



# School Inspection Service

## **FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE FOR THE EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT OF PRIVATE FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES WITH A STEINER, MONTESSORI OR EURYTHMY BASIS OR BACKGROUND**

The School Inspection Service (SIS) is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Border Agency to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England, with a Steiner, Montessori or Eurythmy basis or background.

SIS inspections are required to:

- report on the extent to which colleges and schools comply with SIS Standards for private colleges;
- assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision; and
- where applicable, make recommendations to colleges outside the scope of the standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection by the SIS is designed to strengthen the quality of education on offer to international students through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas. 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, the UK Border Agency 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. Reports help colleges, their staff and governors/proprietors to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy their weaknesses. Reports also address the issues relating to the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of students including, where applicable, those under eighteen and vulnerable adults.

This framework is designed to support and facilitate high quality inspection of private further education colleges with a clearly defined and specific purpose, so that reports can be written and presented which are valuable to the institution, to government agencies, to students, their parents where appropriate and to the public. A report will evaluate the effectiveness of the institution at the time of the inspection: it will not attempt to anticipate future developments nor will it describe historical circumstances in detail. The inspectors will be specialists in education and not financial or legal experts. Prospective students, their parents and agents should make their own enquiries into the financial viability of institutions before accepting a place.

Reports will include an assessment of the quality of outcomes and provision, and state whether the standards set out in this framework are met or not met. Inspectors may also make recommendations to colleges outside the scope of the standards, where these will support continued improvement of academic quality.

**Reports will include the following sections:**

**Characteristics of the college**

This will be a short, factual section, which gives details of the college's courses, the student numbers and age range, and which sets out the college's main aims. The description will also include information about sites and location, the structure of governance and any distinctive features. Any significant changes in the nature of the college in recent years or since its previous inspection will be noted.

Brief information about patterns of enrolment and significant features of the college structure will be included, as well as information on the selection process for courses, and on the breakdown of ethnicity and background. Indication of students whose first language is not English and where applicable the number of students requiring support for special educational needs or learning needs and disabilities.

**This section will include a table with key information about the college and will identify any areas of provision not inspected, either because they are at higher education level or because they were not operating at the time of the inspection.**

**Evaluation of the college**

This section will give a short summary of the main findings concerning the college's main strengths and areas for improvement. It will judge how well the college meets its aims, and will state the extent to which the standards are met. For any standards that are not met, there will be a statement of what the college has to do in order to meet them. In addition, in this section there may be recommendations for further improvement.

**Evaluations of Standards in relation to:**

- Courses and qualifications
  - Teaching, learning and assessment
  - Cultural and moral development
  - Welfare, health and safety
  - Proprietors and staff
  - Premises and accommodation
  - Information and complaints
- (Details pages 9 to 21)

## The organisation of inspections

Inspection teams are constructed to provide appropriate coverage of the *Inspection schedules*. They have regard to the college's educational character and priorities. Inspections are overseen by a reporting inspector (RI), who manages the inspection process and is the main point of contact with the college. The RI is supported by between one and two supporting inspectors (SI), depending on the size and complexity of the college. The team inspectors have complementary experience and may be allocated particular aspects of the inspection to manage. All inspectors undertake a wide range of inspection activities including the observation of teaching, the interviewing of students and staff and the scrutiny of records and documentation. The team makes a single visit of two or three days to the college.

## Reporting on inspections

### Oral feedback

The corporately agreed findings of the inspection team are reported to the college orally at the end of the inspection.

### Written report

The reporting inspector has the responsibility for drafting the written report on the basis of the team's agreed findings. The report includes judgements and explanation in accordance with the *Inspection Framework and Guidance*. The college has the opportunity to comment on factual accuracy and highlight any administrative errors in the draft report **two** weeks after the end of the inspection. Copies of the published report are usually sent to the college and to the UKBA within **four** weeks of the end of the inspection. The report is published on the SIS website within **two** weeks of its issue to the college and remains there for up to three years. On receiving the final report, the college must send copies to all current students, the parents of any students below 18 years of age and make copies generally available to any who request it.

