



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT/STAFFING (College)**

**INSTITUTION:** Bishopsland Educational Trust

**ADDRESS:** Bishopsland  
Dunsden  
Reading  
RG4 9NR

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Claire Murdoch

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 9–10 January 2024

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation, 28 March 2024

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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Bishopsland Educational Trust (Bishopsland/the Institution) was established in 1993 and became a limited company in 2001 and a registered charity in 2002. Bishopsland offers residential courses focusing on silversmithing and jewellery skills.

Bishopsland is based in a rural setting near Reading in the United Kingdom (UK). It aims to provide training for postgraduates in the fine and applied arts and crafts and to provide guidance on becoming independent artists, craftspeople and designers.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for managing the operational side of the Institution, including finance and administration. The Principal has responsibility for creative standards within Bishopsland's programme, supported by the Workshop and Programme Co-ordinator.

The CEO reports to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees comprises five members, all of whom serve as Directors of the company. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance and strategic management of Bishopsland.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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Bishopsland's 46-week residential programme is designed for recently established, self-employed silversmiths and jewellers. The programme focuses on enhancing students' technical and business skills. All teaching is delivered in person.

Personal projects and masterclasses help students to develop their individual creativity. A six-month residential option is available for overseas students. On completion, graduates automatically join the alumni of Bishopsland Fellows community.

During the inspection, there were seven enrolled students, the majority of whom were female. Six were from the UK and one was from the Netherlands. All students are aged over 18.

Applicants should be educated to first-degree level, although exceptions are considered for individuals with relevant prior experience. Enrolment takes place annually in September, with the six-month programme for overseas students starting annually in October or March.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was a hybrid inspection carried out by one inspector over one-and-a-half days. One day was spent on site and one half-day was online. The inspector held discussions with the CEO, the Principal, a group of students, a tutor and the Workshop and Programme Co-ordinator. A masterclass was observed and a tour of the premises undertaken. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. Bishopsland co-operated fully with the inspection.

### **4. Background to the supplementary inspection**

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This supplementary element of the inspection is the result of changes in management.

### **5. Inspection history**

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**Inspection type**

**Date**

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Full Accreditation	16–17 October 2013
Interim	11 December 2014
Re-accreditation	23–24 October 2017
Interim	10 January 2020
Re-accreditation	19, 20 & 24 May 2022

## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

*The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the Institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, a new principal has been appointed, the Executive Director has been promoted to CEO, and a new post of Workshop and Programme Co-ordinator has been established.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

There were no action points in the last report.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

*It is recommended that Bishopsland consolidates its oversight of the provision by producing an end-of-programme report each year that includes an action plan for the next programme.*

This recommendation has been met. The CEO now consolidates the oversight of the provision with an annual Chair's report, which is presented to the Board of Trustees at the end of the programme. This report includes an overview of the programme deliverables and highlights from the year. It includes feedback from students, as well as details of staffing and health and safety, and a report on special projects. It anticipates future challenges and includes areas for future focus that are consolidated into an action plan.

*Bishopsland should consider centralising the documentation relating to risk management, including fire risk management.*

This recommendation has now been met. All risk assessment documentation, including that relating to fire risk management, is now centralised digitally on a shared drive. All members of staff have easy access to this shared drive. Each risk assessment appropriately contains the identification of the hazard, an assessment of the risk level for each identified hazard, control measures to be put in place, any training required, a schedule of inspection and maintenance, the documentation of all inspection and maintenance activities, and the review date.

### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

#### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (supplementary inspection)**

*The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the college scheme document and main full inspection report*

#### **1. The institution is effectively managed**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body.                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Bishopsland's organisational chart, comprehensive job descriptions and feedback from tutors indicate that the management structure is clearly understood. The Board of Trustees oversees Bishopsland's overall direction and finances effectively.

Scrutiny of Curricula Vitae (CVs) and discussions with managers and tutors show that the senior managers are appropriately qualified and are effective in carrying out their duties. The new Principal is highly experienced and brings with her a wide network of contacts who are already being used to enrich the provision.

The CEO has over 20 years' experience in the corporate world and is using this expertise to better position the Institution for the future. The recent changes in management have enabled the Principal to take complete responsibility for the artistic side of Bishopsland's work, including workshop bookings. The Principal is also now spending more time in the workshop. The CEO is able to focus on administration and Bishopsland as a charity and on developing its funding streams. The Workshop and Programme Co-ordinator is an addition to the provision and gives support directly to students and tutors.

