

## RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF MID-CHESHIRE COLLEGE

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### Outcome of Re-inspection Monitoring

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

### Background

Mid-Cheshire College was inspected in April 2004. 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 the work-based learning area of engineering, which was found to be less than satisfactory.

Ofsted and ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum 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 further 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 the Re-Inspection Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, three re-inspection monitoring visits of the work-based

learning area of engineering took place on 20-21 October 2004, 26-27 April 2005 and 12-13 July 2005.

### **Work-based learning in engineering**

In the April 2004 inspection, the quality of provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following weaknesses relevant to WBL engineering were identified during the inspection:

- low pass rates at levels 1 and 2 in performing engineering operations
- slow progress by advanced modern apprentices
- inadequate monitoring of employers in work-based learning
- employers' poor understanding of the NVQ
- unsatisfactory monitoring of equal opportunities in employers' premises and at progress reviews
- lack of internal verification on work-based learning programmes for a six month period during 2003.

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**.

Pass rates for work-based learners taking performing engineering operations (PEO) are improving and are significantly better than those achieved by learners taking the same qualification in the rest of the college.

Progress in completing apprenticeship frameworks is now satisfactory. The average time taken to complete the framework has reduced significantly since the inspection.

The number of learners still in training beyond their expected end date fell from 23% in July 2004 to 13% in July 2005. The number of frameworks being completed is increasing. The success rate is still not good, but is clearly improving.

There has been good progress in addressing the weaknesses relating to key skills. The approach is flexible, with key skills being integrated for engineering, but delivered discretely for motor vehicle learners. They start earlier, make better progress, and they are more aware of what needs to be

done to complete their key skills. In-year retention rates, over the past 4 years, are good.

Communications between WBL staff and college staff delivering technical certificates have improved, and progress review documents now include information relating to progress with technical certificates delivered during day release in the college.

There has been good progress in improving arrangements for staff training in equality and diversity, and the use of data for monitoring equality of opportunity. Small employers now benefit from the recently introduced equal opportunities monitoring check list which ensures they meet current requirements. Monitoring of apprentices' understanding of equality of opportunity is now more effective.

Many employers attended the recent employer engagement forum, and confirm that the event was helpful and improved their understanding of the apprenticeship requirements. Employers now have copies of the updated employer portfolio, and they are now much better informed about their apprentice's progress at college.

There has been good progress in addressing weaknesses relating to internal verification. Engineering work-based learning is now adequately resourced with suitable assessors and verifiers. Internal verification is well planned and effective. Standardisation meetings take place on a regular basis. Internal verification in the workplace is carried out in line with the sampling plans. Approaches to portfolio building are effective and fit for purpose.

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