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Mr N Otley
Principal
Havering College of Further and
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Ardleigh Green Road
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Dear Mr Otley

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 visits on 16 and 18 November 2011 and on 6 March 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 managers, staff, participants, employers and other partners; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; observation of four learning sessions.

Key findings

- The college has a clear strategic commitment to developing employability provision and to working with partners to meet local needs. The college uses available funding flexibly to develop courses based on sound labour market information. Good and developing working relationships with local authorities, Jobcentre Plus and with a recruitment agency are enhancing the provision and benefiting participants.
- Teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed. The resources used were of a high quality and courses were well planned with a wide range of teaching techniques that were effective in developing

participants' employability skills. However, participants do not undertake work-experience or work-trails as part of their course and they are not able to demonstrate their skills to potential employers.

- Arrangements for providing initial advice are satisfactory and continue to improve. Staff assess all participants' suitability for the course effectively. The participants interviewed spoke highly of the advice and guidance that clearly explained the course content and what was expected of them. However, initial advice and guidance does not include assessments in literacy and numeracy for all clients and the resulting learning plans do not always identify participants' personal barriers to learning in sufficient detail.
- Employability programmes are managed well. The college's workless coordinator monitors the quality of provision very effectively and works well with a dedicated team of staff to ensure that the course content is well matched to needs of participants and employers. Managers use participants' evaluation questionnaires and regular staff meetings to evaluate the provision and plan for improvement. However, they do not always collect information on participants' post-course destination or use it effectively to evaluate or improve the quality of provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the use of work-trials and meaningful work-experience to enhance the quality of provision and to enable participants to gain experience and demonstrate their skills to employers
- enhancing further the quality of initial advice and guidance by ensuring that all participants undertake screening in literacy and numeracy and by recording participants' personal barriers to learning more effectively.
- developing arrangements to monitor participants' post-course destinations more effectively and use the information to evaluate and improve the quality of provision.

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

Paul Joyce
Her Majesty's Inspector