Discussions with management, tutors and students indicate that channels of communication are clear and well used. Weekly, minuted meetings take place in person with staff and students, and remotely with the Board of Trustees. Consequently, all stakeholders are engaged and are able to express their views.

**2. The administration of the institution is effective**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Bishopsland is administered by the CEO, who is a highly qualified and experienced administrator. As a result, the administration of the Institution is effective.

In discussion with the inspector, students confirm that the Institution is effectively run on a day-to-day basis. There are seven students in the current cohort. The size of the administration team reflects this small number, and the team is completely sufficient to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the Institution.

Appropriate administrative policies and procedures are well documented, widely disseminated and understood. Tutors and students confirm that administrative policies are embedded into the daily routine of the Institution. As a result, the Institution runs smoothly.

Clear procedures support the collection, storage and retrieval of information and data.

**3. The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 3.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Documentation and discussions with management indicate that Bishopsland has appropriate policies and procedures for the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

All staff have their qualifications and experience verified prior to employment and are required to serve a probationary period.

Appraisal documentation shows that managerial and administrative staff have a suitable annual appraisal based on a professional dialogue. The appraisal identifies strengths and areas for development. As a result, staff have the means to maintain and improve their performance.

**4. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.  Yes     No

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date.  Yes     No

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Bishopsland's website offers an accurate portrayal of Bishopsland, showcasing images that effectively convey the expected standard of work.

An informative video on the website includes a clear depiction of the location, the facilities, the resources and what is achievable. The text provides a thorough insight into the Institution's ethos and vision.

Bishopsland's website gives comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information on the programme, including costs, available funding and bursaries. A downloadable admissions brochure on the website further supplements this information.

**5. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enroll suitable students for its courses**

5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students.  Yes     No

5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements, and any claimed qualifications are verified.  Yes     No

5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries are responded to promptly and appropriately.  Yes     No

5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.  Yes     No     NA

5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment that includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling.  Yes     No     NA

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The entry requirements for Bishopsland’s programme are clearly stated on its website. Applicants should have completed a degree in art and design, or equivalent, and have a portfolio of designs and models, or work in progress. This enables Bishopsland to recruit those applicants who are most likely to benefit from the course.

Applicants are required to complete a comprehensive application form that includes information about qualifications, experience and career aspirations. Qualifications are verified before a place is confirmed. This allows Bishopsland to assess the suitability of applicants before extending an offer to join the programme.

Students are appropriately briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses through the information available on the website, e-mail exchanges and telephone calls. Students confirm that application enquiries are responded to in a timely fashion.

In discussion with the inspector, students also confirmed that all applicants are interviewed on site after the applicants have seen the facilities and met the staff. This enables students to make sure that the course meets their needs. It also allows Bishopsland to assess their suitability prior to the offer of a place.

Overseas recruitment agents are not used.

Acceptance onto the programme does not rely on an initial assessment but on fulfilling the requirements of an initial degree, a portfolio of designs and an acceptable level of English language competence.

**6. There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

6.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.3	Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate is action taken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The attendance and punctuality policy is clear and appropriate. The policy is discussed as a major part of the induction programme. Students in the group discussion were aware of the policy. Inspection findings confirm that the policy is well communicated and understood.

Students sign in and out of their lessons, and these sign-in sheets are collated centrally and reviewed daily.

All instances of absence are readily apparent given the small number of students. Staff address any absences in a timely manner. As a result, attendance rates are very high.

**7. The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

7.1	The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution’s provision, including formal student representation where appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.2	Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.3	The feedback is reviewed by management, and action is taken where necessary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.4	There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution’s response to the feedback to the student body.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Comprehensive feedback from students is obtained at the end of each term. In addition, students have weekly meetings with the managers at which they can give further feedback. These meetings are recorded and actions are identified and taken. Students also provide feedback informally on a daily basis.

The tutors confirm that they feedback orally to the CEO at the end of each teaching session. As a result, Bishopsland has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback and reviewing its provision in the light of that feedback.

An analysis of the feedback is included in the annual Chair's report, which is presented to the Board of Trustees.

Feedback is obtained, recorded and acted on in a timely manner. All students were able to give examples of feedback leading to improvements. However, tutors are not routinely informed of the student feedback regarding their workshops and so could be unaware of what improvements to make.

Minutes of meetings and discussions with students show that Bishopsland has effective mechanisms for reporting actions to students as a result of their feedback.

