

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Hull College**

**03 November 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## **Adult Learning Inspectorate**

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

### **Pre-inspection analysis**

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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## Hull College

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Hull College	1
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
Key Findings	2

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hull College (the college) is a large further education college which provides education and training for the city of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The college has a contract with Jobcentre Plus to provide a Workstep programme for up to 30 participants from Hull and the East Riding area. Currently, there are 16 participants on the programme, all of whom are in supported employment. Some Workstep participants join the programme from other programmes provided by the college. These are usually from the centre for visual impairment, the centre for hearing impairment and from programmes for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Participants are supported by a Workstep co-ordinator and a support officer.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The provider's arrangements for quality improvement are inadequate. The preparation for life and work provision, which includes Workstep, is satisfactory.

3. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** This is the provider's second self-assessment report. It is sufficiently critical and identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses found by the inspection team, although other strengths identified in the report are standard practice.

4. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The college has sufficient resources and expertise to implement improvements. The college's senior managers and Workstep staff are very committed to extending the capacity of the Workstep programme. The revised management structure has improved the amount of support and guidance available to the Workstep team, but it is too soon to judge the effects of this on the participants.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR HULL COLLEGE:

- fully establish college quality improvement procedures within Workstep provision
- improve individual development planning
- build on the positive relationships developed with employers to increase their awareness of the wider aspects and possibilities of Workstep
- increase participants' understanding of equality and diversity in relation to employment and employability

## GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

Preparation for life and work			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Employability training</i>		3	
Workstep	16	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

5. This inspection only covered the specialist Workstep provision. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over three days in November 2005. The college's further education provision was inspected by Ofsted in April 2005.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learners interviewed	8
Number of staff interviewed	6
Number of employers interviewed	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	9
Number of visits	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

6. **Participants' work-related skills are developed well.** They achieve a wide range of skills to enable them to carry out their jobs effectively. Some participants have developed additional skills and have successfully taken on more responsibility. Participants are usually matched to jobs according to their previous experience or existing skills. Most participants have a good attendance and punctuality record. The provider places strong emphasis on the continuous development of participants' experiences and skills development.

7. **Participants achieve good standards of work in the workplace and receive positive**

**feedback about their achievements.** Participants have a good understanding of health and safety in relation to themselves and how to ensure the health and safety of others by working safely.

8. At the time of the inspection, six participants were scheduled to progress into unsupported employment. A few of the participants make slow progress into unsupported employment. Some of them are ready to make the transition and employers are prepared for the transfer and very willing to take full responsibility for the participants.

9. Participants have satisfactory access to relevant qualifications in the workplace. One participant has achieved a first aid qualification and another a basic food hygiene qualification. Other participants have achieved recognition of their development by their respective employers. The participants also improve their personal skills particularly those of working with others, and communication. They also use the new skills that they have learnt in the workplace in their personal lives.

### The quality of provision

10. **Employers are particularly supportive of participants.** They have a good understanding of participants' personal and developmental needs and respond effectively to individual needs or difficulties. The participants feel confident in discussing personal issues with their employers and value the support that they receive. Access to Work is used effectively to provide appropriate specialist equipment to allow participants to carry out their jobs and to develop further skills. Some employers actively encourage participants to broaden their skills and to aim for higher positions within the company. One employer has changed its staff working patterns to accommodate the particular needs of the participant. Another employer is rewriting training materials in a more appropriate format for the participant to understand. Deaf awareness training was used by one employer to develop staff's understanding of the disability and to improve communications with a participant who has impaired hearing. Employers value the participants and the contributions they make to the staff teams. Most employers take an active role in the quarterly progress review. In a few cases, Workstep staff are unaware of changes in the working conditions until the development plan review takes place.

11. Staffing arrangements are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and have access to a good range of professional development opportunities. The college recently revised its appraisal process to allow a greater emphasis on performance reviews. Staff have an annual formal meeting with the head of school, but in between reviews there are no scheduled, formal meetings where progress and targets can be monitored against the action plan. Other resources are adequate to meet the needs of participants. The college's structure has been revised. The Workstep team now has better access to wider college resources and expertise.

12. **The information recorded in individual development plans is inadequate and does not set clearly to the participant and employer the goals and how these will be achieved.** All participants have an individual development plan. The development plans do not always record participants' experiences and aspirations, and some are incomplete. Targets are not specific or measurable and some have no timescales. The plans do not always record participants' skills developed since the last review. Some participants and employers do not have a copy of the plan to refer to between reviews. Support such as job coaching is

not adequately recorded to show what support will be given. Some plans do not effectively link in with the employers' training and development plan for the participant. Elements of this weakness are recognised in the self-assessment report.