## The principles governing SIS inspections

Inspections carried out by the **School Inspection Service** are based on the following principles:

- inspection acts in the interests of students, to encourage high quality provision that meets diverse needs and promotes equality of opportunity;
- inspection is evaluative and diagnostic, assessing quality and providing a clear basis for improvement;
- the purpose of inspection and the procedures to be used are communicated clearly to those involved, including teaching staff;
- inspection invites and takes account of any self-evaluation by those inspected;

- inspection informs those responsible for taking decisions about provision;
- inspection is carried out by those who have relevant professional expertise and training;
- evidence is carefully recorded and is of the range and quality to secure and justify judgements;
- judgements are based on systematic evaluation requirements and criteria, and are reached corporately;
- inspection includes clear and helpful oral feedback and leads to written reporting that judges performance and quality and identifies strengths and areas for improvement;
- the work of all inspectors reflects the Inspectorate's stated values and Code of Conduct; and
- quality assurance and control is built into all inspection activities to ensure that these principles are met and inspection is constantly developed.

### **Inspectors Code of Conduct**

Inspectors are required to adhere to the *Code of Conduct* set out below. They should uphold the highest professional standards in relation to all who are involved in the process before, during and after the inspection.

The School Inspection Service is committed to providing a high quality inspection service that is able to provide independent and objective monitoring of colleges. All inspectors who work for the School Inspection Service are expected to abide by the *Code of Conduct*. This has high expectations of how inspectors will conduct themselves. They are expected to:

- evaluate objectively, display impartiality, and have no previous connections, either with the college or with individuals at the college, which could undermine their objectivity;
- report honestly and fairly, and be scrupulous in ensuring that their judgements are accurate and reliable and in accordance with the evidence that they have gathered;
- display integrity in carrying out their work;
- treat those whom they meet in the course of their work with courtesy and sensitivity, while maintaining an appropriate level of authority and objectivity;
- recognise that the process of inspection can be stressful and do everything they can to minimise stress for everyone involved, putting a high priority on the best interests and well-being of all those connected with the college;

- engage in, and maintain, constructive dialogue with those being inspected, whether they be students or staff, and communicate their evaluative judgements clearly, openly and honestly;
- respect the confidentiality of all information, especially that which concerns individuals and their work;
- pay close regard to legal requirements for safeguarding the welfare of students under the age of 18 and any vulnerable adults;
- respect the confidentiality of information received and judgements made before, during and after the inspection; and
- at all times adhere to the requirements outlined in the Inspection handbooks and associated guidance.

All inspectors are required to be consistent and rigorous in their adherence to these principles, and ensure that, in consequence, inspections will proceed smoothly.

### **Guidelines for colleges**

Those involved in inspection should:

- treat inspectors with professionalism, integrity and courtesy, and take all reasonable steps to facilitate their work in the college;
- provide open and objective information on the college and communicate clearly in response to questions;
- co-operate with inspectors in the best interests of the students at the college, raising any concerns promptly in a constructive manner;
- respect the confidentiality of information about the inspection and inspectors;
- seek to understand the *SIS Inspection Framework and Guidance* and to assist inspectors in fulfilling its requirements;
- respect the inspectors' need to make direct observations and to talk with staff and students.

In addition:

- it is the duty of the college leadership to inform all staff of the nature of the inspection, including the observation of lessons; and
- to ensure that the need for confidentiality is maintained.

### **Principles to ensure the quality of inspections, feedbacks and reports**

Inspection teams must ensure that their judgements are:

- **clear**, in that they are succinct and relevant in expression whether oral or written;

- **comprehensive**, in that they cover all the aspects of the college set out in the *SIS Inspection Framework and Guidance*;
- **consistent**, in that the evaluations from inspection evidence do not contradict one another;
- **corporate**, in that conclusions about the college as a whole reflect the collective view of the inspection team;
- **fair**, in that they accurately express the correct evaluation of strengths and areas for development;
- **objective**, in that the aims of the college are fairly judged;
- **reliable**, in that they are based on thorough application of the evaluative criteria in *the SIS Inspection Framework and Guidance*;
- **valid**, in that they are supported by the evidence gathered by the inspectors.

