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Dear Laraine Smith

Ofsted inspection of ITE provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications in the lifelong learning/further education sector

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your provision in the week beginning 17 October 2011. Please pass my thanks on to your staff for the time they gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which they provided before and during the inspection.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and to a published national overview report. This report will identify the overall quality of provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications and identify the overall strengths and areas for development. However, in line with previous practice, inspectors will not make graded judgements of the quality of the provision in each centre; they will evaluate and feed back identified strengths and any points for further development. These are outlined below for your centre.

The published overview report will list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text.

Outcomes for trainees

Success rates have been rising and, in 2010-11, the Diploma in Teaching ESOL in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTEELS) and the Additional Diploma in Teaching ESOL in the Lifelong Learning Sector (ADTEELS) reached high levels. Membership of the Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training provides valuable opportunities for trainees. The college is usefully developing a modular master's degree programme with partner higher education institutions which will offer trainees clear progression opportunities.

Trainees make good progress. This is particularly marked in their understanding of how to measure the progress of their learners, of the barriers to learning that they need to overcome, their understanding of the appropriateness of teaching and learning strategies for varying learner needs and in how they systematically apply what they learn on the programme to their teaching. They use published, authentic and original resources well. They demonstrate and apply good subject knowledge.

Trainees have clear expectations at the start of the course. Thorough testing at interview means that the early diagnosis of learning needs feeds well into the individual learning planning (ILP) process. Trainers respond well to the learning needs of trainees and these needs are met effectively through extra tutorials and support materials. One experienced community outreach worker raised well-founded concerns about being dyslexic at the beginning of DTEELS Year 2, based on the outcome of the initial screening by the college's Learning Support Department. Trainers discussed support needs with the trainee, the examinations department was informed and extra time arranged for the Knowledge About Language (KAL) tests.

Trainees reflect well to improve their practice. These skills in critical reflection are developed well in training sessions and through trainers modelling good practice in the feedback they provide; as preparation for tutorials, tutors ask trainees to reflect on specific aspects of the course. The requirement for trainees to state learning rationales for lessons is a real strength, enabling them to reflect well on the impact of their teaching on learners' progress. Tutors provide effective feedback on trainees' practical teaching. They give sound practical advice, elicit trainees' own self-evaluation, encourage them to explore what could be done better and refer back to previous areas for development.

Trainees demonstrate consistently an understanding of how theory underpins practice, in their teaching and in assignments. Training sessions are well planned and effectively delivered; tutors model good pedagogical practice and make good use of excellent resources. Tutors have good subject knowledge, extensive experience, are enthusiastic and are well organised. They set clear expectations and encourage trainees to think about theory as well as practice.

Trainees demonstrate good use of technology in their teaching; tutors model this well supported by specialist input from the e-learning team. Former and current trainees find the college Learning Resource Centre excellent and the librarian very effective. Current trainees find the virtual learning environment useful, particularly if they have missed a training session. Trainees receive some specialist support through tutors acting as subject specialist mentors where possible. However, arrangements for mentor roles in the workplace and their closer involvement in the programme need to be more formal.

Trainees are prepared well to meet the needs of diverse learners: the curriculum embeds diversity, experienced teachers are observed as part of

the programme, most teachers' practice settings are in institutions with diverse populations. Trainees' placements are monitored to ensure they are teaching a diverse range of learners.

Trainees' progress is monitored accurately and they receive good quality feedback and are set development targets that enable them to make progress. However, there is no document that provides a comprehensive and holistic picture of trainee's progress to help both tutors and trainees monitor their development more closely. Tutors are responsive to employers when asked for feedback on trainees. However, communication between the provider and employers depends on professional relationships between tutors and employers where employers are external to the college. There is no systematic communication to employers about trainees' progress nor does the provider gather employers' views as part of the evaluation of the programme. It is recommended that employers as stakeholders are more closely involved in the training of their employees.

The moderation of the assessment of trainees is effective, as are the arrangements for internal and external verification. The outcomes of the observation of practical teaching are moderated well through professional conversations between tutors, joint observations with the external verifier and tutor co-observations.

The key strengths are:

- trainees' understanding of how to measure the progress of their learners and of the barriers to learning that they need to overcome
- trainees' understanding of the appropriateness of teaching and learning strategies for varying learner needs
- trainees' understanding of links between theory and practice and the systematic application of what they learn on the programme to their teaching
- trainees' good subject knowledge and application to their teaching
- how well trainees are prepared to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners
- how well learning needs are diagnosed as part of recruitment and selection, fed into the ILP process and met effectively through extra tutorials and support materials
- well-planned, effectively delivered training sessions with tutors modelling good pedagogical practice and using excellent resources
- effective support from tutors and feedback on practical teaching
- the requirement for trainees to state learning rationales for lessons and the reflection and the quality of the evaluation notes made by trainees
- the quality and use of resources in the college to support trainees' learning
- the effective moderation of the assessment of trainees and arrangements for internal and external verification
- wide ranging and thorough self-evaluation and review processes that lead to good improvement planning and implementation

- the effective integration of the initial training of its employees, their further professional development and the quality assurance of teaching in the college.

The key areas for development are:

- a document which pulls together all aspects of a trainee's progress to monitor trainees' development more closely and give a comprehensive and holistic picture of the learner journey
- for trainees who are not college-based, involving employers more closely in the training of their employees
- the formalisation of specialist mentor roles in the workplace and their closer involvement in the programme to strengthen further the overall quality of the training.

As explained in the inspection guidance, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Armitage

Additional Inspector (Seconded)