**8. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 8.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.2 | Reports are compiled at least annually that present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.3 | Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Bishopsland possesses robust systems for evaluating its own performance. A wide range of feedback, including from students on teaching, learning, facilities and accommodation, is methodically gathered and analysed. As a result, the Institution has a clear understanding of its overall performance.

Reports are compiled for the quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees. These reports include an effective review of the course modules and an analysis of feedback, retention, attendance and progress, which in turn informs action-planning.

These quarterly reports appropriately inform an annual Chair's report, which provides a summative, end-of-programme report that pulls together the different aspects of the quarterly reviews.

Bishopsland compiles action plans after each of the weekly cohort meetings, at the end of every module and at the end of the year. These action plans are detailed, with measurable, time-bound actions assigned to designated members of staff.

Outcomes from the actions are reported to management, students or the Board of Trustees as appropriate. As a result, Bishopsland is able to continuously improve its provision.



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#### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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The standards are judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

##### Comments

Lesson observations, discussions with students and tutors, meetings with management and staff, and scrutiny of policies and satisfaction data indicate that academic management is effective. The new Principal is suitably experienced and qualified to take overall responsibility for the programme.

The programme successfully focuses on developing the creative techniques and the business knowledge needed for students to be successful jewellers and silversmiths. Class sizes are very small, and this enables tutors to individualise their teaching. The Workshop and Programme Co-ordinator supports the visiting tutors providing masterclasses effectively.

The focus of the teaching is effective in supporting the students' ability to become independent practitioners and therefore meets their needs. Assessment and feedback in one-to-one tutorials support this process effectively. The students would prefer dedicated timetabled slots for these tutorials so that they can plan their time more effectively. Students would also welcome the opportunity to present and discuss their work with each other in order to get peer feedback on their work.

The programme is well-equipped, providing students and tutors with all the necessary resources. Each student is granted an independent bursary for acquiring additional resources, thus supporting their independent learning skills.

Business skills development is effectively integrated into the programme, preparing students to establish their own ventures in the creative sector on completion of their Bishopsland course. Student satisfaction rates are very high.

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#### 4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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The standards are judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

##### Comments

Discussions with students and the management team and a scrutiny of relevant policies indicate that students receive pastoral support that is appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. All students are adults and fully fluent in the English language.

Students confirm that their induction was effective in allowing them to settle into their studies quickly. They also confirm that safe working practices in the workplace were strongly emphasised.

Bishopsland has an appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion policy that is disseminated via the website and included in the induction. This prohibits discrimination effectively.

The Institution also has an effective policy in place to avoid the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

International students receive suitable advice before their arrival in the UK.

Students are enrolled onto the programme under fair and transparent terms and conditions that are made clear during the application process before enrolment.

The residential accommodation is adjacent to the teaching workshops and is fit for purpose and of a suitable standard.

Bishopsland provides suitable advice regarding leisure and cultural events in the area.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

##### **Comments**

Bishopsland's premises have a suitable lease and ensure a safe, secure and clean environment for both staff and students. The site is well-maintained, with well-kept lawns and gardens.

Specific safety rules are in place in the hazardous areas of the workshops, and these rules are suitably enforced.

Workshops are specifically tailored for the different aspects of the programme and are appropriately equipped and maintained. Individual workstations for each student, with access to a diverse range of specialised tools and equipment, allow tutors to personalise their teaching and offer effective one-to-one support.

The workshops are conducive to private study, and their proximity to the residential accommodation, along with additional common areas, provides flexibility and supplementary space when needed. The strong internet service further enhances the overall facilities.

Staff and general meetings with the students are held in the main meeting room above the workshops.

Students enjoy excellent opportunities for independent work beyond the programme's timetabled hours.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

Bishopsland’s rigorous application process ensures that successful applicants are suitable for the programme, leading to very high success rates.

Small class sizes enable tutors to individualise their teaching and provide effective one-to-one feedback and support.

The staff and tutors are current practitioners and experts in their field and, therefore, students benefit from up-to-date knowledge of the sector.

Bishopsland is well-resourced so that students have easy access to the workshops and a wide range of specialist equipment and materials.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High    Medium    Low

**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

Bishopsland should share the feedback about the masterclasses gained from the students with the tutor providing the masterclass.

It is recommended that students are given dedicated time slots for their tutorials.

Bishopsland should consider holding small, informal sessions in which each student shares their work with the other students.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

None

**THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:**

John Rooney

Lead Inspector