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25 November 2011

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Dear Anne

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 between 17 and 21 October 2011, for the time given to our telephone discussions and for the information which you 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

A small number of trainees follow the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) courses. Most trainees who are retained on the course complete their qualifications successfully. Success rates, for the first cohort of trainees completing the two year Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) course in summer 2011, are around 10% higher than those on similar courses nationally. There are no significant differences in the success rates of the different groups of learners gaining DTLLS qualifications.

Progression routes to higher level courses from the awarding body provision are yet to be established. Nevertheless, there is good continuing professional development available for teachers who are employed by the college. A significant proportion of trainees, who complete the training successfully, progress quickly into a full teaching role and some gain rapid promotion. However, the college acknowledges its slow progress, from the end of the training through the processes of professional formation, to teachers gaining Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS).

Most trainees make good progress overall. They develop good practical teaching skills and pay careful attention to the needs and interests of their students. The vast majority of trainees focus well on group and individual learning needs in their planning. Conversely, they do not always challenge the most able students to achieve their full potential in lessons. Trainees are clear in their understanding of the need to check and consolidate students' learning through questioning. Nevertheless, the questions they ask are not consistently probing or targeted sufficiently to engage all students. Typically, they establish very good working relationships. These are underpinned by a strong and effective focus on the promotion of mutual respect and good behaviour management for learning. They use their, often excellent, subject knowledge and high standards of vocational expertise very well to capture students' interest and engage them in lessons. Most trainees are skilled in the use of information learning technology (ILT) and take full advantage of the high quality resources available to them in the college.

Trainees develop a good understanding of the importance of addressing equality and diversity through their teaching. The practical application of equality and diversity in lessons is a key theme for the continuing professional development of trainees who are employed by the college. External trainees have more variable opportunities to practise these skills. The course equips trainees with the appropriate knowledge and understanding to address functional English and mathematics in the context of their specialist subject. Typically, they work effectively with support staff in lessons and know how to make simple adjustments in planning learning for students with special educational needs.

Although good overall, trainees access to support in the workplace is more variable than that available through the central training. College staff and specialist curriculum and quality leaders (CQLs), provide subject support to trainees employed in the college. This support is offered to trainees employed in other settings when specialist mentors are not available to them on site. The teacher training team are responsive, reflective and offer high levels of personal and professional guidance. Trainees' progress is monitored regularly and feedback from trainers is helpful and supportive. However, development targets are not always sharply focused on learning and what the trainee needs to do to continue to improve. There is further scope to use the information gathered on trainees' prior experience more efficiently. For example, to better inform the analysis of different starting points, planning individual learning, and in providing a deeper understanding of the progress trainees make over time. The provider's self assessment of the quality of provision is

generally accurate with a clear identification of the priorities for improvement but needs a sharper focus on outcomes for trainees.

The key strengths are:

- trainees' extensive and up-to-date knowledge of their specialist area which is used very well to engage students and motivate them to succeed
- the strong and effective focus on the promotion of mutual respect and good behaviour management to support learning in trainees' lessons
- the high quality of personal and professional support for trainees which improves retention in the training and the rate of successful completion
- the good contribution of the college based curriculum and quality leaders to workplace support for both internal and external trainees
- the well-managed programme of central training and active promotion of opportunities for trainees to learn from each other
- the overall accuracy of self-assessment and identification of priorities for further improvement.

The key areas for development are:

- further strengthen the links with internal and external employers to secure trainees' access to their entitlement and to consistently high quality support across all aspects of the training
- improve the monitoring of trainees' progress, against clear expectations, to set sharper and more challenging developmental targets that are rooted in learning
- further develop self-assessment, through a deeper analysis of the progress trainees make, to better inform planning for improvement and establish a clearer understanding of the value added as a result 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

Christine Dick

Her Majesty's Inspector