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Dear Jan

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 16 and 20 January 2012, 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

The majority of trainees at the college follow the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) and are already engaged in a full teaching role. A very small number of trainees follow the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) courses. Most trainees who are retained in the training complete their qualifications successfully. Provisional success rates for the most recent cohort of trainees completing the two year DTLLS programme in December 2011, are significantly higher than for the previous

cohort in 2009. However, the success rate for this recent cohort is around 6% lower than for similar courses nationally. There are no significant differences in the success rates of the different groups of learners gaining DTLLS qualifications.

Progression rates to higher level courses from the awarding body provision are yet to be established. There is a wide range of continuing professional development available for teachers who are employed by the college. The college provides clear information and individual support for all trainees, including those external to the college, who wish to progress on completion of their training through professional formation to gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS).

Most trainees make reasonable progress overall. They develop their existing teaching skills further and pay careful attention to the needs and interests of their students. Trainees use their detailed subject knowledge, personal experience and vocational expertise very effectively to underpin teaching and learning and to engage students' actively in lessons. The majority of trainees focus well on group and individual learning needs in their planning. Trainees are clear in their understanding of the need to assess students throughout their programme and to provide appropriate feedback to students to help them improve. Typically, trainees establish very strong working relationships with learners which are reinforced by their professional approach to learners and their focus on maintaining an ethos of mutual respect and appropriate behaviour within classroom or workshop settings.

Trainees develop a thorough understanding of the importance of addressing inclusion, equality and diversity through their teaching, and they apply this understanding effectively in their work with learners. The course equips trainees with the appropriate support to develop their own skills in functional English and mathematics, and trainees work effectively with other staff to support learning for students with special educational needs.

Although most trainees receive appropriate subject specialist support and guidance in their workplace, this support is not sufficiently consistent across the provision, and is not monitored effectively. The teacher training team are responsive, and offer high levels of personal support and professional guidance. Although trainees value the encouraging feedback they receive, procedures for monitoring and evaluating individual trainees' progress against their starting points are unclear. Information gathered on trainees' prior experience through initial assessment is not used effectively to plan for individual learning or to allow trainees to progress at their speed. Review

processes are insufficiently systematic to provide a clear understanding of the progress trainees make over time. Personal development targets are not sufficiently sharply focused on learning and what the trainee needs to do to continue to improve.

The provider's most recent self-assessment report of the quality of provision demonstrates a clear understanding of the immediate priorities for improvement. However, it overstates existing strengths, and the process of self-assessment does not draw on a sufficiently wide evaluation of performance in order to provide an effective analysis of the progress and outcomes for individual trainees.

The key strengths are:

- trainees' extensive knowledge and personal experience of their specialist area which is used very well to engage students and motivate them to succeed
- the effective focus within the programme on the promotion of mutual respect and inclusive behaviour by trainees to support learning in their lessons
- the high quality of personal support for trainees which encourages them to succeed and builds their personal confidence.
- the strong support provided for all trainees which encourages them to progress to QTLS.

The key areas for development are to:

- improve the processes for the selection and initial assessment of trainees so that trainees are placed on the right programme, and tutors have a clearer view of the starting points of all trainees to inform their teaching
- establish a more cohesive teaching team which extends the modelling of good practice so that trainees experience a wider range of teaching styles to inform their professional development and to encourage them to try new approaches and methods in their own teaching
- improve the monitoring of trainees' progress against clear expectations and to set sharper and more challenging developmental targets for individual trainees
- develop further opportunities for all trainees to develop a greater understanding of the range of teaching contexts and levels within the sector, and the challenges presented by learners in different contexts
- improve the monitoring of mentor arrangements to ensure that all trainees have equal access to regular, high-quality subject specialist support which itself combines closely with tutor support
- further develop self-assessment through a deeper analysis of trainees' progress and the greater use of evaluative feedback from trainees and

mentors, in order to inform planning for improvement and to establish a clearer understanding of the value added through 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

Alan Winchcombe

Her Majesty's Inspector