



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

L3 CTS AIRLINE AND ACADEMY TRAINING LTD

(Companies House number – 09592088)

Full Name	L3 CTS Airline and Academy Training Ltd
Address	2-3 Gatwick Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 9BG Crew Training Centre, Bournemouth Airport, Christchurch, Dorset, BN23 6NE Cranfield Training Centre, Hanger 1, Cranfield, Bedfordshire, MK43 0AL
Telephone Number	02380737567
Email Address	emma.mcmullan@L3harris.com
Website	www.L3harrisairlineacademy.com/en-gb/
Principals	Mr Eugene Moriarty
Proprietors	L3 Commercial Training Solution Ltd (L3 CTS)
Age Range	18+
Total number of students	396
Numbers by age and type of study	18+: 396 FE only: 396
Inspection dates	23 - 25 November 2021

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

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

ISI inspections are required to:

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

	Page
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	4
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	6
(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival	6
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	6
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	7
(d) Attainment and progress	78
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	9
(a) Health, safety and security of the premises	9
(b) Student registration and attendance records	9
(c) Pastoral support for students	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) Ownership and oversight	11
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	11
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	11
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	12
(e) Provision of information	12
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	13
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	14

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 L3 Commercial Training Solutions, Airline and Academy Training Ltd (L3 CTS AAT) provides training to pilots at all stages of their training development. It also trains examiners on behalf of the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and other regulators globally. The mission of the company is to provide airline-ready, well-trained pilots of the highest calibre. The academy is owned by and accountable to L3Harris, a US corporation.
- 1.2 A dedicated president leads L3Harris Commercial Aviation and is supported by a number of vice presidents (VPs) and directors, one of whom leads and is the principal of L3 CTS AAT. He, in turn, is supported by a number of senior managers and directors. The principal is responsible for teaching and learning and the regulatory and compliance aspects of the training. The academy director is supported by a management team of training and compliance managers. The individual sites in Bournemouth, Cranfield and Crawley are led on a daily basis by site managers who follow the directives of the leaders based in Crawley and are answerable to them.
- 1.3 L3 CTS AAT operates on three sites in the UK: Crawley near Gatwick Airport, Bournemouth Airport, and Cranfield Airport. In addition to the UK sites, L3 Harris owns a centre in Portugal and another in the USA, although the latter is purely dedicated to US licence training. Trainees move to these different sites to complete the different stages of their training. For the purposes of this inspection, the team visited Crawley, Bournemouth and Cranfield.
- 1.4 The company has partnerships with Middlesex University and the University of Central Lancashire, which offer trainees the opportunity to gain an honours degree in Professional Aviation Pilot Practice and Aviation Pilot Programme respectively. These degrees are based on the current course content plus an additional element at the end, which is completed with the student's airline employer following the period of formal training by L3 CTS AAT. As a result of COVID disruption to studies, additional options to allow completion of a qualification in the absence of moving straight into employment with an airline have been provided by Middlesex University. These include the option to complete the Professional Aviation Flight Instruction degree, and/or complete a final year based on theoretical studies. However, this option is available as an exception to trainees affected by COVID only and is not a general offering.
- 1.5 The selection process assesses aptitude for pilot training. Applicants with English as an additional language are required to have English at the required level. There are no trainees with learning difficulties or disabilities. Enrolment normally takes place monthly. Trainees start together but individual finish dates can vary widely due to variations in their progress rates in the flight and simulator phases, inclement weather, and aircraft/simulator serviceability and availability.

