



Harlow College

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published TBC	Provider reference 130676
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Introduction

Harlow College was inspected in October 2003. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in Construction Work-based learning (WBL) and hospitality and catering WBL which were found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory areas of Construction WBL and hospitality and catering WBL were re-inspected on 19th and 20th October 2005. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Construction WBL

Work-based learning area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Construction	4	3

Context

Harlow College provides work-based learning in construction, electrical installation, carpentry and joinery and brickwork. Foundation and Intermediate certificates are offered alongside apprenticeships and NVQs. At the time of inspection there were 125 learners of whom 51 were in electrical installation, 59 in carpentry and joinery and 15 in brickwork.

Strengths/Improvements

- *Training plans linked effectively to assessment and achievement*
- *Very effective tracking of learner progress*
- *Good integration of key skills in assignments in brickwork*
- *Clear and effective leadership and management of work-based learning*

Areas for improvement

- *Further develop strategies to raise the standard of theory teaching and learning*
- *Insufficient sharing of good practice across areas*
- *Further improve the achievement of frameworks within time scales*

Achievement and standards

Framework achievement has improved. Of 18 completions since 2002, 72% have achieved within the recommended time frame. Although success rates are average, the trend is towards improvement, with appropriate strategies in place to raise success levels. Improved tracking, target setting and regular reviews for learners have enabled performance to be measured and recorded effectively. Key skills are being integrated through vocationally relevant assignments. These take place in an IT suite and make use of the college network. Attendance overall is good, and behaviour excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and Learning is good in practical sessions, with learners displaying a good grasp of hand skills and understanding of materials, tools and processes. In theory classes there is a tendency for the sessions to be over reliant on teacher input. Active differentiation is limited and most learners progress at similar rates. Portfolios are comprehensive, with a number of workbooks used to deliver particular units or topics. Assessment is well planned and linked to on-site evidence through the use of the training plan, progress review and tracking sheet. Additional support is in place and used to supplement the programme. A variety of support is available, including spelling, writing skills and specialist support for dyslexic learners. Currently there are 3 learners receiving support. All learners are interviewed prior to enrolling on programme. Initial assessment takes place and is followed where appropriate with a more detailed diagnostic testing. This information is used well to determine any support that may be offered.

Leadership and management

The profile of work-based learning at the college has been raised through an inclusive approach. It is now part of the main business of the college, with improved internal communication links, giving clearer direction and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Performance is measured and support is available to staff to meet expectations as part of an on-going continuing professional development programme. Workshops and classrooms are satisfactory. Construction will move into purpose built accommodation in December 2005. Staff are well qualified and have appropriate experience. Equal opportunities are included effectively during induction and re-visited during learner reviews to consolidate understanding.

Hospitality and Catering WBL

Work-based learning area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Hospitality and Catering WBL	4	3

Context

Harlow College offers foundation and modern apprenticeships to work-based learners. There are a range of hospitality qualifications offered, including food preparation and cooking and hospitality supervision. Ten work-based learners were enrolled at the time of the inspection, of these four were foundation modern apprentices and five were advanced modern apprentices.

Strengths

- *Well planned monitoring of learners' progress*
- *Particularly effective management of work-based learning*

Areas for improvement

- *low but improving framework achievement*

Achievement and standards

Completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks is low but improving. The pass rate for frameworks in 2003/04 was 14%. In 2004/05 this increased to 33%. Learners currently on apprenticeship programmes are making good progress. Of the ten learners, two foundation apprentices have progressed to an advanced apprenticeship programme six months ahead of their target dates. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners are confident and have a good understanding of their progress.

Quality of provision

The monitoring of progress for work-based learners is thorough and well planned. Each learner has an individual tracking plan, which sets clear target dates for completion of individual units. These targets are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Assessments and progress reviews are carried out regularly in the workplace. Reviews are detailed and include clear and effective short-term targets. Key skills are relevant and have been integrated effectively. Internal verification occurs throughout the programme and recording systems have been improved with further developments planned. Employers have a clear understanding of the apprenticeship programme and are adequately involved in the process.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Theory classrooms are well equipped but training kitchens are small and poorly ventilated.

Leadership and management

The work-based learning management team have been particularly effective in resolving the weaknesses identified in the original inspection. A dedicated work-based learning manager has been appointed as well as two work-based learning co-ordinators. New systems and documentation for monitoring learners' progress have been implemented effectively. Communications between work and college-based provision are now very good. Quality assurance of the work-based provision has improved significantly through regular observations of assessment in the workplace and the introduction of a planned and more thorough internal verification process.

Work-based learning assessors are well supported through regular meetings; this includes reviewing retention and achievement of learners. These meetings lead effectively to action planning, continuous improvement and standardisation. The most recent self-assessment report recognises the remaining weaknesses within work-based learning and a satisfactory development plan is in place.