### Use of evidence

In order that a team's judgements may meet the criteria for the quality of inspections, feedbacks and reports, they shall be based as far as possible on first-hand evidence and include the following activities:

- observation of lessons and scrutiny of students' work;
- consultation with students;
- the analysis of evidence provided by students and staff;
- the analysis of documentary evidence, including performance indicators and self-evaluation;
- discussion with the proprietor or representatives and others involved in the work of the college as required;
- the consideration of any significant changes or progress over recent years;
- analysis of data, including material relevant to students' progress and attendance over time.

### The Standards

The standards for private colleges are set out within each aspect section of the Framework.

Most of the standards are framed in a general way. Professional judgements should be made against them using all the available evidence and applying common sense to decide whether they are met or not. For any standard that is judged not to be met, there must be a clear statement of what the college has to do in order to meet the standard in the future. Because there is no single right way to meet these general

standards, it is sensible to exemplify what each one means by describing situations in which the standard is not met.

Some standards, however, are more precise and need to be treated like a check-list. For example, Standards 9 and 23 relate specifically to UKBA requirements and Standards 24 and 27, if applicable, requires colleges to follow government guidance in determining who should be checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Similarly, Standards 4, 5, 20, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 41 and 42 are clear-cut requirements. For these specific standards, the guidance states what has to be done in order to meet them.

Most of the standards apply to all colleges, but some, prefaced by an asterisk, only apply in particular circumstances.

**Overall inspection judgements will be made under 3 categories:**

Inspection findings		Next steps
Meets requirements	All Standards are met	No inspection follow-up required
Almost meets requirements	Most Standards are met in the aspect section	Follow- up action will take place. Partial re-inspection within six months.
Does not meet requirements	Key standards, including UKBA specific standards, are not met	UKBA will review the appropriateness of the college to hold a Tier 4 sponsor licence

**Quality of courses provided**

This section will comment on the courses and qualifications offered and on the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment, making reference to the extent to which the college meets the following standards.

Inspectors will evaluate quality and Standards in relation to the following criteria:

- Assessment of students prior to or on arrival:
  - The college undertakes thorough assessments of students' suitability prior to entry, reviewed if necessary before commencement of the course of study.
  - Assessment information is used effectively by tutors.
- Suitability of course provision and curriculum:
  - Students are well educated in accordance with their objectives and the college's aims.

- Courses are well matched to students' needs.
- Courses are in accordance with those detailed in the prospectus and other marketing materials.
- Most students complete the course they initially registered for.
- Quality of teaching and learning:
  - Teaching is effective in promoting students' progress. The report will: refer to significant features of the teaching (for example, in: subject knowledge; methods employed; understanding students' needs; fostering interest and independence; planning; management of time; availability and use of resources; marking and assessment).
  - The students' achievement is based on suitable levels of knowledge, understanding and skill.
  - Where applicable, there are effective procedures for the identification and support of students with particular learning or language needs.
- Progress and attainment:
  - Students reach at least acceptable levels of attainment relative to their ability EITHER in UK or international public examinations relevant to the course undertaken, including any trends over time  
OR as judged by available evidence from the demands of the curriculum, the destinations of leavers, and performance in classes, written work and interviews.
  - Students make suitable progress as indicated by lesson observation, work seen, interviews, quality of teaching and any standardised measures of progress.

### ***Standards for courses and qualifications***

1. *The courses offered are at a suitable level for the students.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Students' questionnaire; discussions with students and staff; observation of teaching and learning; course outlines and plans.

**This standard is not met if** a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that the courses are too difficult or too easy, and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; observation of teaching shows either that many students are having difficulty in keeping up or that many students do not appear to find their work challenging; course outlines and plans do not seem to be pitched at a suitable level, and staff, when asked, are unable to give good reasons for this.

2. *Prospective students are given clear information about the level of their competency in English and the prior knowledge of the subject required for each course.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Students' questionnaire; discussions with students and staff; observation of teaching; pre-course information and requirements.

