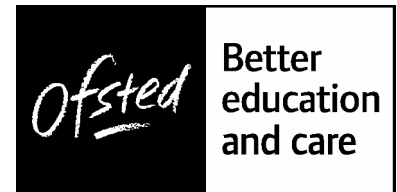


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07 December 2006

Mr Mike Potter CBE  
Principal  
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Dear Mr Potter

Ofsted Subject Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 5 – Construction

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 21 and 22 November 2006. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work that took place to prepare for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet with me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

This visit is part of a series to provision in SSA 5 graded good or better at its most recent inspection, in order to evaluate how effective/good practice has been brought about, further improved and sustained. The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice survey in construction. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but should we wish to cite specific aspects of practice we will contact the college first. All letters, following survey visits, will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: lesson observations; interviews with staff and learners; scrutiny of the examples of good practice provided including a tour of resources. I agreed to provide a summary of the observations of good practice seen and to suggest some areas for development.

Good practice observed included:

- the extensive and highly supportive initial assessment and induction arrangements for full-time students; these enable learners to sample work from all the different trades before confirming which course to

study and provide an extended initial assessment period where appropriate target grades and any support requirements are identified

- the well planned theory teaching; learning outcomes are clearly defined and teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage learner participation and engagement; theory teaching is very closely linked to related practical activities
- the good use of information and learning technology (ILT) within theory lessons; teachers effectively use ILT to enhance learning and students benefit from well produced learning materials which improve their understanding
- the highly effective tracking of learner progress; this enables learners to know the extent of their achievement and to take responsibility for meeting deadlines in respect of work that they still have left to complete
- the good progression, particularly from level 2 to level 3; in 2005/06, over 60% of level 2 learners progressed to level 3 courses and in the same year around 16% of learners who completed a level 3 qualification went on to higher level courses
- the application of the college's robust quality procedures; these are understood and applied by staff and have improved the quality of teaching and learning and learner achievement as their key aims; proactive support by the college 'Learning and Teaching Champions' is improving the quality of teaching and learning
- the motivation and encouragement for learners provided through entry into regional and national competitions, student awards evenings and 'student of the month' awards
- the extensive partnerships with schools; these partnerships enable 14-16 year olds to experience construction education and training and support the progression to post 16 courses.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- to set clear, specific and measurable targets in learner reviews
- to monitor the progression of full time learners into employment within the construction sector.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop construction provision in the college.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your LLSC. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser  
Additional Inspector