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10 July 2007

Dr Greg Taylor
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Dear Dr Taylor

Ofsted survey inspection programme – a comparison of the effectiveness of post 16 providers

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 and 14 June to look at work in level 3 provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of level 3 provision was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory, considering the low prior attainment of students on entry to level 3 study, although there is significant variation between subjects.

Quality of teaching and learning at level 3, including academic guidance

The quality of teaching and learning at level 3, including academic guidance is satisfactory. The guidance and support provided is valued by the students and is good, although students from the school studying courses in other centres of the Stafford Collegiate report that this is not of a consistently high

standard. Students are given an effective early introduction to the course work and study requirements at level 3, but teachers are not consistently successful in promoting independent learning or in planning to meet the needs of all learners in lessons. The tracking and monitoring of individual student progress has improved and is now good. Students show good awareness of their progress towards challenging targets.

Quality of curriculum

The extent to which programmes and activities meet students' needs and interests is good. Planning of the curriculum is effective in taking into account the students' prior attainment. The number of available courses at level 3 has increased significantly as a result of collaborative arrangements between the members of the Stafford Collegiate, and there is a good choice of provision. However, the take up of vocational qualifications is low.

Leadership and management of level 3 provision

Leadership and management are good. The school is successfully focused on raising achievement and standards; however progress and attainment do not yet reflect the high levels of support provided to enable students to participate in level 3 provision.

Self-evaluation is effective. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which effectively informs improvement planning. As a result there is good capacity to improve the quality of level 3 provision. However, the use of data to drive overall improvement is not yet fully developed and the school recognises that there is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. Recruitment to level 3 provision is inclusive. The school is aware of how individual students achieve. Teachers monitor and track the individual students' progress effectively and take timely action to address under-achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that school data is used more centrally to drive the improvement plan
- ensuring that lines of communication between the members of the collegiate are consistently clear and timely to support the review of students' progress
- sharing good practice in teaching and learning more effectively.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop level 3 provision in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Russell Jordan
Her Majesty's Inspector