



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



RE-INSPECTION OF ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

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

Background

Abingdon and Witney 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 in all areas inspected, except in engineering work-based learning which was 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 where 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.

Dates of re-inspection monitoring visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of engineering work-based learning took place on 7 October 2003, 27 April 2004, 2 November 2004 and 7 March 2005.

Engineering work-based learning

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

Strengths

- none identified.

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of work-based motor vehicle assessments
- low retention and pass rates for engineering and motor vehicle work-based learners
- poor promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace.

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

Retention and pass rates are improving. The retention rate for apprentices starting in 2002/03 was just 25%. Retention of those learners who started since the full inspection in February 2003 is significantly higher. The in-year retention rates for those learners who started in 2003/04 and 2004/05 are 71% and 93% respectively. The trend is similar for advanced modern apprentices; the current in-year retention rate is 85%. The pass rate of apprenticeship frameworks is also improving, and those in learning are now making satisfactory progress towards completion of their full framework.

Work-based assessment for motor vehicle apprentices is now well managed. The college and its subcontractors have appropriately qualified full time assessors. Internal verifiers now have adequate time allocated for verification activities. Internal verification is thorough and effective. All learners now receive regular visits in the workplace from their assessor. Learners can telephone their assessor if an unplanned opportunity for assessment arises at work, and in many cases the assessor is able to carry out assessment. Target dates for learners to achieve units are agreed and appropriately phased throughout their programmes.

Retention and achievement data are now collected and effectively used by managers. A new management information system has been purchased and managers make good use of this. The

agreed target dates and achievements of all learners are effectively shared with subcontractors contributing to effective monitoring of learners' progress. Monthly meetings with subcontractors are effective in monitoring and managing their performance.

Reviews of learners' progress are now satisfactory. Clear, achievable targets are set and progress towards these targets is followed up at subsequent review meetings. Aspects of learners' qualifications which need completing are noted and plans are documented. Training and assessment are planned around these targets. The opportunity is also taken to monitor health and safety issues and check whether previously identified actions relating to health and safety have been completed. Employers feel adequately involved in the planning of their apprentice's programme and have confidence in the college's ability to manage the training.

Work-based learning in engineering and motor vehicle is effectively managed. Retention and achievement have improved and most key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been rectified. Learners are closely monitored and appropriate action taken to ensure their success. However, the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace remains unsatisfactory.

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