**This standard is not met if** a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that they were not given clear information about the level of English and/or the prior knowledge of the subject required for the courses they are following, and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; observation of teaching shows either that many students do not understand enough English to follow the courses, or do not understand enough about the subject matter in order to do so; the pre-course information and requirements given to students are vague or non-existent and staff, when asked, are unable to give good reasons for this.

3. *\*Where students are admitted without the usual level of English or prior knowledge, appropriate support is given to bring them quickly up to requirements to enable them to access the courses.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Provision for support; case studies of individual students; discussion with them and with the staff who teach them; scrutiny of their work.

**This standard is not met if** any students, who have been admitted without the usual level of English or prior knowledge, have not been given sufficient support and are unable to benefit from the courses that they are following.

4. *All full-time students follow courses that taken together require full-time study.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Time-tables of full-time students.

**This standard is met if** all full-time students on courses of study below UK degree level have a minimum of 15 hours per week of organised (i.e. classroom) daytime study. This is a UKBA requirement for any Tier 4 student, and is a reasonable benchmark for all FE students. The organised study can include supervised self-study as well as direct teaching. The minimum amount of organised study is expected in most, typical weeks but not necessarily in all. There can legitimately be particular times during a course when students are required to pursue research, write assignments or undertake practical tasks on their own. For any HE students, the contact time may be less, supplemented by a greater amount of self-study

5. *\*Where courses lead to externally validated qualifications, the college is authorised by the external validating bodies and meets their requirements in full.*

**Note:** Most colleges will have externally validated courses, since it is a requirement of UKBA that Tier 4 students must follow a main course that leads to an approved qualification (see standard 8 for further details). However, a college that does not

currently have any Tier 4 students may also not have any externally validated courses. These colleges should be aware that before they can sponsor any Tier 4 students in the future, there must be externally validated courses, leading to approved qualifications, for them to follow.

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Communications between the college and the validating bodies; requirements of the validating bodies.

**This standard is met if** the college complies with all the requirements of its validating bodies.

6. *Where colleges provide their own qualifications, prospective students are made fully aware of this fact.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Students' questionnaire; discussions with students and staff; information given to students.

**This standard is not met if** a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that they do not know which of their courses lead to the college's own qualifications, and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; the information given to students about courses and qualifications is confusing and misleading and, when asked, staff cannot explain how students are supposed to distinguish between courses leading to externally validated qualifications and those which lead to the college's own qualifications.

7. *The proportion of students completing courses and attaining qualifications is appropriately high, given any evidence from their previous education, and the nature of the courses and qualifications.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Statistics about the college's completion rates and success rates in its various courses over the last three years, where the completion rate is the number of students who left having completed the course, divided by the total number of students who enrolled for the course at the outset, and the success rate is calculated in a similar way, based on the number of students who completed the course and obtained the qualification; discussion with staff about courses where completion and/or success rates are below 95%.

**This standard is not met if** a high proportion of students did not complete their courses and obtain qualifications, without understandable reasons or extenuating circumstances. The government's national target for success rates in FE is 80%. UKBA expect a completion rate of more than 95% of Tier 4 students and this is a reasonable expectation of all students. However, particularly in small colleges, percentage rates need to be treated with caution and can be adversely affected by a small number of individuals in special circumstances. If the completion and/or success rates for courses are below 95%, the standard will only be met if the college can give convincing reasons to show that the lower figures arise from factors beyond the college's control.

8. *\*All courses on offer to international students using Tier 4 lead to qualifications which meet the definition of an approved qualification for UKBA purposes.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Details of the courses being followed by all current students sponsored under Tier 4.

