

RE-INSPECTION OF KNOWSLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

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

Background

Knowsley Community College was inspected in November 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 work-based learning in construction which was found to be less than satisfactory.

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.

Date of the Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of work-based learning in construction took place on 25 June 2004 and 14 and 15 March 2005.

Construction

In the November 2003 inspection, the quality of work-based learning 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

- high pass rates in 2003
- significant progress of students with low prior attainment
- excellent central technician support
- highly responsive curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory work-based learning
- insufficient variety of methods of teaching and learning
- insufficient breadth of provision in carpentry and joinery.

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

At the previous inspection, framework achievement was low with less than one-quarter of learners completing their framework. There have been significant changes to the management of work-based learning, including the appointment of staff to strengthen learning support for students. In some instances programmes have been restructured to enable earlier student success. This includes introducing key skills at an early stage in the learners' programme.

There is an improving trend in learner achievement. Many initiatives have been taken to improve retention, achievement, attendance and punctuality. In 2004/05 the retention for apprentices has improved to 80%. On the NVQ programme in 2003/04, the retention of learners was 46%. In 2004/05 the retention for these learners has improved to 95%. The standard of learners' written and portfolio work is satisfactory. Practical work is good, with learners developing good skills comparable with that in industry. Attendance and punctuality are monitored very effectively and good attendance and punctuality is rewarded at monthly presentation events. This has a highly motivating effect on

learners.

At the previous inspection, not all learners in the workplace were studying key skills. These are now well integrated into schemes of work. Naturally occurring evidence in theory and practical sessions is used for the purpose of key skills achievement. Since July 2004 to March 2005 a further 29 work-based learners have achieved key skills qualifications. There are good learner recording and monitoring systems, which allow learners and staff to check in detail learner progress and achievement. The computerised monitoring system is easily accessed through computer workstations located in workshop and classrooms. All staff are fully involved in the use of data for improvement purposes. Staff also compile and analyse detailed records of learner progress.

At the previous inspection, assessment practice and learner progress reviews for some work-based learners were insufficient and often lacked rigour. The collection of work-based evidence and assessment is now satisfactory and is meeting the requirements of awarding body standards.

The standard of learner progress reviews on site and in the college has improved and informs learners and employers appropriately. Feedback to employers is satisfactory. Feedback from tutors and assessors is regular and provided in greater detail than previously. Employers are adequately informed of learner progress and achievement. They are involved more in learner progress reviews and receive a copy of the completed review form, enabling them to provide the appropriate on-the-job training. Satisfactory information is provided to employers on the content and requirements of the learners' programme of training. Assessors and reviewers regularly visit the workplace and their respective roles are now established in the learners' training programme. The number of learners gaining work placements has increased significantly. However, there is an over reliance on learners to find their own work-placement.

At the previous inspection there was insufficient accommodation to meet learner demand for construction programmes. The standard of accommodation has improved and is now good. The new brickwork practical area is built to high standards and is impressive. It provides a good learning and training resource which helps to meet the high numbers of learners in this vocational area in appropriate sized workshops.

At the previous inspection there was insufficient breadth of provision in carpentry and joinery, especially in site joinery. The curriculum has been developed to accommodate greater breadth and includes a new site joinery workshop that is well planned and equipped to meet the training needs of the learners. The training rigs are well constructed and provide flexible and good facilities to meet the demanding carpentry and joinery curriculum requirements.

Teaching and learning have improved. Most teaching is good and none was unsatisfactory. Effective use is made of information learning technology resources. Lessons are well planned and effectively developed with good use of well-prepared learning material. Frequent reference is made to industrial applications and there is good linking of theory to practical work. Learning is frequently checked by various methods.

There will be no further monitoring visits to the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.