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Professor Dave Muller  
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Dear Professor Muller

Ofsted Survey Programme 2006/07

Aspect: The contribution made by CoVEs to the development of vocational work, including preparation for the specialised 14-19 diplomas, in schools.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 08 November 2006. I am particularly grateful for all of the hard work which went in to preparing the programme and background documentation. Please pass on my thanks to all of the staff who gave up their time to talk to me.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice survey into CoVEs' work with schools. Where published reports cite specific aspects of good practice it is usual practice to name the colleges involved. However, where reports identify common issues which represent barriers to progress, individual colleges will not be named.

I agreed to provide a summary of my observations of good practice seen and to suggest some areas for development.

Good practice observed included:

How well do learners achieve?

- Schools report improved attendance and better motivation of students who attend the college. Individual programmes have not been running long enough to assess the impact on the standards they reach.

How effective are teaching, training and learning?

- Teaching, training and learning are good. Students respond positively to their work at the college. They find their studies both interesting and

challenging. Student progress is monitored carefully and procedures for reporting progress to schools, parents and the students themselves are comprehensive. The college's programme of lesson observations provides an effective check on the continuing quality of teaching in the CoVE. Partnership schools are also fully involved in the procedures for assessing and monitoring the quality of teaching.

- CoVE funding has assisted in the development of excellent resources to support learning. These include the development of a full training nursery, providing early years students with the opportunity to strengthen their practice skills. The CoVE has recently purchased a VLE for health and social care and early years to support the delivery of specialised units.

How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?

- Current 14-16 programmes provide students with excellent opportunities to progress, and in the north east partnership provide an extremely effective platform for the planned introduction of the specialised diploma.
- The north east Ipswich partnership currently caters for a group of Year 10 students on a two year ESF funded pre-apprenticeship programme in the health line of learning, which has been developed as a forerunner for the specialised diploma in society, health and development. The programme is being used to model diploma delivery at level 1 and level 2 to prepare the ground for the launch of the diploma in 2008. This is an excellent example of thorough preparation for the specialised diploma because the course is fit for purpose, provides clear progression pathways (including into HE) and is supported by the excellent resources in the CoVE. The current pre-apprenticeship group will be well prepared to take the diploma at level 3.

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

- A good track record of collaboration and the influence of the CoVE make the north east Ipswich partnership well placed to deliver specialised diplomas. There are excellent relationships between the four schools and the college and curriculum pathways are already in place.
- Delivery of the diploma will take place in a community location for students at both level 2 and level 3. The CoVE will be responsible for delivering and managing the specialist units for childcare and health and social care. The advantages are that secure quality assurance arrangements are already in place, the partnership will be able to maximise the potential of its resources, and be able to respond to any significant changes in recruitment. It is intended that this model will ease timetabling issues and enable employers to become involved in the planning and delivery of the diploma.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- the two partnerships are at very different stages of development for the introduction of specialised diplomas. It is not clear how students' entitlement to an appropriate range of high quality programmes will be assured given these differences. The more ambitious proposals in the south west are not supported by the effective history of collaborative planning and activity which exists in the north east, where the CoVE is playing a full and active role in curriculum developments
- the provision of impartial information, advice and guidance to students is addressed in the plan for the north east partnership and is correctly identified as a priority for development
- employers are not yet involved as fully as they might be in diploma developments.

Based on this visit it appears that CoVEs can and do have a real impact on specialised diploma developments where the collaborative arrangements are secure enough to take advantage of them.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the ways in which your CoVE supports 14-19 curriculum development in the area.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your LLSC and will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of the half-term following the visit. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Hebditch  
Her Majesty's Inspector