

30 March 2007

Mr Howard O'Keeffe
Principal
Bracknell & Wokingham College
Church Road
Bracknell
Berkshire
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Dear Mr O'Keeffe

Ofsted Subject Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 5 – Construction

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 20 and 21 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 well established electrical provision. The college has developed a good reputation for the delivery of electrical courses. Demand is high and there are many more applicants than available places. Success rates are high.

- The good progression pathway. Multi-craft taster courses provide learners with the opportunity to try electrical work before committing themselves to a career in it. Progression is then available to the one-year full-time course that prepares learners for employment in the industry. Courses are also available to enable industry recognised technical and NVQ certificates to be gained.
- The good range of courses to meet employer needs. A wide range of short courses provides professional updating opportunities for electrical contractors, designers and practitioners. Participants appreciate the tutors' trade knowledge, expertise, and particularly the support they provide. Success rates on these courses are good.
- The highly effective schools' link programme. Many pupils from seven local schools are attending a multi-crafts course enabling them to sample different construction crafts whilst working towards a qualification at level 1. Success rates for the new qualification are high at nearly 90%. Over half of the pupils who completed their construction course last year went on to further courses or to employment within the construction industry.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- to improve the timely completion rates of apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes
- to increase the use of information learning technology (ILT) in teaching.

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 Houghton
Additional Inspector