



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF LEICESTER COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

- The overall provision in the worked-based learning construction area is now **satisfactory**
- The overall provision in the worked-based learning of engineering area is now **satisfactory**
- The overall provision in the curriculum area of business is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Leicester College was inspected in November 2001. 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 in all areas inspected, except in business, work-based learning construction and work-based learning (WBL) engineering, which were found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas.

As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and

the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of business, WBL construction and WBL engineering took place on 10 and 11 June 2002, 15 and 16 October 2002, 11 and 12 February 2003, 13 and 14 May 2003, and 28 and 29 October 2003.

Construction (work-based learning)

In the November 2001 inspection, the quality of provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified for the whole curriculum area in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good pass rates on level 3 courses
- high levels of retention
- much good teaching
- high standards of students' practical work
- good student portfolios
- productive employer links.

Weaknesses

- many MAs do not achieve full qualification
- poor pass rates in plumbing

- unsatisfactory management of work-based learning
- little co-ordination of on and off the job training
- inadequate procedures for monitoring effectiveness of work-based learning
- insufficient sharing of good practice in subject teams
- poor written feedback on students' work
- employers' understanding of NVQ requirements is poor
- too little industrial updating of staff.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that **good** progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

There has been an increase in foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship framework completions. In addition, pass rates in plumbing NVQs have improved in 2003, and are now above the national average. There have been modest improvements in key skills achievements. In addition, exemptions on key skills are now being appropriately applied to those students who have achieved the requisite level prior to undertaking their programme of study. There have been significant changes to the management structure of the area, resulting in more effective co-ordination and management of the work-based provision. New trainer/assessor appointments have been made, which has improved the quality of tracking of trainees' progress. There are also regular meetings of a newly established cross college forum for managers responsible for the organisation and delivery of work-based learning. This has promoted sharing of examples of good practice.

Standard assignment sheets have been introduced that ensure fuller feedback and learner review sheets now provide clear action plans. The wide range of practical activities available in college now prepares trainees well for the work-based assessment. An employer data base had been established to strengthen links with employers. Employers' Information packs have been produced and distributed, along with further verbal guidance from college staff. This has partially improved the understanding of some employers of NVQ frameworks. Assessors make regular visits to complete reviews with employers and trainees in the workplace. There are increased opportunities and incentives for industrial updating of staff. In addition, since October 2002, the breadth of industrial expertise available from staff has increased through appointment of 23 new staff that have industrial

trade experience.

Engineering (work-based learning)

In the October/November 2001 inspection, the quality of provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified for the whole curriculum area in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good practical tuition at the college for work-based trainees
- good range of assessment methods used
- high pass rates on most courses
- effective targeting of community and industrial groups and schools
- high quality learning material
- effective use of computer-based software packages in electronics.

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of work-based trainees
- inadequate work-based reviews
- insufficient detail of trainees' progress in review files

- little or no coordination between assessor and training support officer
- employers have little knowledge of NVQs and assessment procedures
- internal verification processes are poor
- poorly managed modern apprenticeship programmes
- responsibilities for the management of work-based programmes are unclear
- no monitoring of equal opportunities in the work place
- ineffective work-based quality assurance procedures.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that **good** progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Effective support mechanisms have been adopted to identify trainees at risk of not completing and beyond their standard length of stay. Analysis of this cohort since inspection indicates that achievements are now at national published data for success rates. This relates to successful completion rates for both foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. In addition, achievement levels meet the floor target requirement.

Detailed reviews now take place enabling the effective completion of portfolios. Trainee progress is accurately monitored. The appointment of training support officers has improved the communication with the college training agency. Trainees are able to relate underpinning knowledge gained during their day release programme to their place of work. Review files are detailed, individual learning plans are updated and the necessary competencies for completion identified. Trainees are kept informed by assessors and understand the progress they are making towards successful completion of the framework. Assessors are knowledgeable about what trainees require to complete their framework. In one visit the assessor and training support officer met to discuss the trainee progress, additional support needs were identified and recorded. Employers demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the NVQ and the assessment procedures. In one observation, the employer assisted in the assessment. Internal verification procedures ensure sufficient sampling of assessors' work.

There is now a co-ordinator responsible for work-based learning. Procedures have been put in place to address the main weaknesses of the inspection report. Trainees' progress is carefully monitored and targets set. Records are up-to-date and there is a good tracking system in place identifying

student progress. The college has secured funds to employ a researcher who is examining the reasons why the recruitment of trainee's from minority ethnic backgrounds does not reflect the population distribution and to identify barriers to recruitment. Clearly designed monitoring forms are used by training support officers to record student progress in the workplace. Data for ethnic groups undertaking modern apprenticeships is available. A generic equal opportunities policy has been developed by the college for use by employers. Effective quality assurance procedures are in place for work based learning.

Business

In the October/November 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified for the whole curriculum area in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and advanced business courses
- good and improving retention rates on some courses
- effective support or students
- good support materials for learners.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on a significant number of courses
- lessons that fail to challenge or engage students
- lack of work placement for NVQ 2 and 3 accounting students
- ineffective internal verification

- weak curriculum management
- narrow range of professional courses
- declining provision in several areas.

Following the re-inspection monitoring inspections, inspectors judged that **good** progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses, and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Almost all courses show improvement in pass rates in 2003. Pass rates on most courses are above national averages and in some cases significantly above. For example pass rates are 100% on GNVQ foundation and intermediate business, 85% on AVCE business, 85% on ILM Certificate, 88% on NVQ1 Administration, and 83% on AAT intermediate. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers place strong emphasis on differentiation within lessons. Teaching maintains students' interest. Good links are made between theory and practice. Most teachers use extension strategies that enable students to develop their business skills and extend their learning. There are regular and consistent internal verification procedures in place. Good use is made of assessment plans, mapping of courses for assessment and sampling of unit assessments. There is evidence of a few cases of generous grading, but within acceptable grading boundaries. There is good curriculum management. Common procedures and practices have been developed across the curriculum. Course teams share teaching materials, and have moved to a culture of shared experiences leading to improvements in teaching. There is an open and consultative management style. Teachers feel valued and able to contribute. No planned courses have failed to recruit and in 2003/4 numbers have increased substantially on NVQ Administration courses.

In 2003 work experience was introduced for all full-time level 2 and 3 accounting students. Students undertake a work project and are visited whilst on placement. Work experience opportunities remain comparatively limited, however the college has identified this and plans to extend the work experience time to two weeks for Foundation students with effect from 2004. Improved links with employers have been developed through this exercise. The college has improved its enrolment numbers on existing professional courses. AAT student numbers are high. The college recognises the potential for additional courses at professional level but has not felt it appropriate to plan for new developments in this area during the period of re-inspection.

Following the most recent Reinspection monitoring visit, there will be no further monitoring visits to the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.