

Review of private further education colleges and English language schools

Tayside Aviation Ltd

23 June 2021

The review process

This review report follows the quality framework for the review arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, November 2018. The review normally lasts for three days. Over the three-day period, the review team:

- engage with learners;
- observe episodes of learning and teaching and provide feedback to each member of teaching staff or other learning facilitator on strengths and areas for further development;
- conduct interviews and undertake other activity required to determine the extent of concordance between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluate evidence against the **14 reference quality indicators**; and
- identify key strengths and areas for further development for the organisation.

Education Scotland is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland.

Reviews are arranged under **three high-level principles** which Education Scotland is adopting for evaluative purposes:

Outcomes and Impact:

How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Service Delivery:

How good is the delivery of our learning and teaching?

How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Leaderships and quality culture:

How good is our strategic management?

These are underpinned by a wider principle on the centre's **Capacity for improvement** and the question, **How good is our capacity to improve?**

Education Scotland reviews are designed to:

- support and promote quality enhancement in organisations to provide the best possible experience for the learner;
- provide information to the Home Office, when required, on the quality of organisations and the learning experience they provide;
- provide an independent evaluation to assist organisations in informing prospective and current learners of the quality of the organisation's programmes and services;
- evaluate organisations against the Education Scotland quality framework, September 2016; and
- complement organisation-led internal review and self-evaluation.

Review provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of education provision in schools and colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to learners, Government and the wider community. Review takes account of the context of each individual school or college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The review of the school or college is from an educational perspective and provides limited review of other aspects; though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on learners. The review does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school or college estate, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or college or its accounting procedures; and
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's or college's compliance with employment law.

This report contains effectiveness statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of learner progress and outcomes, learning and teaching processes and leadership and quality culture.

The report also uses the following terms to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
Majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
Few	up to 15%

Grades are awarded in THREE areas:

- Outcomes and Impact
- Service Delivery
- Leadership and quality culture

Inspectors use a SIX-point grading scale:

- excellent - outstanding and sector leading
- very good - major strengths
- good - important strengths with some areas for improvement
- satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- weak - important weaknesses
- unsatisfactory - major weaknesses

Contents

1. Introduction	1
The organisation and its context	1
The review	1
2. Outcomes of external review	2
Judgement of Grades	2
3. Outcomes and impact	3
Learner progression and achievement:	3
How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?	3
Meeting the needs of stakeholders	3
How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?	3
4. Service delivery	5
Delivery of learning and teaching:	5
How good is our delivery of learning and teaching?	5
Management of learning and teaching	6
How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?	6
5. Leadership and quality culture	7
Strategic leadership:	7
How good is our strategic leadership?	7
6. Capacity for Improvement	8
Capacity for improvement:	8
How good is our capacity for improvement?	8
7. What happens next?	9
8. Further information	9
Appendix 1	10
Glossary of terms	10
Appendix	11

1. Introduction

The organisation and its context

In carrying out the review of Tayside Aviation, Education Scotland HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) took the following context fully into account.

Tayside Aviation is a family owned, private limited company who operate from premises close to Dundee City Airport, and a second site at Glenrothes Airport in Fife. The school has been delivering flight training since 1968. They are a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) approved flight training organisation. The school offers trainee pilots a range of work-related facilities including study rooms, well-equipped classrooms, digital resources including specialist learning materials and relevant flight materials and data, 16 aircraft and a flight simulator. The school is applying for United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Student Sponsor status to support the development of its international links and extend opportunities for learners to study in the UK.

They currently have around 50 learners from both the UK and Europe, all of whom were enrolled prior to the new UKVI guidelines coming into force.

Tayside Aviation deliver a range of programmes from Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6 to Level 10. These include a Private Pilot's Licence and Flight Instructor Training through to full Commercial Airline Licence level. All programmes are delivered on both a full-time and part-time basis. All programmes are accredited by the CAA and/or Middlesex University.

For over 35 years, Tayside Aviation has delivered the Royal Air Force (RAF) Air Cadet Pilot Scheme (ACPS). They were recently awarded the RAF Central Flying School Trophy by the Honorable Company of Air Pilots for 'a significant and outstanding contribution to excellence in the delivery of flight training and instructional standards'. This is in recognition of the quality of their Air Cadet training, something that no other private flight training school has achieved.

