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Ms E McMahon
Principal
Hull College
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Dear Ms McMahon

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment

This survey evaluates providers' response to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and participants, during my visit on 6 and 7 February 2012 to look at your work in employability provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and participants; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of two learning sessions.

Key findings

- The development of suitable employability provision has formed a key part of Hull College's adult learning strategic plan. It aims to support the new national employability drive and initiatives to ensure that the college will help people develop the skills they need to progress into work.
- The college uses its discretionary funding effectively to plan, market, develop and deliver suitable provision for unemployed participants. In particular, it has prioritised funding to develop bespoke courses, train and recruit staff and develop resources and premises to offer dedicated provision for the unemployed.

- The college has worked well with Jobcentre Plus to develop and deliver very effective sector-based skills academies and to recruit participants for courses specifically linked to vacancies at local employers. The college is proactive in working with local and national employers to design and deliver bespoke pre-employment training leading to work trials, interviews and sustainable employment opportunities.
- Courses provide good teaching and learning that enable participants to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence levels to prepare them for employment. Well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable staff provide good support that helps to motivate and inspire participants. However, participants do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills in realistic work environments or on work-experience placements.
- Initial assessment is good and participants can access good Skills for Life provision to help them improve their literacy, numeracy or English language skills. Diagnostic testing also identifies specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia that leads to further analysis and specialist help where required.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making better use of work-experience opportunities to update participants' work skills and improve their confidence and using the college's realistic working environments to provide operative or supervisory work experience for those participants who need to update their work skills and practices
- developing systems further to provide accurate information about participants' post-course destinations.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at Hull College

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Skills Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

John Grimmer
Her Majesty's Inspector