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Ms Elaine McMahon  
Principal  
Hull College  
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Dear Ms McMahon

Ofsted Subject and Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 04: Engineering and manufacturing technology

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on the 21 and 22 November 2006. I am particularly grateful to all the teaching, administration and support staff for all their hard work in preparing the programme and background documentation and giving up a great deal of their time during the visit. Please pass on my thanks to and students who gave up their time to talk to me.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice survey. 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. College letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and copied to the LSC. The letters will also be available to the next inspection team to visit the college and to inform your AAV visits.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of four lessons.

I said I would provide a summary of my observations and of the good practice seen and to suggest areas for development.

Good practice observed

- Provisional data shows that success rates in 2005-06 are above the national averages.
- Key skills success rates are well above national averages.

- Aspects of teaching and learning:
  - during practical work, health and safety were given good attention, learners made good progress, worked well both individually and in groups, and benefited from equipment which was of good standard equipment.
  - teachers provided close individual support; in one particularly good lesson learners, many of whom were of low attainment and quite challenging, undertook a wide variety of practical activity, worked at a good pace and developed a good range of skills
  - discussion during lessons was lively and productive; teachers often made good use of questioning to assess learning
  - interactive whiteboards were used productively; in one lesson sectioned illustrations of motor vehicle sub-assemblies were particularly well used.
  
- Course assignments are well designed and are of a good standard. They link theory, practical work and industrial application well and develop wider “employability” attributes, including key skills.
- Programmes cover a wide range of vocational disciplines and offer good opportunities for progression from entry level to level 3 and beyond. Modes of attendance are designed to meet the needs of employers and learners. Enrolments have increased substantially. Work with schools for pupils aged 14-16 is extensive.
- Full-time and work-based learners’ progress is monitored closely and learning targets set for individual learners are appropriately challenging. Employers and parents are kept informed of progress.
- The assessment of learners incoming levels of attainment and the identification of learning support needs are completed promptly and appropriate learning support is provided. A good feature is the drop-in seminars provided regularly for those who need extra vocational support.
- Employer engagement is strong. The school has won three consecutive National Training Awards for employer engagement. The departments manage international and national contracts for apprenticeship work with major manufacturers. Manufacturers donate valuable capital equipment to the department and provide secondments and manufacturers courses to college staff.
- The accommodation and capital equipment base, in both engineering and motor vehicle work, is of very good quality. The provision meets high industrial standards.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- low attendance in one of the lessons observed
- better use of teaching techniques such as directed questioning to ensure all learners are concentrating fully.

Please note that these findings do not constitute a full evaluation of the quality of the department and are based on a short visit.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop engineering and manufacturing courses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'C' and 'G'.

Chris Green  
Additional inspector