**This standard is met if** all Tier 4 students are following as their main course, or will follow as their main course when they have completed pre-sessional courses, a course that leads to a qualification approved by UKBA. In addition to their main course, Tier 4 students may follow subsidiary courses that do not lead to approved qualifications. An approved qualification for UKBA purposes is one which is: validated by Royal Charter; or awarded by a recognised body on the recognised bodies list operated by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, (see <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/recognised-uk-degrees/recognised-bodies>); or recognised by one or more recognised bodies via a formal articulation agreement with the awarding body; or in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (see <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>) at Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) or National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 3 or above (*that is, equivalent to A-levels or above*); in Scotland, accredited at Level 6 or above in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority; or an overseas qualification, on which the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) is able to advise on its validity, with a level equivalent to Level 3 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

9. *The content of all courses is compatible with the declared ethos of the college.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Course outlines and planning; observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** the courses do not support the values, ethos and purpose of the college as expressed by the college in documentation or on its website.

### ***Standards for teaching, learning and assessment***

10. *The teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff; records of students' progress; samples of students' work.

**This standard is not met if** in several sessions observed, students are making little or no progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding; students say that they are not learning much and, when asked, have good reasons for saying so; records of students' progress are skimpy or non-existent and, when asked, staff cannot give

good reasons why this is so; students' work shows no evidence of increased knowledge, skills or understanding during their time at the college.

*11. Students apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts, show interest in their work, and think and learn for themselves.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** in several sessions observed, students do not appear to be making any effort, showing any interest, or thinking and learning for themselves; students say that the work is too easy, is not interesting and does not stimulate thought, and when questioned they have good reasons for saying so; staff do not expect enough from their students and, when asked, are unable to give good reasons for their low expectations.

*12. Teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of teaching and learning; students' questionnaires; discussions with students and staff; staff qualifications and experience.

**This standard is not met if** in several sessions observed, staff do not show much knowledge or understanding of the subject matter they are covering; students say that they are often confused by the ill-informed teaching they receive and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; staff with appropriate qualifications fail to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding when they teach; staff without appropriate qualifications fail to show that they have compensatory experience and expertise.

*13. Students' work is assessed regularly and thoroughly and students are given clear information about their progress.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Samples of students' work; students' questionnaire; records of students' progress; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** students' work shows no evidence of marking or comments; a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that their work is not assessed regularly and thoroughly and/or they are not given clear information about their progress, and when questioned they have good reasons for saying so; records of students' progress are skimpy or non-existent and, when asked, staff are unable to give good reasons why this is so.

*14. The quality of support for EAL is appropriate where required, and staff are well qualified. Strategies and expertise are in place to support students who may have difficulties with learning.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Discussions with students and staff, students' questionnaire, evidence of progress.

**This standard is not met if** a significant number of students indicate that support for EAL is inadequate and when questioned they have good reasons for saying so, records of progress are inadequate, staff are not sufficiently well qualified.

*15. Subject specialists plan their work and deliver lessons effectively. They manage time well and show understanding of the need to communicate clearly.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of teaching/lessons.

**This standard is not met if** lesson plans are inadequate and do not support the effective use of available time and to address the needs of all students in the class; teachers do not communicate effectively with students.

### **Cultural and moral development of students**

This section comments on how well the ethos gives students opportunities for spiritual, culture and moral development, in line with the aims of the college, making reference to the extent to which the following standards are met.

#### ***Standards for cultural and moral development***

*16. Students develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence and are enabled to deepen their understanding of morality.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of teaching and learning, of spiritual activities, such as collective worship, and of social activities; course outlines and plans; students' questionnaire; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** in none of the teaching sessions observed, there are any opportunities for students to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence; there are few social activities, and none of those observed give students opportunities to deepen their understanding of morality; courses are never or hardly ever concerned with moral matters; staff do not expect students to develop morally, and, when asked, cannot give good reasons for their low expectations.

*17. Students behave responsibly and obey the law.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Observation of students' behaviour in sessions and around the college; discussions with students and staff; college policies; course outlines and plans.

**This standard is not met if** students do not behave responsibly; in discussion, students show scant regard for the law of the land; college policies and course plans do not demonstrate an expectation that students should obey it.

*18. Students are encouraged to treat everyone with respect, including those of different cultural traditions.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Course outlines and plans; observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** courses contain materials that encourage students to look down upon people of cultural traditions, or any other groups of people; sessions are observed in which intolerance goes unchallenged; discussions with students indicate that intolerant attitudes are widespread; staff, should they be asked, are unable to give convincing details of how tolerance is encouraged.

