and attendance are rigorously monitored and in line with the requirements of UKBA. Premises are welcoming educational environments which are clean and tidy. The college café provides excellent food and service in a relaxed environment.
- 2.3 The college is well managed and communication between the principal and chairman are effective. They provide clear educational direction as reflected in the quality of education and the care of the students. Much of the college's effective operations are overseen by the college services manager. Relationships are good throughout the college. There are a range of mechanisms for monitoring quality. However better use could be made of the accurate self-evaluation report for action planning to secure improvement. The college has reliable arrangements for staff recruitment. All staff are well qualified in their vocational subjects, are practitioners in their field, and most have teaching qualifications. Complaints are handled appropriately.

### 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.

#### (ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The college is advised to make the following improvements:

1. Provide an improvement plan to ensure that the areas for development identified during self-evaluation are tackled successfully.
2. Improve monitoring of teaching and learning to promote the best practice in all lessons.
3. Ensure that marking of students' work makes clear what they have done well and what needs to be improved for them to progress.

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

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

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to them beginning their course of study is satisfactory. The initial and diagnostic assessment of students is appropriate. Prospective students submit copies of vocational subject qualifications to the college, and are vetted by local recruitment agents or interviewed by the principal. English language entry levels for Tier 4 students are set above the minimum UKBA requirement. Diagnostic assessment is done by tutors at the beginning of the course and takes a variety of forms. There is, however, a wide range of abilities in classes despite the system of assessment. Individuals' needs are reviewed throughout the programme and appropriate support is provided.
- 3.2 Advice and guidance is good and ensures the students choose the route that suits their aspirations. Pre-enrolment advice is given by the principal, and this is fair and accurate. Guidance on progression routes is given by the subject teachers and is up-to-date and relevant. Students all agree they are on the right courses.
- 3.3 English language support is very good. A wide range of language support options is available either in classes or one to one. The use of assessment information by tutors is effective. Where individual learning support needs are identified, tutors work closely with students to ensure that they make good progress. This individualisation also takes good account of cultural expectations of teaching and learning.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum meets requirements. There has been clear educational direction in developing the curriculum to offer qualifications within the Qualifications and Credit Framework, which has now been operating successfully for a year. These are explained very well on the website and in the prospectus.
- 3.5 The range of provision is good. Students study courses which are externally verified at level 4 and 5 with progression pathways into university degree courses up to the final year of entry. There are five 18 week certificate courses (not available to Tier 4 students), four 36 week diploma courses and two 72 week advanced diploma courses.
- 3.6 The courses adequately match the students' aptitudes. Students mix and match subjects to suit their career aspirations with realistic progression routes. This sometimes means there is a wide range of abilities in a class. The provision supports the students well to develop the skills they need for their careers or further study. Almost all students complete the course they initially registered for.

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

- 3.7 The high quality teaching is reflected in the success of the students. In the majority of lessons teaching and students learning is at least good and is sometimes excellent. The students actively acquire new knowledge and participate enthusiastically. Students' individual needs are very well met in most lessons



through the teachers' knowledge of their previous learning. The methods used in the majority of lessons are highly effective, with frequent checks on learning. In most cases, activities are varied, and students are engaged, participate actively and take responsibility for their own progress. They are able to apply their learning well. In a small number of lessons, teaching is less effective because of over-direction by the teacher. This results in little student activity and insufficient checks on learning.

- 3.8 In most cases, lessons take account of students' wider knowledge and interests and encourage personalisation of their learning. The college has developed a cross college approach to lesson planning, but some plans are insufficiently detailed.
- 3.9 Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and an up-to-date knowledge of industry, which is used very well to motivate and engage students. They generally make good use of learning resources to meet the learning outcomes they have identified. Most teaching enables students to apply intellectual and creative efforts which ensure they become self-confident and independent learners. Teachers support the development of good study and problem-solving skills to encourage this independence. The students' varied cultural backgrounds are valued and in many lessons they are used to provide case studies from a range of countries when exemplifying. All teachers check that students whose first language is not English understand specialist language and clarify meanings for them if necessary. All students progress well in most classes.
- 3.10 The students' work is marked well and at an appropriate level, although comments are sometimes too brief to be of value in improving work. Assessment practice is well organised and tracks the students' progress in assignments, with appropriate standards moderation and internal verification processes ensuring quality.