- 1.6 At the time of inspection there were 396 full-time trainees undertaking pilot training. In addition, there were qualified pilots from a range of airlines undertaking update training. All trainees are aged 18 years or over and the large majority are male and come from the UK. A small minority come from other countries in Europe and the Gulf States, and speak English as an additional language.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The academy has clear educational aims and objectives and offers a wide range of high-quality courses that fully meet the needs of the trainees and provides clear progression routes into the aviation industry. Courses on offer to trainees on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to, and on arrival, is excellent and is highly effective in ensuring trainees have the ability to successfully complete their course and go on to fly with major airlines. Trainees are well supported by excellent teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Instructors have excellent subject knowledge, appropriate experience in the aviation industry and the majority use effective teaching methods to motivate and involve the trainees in their learning. However, in a few lessons, instructors do not always use direct questioning to effectively explore individual trainee's understanding of the material being delivered. Regular assessments are used very effectively to check trainees' progress and to provide instructors with up-to-date information to ensure that they effectively plan to meet trainees' needs. Overall, trainees' achievement and attendance are excellent.
- 2.3 Arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of trainees across all three centres are excellent. Health and safety is well managed, with highly effective monitoring and oversight ensuring that any issues are quickly addressed. The academy's buildings are very well maintained and provide high quality facilities that effectively support learning. Comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for trainees and staff. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken and are clearly understood by all trainees and staff. However, the actual number of staff and trainees participating in fire drills is not consistently recorded. Trainee registration and attendance records are excellent. They are accurate, very well managed and are highly effective in monitoring attendance and taking necessary action. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are highly secure. The academy's pastoral structure provides excellent support and guidance for the trainees in accordance with its aims. Residential accommodation is well managed and monitored. Relationships between trainees and instructors are excellent. Trainees report that they are safe and well supported.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The board of directors are highly effective in ensuring that high levels of education, welfare, health and safety are maintained. A clear vision for the academy is shared by senior leaders and staff, who work very well together for the good of the trainees. A detailed management structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, ensures that the academy is well run, meets all its legal obligations and quality

assurance is prioritised. A comprehensive process of self-assessment and evaluation effectively informs improvement planning and ensures that the necessary resources are in place to meet the changing needs of the academy. Systems to ensure consistent assessment and the monitoring of trainee progress are excellent. The academy successfully attracts highly qualified and experienced administrators, instructors and managers. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken.

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

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

- 3.1 The assessment of trainees prior to and on arrival is excellent. Entry criteria are detailed and used effectively to provide accurate and appropriate advice and guidance to prospective trainees. On arrival, trainees undergo a comprehensive assessment programme to ensure they have the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy and other skills to successfully complete their course and go on to fly with major airlines. As a result, initial assessment is highly accurate and trainees are very satisfied with their placements.
- 3.2 Regular on-going tests and course reviews ensure that the course remains appropriate for the trainee and clearly identify any issues that they may have with the demands of their programme of study. Excellent use is made of this information by instructors to guide their planning and provide any necessary support or guidance.
- 3.3 High quality information, advice and guidance are made available to trainees through the academy website. The website is detailed, professional and includes accurate information about the academy, the selection process, accommodation and training offered. Trainees confirm that they are highly satisfied with the pre-enrolment advice they receive.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Trainees are well educated in accordance the academy's aims and their objectives. The academy has a clear statement of educational purpose which is supported by comprehensive and appropriate teaching plans and schemes of work. The curriculum is very well planned and is designed to meet all of the requirements of the regulatory bodies in the aviation industry: the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) other international Civil Aviation Authorities (ICAA). Consequently, the content and learning experiences provided for trainees prepares them effectively for work as commercial pilots.
- 3.5 The range of courses offered encourages progression of learning and the majority of eligible trainees have the opportunity to combine their commercial pilot training with an honours degree from Middlesex University or the University of Central Lancashire in professional aviation pilot practice. The courses on offer to trainees on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance. Courses match those listed on the website and in other marketing materials. Most trainee successfully complete their course.

