

03 April 2007

Ms Elaine McMahon  
Principal  
Hull College  
Queens Garden  
Hull  
HU1 3DG

Dear Ms McMahon

Ofsted Subject Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 5 – Construction

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 06 and 07 February 2007. 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

- The flexible teaching programmes. These allow course tutors to provide additional practical skill development time where required by individual learners.
- The effective use of information learning technology (ILT). Theory sessions engage and motivate learners who enjoy lessons. Good quality learning resources, many adapted from the 'Standards Unit' materials make learning interesting and enable learners' to develop other valuable skills such as team building and communication.

- The good arrangements for course management. Course tutors keep detailed records and take ownership of the courses for which they are responsible. Course planning and curriculum development is well informed by course tutors.
- The highly effective monitoring of learners' progress. Learners benefit from very close monitoring of their progress. Detailed reports are produced that show the progress of individuals against their targets. This information is linked to attendance and punctuality data and is used effectively at reviews and in tutorials to motivate learners or to identify areas where additional support may be required.
- The wide range of provision with good progression opportunities. Courses are offered to meet the needs of learners and of local and regional industry. These include courses from entry level to higher education programmes with many different progression pathways. The use of a 'learner mentor' has been beneficial in providing links with schools.
- The good and effective delivery of key skills. Key skills training has been effectively structured to provide an integrated learning programme where vocational assignments provide evidence for both key skills as well as the NVQ. Most key skills training and assessment is undertaken by construction staff with additional key skill sessions available if specialist support is required.
- The strong links with local and regional employer groups. The section has good links with national training organisations like the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and with the related sector skills councils. Learners frequently participate in local, regional and national skill competitions and many have a long history of success at such events.
- The positive changes in the delivery and assessment of work-based learning. Work-based assessors have been introduced and this has provided a more structured and coordinated approach to assessment. The progress review arrangements have been strengthened and the timetable now enables an individual review of progress at the end of each day.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- to develop an integrated programme of work experience for full-time students
- to ensure a more consistent tutorial provision
- to effectively monitor learner destinations for students leaving full-time programmes

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

Ian McMillan  
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