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Mr Steve Tucker
Director of Performance and Standards
City of Bath College
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Dear Mr Tucker

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 30 April and 4 May 2012, for the time you gave 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 feedback 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

Data for success and retention on the Certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (CTLLS) programme over the last three years indicate an improvement in success rates, which are now above the national average. Ten trainees started in 2008/09. All were retained on the programme and 80% were successful. Of the 10 starts in 2009/10, only 80% of trainees were retained on the course but all of these were successful. Of the 11 who started in 2010/11 all were retained and 91% were successful. Of the current trainees, all are expected to complete the course successfully.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For the larger number of trainees on the Diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS) programme, data have been more variable and success rates have not been as high, although they are generally in line with national averages. According to the college's data, thirteen trainees started the programme in 2008/09. Of these, two withdrew, giving a success and retention rate of 84.6%. In 2009/10 of the 32 starts, 91% were retained on the programme but only 63% were successful. In 2010/11 22 trainees started this programme. Of these, 17 remained on the programme giving a success and retention rate of 77%. Of the current trainees, one second-year and one first year trainee have been identified as of concern in relation to the level of work being produced or the completion of required work and one further first year trainee has been identified as being 'in danger'. However, all current trainees are expected to complete the course successfully.

The key strengths

- The college has a clear strategy for the development and integration of its teacher training courses

The college has reviewed and amended its initial teaching education and training (ITE) programmes to ensure a close alignment with its strategic priorities and the continuous professional development of all college staff. The ITE programmes are now located in a new Department for Quality and Standards which also includes coaching, oversight of teaching and learning and ILT. A small Teacher Learning Centre has been created recently where all key staff are located. This has quickly been recognised by trainees and wider college teaching staff as a central point for helpful support with teaching and learning and for advice on further training.

- The college makes good use of its Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector (PTLLS) programme to recruit, select and prepare trainees well for CTLLS and DTLLS courses

The good quality PTLLS programme has been carefully reviewed and amended to ensure that it provides a good platform for trainees to progress to CTLLS and DTLLS courses. The college now offers a 12-week programme or a short intensive course to minimise waiting time for progression to other ITE courses. Trainees now study at a level commensurate with the CTLLS and DTLLS programmes which has better prepared them for the academic demands of these courses. The significant majority of current trainees progressed to these programmes from the college's PTLLS course which they felt prepared them well for this training.

- Trainees, tutors and mentors demonstrate a high degree of commitment to the training

Trainees are highly committed to and enjoy their training. They are keen to make progress in the development of their professional practice. Trainees develop reflective skills which they use to good effect to improve their teaching. Many trainees are enthusiastic about further development and training as a result of these courses. Tutors and mentors also show a high degree of commitment to the trainees



and their training. They are all experts in their subject areas and give of their time freely to support, encourage and develop trainees.

The key areas for further development

- Arrangements for the formal quality assurance and improvement of mentoring are underdeveloped

Mentors generally offer good specialist subject and individual teaching support for trainees, but mentoring is insufficiently integrated into the overall programme. Mentors do not go through a consistent training programme and are not routinely provided with clear information about the requirements of the mentoring role or the training programmes. The college does not have sufficiently thorough and formalised arrangements for assuring the quality of mentoring. Neither are there appropriate formalised opportunities to share information between trainers and mentors or to share practice amongst mentors.

- Formal arrangements to fully monitor all aspects of trainees' progress are not yet complete

Trainees are carefully monitored through their assignment work, regular observations and tutorials. Trainees set their own targets which are supplemented by others set by their tutors. Current arrangements for the recording and monitoring of all information are not yet complete and do not provide a comprehensive information point through which all parties can easily track progress. The recently introduced electronic individual learning plan has started to bring together some of this information, but it is still in a very early stage of its development and is not yet used consistently enough to set sharp and challenging individual targets for all trainees.

- Insufficient attention is paid to encouraging trainees to extend the breadth of professional practice to better prepare them to teach in a diverse society

Trainees are encouraged during their training to consider professional practice from a range of perspectives. The training has a clear focus on equality, diversity and inclusivity which effectively raises the awareness of trainees. However, insufficient attention is paid to encouraging trainees to extend the breadth and range of their practice through direct teaching or observation. Many of the trainees employed by the college have little experience of settings outside the college and external trainees sometimes have a very limited experience of different types of students and provision.

- Insufficient monitoring of progress of completed trainees towards professional formation

Trainees in the second year of their DTLLS programme feel well prepared for and informed about professional formation. The college keeps records of college staff who have completed their professional formation. Staff are expected to complete this in order to comply with their college employment contracts. However, the



progress against this is not formally monitored and the college does not keep records of the professional formation of external trainees.

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

Linda Truscott

Her Majesty's Inspector

