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Mr Graham Taylor
Principal
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Dear Mr Taylor

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

Retention, pass and success rates are high on each of the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS), Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) and the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) courses when compared with national averages. These high success rates have been sustained over three years on the CTLLS and CELTA courses and over the two years the DTLLS course has been running. Success rates are also high for all groups of trainees.

All trainees are on the most appropriate course. Careful attention is given to making sure that the course matches their role well and takes full account of future career and professional development. The college provides very clear progression routes through PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS programmes. There are many examples of

trainees who progress through the courses as their role changes and others who have taken on more responsibility and/or teaching hours as they progress through the qualifications. The college balances well setting rigorous entry requirements, both for college-based and external trainees, with meeting individual expectations; tutors are very careful to 'not set people up to fail'.

Trainees are extremely positive about their course and can explain clearly how it helped them improve their teaching and fulfil or further develop their role. The courses give them confidence. Those with limited prior experience value highly the micro-teaching sessions and feedback from tutors and peers. They become confident and authoritative teachers. Those with greater teaching experience are able to effectively apply a wider range of approaches to teaching and learning to maintain the interest of all of their learners. In all of the lessons observed, the progress of learners was good. Trainees have a suitable breadth of teaching a range of different learners.

Tutors provide good feedback to trainees on their teaching; they provide extensive practical advice that helps the trainees make progress. Trainees make good progress in their ability to reflect critically to improve their teaching. However, the feedback from tutors focuses mainly on teaching without evaluating the impact on learning. As a result, when trainees evaluate their own teaching, they do not first evaluate the quality of the learning. Most trainees receive additional specialist support, but the extent of this varies considerably. A small proportion of trainees requires additional specialist support to help them progress further. Trainees are able to apply what they learn in training sessions to their teaching. Good examples are: integrating functional skills into lessons; the purposes and use of different types of questioning; and the sessions on 'inclusive learning'. Trainees also draw well on their own experiences to make lessons interesting and relevant.

The initial analysis in the individual learning plan is used well by trainees to identify particular attributes, skills and possible barriers to success. This analysis provides a good focus for the first tutorial and also identifies when additional support is needed; for example, for those who might need help with the assignments and academic writing. However, despite intentions, this analysis is not against the professional standards. The learning plan is used well to keep a detailed record of the trainee's progress in achieving each course unit, and logging teaching hours and observations. It is not used to log their progress in how the course helps to improve their teaching and professional development. It is not a record of progress against clear developmental targets arising from observations and tutorials as well as from trainees' own evaluations and reflections. There is little use of the professional standards to help in setting developmental targets.

Trainees are prepared well for the period of professional formation following the achievement of the qualification. In the college, further professional development is matched well to individual progress, roles and needs. However, there is little formal monitoring of progress through this period to evaluate how well the course prepared

trainees for their further professional development or to provide continuity. Limited use of the professional standards throughout the course also does not support this continuity. No analysis of how many trainees successfully go on to achieve Associate or Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (A/QTLS) status is included in self-assessment.

The key strengths are:

- the high success rates and the effectiveness of progression routes through the qualifications
- trainees' extensive and up-to-date knowledge of their specialist area which they use well to teach interesting lessons
- the high quality of personal support for trainees - tutors know well each trainee's work commitments as well as personal aspects that may have an impact on how well they can do
- the experienced and knowledgeable team of teacher trainers who provide high quality central training - trainees can see the relevance to their teaching - they value the good variety of approaches used, the modelling of good practice and how they are supported in sharing ideas
- the way in which feedback to trainees on their teaching is very encouraging, good on identifying strengths and building confidence; it is given with great sensitivity and is very good in drawing key points from the trainee and then building on them - modelling good teaching
- the extensive good practical feedback and advice given to trainees
- feedback on assignments that provides a clear indication of how the assessment criteria are met
- the structure trainees are provided with to evaluate key experiences in their reflective learning journals - they reflect well on their own learning, their teaching and any 'critical incidents'
- the strength of the well-led team of senior and course leaders with good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes and secure further improvement
- the accuracy of self-assessment and identification of the priorities for further improvement.

The key areas for development are:

- rigorously monitoring individual trainee's progress against clear expectations, as well as against the requirements of the qualification, making greater use of the professional standards, setting sharper and more challenging developmental targets and using the analysis of this progress to further improve self-assessment
- increasing the focus of all evaluations on learning - observations and feedback on trainees' teaching, trainees' own evaluations of their teaching and in setting developmental targets
- encouraging trainees to use their reflective journals to evaluate the impact of their training on their teaching - linking more closely their evaluations of their own learning and evaluations of their teaching

- considering how to ensure all trainees receive some specialist observation and support.

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

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector