

30 April 2007

Ms Jean McAllister
Principal
ShIPLEY College
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ShIPLEY
West Yorkshire
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Dear Ms McAllister

Ofsted Subject Survey Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 3: Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 9 March. I am particularly grateful to the teaching 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 staff and learners who gave up their time to talk to me.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice subject survey in agriculture, horticulture and animal care. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but should we wish to include specific aspects of practice we will contact the college first. All college letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform judgements included: interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of good practice examples.

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

Good practice observed included:

- the very effective promotion of equality and diversity particularly through the high profile given to teaching horticulture in the community to under-represented groups
- the holistic approach to sustainability, and particularly the very impressive 'learning for sustainability' policy, which ensures that the principles of sustainability are included in the personal and social development programme

- an excellent system for monitoring the progress of learners which is well regarded by learners
- excellent use of external practical resources to benefit learners
- extensive community provision which meets the needs of learners and is supported by a designated horticultural community officer
- good use of DfES Standards Unit materials to benefit most learner groups but, particularly, E2E learners.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- community resources, which may not meet the needs of all learners particularly those on level 3 courses.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop land-based courses in the college.

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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Davies
HMI