

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
Chamber of Commerce (DNCC)
Date of visit: 9 April 2008

Context

The one day re-inspection monitoring visit follows the inspection in May 2007 at which the construction, planning and the built environment sector subject area was judged to be unsatisfactory. Of the other two sector subject areas inspected, one area was found to be satisfactory and the other found to be good. Arrangements for leadership and management, equality of opportunity and the effectiveness of the provision were judged to be satisfactory. A reinspection of construction, planning and the built environment is due to be carried out in October 2008.

Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in improving construction, planning and built environment learners' success rates?	reasonable progress
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There has been reasonable progress to improve learner success rates in the construction, planning and built environment subject area. Overall apprenticeship success rates have risen from 48% at the previous inspection to 55% and advanced apprenticeship success rates which are in their first year are good at 85%. Timely apprenticeship success rates have risen by 9%, although, they are still low at 28%. Resources have been introduced to improve achievement through better assessment planning and individual progress monitoring.

The quality of the provision

What measures have been taken to improve assessment planning in the construction, planning and built environment subject area?	reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made to improve assessment planning in the construction, planning and built environment subject area. Skill scanning is being introduced to ensure employers agree the potential for unit achievement and are

able to provide assessment opportunities and adhere to target dates. Effective new monitoring sheets have been introduced by DNCC and these are shared with subcontractors to ensure assessment happens in a timely manner and assessment opportunities are not missed. The local training network is being used well to provide additional support for 30 learners. They mentor individuals on a one- to-one basis to ensure they understand opportunities for evidence gathering and assessment requirements. New arrangements stipulate three on site assessments take place per year with in-college assessments to take place if required and agreed. Progress toward this and other performance objectives are reviewed quarterly with subcontractors. Although in place, these measures have not yet had a significant impact on learner achievement.

To what extent has the progress review process been improved in the construction, planning and built environment?	reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made to improve the progress review process in the construction, planning and built environment subject area. Two monitoring officers are now dedicated to the construction, planning and built environment subject area and carry out progress reviews more frequently using an eight week cycle. Reviews take place both within the subcontractor and within company. Highly effective weekly drop in visits are made to subcontractors to meet with programme co-ordinators to ensure outcomes of review are followed through. Review paperwork is still generic in nature and not specifically focused to the nature of the visit.

There is a lack of consistency in the recording of learner information across the subcontractors however, one of the monitoring officers who is from industry is being developed to become overall co-ordinator for the construction, planning and built environment subject area with a view to ensuring a more consistent approach to information recording across the subject area. There is currently no on-programme feedback questionnaire for learners to present views on their learning experience.

To what extent have improvements been made in the construction, planning and built environment to the action-planning and target-setting process used with individual learners?	reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made in the improvements to action-planning and target-setting in the construction, planning and built environment. Dedicated staff with improved knowledge of the framework, qualifications and programme requirements has enhanced the quality and focus of target-setting and made action-planning more rigorous. Extensive portfolios of information have been given to each monitoring officer giving detailed information on standards, qualifications, framework and monitoring information for all areas of construction.

Clear targets and actions are both formally reviewed on an eight week basis and informally through drop in visits to learners both in college and on-site. The communication between staff at DNCC and subcontractor staff is much improved and is assisting learner's progress towards meeting set targets. This has not yet fully impacted on learner achievement.

Leadership and management

How effectively have the quality assurance arrangements for subcontractors been established?	reasonable progress
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There has been reasonable progress in ensuring the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements for subcontractors in the construction, planning and built environment subject area. Both formal and informal arrangements have been enhanced. Following a series of senior management level meetings with subcontractors, revised detailed service level agreements have been agreed which ensure the provision of performance information is regular and accurate.

DNCC attend regular programme review meetings at subcontractor premises. All meetings are minuted with action plans produced and monitored by all parties. Informal quality assurance takes place through weekly visits that the monitoring officers make to subcontractors on a drop in basis. During these visits, monitoring officers meet with programme managers, tutors and assessors to monitor learner's progress. DNCC have regular access to all subcontractors' observation of teaching and learning process records and to external quality monitoring reports from awarding bodies. Staff at DNCC review this information on a termly basis.

Programme review meetings have not yet established a consistent and settled format and performance information is not yet received in a consistent manner from all subcontractors. New reporting mechanisms from subcontractors are planned to be established by September 2008. Some opportunities for sharing good practice are not currently being identified and taken.

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What impact is the post inspection improvement planning process having on the effectiveness of the provision?	reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made to ensure the self-assessment process and subsequent development plan drives forward improvements. A quality improvement group effectively review the action plan produced from the self-assessment report to assess progress in completing the identified actions. Targets in the action plan are relevant and are measurable. All development issues are covered by the action plan and all identified actions are being followed through.

Developments are at too early a stage to have had a major impact on learner performance, however, achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The DNCC internal audit system has been made more robust with a dedicated auditor spending one day per week ensuring all files and paperwork are up-to-date and completed to the required standard.