The review

The review by HMIE took place during the period 19 – 21 May 2021.

A team of HM Inspectors examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the learner experience, and evaluated these using the 14 reference quality indicators outlined in [inspection arrangements for private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland, November 2018](#). The team used information submitted in advance by the organisation to decide on the scope of the inspection, and met with learners and staff both virtually and face-to-face at all levels in the organisation.

2. Outcomes of external review

Judgement of Grades

The review team awarded grades for each of the three key themes based on the following criteria.

excellent:	outstanding and sector leading
very good:	major strengths
good:	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory:	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak:	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory:	major weaknesses

Key Theme	Grade awarded
Outcomes and impact	Excellent
Service delivery	Excellent
Leadership and quality culture	Excellent

As a result of these grades Tayside Aviation is found to be EFFECTIVE

3. Outcomes and impact

Learner progression and achievement:

How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

Areas of positive practice

- Retention rates for learners on all programmes are high and all learners are making good progress from their prior learning. After successful completion of the Ground School theory element, learners achieve Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) theory. All learners who complete their programmes are successful in gaining employment with commercial airlines or as flight instructors.
- The average pass rate for learners undertaking the ATPL programme is very high at 91%.
- Almost all learners for whom English is their second language, improve their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score. This is an essential element of the course as English is the language common to the flight industry and all learners must therefore demonstrate competence to meet the needs of their industry.
- Success rates for trainee pilots who complete the ground school theory elements of the ATPL programme, are high.
- Tayside Aviation have rigorous entry standards. Applicants undergo a series of screening tests to help ensure they possess the appropriate attributes to become a pilot.
- All applicants are screened to ensure they have the right to study in the UK, have an IELTS Level 5 certificate, and have passed the medical requirements set out by the CAA.
- Tayside Aviation use an external provider to support for pre-entry testing. This includes psychometric testing and minimum competencies in spatial orientation, mathematics and physics. These are all essential criteria for flying according to the CAA regulations. An appeals process is included for unsuccessful applicants.

Areas for development

- There are no areas for development identified.

Meeting the needs of stakeholders

How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?

Areas of positive practice

- Most of the learners are 18 or over, although the school has a limited number of learners who are under 18 undertaking the RAF Air Cadets programme. The school has in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements and staff have a good awareness of procedures and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- All staff are vetted as part of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme and receive regular updates regarding their responsibilities for protecting vulnerable individuals.
- All staff have recently undergone PREVENT training and are aware of their responsibilities to support this initiative.
- The school offers an appropriate range and level of programmes between SCQF Levels 6 to 10. These programmes meet the needs of learners well.

- Progression routes are well promoted from the achievement of a Private Pilot Licence through to a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL). Learners are able to choose an individual programme that is tailored to their ability and aspirations. The programme allows them to gain qualifications that provide pathways into further study and employment.
- The school has a high level of success in placing graduates into employment with airlines and are regularly approached to recommend individuals to enter employment.
- All learners express high levels of satisfaction with their programmes and confidence in their teachers.
- The school is making good progress in addressing the gender gap within the flight industry and has an increasing number of females qualifying as pilots and gaining employment.
- All learners develop a range of wider skills and additional qualifications during their programme which are delivered in a simulated work-based environment. These include core, essential, employability and digital skills. Learners also achieve a radio telephony licence/certificate and can also obtain their flight instructor rating. Some learners are able to gain their first aid certification which enhances their opportunities for employment.
- The flight school actively encourages new recruits to mix with peers who have recently qualified. This helps new learners to ask questions about their programme, address concerns, and gain confidence.
- Class tutors support learners well to discuss the progress they are making and their overall performance and attitude/behaviour. All learners welcome the opportunity to discuss their progress each month.

Areas for development

- The school does not offer learners the opportunity for successful candidates to celebrate their achievement with family, friends and their peers.
- Learners do not currently receive formal recognition of the development of and progress made with their additional core, essential employability and digital skills.