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

- 3.6 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is excellent. Detailed planning, and an extensive understanding of the needs of the trainees, allows instructors to successfully adapt lessons to meet individual learning needs. Instructors have excellent subject knowledge, appropriate experience in the aviation industry and the majority use effective teaching methods to motivate and involve the trainees in their learning. However, in a few lessons, instructors do not always use direct questioning to effectively explore individual trainee's understanding of the material being delivered. Relationships at all levels are extremely productive, with instructors and trainees working collaboratively to enhance learning and progress.
- 3.7 Lessons are well paced and provide excellent opportunities for trainees to participate. Trainees work very well in groups, showing excellent co-operative learning. Instructors readily offer individual help and support to ensure high levels of subject skills, knowledge and understanding are developed. The high expectations of instructors ensure that all trainees are consistently challenged and well supported to meet their learning goals. The use of technology to enhance learning in the classroom is excellent and is used well to stimulate trainees to explore ideas and further develop their understanding of the subject. The importance of theory is emphasised through illustration of practical examples and reinforced in practical instruction in the Flight Simulators (SIMs) and in flying practice.
- 3.8 Teaching effectively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It encourages respect for other people including those with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.9 Assessment is regular, thorough and follows the stringent European Union and UK CAA requirements. It is highly accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses in trainees' progress and highlights any areas for improvement. Feedback to trainees is positive, encouraging and accurate. Trainees are encouraged to continue their learning outside of lessons, with regular setting of further study. As a result, students effectively develop their confidence and independence.
- 3.10 Arrangements for tracking trainees' progress are excellent. The progress of each trainee is very carefully tracked, allowing trainees, teachers and managers to monitor their progress effectively. Tutorials are held regularly and effectively support trainees to review their progress.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.11 Progress and attainment are excellent. Trainees receive an excellent education which reflects the aims of the academy. They quickly master and build confidence in their subjects, demonstrating excellent levels of knowledge and understanding. The evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of work shows that the overall

standards being reached are excellent, and that outcomes are high in relation to the trainees' starting points. They reach very high levels of attainment judged on the performance in external (CAA) examinations and on final outcomes in flying. Students report that they are happy with their progress. Attendance levels are excellent.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises

- 4.1 Arrangements for the health, safety and security of the premises are excellent. A wide range of very detailed policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of trainees and staff, and that the premises are secure. The academy's buildings are fit-for-purpose and very well maintained. They provide high quality learning resources and equipment, including well-maintained industry standard flight simulators, computer-based training stations and instrumentation rooms, which enhance the trainees' education. Classrooms and briefing rooms are spacious, light and well furnished. All electrical equipment is tested regularly as required. Where food is prepared and served there are excellent arrangements to ensure hygienic preparation and service. Toilet facilities are adequate in number and very well maintained. Security arrangements are excellent. As a result, trainees report that they feel safe, secure and comfortable.
- 4.2 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. These conform to requirements. A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place with clearly allocated responsibilities. Up-to-date general and fire risk assessments are carried out with clear follow-up actions which are regularly reviewed. However, individual risk assessments are not currently carried out for future organised off-site activities. An appropriate number of trained fire marshals and first aiders are in place as well as first aid kits and accident books. Fire action notices are clearly displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Regular fire drills are carried out and the date recorded. However, the actual number of staff and trainees participating in fire drills is not consistently recorded. Free drinking water is readily available throughout the academy. Staff and trainees report that they are aware of their responsibilities and have received appropriate health and safety training. Proper provision is made for trainees who are ill or injured. Due to the medical requirements of the course, no trainees with physical disabilities are recruited.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.3 Arrangements for trainee registration and the recording of attendance are excellent. Detailed admission procedures are in place and properly observed. A central register is accurately maintained and individual trainee files contain all required information.
- 4.4 Daily attendance is accurately recorded and very closely monitored, with all unexpected absences followed up the same day. Relevant staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment and attendance requirements for students who are studying under Student visa arrangements. Accurate trainee records are maintained on the academy's database and in trainees' individual files.

