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28 February 2012

Mrs S Legrave  
Principal  
Chichester College  
Westgate Fields  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1SB

Dear Mrs Legrave

**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 20 and 21 February 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, participants and partners; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of three learning sessions.

**Key findings**

- Since August 2011, Chichester College has developed its employability programme very well by re-training tutors, establishing provision in Worthing and introducing a good range of regularly run short courses. College managers tailor courses very effectively and quickly in response to requests from Jobcentre Plus and employers who are new to the area. The relationships with Jobcentre Plus have been strengthened and although referrals have increased significantly, the proportion of participants who start courses varies between learning centres and courses.
- Tutors use comprehensive initial assessments and interviews to discuss participants' barriers to employment, and to identify their development

needs and career or employment goals. However, participants do not have individual development plans that record these discussions or the agreed actions to help increase their chances of employment.

- The teaching and learning observed were very effective in increasing participants' confidence and communication and teamwork skills. Participants developed and demonstrated sound vocational skills and a good awareness of health and safety through practical learning activities. In jobsearch and employability sessions, participants used good-quality learning resources to develop relevant skills, such as improving the professional appearance and language in their curriculum vitae and covering letters.
- Participants receive highly individualised and valued support. They make good progress towards achieving their vocational and employability qualifications. They receive regular, thorough and motivational feedback on their work, which some participants on the construction course particularly appreciated as they had not previously had the opportunity to have their skills assessed.
- Tutors have good links with employers which they use well to enrich the courses by bringing industry relevance to vocational subjects through guest speakers, external visits and creating realistic work environments for learning. However, the college does not introduce information, advice and guidance about career and progression options sufficiently early in each course and some participants are unclear about what they will do next.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- devising individual development plans with each participant that identify their barriers to employment and set appropriate goals
- incorporating more structured advice and guidance about career and education progression, including to apprenticeships and work experience, within each course
- increasing the proportion of participants who start courses following referral by Jobcentre Plus through analysing the reasons for the variations in courses and learning centres and taking appropriate action.

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

**Janet Rodgers**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**