4. Service delivery

Delivery of learning and teaching:

How good is our delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- All learners are highly motivated and participate purposefully in a range of practical and theory activities. They work together well, enthusiastically and professionally. They feel affiliated to the school and its purpose, demonstrating behaviours and attributes in their dealing with other learners, staff and visitors.
- Learners use a range of appropriate resources effectively, including specialist learning materials, to support their learning and develop their subject knowledge and skills.
- All learners develop high levels of independence and self-regulation in their own learning. They take full responsibility for ensuring they are well prepared for theory classes and short and long briefings. They demonstrate knowledge transition skills into practical activities well across a wide range of scenarios, which is an essential element for their chosen career.
- Learners on the practical flight training aspects of the courses work in pairs to reflect the flight school requirements of pilot and co-pilot scenarios. They encourage and help one another well through peer support.
- Almost all learners are making very good progress towards the achievement of their learning goals during their period of study.
- Teaching staff use their vocational and professional experience well to make lessons interesting and stimulating for learners. They use an appropriate range of teaching approaches to engage learners purposefully in learning and use questioning techniques effectively to encourage learners to contribute to class discussions.
- Teaching staff use ground school theory lessons effectively as briefings to learners prior to demonstrating their practical ability in flight school. Learners value this experience and feel comfortable to ask questions to ensure they are well prepared.
- All teaching staff set high standards and expectations for learners. They provide challenge to help them to achieve their aspirations. Staff reinforce regularly the requirements of professional conduct as a pilot, and aviation standards. This provides opportunities for learners to develop awareness and confidence of these standards as they progress with their studies.
- Teaching staff and learners use CAA approved digital learning materials effectively to support skills and knowledge development. Regular progress tests and mock exams assist learners to practice and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. These are often augmented by access to additional question banks to ensure learners are well prepared for exams.
- Resources including training manuals, operations manuals and e-books provided for learners are very detailed and provide a high standard of information relevant to the course requirements.
- Learners receive ongoing verbal and written feedback on their progress which enables them to focus their study to their own development appropriately. Learners appreciate this detailed feedback which they use to improve their knowledge and skills.

Areas for development

- On occasion, teaching staff miss opportunities to expand on equality and diversity issues and PREVENT during lessons.

Management of learning and teaching

How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- The school provides a realistic environment for learners. All learners wear pilot uniforms and are taught in a manner reflective of the flight industry. Staff and learners work well together, and are mutually respectful. This contributes to a positive and purposeful environment for learning.
- All teaching staff take part in a range of formal lesson observations to maintain their teaching practice. These include observations between peers, by management, by staff from Middlesex University, and by the RAF. The observation process identifies strengths and areas for development in teaching approaches. The outcomes of these are discussed at monthly review meetings and staff development needs are identified and result in tangible improvements to lesson delivery.
- All lessons in ground school are based on CAA approved delivery materials. Staff adapt these appropriately to meet the differentiated needs of the learner. All teaching staff plan lessons well to ensure the course aims are met and the briefings for flying school are relevant and timely. Learners take responsibility for ensuring they are well prepared for the lesson through directed reading and assessment.
- All learners receive accurate and useful information prior to commencing their programme through the school website and contact with admissions staff. This includes information about the IELTS requirement.
- All learners are well supported by the staff team who provide a range of practical support during the initial induction period and throughout the programme. The student charter outlines the expected standards clearly.
- Learners provide regular feedback on ways to improve their learning experience through questionnaires and surveys. Staff use this feedback to make changes to improve the experience for future learners.
- All staff are committed to a culture of enhancement and improvement. Teaching staff meet monthly to discuss progress of learners and changes to delivery approaches.
- Assessment policies are clear and concise and an appeals procedure is in place. This is clearly understood by staff and learners.
- The school offers a comprehensive induction process which includes health and safety, meetings with instructors, the student charter, orientation with aircraft, paperwork and the real life environment of a working airport.
- Tayside Aviation has good relationships with both the police and UK border forces. They use confidential channels well to identify potential risks of radicalisation.
- A learning and teaching mentor provides flight school instructors with advice and guidance to improve their pedagogy. Teaching staff welcome the opportunity to discuss and improve their teaching skills through these discussions.

Areas for development

- Arrangements for a designated buddy or mentor to offer pastoral support and guidance to learners has been introduced recently. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this initiative.

