

Intec Business College PLC

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent Learning Provider

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FOCUSSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Intec Business College PLC (Intec) was founded in 1982 as a privately owned recruitment and training organisation. Intec is a national training provider and offers work-based learning in retail and commercial enterprise and business administration and law. Programmes include apprenticeships, Train to Gain, European Social Fund (ESF) funded programmes and commercial training. Currently around 3000 learners are following learning programmes with Intec. The head office is in Rugby, Warwickshire. The management structure consists of a managing director supported by a curriculum and quality director and seven senior managers whose posts cover cross-organisation management roles including marketing, sales, finance, and information technology. Three are regional managers. Each region has a contract manager to manage the contract coordinators and their assessing teams.

Intec was inspected by Ofsted in June 2010 and overall effectiveness was found to be satisfactory. Capacity to improve, quality of provision and leadership and management including safeguarding and equality and diversity and the subject areas of retail and commercial enterprise and business administration and law were graded satisfactory. This report focuses on themes explored during the visit including the mandatory themes of outcomes for learners and self-assessment and improvement planning.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has Intec made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment and quality improvement processes to bring about improvements?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection data were not found to be used systematically to improve performance and feedback was not being sufficiently analysed to inform programme improvements. Significant improvements in both these areas ensure self-assessment focuses more fully on learner performance. A more systematic and inclusive approach to self-assessment has resulted in key drivers for improvement being identified and introduced. The quality improvement plan (QIP) is well monitored through regular central and regional meetings resulting in improvement in all key performance areas. The QIP clearly focuses the main centre and the regions on the mechanisms for improvement. Staff now understand performance data well and use it systematically to monitor and promote improvement. Key performance indicators are smarter and better understood. Monthly monitoring of all performance aspects is driving improvement.

Opportunities to gather feedback are now being taken across a range of learner activity and good examples leading to improvements were in evidence. Feedback is

analysed fully and the data produced informs the QIP. Improved gathering of feedback from employers has led to increased opportunities for learners to undertake learning programmes following adjustments to training methods, including variations to assessment and additional support.

Outcomes for learners

How much progress has Intec made to improve the overall and timely success rates for learners? **Significant progress**

Overall programme success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and many more learners have achieved within planned their planned times-scales. In 2008/09, the overall apprenticeship success rate was 64% and the number of apprentices who completed within their planned end date was 43%. Since then Intec has reorganised its operations and successfully implemented a range of improvement strategies. In the most recent complete year, 2010/11, the overall apprenticeship success rate was 84% which is eight percentage points above the national average and 20 percentage points improvement over three years. The number of apprentices who completed within their planned end date in 2010/11 was 74% which is eight percentage points above the national average and an improvement of 31 percentage points over three years. Intec's performance in Train to Gain over a similar period demonstrates equally strong improvement. For example the proportion of learners who completed within their planned time scale increased by 25 percentage points over the three years to 2010/11.

Quality of provision

What progress has Intec made to improve the effectiveness of the learner progress review process? **Reasonable progress**

At the time of the previous inspection progress reviews did not cover learners' specific needs, including wider aspects of learning and development, sufficiently well. In order to address this, Intec now produces individual learning plans reflecting more specific and individual learner's needs. This enables progress reviews to focus more on meeting individual needs and on the broader aspects of the learner's development. Improvements to initial assessment and the introduction of new diagnostic tools enable staff to identify and specify more thoroughly individual learning needs. Staff have benefitted from training and development and are encouraged to construct plans with clearer learning objectives.

Progress reviews now cover broader aspects of learning such as confidence and personal development. Options and opportunities for learners to develop in their job role are covered more at reviews. Improved management control systems ensure progress reviews are timely; however, the quality assurance of progress reviews is underdeveloped. Intec recognises that further development to the progress review process is required and work is in progress to achieve this.

What progress have Intec made to support learners with additional needs and provide good quality information, advice and guidance for all learners?

Reasonable progress

Support for learners with additional needs was under-developed at the time of the last inspection. Since then the strategy of investing in continued professional development for staff has led to improvements in the standard and amount of support now provided. More staff are qualified to offer support. The overall apprenticeship success rate for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities has improved by 37 percentage points over the three years to 2010/11.

Information, advice and guidance provided by Intec on training and career progression routes were underdeveloped at the time of the last inspection. Staff discuss options and choices more frequently when constructing short term and medium term learning plans with learners. Progression to further qualifications and wider training opportunities at work and elsewhere form part of planning and reviewing of learning. Employers and learners recognise and value the information and guidance provided by Intec. The organisation recently achieved an award for the standard reached in the provision of information, advice and guidance. An action plan is in place seeking to continue to improve this aspect of the provision including well advanced plans for publicising service standards and obtaining feedback from learners on service levels.

Leadership and management

What progress has Intec made to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure it meets all learners' needs?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection observations of teaching and learning, although planned, had not been fully implemented. Following limited success with previous attempts to implement a cohesive system nationally, a revised system and process has been in place since January 2012. Still work in progress with around fifty per cent of observations completed, the observation process has been well received by the staff involved so far. A consistent approach has been introduced with the individuals responsible for carrying out observations having the management status and the teaching experience expected. Individual staff understand and value the process that has proved an excellent vehicle for identifying and providing further teaching and learning development opportunities.

However, the nature of Intec's national remit has required the delegation of follow-up actions to become the responsibility of the regional managers. Completion of the observation sheets and follow up records is not currently consistent and clear to ensure individuals understand what they need to do to improve and how this will be monitored in the future. Observation documents are currently hand-written and would benefit from word-processing to allow for electronic recording and improve quality control.

What progress has Intec made to improve its promotion of equality and diversity and safeguarding?

Reasonable progress

The previous inspection identified a lack of ongoing promotion of both equality and diversity and safeguarding to learners and staff. Intec have now given dedicated responsibility to individual staff members to act as champions for equality and diversity, safeguarding and health and safety. Comprehensive staff training and regular awareness raising in all three areas has taken place. Four staff are now trained and formally qualified to facilitate in-house safeguarding training. These individual champions now give good specialist levels of support to learners, staff and employers. Well documented examples of individual staff and learner issues being resolved are in evidence. Promotion to under-represented groups is a key focus for Intec and comprehensive data inform initiatives and enable the monitoring of performance of different groups of learners.

However, the impact of these initiatives in the workplace has not yet been fully analysed. Although all aspects are covered well at induction, reinforcement at learner progress reviews and with employers is inconsistent and safeguarding in particular is not probed and questioned in detail to confirm understanding. This is identified in the current self-assessment report.

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