### **Welfare, health and safety of students**

This section comments on the welfare, health and safety of students, making reference to the extent to which the following standards are met.

Inspectors will evaluate quality and Standards in relation to the following criteria:

- Health, safety and security of premises (in line with expectations of educational institutions)
  - All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards (see Standard 20).
  - Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include provision for students who are ill, injured or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Student registration and attendance records
  - There are fair and clear procedures for the collection and refund of fees and deposits.
  - Appropriate admission and attendance registers are properly maintained.
  - The college has appropriate procedures to monitor attendance and course completion rates, including making timely contact with students missing classes and the necessary reports to UKBA when required.
- Pastoral support for students
  - Staff provide effective support and guidance in accordance with the needs of the students and the college's aims.
  - Relationships are positive between staff and students and among the students themselves.
  - The college positively promotes integration and tolerance and has effective procedures to help prevent bullying and harassment.

- The college provides further study/careers guidance for students where appropriate.
- Child protection (if applicable)
  - The safeguarding arrangements have proper regard for students' welfare and take into account any circumstances or context of the college which may indicate a need for particular care.
- Residential accommodation (if applicable)
  - Arrangements for accommodation, through home-stay, halls of residence or otherwise, are appropriately managed and registered in accordance with national requirements.
  - Where accommodation is provided by the college, it plays a valuable part in the students' education and development, and contributes effectively to the college's aims.

### **Standards for welfare, health and safety**

*19. The college has proper regard, and effective policies, procedures and practices for health and safety issues.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Policies and procedures for health and safety, including first aid and appropriate record keeping; observation of premises; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** the policies, procedures and records are skimpy or non-existent, or do not appear to be followed in practice; the premises are hazardous and threats to health and safety have not been noted or dealt with; students say that they do not feel safe, and have good reasons for saying so; when asked, staff are unable to give good reasons for apparent deficiencies in health and safety matters.

*20. There is a satisfactory level of fire safety which conforms to legal requirements.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Discussion with the fire safety officer; fire risk assessments, policies and procedures; any correspondence with the local Fire Brigade; record of checks on equipment; record of fire drills.

**Note:** Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the college has a duty to:

- carry out a fire risk assessment (formally recorded and regularly reviewed so as to keep it up to date)
- produce a fire risk policy which includes the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances
- develop fire procedures and provide staff training (repeated periodically where appropriate)

- ensure the safety of staff, students or anyone else legally on the premises
- carry out fire drills and contact emergency services when necessary
- appoint one or more competent persons (with sufficient training, experience and knowledge) to assist in taking preventive and protective measures (including fire fighting and evacuation)
- have a suitable system for the maintenance of clear emergency routes and exits (with doors opening in the direction of escape), signs, notices, emergency lighting where required, fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers (the maintenance should be by a 'competent person' for example, ISO9001 certified or BAFE approved)
- provide staff, students and any others working on the site with fire safety information.

**This standard is met if** the college conforms to its legal duties as set out above.

*21. The welfare of students is safeguarded and promoted through pastoral care in line with the declared ethos and the aims of the college.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Students' questionnaire; policies and procedures for welfare and pastoral care; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that they do not feel that they are looked after well or valued as individuals, and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; policies are skimpy, non-existent or not followed in practice and, when asked, staff cannot give convincing reasons for this apparent neglect.

*22. The college maintains accurate admission and attendance registers, and when a student with a Tier 4 visa fails to enrol, misses ten expected contacts, or discontinues study, the required report is made to UKBA as soon as is practicable. Systems are in place to follow-up absences rigorously for all students.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Admission and attendance registers; overall attendance rate for the last year, where the attendance rate is the number of actual attendances divided by the number of possible attendances; procedures for following up absences; procedures for making reports to UKBA, when required.

**This standard is met if** admission and attendance registers are accurate and up-to-date; unexplained absences are followed up promptly; overall attendance is high, and any poor attendance is a result of students' personal circumstances beyond the college's control; reports are made promptly to UKBA when required.