**13. The wider aspects of Workstep and development opportunities are not sufficiently explored or communicated effectively.** A wide range of training courses is made available by the provider, but these opportunities are not communicated effectively to the employers or the participants. Employers complete a Workstep agreement which clearly details what is expected of the employer in respect of participant induction, equality of opportunity and the health and safety of the participants. It also records the level of Workstep support that has been agreed. The recording of the support arrangements is not comprehensive enough and does not provide a lasting record for employers to refer to. The initial information given to employers about the support is not reinforced regularly. Employers' understanding of support requirements sometimes has no continuity, especially when there is a change of supervisor.

14. Literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. The Workstep programme does not have a separate literacy, numeracy and language strategy. The overall college strategy refers to Workstep participants' entitlements to initial assessment and support. There is a schedule for assessing all participants in the workplace, and the results sometimes identify literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs that were not identified during the induction programme. Current literacy, numeracy and language support does not always relate to individual participants' employment activities, although in one instance the college is rewriting a training and assessment manual to make it more accessible to the participant. There is no systematic, formal monitoring or recording of participants' development of literacy, numeracy or communication skills in the workplace.

### **Leadership and management**

**15. Internal communications are good.** Since the appointment of a new team member, formal team meetings take place weekly. The standing agenda items include participant contact, individual progress and progress with action plans. The needs of individual participants are discussed, and potential obstacles to employment are examined and solutions are proposed. Other topics are discussed as appropriate. Although the minutes of the meetings are brief, there is some good recording of discussions. Senior managers are kept informed through quarterly briefings about events and activities from the preceding three months. However, there is some repetition of actions to be taken, and insufficient recording of progress.

16. Business planning is satisfactory. The college identified that the Workstep provision was not receiving appropriate management support and through the business planning process brought Workstep into the school of foundation studies and learner support. The Workstep team now has access to a wider range of support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Workstep participants. Although the Workstep programme does not have a dedicated resource budget managed by the Workstep co-ordinator, there are clear audit trails identifying income from Jobcentre Plus, payments to employers and other expenditure.

17. The use of management information was identified as a weakness in the provider's self-assessment report. The use of information is now fit for purpose, and wall charts are



used to monitor participants' progress.

18. The college has a satisfactory equality and diversity policy that conforms to current legislative requirements. This policy applies to the Workstep programme. The arrangements for promoting race equality are also satisfactory. Positive images of disadvantaged and disabled learners, including one Workstep participant, are displayed around the college.

19. Most participants understand their rights and responsibilities at work. These are discussed at induction and followed up informally during development plan reviews. Participants are aware of their employment terms and conditions and have a good understanding of the complaints process. They feel confident that any complaints about being treated unfairly or discrimination would be taken seriously by their employer and Workstep staff. Some participants have a good understanding of equality and diversity.

20. **The provider makes slow progress in achieving quality improvement action plan targets.** Some weaknesses in the Workstep programme are identified through the self-assessment process, but the Workstep quality improvement system is not effective enough to make the necessary improvements quickly. The poor record-keeping in participants' files was recognised as a weakness. Despite procedures to ensure that records are up to date, complete and correct, there were still several incomplete records at the time of inspection, some of them highly relevant to participants' work situations. Another weakness in communicating with employers was identified in September 2005, but the proposed employers' newsletter is not scheduled to be introduced until December 2005. Actions to improve formal target-setting in individual development plans have not made sufficient improvements. The procedure introduced to ensure that participants' files are completed and that all necessary documents are included identified a missing job description in April 2005. This omission had not been rectified at the time of inspection. The file check procedure also claims that targets are 'SMART' when in many cases they are not clear, easily understood by participants, or measurable.

21. The college produced its second self-assessment report in September 2005. The process was satisfactory and was managed by the Workstep co-ordinator and support officer. The self-assessment report states that the team encouraged everybody who deals with Workstep to participate in the self-assessment report, including participants, employers and colleagues. Very few participants or employers had any awareness of being involved in formally evaluating the Workstep programme and those who completed questionnaires did not receive any feedback about the results of the process. Participants are asked if they want to comment on the programme at the end of their progress reviews, but few comments are recorded or are of use for evaluation purposes. The report is critical and identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses found by the inspection team, although some strengths identified are no more than normal practice. The self-assessment process was monitored by the director of learning and the report was validated by the college inspection team.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good internal communications

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in achieving quality improvement targets

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Employability training***

***Grade 3***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of work-related skills
- particularly supportive employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient promotion of wider aspects of Workstep to employers