5. Leadership and quality culture

Strategic leadership:

How good is our strategic leadership?

Areas of positive practice

- The Chief Executive and senior managers have a clear shared vision for the flight school, which has a continuous focus on the quality of delivery and employability of learners. They communicate this well to staff and learners. The flight school enjoys excellent relationships with its partners including the RAF, the CAA and Middlesex University. This ensures that programmes are fit for purpose and industry recognised.
- The flight school has in place clear strategies and approaches for improving the quality of learning and teaching. These include supporting staff through reflection on their classroom practice and a suitable range of ongoing continuing professional development activities in which all teaching staff actively and enthusiastically participate.
- Managers lead their staff well and give clear focus to delivery and improvement. Staff value the support of their team leaders and feel empowered to contribute or challenge decisions.
- All staff work well as a team, they are committed to a culture of quality improvement and ongoing development of the school's programmes and activities. They are well-qualified and bring real life experience to their teaching, which is valued by the school and learners.
- Learner feedback is considered carefully, along with other feedback, to generate improvement actions. These actions are acted on quickly and effectively. Regular staff meetings are particularly useful for identifying any issues for concern and solutions are usually quickly implemented to resolve any matters raised.
- The school provides an annual monitoring report to Middlesex University which provides a robust evaluation of performance of the ATPL programmes. Actions are identified and monitored for progress on a monthly basis.
- The flight school maintain data sets which profile each cohort to examine entry, progression and achievement trends over time. This provides essential management information to identify improvement strategies.
- Tayside Aviation have held the prestigious RAF Cadet contract for 35 years, confirming the high quality of instruction offered to their learners.
- Staff engage well in regular meetings to consider teaching standards and the quality of programme delivery.
- Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in the development of the flight school by offering their suggestions for improvements and are actively involved with new proposals such as the rejuvenation of the fleet.

Areas for development

- There are no areas for development identified.

6. Capacity for Improvement

Capacity for improvement:

How good is our capacity for improvement?

Tayside Aviation deliver high quality learning and teaching and achieve high quality outcomes for learners training to be a pilot. The programmes are delivered in a realistic environment and reflect the culture and standards expected by the industry. The internal arrangements and culture of professional standards help foster a reflective style of teaching delivery and training.

The Chief Executive and senior managers have a clear shared vision for the flight school, which has a continuous focus on the quality of delivery and employability of learners. They communicate this well to staff and learners. The flight school enjoys excellent relationships with its partners including the RAF, the CAA and Middlesex University. This ensures that programmes are fit for purpose and industry recognised.

Teaching staff use their vocational and professional experience well to make lessons interesting and stimulating for learners. They use an appropriate range of teaching approaches to engage learners purposefully in learning and use questioning techniques effectively to encourage learners to contribute to class discussions.

All teaching staff set high standards and expectations for learners. They provide- challenge to help them to achieve their aspirations. Staff reinforce regularly the requirements of professional conduct as a pilot and aviation standards. This provides opportunities for learners to develop awareness and confidence of these as they progress with their studies.

Managers lead their staff well and give clear focus to delivery and improvement. Staff value the support of their team leaders and feel empowered to contribute or challenge decisions.

All staff work well as a team, they are committed to a culture of quality improvement and ongoing development of the school's programmes and activities. They are well-qualified and bring real life experience to their teaching, which is valued by the school and learners.

7. What happens next?

This review report is valid for four years.

Education Scotland may engage at regular intervals to monitor progress, if invited by the organisation.

Any significant material change within the organisation should be reported to Education Scotland immediately.

Barbara Nelson
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Education Scotland

8. Further information

This review and judgements relate to the service area as a whole. For further information about Education Scotland, the external review methodologies, or other information about reviews, see www.education.gov.scot

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

ACPS	Royal Air Force (RAF) Cadet Pilot Scheme
ATPL	Airline Transport Pilot Licence
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CPL	Commercial Pilot Licence
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
RAF	Royal Air Force
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework
UKVI	United Kingdom Visa and Immigration

Appendix

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs	
12				Professional Apprenticeship	
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
8	Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ	
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ	
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher			Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ	
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ	
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award	SVQ	
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3				
2	National 2, Awards				
1	National 1, Awards				