*23. Where students under the age of eighteen are accommodated, their accommodation is registered and inspected in accordance with national requirements.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Boarding policies and procedures; boarding accommodation and facilities; discussions with boarders and boarding staff.

**Note:** Boarding schools have a statutory obligation to meet the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* for all their boarders, including those in the 16 to 18 age range. Maintained FE colleges with boarders have a statutory obligation to meet the *National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under 18 by Further Education Colleges*. Private FE colleges are not statutorily required to meet either set of National Minimum Standards (NMS). The boarding school NMS have been selected as a yardstick rather than the FE NMS because they have been recently revised and are therefore more concise and up-to-date. But the FE NMS are still valid. Judgements made about broad comparability with these NMS will take into account that all boarders in colleges are over 16.

### **Proprietors and staff**

This section will comment on the effectiveness and suitability of proprietors and staff, making reference to the extent to which the following standards are met.

#### ***Standards for proprietors and staff***

*24. The proprietors are successful in recruiting and retaining sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications, expertise and experience, who are in sympathy with the declared ethos and aims of the college concerned.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Staff list, including qualifications, experience and length of service; observations of teaching and learning; discussions with proprietors and staff.

**This standard is not met if** the staff list shows that few members of staff have appropriate qualifications and experience; staff turnover is high leading to problems with consistency and continuity; in sessions observed, staff members lack appropriate expertise or are evidently not in sympathy with the religious ethos and aims; proprietors report serious difficulties in recruitment and retention; members of staff are unhappy and show little commitment to staying.

*25. Prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff and volunteers, appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity and their right to work in the UK, and prudent enquiries have been made, taking up character and professional references and checking on qualifications, as appropriate, so that all this information is taken into account to determine whether appointments will be confirmed.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Policies and procedures for recruitment; confidential staff files with details of checks undertaken and references taken up; discussions with proprietors and senior staff.

**This standard is met if** proprietors and/or senior staff can show that appropriate checks and prudent enquiries are carried out when new staff are appointed.

26. *\*Where there are students under the age of 18, all staff and volunteers have had appropriate checks made on their suitability to work with young people, including an enhanced CRB check, following government guidance regarding the frequency and nature of their contacts with such students.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Policies and procedures for recruitment of staff who work with students under the age of 18; confidential staff files for these staff with details of checks undertaken; discussions with proprietors and senior staff.

**Note:** Government guidance, in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (SCSRE)*, DfES, 2007, states that a CRB Enhanced Disclosure is required for staff in FE colleges who are 'regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of persons aged under 18', where 'regularly' is taken to mean 'three or more times in a 30 day period, or once a month or more, or overnight.' Further details are in Chapter 4 of SCSRE.

27. *There is a comprehensive list, that is made available to inspectors, of all staff and volunteers, showing the dates on which they started working (and, if applicable, when they stopped working) at the college.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Staff list.

28. *There are records, made available to inspectors on request, of all checks made on staff and volunteers who are currently working at the college.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Records of checks made on staff and volunteers.

**These standards (27 and 28) are met if** the records are made available to inspectors and are comprehensive and up-to-date.

29. *\*There are records, made available to inspectors on request, of all instances of disciplinary action, suspension or departure of members of staff or volunteers; where this was due to their lack of suitability to work with young people, the record shows that an appropriate report has been made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Any records of disciplinary action, suspension, dismissal or departure of members of staff or volunteers, in circumstances where dismissal might have been considered.

**This standard is met if** the records are made available, are comprehensive and up to date, and show that reports have been made to the ISA when appropriate. Where there have been no instances of disciplinary action, suspension or departure of members of staff or volunteers, in circumstances where dismissal might have been considered, this standard is not applicable.

30. *\*Where the college uses temporary staff supplied by an employment business or agency, the identity of these staff have been checked, and all reasonable*

*steps have been taken to ensure that the employment business has carried out all appropriate checks.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Policies and procedures relating to supply staff; correspondence with the employment business supplying staff.