### **3.(d) Progress and attainment**

- 3.11 Students' attainment is excellent. Retention rates are good and achievement rates are very high for those who complete courses. In 2010/11 the majority of students received high grades. Three students received world academic awards.
- 3.12 All students make good progress. The standard of work is high on all courses. This is demonstrated, for example, in creative subjects by the development of professional portfolios during assignments.
- 3.13 The students' learning and progress are monitored very well using individual progress and mid-course reviews. Action plans are compiled and monitored where necessary.
- 3.14 Students who study the advanced diploma courses and have good achievement are given an opportunity to attend a one year top-up course to obtain a university degree, an opportunity taken by two students this year.

## **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 meet requirements. The college premises are suitable for the courses offered, and are welcoming and safe. The classrooms and computer rooms have suitable furniture and are well maintained, clean and tidy. The college cafe has a 5 star hygiene rating and a healthy food award and provides excellent food and service in a relaxed environment.
- 4.2 Security and health and safety measures are good and the policies are well implemented. Fire safety arrangements meet requirements and evacuation routes are very well signposted. First aiders' names and photographs are clearly advertised throughout the college. There are suitable arrangements for students who are ill or injured. However, the site and some resources are not fully accessible for students with some physical disabilities and there are no plans to improve access.
- 4.3 The students have a good range of activities outside the college. However, appropriate risk assessments for field trips and other visits have only very recently been introduced.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.4 Student registration and attendance records meet requirements. Proper procedures are clear for the collection and refund of fees. These are explained in the conditions of enrolment, which are also on the website.
- 4.5 Admissions records are securely filed with all appropriate documentation. Good procedures ensure that attendance registers are up to date and, where necessary, reports are made to UKBA in a timely fashion.

### **4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.6 Pastoral support for students is excellent. Students are all very positive about the care, guidance and support they receive; they all know who to approach if they have personal problems and say that there have been no instances of bullying or harassment.
- 4.7 Senior staff take an active role in pastoral support and through this they also offer good advice and guidance. Students are positive about their relationships with staff at all levels. Relationships between students themselves are also positive.
- 4.8 The students make full use of the college's weekly programme of social events. From this they benefit from learning about English lifestyle and culture as well as developing socially with other students and becoming integrated into college life.

### **4.(d) Residential accommodation**

The college does not own any accommodation. Students who are in local private accommodation are very positive about the assistance they received in finding accommodation.

## **5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 The governance, leadership and management of the college are good. They provide clear educational direction as reflected in the quality of education and the care of the students and are characterised by strong and supportive relationships. Governance is strong in the strategic development of the college's direction into the creative sector, and plans and monitors the college's budget closely. The chairman oversees the operations of the college appropriately, with some aspects delegated to the principal. They exercise proper monitoring of finance and operations informally but there is insufficient formal recording to ensure agreed actions are completed.
- 5.2 Governance is effective in discharging responsibilities for safeguarding and for welfare, health and safety throughout the college. All required permissions are in place.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are effective. Leadership and management at all levels support high educational standards. The aims of the college are well met and delegated responsibilities, particularly those for policy are implemented successfully. The leadership has very tight control of the college's budget planning and monitoring.
- 5.4 The college's new self-evaluation report follows the inspection framework. It provides an accurate account of the college's key strengths and areas for development. However, the weaknesses noted are not yet followed up in a coherent action plan for the college, and staff have not been involved in the review process.
- 5.5 Appropriate procedures are in place for annual staff appraisals in which targets are set and individual staff development needs are identified.

### **5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.6 Quality assurance is satisfactory. Some good aspects of quality assurance exist, but there is not enough emphasis on using the self-evaluation report to secure the improvements needed.
- 5.7 The students' response to pre-inspection questionnaires was extremely positive; students feel that they are on the right course and making good progress and that the work is interesting and challenging. Inspection findings mainly support these conclusions. As a result, students would all recommend this college to others. The college makes improvements as a result of student feedback at course reviews. The students are not routinely informed of the impact of their views on improvements, although they have noticed some of them.
- 5.8 The college does not routinely monitor the standard of teaching, learning and attainment or the quality of lesson planning. As a result, the many examples of good practice are not being promoted to the benefit of all students.

- 5.9 The complaints policy covers the concerns of students and parents, and is implemented appropriately.

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

- 5.10 The arrangements for staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks meet expectations. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and cover all staff, including volunteers and governors.

**5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.11 The arrangements for the provision of information are clear and comprehensive. The college website and prospectus provide excellent student information including very clear course details; interesting student feedback; good coverage of location; facilities and staffing; enrolment conditions and some policies. The student handbook is very useful and comprehensive. The information provided to outside bodies is also of good quality.
- 5.12 The college was extremely responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

## 6 INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

### Inspectors

Mrs Prue Amner	Lead Inspector
Ms Dawn Hart	Team inspector