

08 March 2007

Ms Pauline Waterhouse
Principal
Blackpool & the Fylde College
Ashfield Road
Bispham
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY2 0HB

Dear Ms Waterhouse

Ofsted Subject Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 5 – Construction

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 07 and 08 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 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 particularly good support for learners. This is a strong feature of the college and learners benefit from a wide range of support mechanisms. Additional support is good and is accessed by a significant number of learners. Support staff work well with

construction teachers to ensure that learners make good progress. Learners are supported well in both workshop and classroom lessons.

- The strong focus on improving provision. There is clear leadership and strong management of construction provision. The monitoring of performance and the subsequent analysis, evaluation and action planning are robust. Useful staff development has had a positive impact on teaching and learning and has contributed to improving success rates.
- 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 development of learners practical skills. Learners benefit from gaining skills over and above qualification requirements which are valued by employers in the workplace. The standard of work produced by many learners is high.
- The good progression into industry employment or further training. Many learners gain employment within the industry during the period of, or at the end of their course. A significant number of learners also progress to further training, to a course at a higher level or to other courses to broaden their industry skills and knowledge.
- The extensive curriculum offer. The college offers a wide range of construction courses with a particularly good entry level offer. Progression opportunities exist from one level to the next and courses are available on a full and part-time basis. A wide range of both construction crafts and technical and professional courses are offered.
- The good provision for 14-16 year olds. There are beneficial links with local schools and the college provides opportunities for school pupils to gain a valuable insight into construction education and training. They are able to gain a basic qualification and many progress onto post-16 construction courses.
- The excellent engagement and involvement with local and regional initiatives for the benefit of learners. The college and the construction department are key partners in a number of regeneration initiatives within the community. This enables the college to be well represented and placed to ensure that any future courses are planned to take account of local need and to enable learners to benefit from the planned regeneration activities.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- to more effectively coordinate and monitor work-based learning programmes to improve framework completion rates.

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

Paul Joyce
Her Majesty's Inspector