- 4.5 Clear policies and procedures are in place for the collection and refund of trainee fees and deposits. The policy is fair and applied consistently.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.6 Pastoral support for trainees is excellent. Highly effective personal support and guidance is provided by staff in accordance with the trainees' needs. A comprehensive induction, and system of progress reviews and attendance reports, ensures that trainees' personal and academic development is reviewed regularly. As a result, they know who to go to if they have a personal problem and feel confident to approach members of staff for help.
- 4.7 Relationships between trainees and students and amongst the students themselves are excellent, with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and the expectations of behaviour and conduct. The academy has clear anti-bullying and harassment policies and procedures, and trainees report no instances of such behaviour. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and meetings with trainees, show that they feel that the academy is providing them with a very safe and comfortable environment which is highly effective in meeting their learning needs. As a result, they would recommend the academy to others.
- 4.8 Comprehensive careers advice ensures that trainees are very well prepared for life beyond the academy. Trainees value and regularly participate in an appropriate range of high-quality enrichment and social activities which effectively enhances their learning.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance and oversight are excellent. The board of directors provide highly effective oversight, with a clear emphasis on supporting students and developing and maintaining very high academic standards. They effectively monitor performance and provide excellent support to staff. The educational direction of the academy is clear and fully understood by staff. Policies and procedures are well developed, regularly reviewed and effectively contribute to the quality of education and the care of trainees. Relationships between the board of directors, senior managers and staff are excellent.
- 5.2 Financial management is excellent. Detailed financial planning, and excellent investment in staff, premises and resources, effectively contribute to the success of the academy and its provision. All necessary legal permissions are in place for the use of the premises, including relevant insurances and licenses.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Self-evaluation is rigorous and provides an accurate account of the academy's key strengths and areas for development. Leaders are highly successful in sharing the organisational vision with staff and all decisions and actions consider the impact on the trainee experience and their needs.
- 5.4 A detailed management structure ensures that highly effective policies and procedures are effectively implemented and monitored. The structure operates well and provides clearly defined roles and responsibilities and excellent lines of communication. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meetings with staff show that they are very supportive of the academy.
- 5.5 The academy is highly successful in securing and retaining well-qualified staff. A comprehensive system of staff review is in place and is used to ensure staff are well qualified for the work they do, and appropriately supported by the management team. An excellent programme of staff development is in place to ensure they are appropriately trained for their roles.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.6 Quality assurance including student feedback is excellent. Managers are very successful in identifying priorities for improvement. Self-evaluation is well developed, resulting in a clear and realistic analysis of strengths and areas for development. Trainee feedback is regularly and systematically collected. This feedback is effectively analysed, shared with staff and managers, and used regularly

to inform instructor development, academic action planning and the identification of academy priorities. Trainee performance data is available and effectively summarised to ensure key issues are highlighted for leaders and managers.

- 5.7 The complaints procedure is clear and appropriate. Complaints are few and trainees confirmed that they are aware of the policy.

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

- 5.8 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are excellent. An appropriate recruitment policy is in place that ensures that well qualified and very experienced staff are recruited. All required recruitment checks have been carried out in a timely manner and appropriately recorded. The process to validate references and qualifications is excellent, with due regard to statutory requirements concerning the identity of staff. A comprehensive central record is maintained and monitored by senior staff.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.9 The provision of information is excellent. The website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective trainees are able to access accurate and highly relevant information to inform their study choices.
- 5.10 The academy was very responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Increase instructors use of directed, rather than open questions, in lessons to ensure that opportunities to explore individual trainee's understanding are not missed.
- Ensure that the number of staff and students participating in fire drills is consistently recorded.
- Ensure that a risk assessment is devised and made available to relevant staff for all external visits once they start again.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with trainees. They held discussions with senior members of staff and attended registration sessions. The responses of staff and trainees to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the academy.

Inspectors

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Ms Jane Beeson	Team Inspector
Ms Sarah Colmar	Team Inspector
Mr Mike Coulson	Team Inspector
Mr Peter Hymans	Team Inspector