

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



13 November 2008

Mr S Gill
Principal
Working Men's College
44 Crowndale Road
London
NW1 1TR

Dear Mr Gill

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff during my visit on 30 September 2008 to look at work in promoting equality in adult and community learning.

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 made included meetings with staff, meetings with learners, observation of teaching and learning and scrutiny of documentation.

The quality of provision to promote equality of opportunity for people from minority ethnic backgrounds is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- Working Men's College has had consistently high success rates for all learners for the last three years across the provision. The staff take action to address any shortfalls in performance. The college successfully identified that Black African learners were significantly under-achieving on ICT courses. They found that lack of access to ICT facilities outside the classroom was a major barrier to achievement, and have been successful in achieving funding to provide improved facilities outside the teaching rooms. The achievement for this group of learners is now at the same level as other minority groups.

- Managers and staff at Working Men's College promote a culture where diversity is valued, and seen as strength and resource, rather than a barrier to learning. Teachers use the learners' diverse cultural backgrounds as a rich source of information and an opportunity for discussion.
- The college has successfully re-designed its curriculum over the past few years after the Principal identified that, for many local residents from minority ethnic backgrounds, including migrants with high levels of qualification in their own countries, the main barrier to success was lack of knowledge of the language.
- The college has very effectively engaged with minority community groups, including migrants, as a first step to learning. The staff have put in place effective strategies for developing language through a range of curriculum settings, both in the college and in the community. The focus of the curriculum is on practical learning and activities that are relevant for learners' lives. For example, many programmes use a practical activity as the vehicle for learning. Women are attracted to the provision through classes that affect their lives: making their own clothes, helping their children, through family literacy provision, focusing on their role as parents. The college has also taken successful action to recruit men, mainly from minority ethnic backgrounds, to vocational training courses and adult and community learning provision. They successfully applied for funding for accredited courses in security that attracted many men who had lived in the area for some time, but had not previously engaged with learning in Britain.

Areas for development

- A stronger focus on promoting disability equality for staff through more effective policy implementation.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities in adult and community learning.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local LSC and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Deere
Her Majesty's Inspector