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Ms Liz Myles  
Deputy Principal  
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Dear Ms Myles

**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 you gave 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**

The Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLTS) and Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) programmes began in 2009/10. Therefore, the college does not have sufficient success rate data to identify clear trends in performance.

The first two cohorts of CTLTS trainees completed their programmes in 2009/10 with an overall success rate in line with the national average, although the success rate for the second cohort rose to be well above the national average. The success rate for the 56 trainees on the first DTLLS course in 2009/10 was in line with the national average. This declined slightly for the 2010/11 cohort. According to the college, this

decline was due to a college restructuring and a loss of teaching hours which decreased the retention rate.

The large majority of trainees make at least satisfactory progress towards the successful completion of their programmes. The extent to which they make progress in relation to their starting points is more difficult to determine as this is not assessed rigorously at the beginning of their programmes.

### **The key strengths**

- Most trainees show a high degree of commitment to their training and are highly motivated. The large majority of trainees work diligently and are keen to make progress in developing their teaching. They are able to work independently and identify when they may need extra support. They are committed to developing their teaching and improving the learning of the students in their classes. Most trainees reflect well on their teaching and are confident in using feedback from their students to identify how they may further develop their teaching.
- Tutors and mentors provide good support for trainees. Tutors are sensitive to the individual needs of their trainees and carefully signpost them to specialist sources of help and advice to improve their development and progress. Tutors know their trainees well. Mentors freely give of their time to support the trainees to reflect on and develop their teaching skills in their specialist area.
- College and programme managers carefully monitor trainees' progress in relation to the completion of assignments and whole units. Trainees deemed at risk of leaving their programmes early are monitored and supported effectively to remain on their courses or transfer to other appropriate programmes. The moderation of the assessment of trainees and the arrangements for external verification are at least satisfactory. Resources are used effectively to ensure that trainees meet awarding body requirements. City College Plymouth works well with local partners and uses these links effectively to develop training and to offer progression routes for the staff of the college. The college holds regular course review and evaluation meetings, the results of which feed into the self-assessment process. Improvement planning is based on the outcomes of self-assessment, but the action points for improvement focus more on completing activities rather than on improving the progress and outcomes for trainees.
- The college provides good support for its trainees and promotes equality and diversity well throughout its training. Trainees are prepared effectively to teach a diverse range of learners. They have a good awareness of equality and diversity; trainees demonstrate this through its careful integration into their lessons and effective promotion through their teaching.

### **The key areas for development**

- There is an insufficient focus on identifying trainees' starting points in order to set targets for development in their teaching. Although the training has high expectations of trainees overall, the initial assessment does not focus sharply enough on assessing each trainee's starting point and setting individual targets for development against which progress can be measured.
- The monitoring of trainees' progress in their teaching is under developed. Trainees feel they make progress in developing their teaching skills as a result of their courses, but most are unable to specify this clearly. They do not have sufficient information to manage their own development effectively and are unable to judge accurately the extent to which they have achieved their potential. Tutors satisfactorily monitor some aspects of trainees' progress through observations of their teaching practice and through tutorials. However, the arrangements for monitoring individual progress in teaching and the extent to which trainees reach their potential are underdeveloped.
- Insufficient attention is given to the development of subject-specialist knowledge. Trainees' practical teaching experience is central to the development of their expertise in teaching and most trainees use this well to reflect and improve. The arrangements for the formal support of the development of specialist-subject knowledge are less well developed. All trainees have access to a subject-specialist mentor, but the development of their subject-specialist knowledge is insufficiently prioritised.
- The achievement of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status is low. Trainees are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their development and progression routes are clear. Trainees are now given clear information about professional formation but the college acknowledges that achievement of QTLS status is low at 8%. The college has put arrangements in place to improve this but these are in the very early stages of implementation.

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

**Linda Truscott**

**Her Majesty's Inspector**