

## RE-INSPECTION OF CARLISLE COLLEGE

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### Outcome of Re-Inspection

The quality of provision in the basic skills curriculum area and in the work-based learning areas of business and retail, and hairdressing and beauty therapy, is now **satisfactory**. Work-based learning provision in construction remains of **unsatisfactory** quality.

### Background

Carlisle College was inspected in May 2002. 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 at least satisfactory in all areas inspected, except in basic skills and in the work-based learning areas of construction, business and retail and hairdressing and beauty therapy 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. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, all unsatisfactory provision will be re-inspected normally during one week.

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.

### Dates of the Re-Inspection Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, three re-inspection monitoring visits of basic skills and the work-based learning areas of construction, business and retail, and hairdressing and beauty therapy took place, on 10 to 11 December 2002, on 31 March and 1 April 2003 and on 9 to 11 December 2003.

### Basic skills

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be

unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

### **Strengths**

- good range of community learning programmes
- sensitive support for adult basic education students
- good one-to-one personal and academic support

### **Weaknesses**

- variable initial screening
- insufficiently demanding teaching in a significant minority of lessons
- lack of differentiated resources in support of English for speakers of other languages lessons
- poor target setting and review in individual learning plans
- insufficient written feedback on students' work
- weak planning and management of provision

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons. Lessons are well planned and develop students' learning in a logical sequence. Teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods and styles to help students learn. These are effective in meeting the needs of each student. In all lessons observed, teachers had identified individual student needs as part of the lesson plan. Individual learning plans are much improved. They now include clear targets and the outcomes of reviews of progress. Marking of students' assignments and portfolios is thorough and includes sufficient feedback to students to enable them to know how to improve their work. The teaching of basic and key skills is more closely related to the relevant vocational area. Students in

adult basic education classes and English for speakers of other languages are keen to learn and appreciate the help and support from teachers. Those following vocational courses appreciate the relevance of basic and key skills to their future working lives. All full-time students and part-time students who receive substantial teaching have their levels of attainment in basic skills assessed at entry to their courses. Management of the basic skills provision has been restructured and is now effective. Roles and responsibilities are clear. The senior management team are supportive. Staff development is helping to improve teaching and learning. In some vocational areas, for example, motor vehicle, childcare and food preparation lessons, the allocation of learning support assistants is insufficient. The college has strengthened its monitoring and follow-up procedures for absence. However, during the final monitoring visit, attendance was low at 61%, 13 points below the national average.

### **Work-based learning in business and retail**

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following weaknesses were identified during the inspection; low retention and framework completion rates on the advanced modern apprenticeship courses in business administration and accounting, reviews of accounting students' progress lacked clear targets, employers did not receive regular reports on the progress of trainees, there was insufficient attention to equal opportunities issues, and some trainees did not understand the requirements of the apprenticeship framework.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judge that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**. The national vocational qualification (NVQ) pass rate is satisfactory and NVQs are usually achieved within planned timescales. Administration trainees are successful in achieving the full modern apprenticeship framework. Apprentices in administration gain additional qualifications, for example in word processing and additional NVQ administration units. The progress of trainees is carefully monitored through regular visits to their workplaces. Individual learning plans and progress reviews of administration trainees have clear targets and indicate progress towards those targets. In accounting, progress reviews are completed regularly, but targets are often vague and are not helpful to students. Reviews of progress on accounting, though supportive, are cursory and take insufficient account of short-term objectives and deadlines. Trainees understand what they need to do to achieve success in the modern apprenticeship framework. The development and assessment of key skills are now more rigorous. Many accounting trainees still make slow progress in achieving key skills qualifications. However, at the time of the re-inspection, their key skills portfolios showed that good progress had been made. More attention is given to communication and application of number at the start of programmes. Employers are more aware of how they can support trainees to achieve success within reasonable timescales. The low number of modern apprentices in administration and accounting disadvantages trainees. They have insufficient opportunities to work in teams and share ideas during college training.

### **Work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy**

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of work-based learning was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following weaknesses were identified in the inspection report: retention and pass rates on the modern apprenticeship programmes were well below average, poor teaching of key skills, low pass rates, insufficient assessment of competence in the workplace, insufficient co-ordination of salon work and college-based training and insufficient attention given to the promotion of equal opportunities.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judge that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**. The teaching of key skills has improved and is now integrated in the vocational curriculum. For example, assignment briefs have opportunities to develop key skills clearly identified. The development of a web-based facility allows learners to have access to course documents from home. Assignments can be completed, saved and emailed directly to the staff for marking. The initial assessment and diagnostic testing of key skills identify learners' needs clearly and learners can use appropriate learning packs to help them improve. Employers are now more aware of key skill requirements, partly due to the visits key skill teachers make to the work place. Progress towards the achievement

of key skills qualifications is satisfactory. Key skills development is now given much more attention early in the programme. Some key skills are now developed and assessed in the work place. More assessment of vocational competence takes place in the workplace, partly through the appointment of additional assessors and also because of improved planning. Reviews of students' progress have been improved. Targets for future learning, set at these reviews, are now much clearer and are based on a thorough analysis of previous work undertaken. Support for work-based learners is effective and easily available. For example, these learners can make contact with training co-ordinators by mobile phone. Learners' marked assignments are returned promptly and include constructive feedback. Links between the college and employers have improved. An employers' forum and a newsletter provide good communication channels. Some good practice, such as the use of simple documentation to record on-the-job training, is not shared across the department and with all employers.

### **Work-based learning in construction**

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following weaknesses were identified during the inspection; no framework completion since 1999, work place evidence not routinely validated, poor employer recognition of NVQ requirements, slow key skills development, and staffing shortages in electrical installation.

The quality of the work-based learning provision in construction remains **unsatisfactory**.

In December 2003 inspectors judged that the regular reviews of students' progress and the high NVQ pass rates were key strengths. The continuing lack of apprenticeship framework completions, the poor validation of work-based evidence, the low retention rates and the low proportion of learners who were likely to achieve key skills qualifications out of the cohorts who started in 2001 and 2002 were key weaknesses.

There will be no further monitoring visits to the college.