

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

The overall provision for work-based learning in hospitality is now **satisfactory**.

Background

West Suffolk College was inspected in April 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 satisfactory in all areas inspected, except in work-based learning in hospitality and construction, 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 monitoring inspections, 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 work-based learning in hospitality took place on 24-25 of February 2003, and 7, 8 and 9 October 2003.

Work-based learning in Hospitality

In the April 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 retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 food and drink service and the national diploma in hotel and catering
- high standards of teaching and off-the-job training
- effective planning of teaching

Weaknesses

- poor achievement and retention of modern apprentices
- low retention rates for food preparation and cooking awards at NVQ level 2
- ineffective strategies to address low achievement on work-based 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**.

Good progress has been made in addressing poor retention and achievement. Retention rates for chef foundation modern apprenticeships is currently at 71% for the 2001/02 cohort and 74% for the 2002/03. For other hospitality foundation modern apprenticeships the rates are 65% and 75% respectively. These rates for an industry which has a traditionally transient workforce are good and now feature as a strength of the provision. Achievement is currently 43% for the 2001/02 chef foundation modern apprenticeships with two still in learning. For the other hospitality foundation modern apprenticeships the achievement rate is 52% with one learner still on programme. These achievement rates are above the national averages for these programmes.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving strategies to address the low achievement identified in the original report. Work-based learners are now targeted to achieve technical certificates in the first few months of their programme. Key skills are also introduced at the start of

the programme. Key skills achievement was highlighted in the original inspection report as an area of concern. Learners are now achieving the generic test requirements of their key skills early in the programme and have a good understanding of the role of key skills. Projects have been developed to assist learners to gather the required evidence. The impact of these new key skill arrangements is reflected in the improved framework achievement rates.

Good teaching and off-the-job training for chef modern apprenticeships was identified as a strength in the original inspection and confirmed during the re-inspection. Chef apprentices attend college one day a week during term time. There is a detailed scheme of work for the off-the-job training at college. This helps learners prepare for their college days as well as informing workplace supervisors about content and skills training. Supervisors frequently adjust their on the job activities to reflect these needs. Theory sessions are well planned and well delivered. There is good group discussion and participation and good use is made of learners' work experiences. Practical sessions effectively combine clear and interesting demonstrations with individual work. This promotes the development of good practical skills.

Support provided for the learners with additional learning needs is good. These needs are effectively identified during initial assessment. Specialist staff at the college deliver this support in a variety of ways. In some cases learners have extra sessions at the college or, in other cases, staff from the college visit learners in their workplace. The learners value this support and consider it an extremely useful aspect of their programme.

The re-inspection of work-based learning in construction is incomplete and an overall judgement stating that it is now satisfactory cannot be given. This area will continue to receive further re-inspection monitoring visits.