**This standard is met if** identity of supply staff is checked and reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the employment business carries out all appropriate checks.

*31. The proprietor/governing body provide appropriate policies and procedures, review them for effectiveness, and ensure sufficiency of resources.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Policies and procedures; availability of resources.

*32. The proprietors, leaders and managers work together effectively to sustain the college's strengths and to remedy any weaknesses.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Discussions with proprietors and senior staff; extent to which other standards are met; development and/or improvement plans.

**These standards (31 and 32) are not met if** the college fails to meet several other standards and has no credible plans for bringing about improvement; proprietors, leaders and managers do not show that they are working together effectively but appear to be at odds with each other; far from sustaining strengths, standards have declined over recent years and there are no credible plans for halting or reversing this decline.

### **Premises and accommodation**

This section will comment on the suitability of the premises and accommodation, making reference to the extent to which the following standards are met.

#### ***Standards for premises and accommodation***

*33. The college buildings and accommodation are fit for purpose and properly maintained, to enable all courses to be taught effectively, and to safeguard the health and safety of all students, including any with special needs.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Buildings and facilities; maintenance records; observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff; case studies of any students or staff with disabilities.

**This standard is not met if** buildings are in a poor state and are not properly maintained; sessions observed are adversely affected by poor accommodation and lack of facilities; students complain with good reason about the deficiencies of the building; maintenance records are skimpy or non-existent and, when asked, staff are unable to give good reasons why the accommodation and facilities have been

neglected; reasonable adjustments have not been made for any students or staff with disabilities and there are no plans to improve access for them.

34. *\*Where the premises are also used for other purposes, this use is arranged so that it does not interrupt the students' education or threaten their welfare, health or safety.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Details of the other uses of the premises; observation of teaching and learning; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** the other uses of the premises interfere with the students' education; sessions observed are adversely affected by other uses; students complain with good reason about the way in which other uses of the premises threaten their welfare, health or safety; when asked, staff are unable to give good reasons why other uses of the premises are allowed to have such a negative effect.

35. *\*Where food is provided, it is prepared and served hygienically, conforming to any relevant regulations.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Hygiene and food safety certificates; reports from environmental health officers.

**This standard is met if** certificates are up to date and the college has responded satisfactorily to any recommendations from environmental health officers.

### **Provision of information and manner in which complaints are handled**

This section will comment on the provision of information and on the manner in which complaints are handled, making reference to the extent to which the following standards are met.

#### ***Standards for information and complaints***

36. *Students and prospective students are given clear, comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information through the prospectus, the web-site (where available) and by other means.*

*Range of evidence to be considered:* Prospectus, web-site and any other sources of information; students' questionnaire; discussions with students and staff.

**This standard is not met if** the prospectus, web-site and other sources of information are misleading, incomplete, inaccurate or out of date; a high number of students respond to the questionnaire by saying that they have not been given clear, comprehensive and up-to-date information, and when questioned have good reasons for saying so; when asked, staff cannot give a convincing explanation of how deficiencies in the prospectus and web-site are compensated for by the provision of other information.

37. *Suitable systems have been established for communicating with students, and where appropriate with parents, and their agents abroad. Reports on progress are suitably frequent and appropriate to the level of the course.*

*Range of evidence to be considered: Policies and procedures; feedback from questionnaires and discussions with students.*

**This standard is met if** suitable systems exist for communication with students and information about their progress.

38. *Students and staff are made aware of an easily accessible complaints procedure which is fair and effectively implemented when necessary.*

*Range of evidence to be considered: Complaints procedure; students' questionnaire.*

**This standard is met if** there is a complaints procedure, it is fair, students respond to the questionnaire by saying that they know about it and, when necessary, it is implemented effectively.

39. *\*The college keeps records, made available to inspectors on request, of any formal, written complaints that have been made and of how they have been dealt with.*

*Range of evidence to be considered: Records of formal complaints.*

**This standard is met if** the records of any formal, written complaints are made available and they are sufficiently detailed and in line with the complaints procedure. If there have been no formal, written complaints, this standard is not applicable.