



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

ORGANISATION: Ashburton Cookery School

ADDRESS: Old Exeter Road
Ashburton
Devon
TQ13 7LG

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Stella West Harling

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 4 March 2014

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 10 April 2014

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the organisation

The Ashburton Cookery School (the School) dates back to 1992 when its founder, a restaurateur and organic cook, began delivering small residential weekend courses in her home in Ashburton, a small town on the southern fringe of Dartmoor. The courses grew in popularity and in 2003 she engaged a professional Chef Tutor to cope with growing demand and develop new courses. By 2006 the Ashburton Cookery School had two purpose-built training kitchens, employed four full-time Chef Tutors, offered seven en-suite rooms for residential participants and was running a range of one- to five-day courses seven days a week. Its market was primarily enthusiastic home cooks but it also began to develop intensive vocational training programmes for professional chefs. In 2009 it opened a purpose-built cookery school building on the edge of Ashburton to provide three additional training kitchens and other work and recreational space for course participants and staff. The new building (and some temporary Portakabins for staff use behind) freed up further rooms in the school's two town centre houses for residential participant accommodation. In 2013 work started on building two new training classrooms on the purpose-built site. One was in operation at the time of the interim visit and the second is due to be finished by the summer of 2014.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The school runs courses seven days a week throughout the year. All courses are practical and kitchen-based, and follow detailed plans and schemes of work. The 20-week professional culinary diploma includes kitchen management and leadership skills and study visits to food producers. Participants on all courses are provided with relevant notes and eat what they cook. Each course is limited to sixteen participants and is delivered by one or two Chef Tutors supported by a Chef Assistant and a Kitchen Porter. The school has recently added specialist patisserie courses to its range of programmes.

The teaching staff is experienced, well-qualified and stable. A Chef Director, a Chef Manager and permanent Chef Tutors form the core academic staff, supported by permanent Kitchen Porter/Chef Assistants. Part-time specialists are brought in to deliver particular additional skills. The senior management team comprises the founder/CEO, the Managing Director, the Chef Director and the Finance Director. Customer Services and Operations Managers lead strong teams. Course participants are recruited from throughout the UK and beyond through publicity and word of mouth. A significant number are returners. The School does not employ agents. Most Chefs Academy participants are in their 20s and 30s; for the short recreational course there is a broader age-range. The minimum age for all courses is 18.

3. Inspection process

The inspection involved one inspector for half a day. The inspector toured the facilities in the three buildings, including the classes being taught, scrutinised documentation and met a number of staff. The inspector reviewed the progress made against the recommendations in the previous report, and identified the recent changes, with one of the directors.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection: 14 and 15 January 2013

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Two new fully equipped training classrooms are being constructed, one of which is complete and the second is due to be finished in the summer of 2014. This has improved the capacity of the school. In addition, reordering of some of the existing accommodation has taken place to accommodate the new patisserie courses.

A new Patisserie Chef has been appointed and new management positions have been created including a Customer Services Manager and an Administration Manager.

New patisserie courses have been added to the programme and the number of vocational courses has increased such that the majority of the courses are now vocational rather than recreational.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no requirements identified in the last report only a number of recommendations. They were as follows:

Arrange an all-staff meeting at least once a year

The school delivers courses 7 days a week throughout the year and as such it is not able to arrange all staff meetings. However, regular heads of departments meetings takes place and from these meetings relevant information is cascaded down to the whole school. In addition, chefs hold daily morning meetings and the Operations Manager meets breakfast and accommodation staff daily.

Ensure that customer service staff are systematically updated with the on-going developments in course design

The Administration Manager and Customer Services Manager are updated on course design issues at the heads of department meetings. In addition, customer service staff are notified directly of changes to courses. The course changes are also reflected in the amendments to the school web site.

Ensure that monthly board meetings take place

These take place whenever it is feasible.

Further develop the structure of teaching observations and facilitate peer observations to ensure best practice

There has been no development of formal teaching observations but peer observations take place naturally due to the fact that often two chefs teach together on the same class and a chef feedback is provided at the end of the day. Chefs have recently received coaching support and they also attended a chef's development day in Sheffield looking at new techniques.

Add an out-of-hours emergency contact number to the student handbook

An out-of-hours emergency has been added to the student handbooks for both vocational and recreational courses

Advise participants of the BAC complaints procedure

Reference to the BAC's complaints procedure now features in the student handbooks for both the vocational and recreational courses.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements – spot check

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | NA |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|---------|----|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments The good management has been enhanced through the establishment of new management positions in customer services and administration. | | | | |

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | NA |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|---------|----|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments New patisserie courses have been established to better meet the needs of participants. | | | | |

3.3 Participant Welfare

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | NA |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|---------|----|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments The new Customer Service Manager provides an additional resource to support participant welfare. | | | | |

3.4 Premises and Facilities

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | NA |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|---------|----|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments New high-quality training classrooms have added to the high standard of resources. | | | | |

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

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| <p>Institution’s strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well managed school with clear plans for development that are being implemented effectively • Experienced, highly qualified and enthusiastic staff • Well designed, popular and expanding course programme • An excellent professional environment for learning cookery featuring exceptionally well-equipped kitchens and premises that are designed, fitted and furnished to a very high standard. |
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| Actions required | Priority H/M/L |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| None | |
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COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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| Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. | YES |
| Further comments, if applicable | |