

RE-INSPECTION OF GREAT YARMOUTH COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in the construction curriculum area is now **satisfactory**, and the overall provision in engineering work-based learning (WBL) is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Great Yarmouth college was inspected in February 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, which was found to be unsatisfactory, and engineering WBL, which was found to be very weak.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning 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 leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

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

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection of the construction curriculum area and engineering WBL took place on during the week commencing 7 February 2005.

Construction

In the February 2003 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

- high attainment and pass rates in NVQ 2 carpentry/joinery and painting/decorating
- good practical work experience for students
- good introductory craft programme for school pupils
- good personal support for individual students
- effective integration of key skills with course content.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on bricklaying and electrical installation courses
- much uninspiring teaching
- disruptive effect of students' lack of punctuality on learning
- poor housekeeping and inadequate storage in carpentry and joinery workshops
- poor management of health and safety.

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

Following the inspection in February 2003, the college re-structured its curriculum offer in construction. Retention rates are now above the national averages in all areas. Retention and pass rates on the intermediate craft award have improved significantly over the last three years and show

a continuous upward trend. However, the awarding body for the brickwork courses has imposed a level 3 sanction on the college and no achievements can currently be claimed in this area.

Teaching in construction is now mostly good. The better lessons include a mix of classroom and practical activities during which students research topics and undertake relevant tasks. In theory lessons teachers use a variety of techniques to capture the interest of their students. Well-prepared workshop handbooks describe each task in detail, provide a marking scheme and allow students to assess the quality of their own work. A good level of additional support is provided to assist students who find numeracy difficult.

Since the last inspection the college has put in place a series of measures to bring about an improvement in students' punctuality. Teachers routinely challenge lateness and take disciplinary action where appropriate. However, a significant number of students still arrive late for lessons and disrupt the learning of others.

Leadership and management are good. The need to recruit new teachers swiftly owing to high staff turnover has been managed successfully and the new teachers have become part of an effective teaching team. There are good opportunities for teachers to undertake professional development. Most new members of the staff team are working towards the certificate in education and have achieved assessor awards. Several newly-recruited teachers have recent site experience, but there is little formal opportunity for other members of staff to undertake industrial updating.

Accommodation for construction students is barely adequate. In the plumbing workshop there are limited connections to the drainage system which limits activities and results in some unrealistic practices. In electrical installation there is noise transmission between the carpentry area below and the workshop. Changes in accommodation have provided additional storage for carpentry. However, space is still very limited and storage of task boards beneath benches leads to an untidy appearance.

Many lessons are held in temporary accommodation. However, the management of health and safety is now good.

The range and breadth of the construction provision is limited. There are courses for the five main craft trades but there is no opportunity for students to undertake technician or site supervisory qualifications at the college. Schools links are very good, with a significant number of pupils attending college to study for vocational qualifications. The curriculum area has been successful in attracting women into painting and decorating.

Engineering work-based learning

In the February 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be very weak. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- very high retention and pass rates on AVCE in engineering course
- good development of students' practical skills
- good development of students' key skills on college-based courses

- many good laboratory and workshop resources
- good personal support for students
- good placements for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- low overall retention rates
- poor teaching of theory
- insufficient technician support
- inconsistent tutorial provision
- very poorly managed work-based training
- poor assessment practices in work-based learning.

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

Retention on work-based learning programmes has risen over the last three years. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices rose from 27% to 98% and for advanced modern apprentices retention rates have varied from 50% to 100%. However, framework achievement is very poor. Students produce comprehensive portfolios of an acceptable standard and develop good skills, but many remain in training beyond the period identified in their individual learning plans.

Teaching is well-planned and structured to meet the needs of individual students, and the assessment of students' skills in the workplace is good

. Students are well-motivated and actively involved in learning. They successfully undertake a wide range of tasks. Practical lessons and training provided in the workplace are both stimulating and

demanding, and students respond well to the challenges presented. However, there is still inadequate technician support. On-the-job reviews and assessment of students' progress are now regular, comprehensive and effective. Previously set targets are reviewed, the work undertaken is examined, new targets are set and the individual learning plan is up-dated. Students know how well they are progressing and what they have to do to be successful. Industrial placements are of a high standard and students develop a wide range of expertise. Support for students has improved and is now good. College lecturers and assessors act as personal tutors. Employers are actively involved in the review and assessment process. They show understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship framework and work closely with the college staff to support students.

The management of work-based learning has improved. The appointment of a project leader for work-based training in engineering provides an effective link between the engineering and work-based learning teams. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood. Emphasis is placed on the progress of the students. The work-based learning team closely monitors students' progress towards framework completion. Formal minuted meetings are held monthly at which the progress of every student is considered and actions agreed.

It is still too soon to determine the level of impact which the improvements in retention, the quality of teaching and assessment, and the management of work-based learning may have on the achievement rates of students.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory/very weak areas.