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Mr D Khan  
Principal  
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Dear Mr Khan

Ofsted survey inspection programme – narrowing the gap in literacy and numeracy

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 25 November 2008 to look at the college's work on the above theme.

As outlined in the initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on how well you meet the needs of all learners in relation to their literacy and numeracy, with particular consideration to those at risk of not reaching their full potential. The visit also evaluated the level of expertise to support for learners of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

The valuable information gained during the visit will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing settings but these will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website.

In reaching these below mentioned judgements I have gathered evidence from the interviews with the staff of the college as well as some learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of learners work and observation of teaching and learning.

The overall effectiveness of provision for literacy and numeracy was judged to be good.

Scope of the survey and context

This survey is based on examining evidence of a broad range of programmes such as discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes, key skills in application of number and communications, literacy and numeracy support, work based learning for entry to employment learners, apprentices and Train to gain learners.

At induction, 15% of 16-18 year old learners were assessed to be at entry levels 1-3 in literacy and 45% for numeracy. The college has approximately, 200 ESOL and 800 learners on Train to Gain including 80 learners who require literacy and numeracy support. Most courses do not have strict entry requirements.

In Grimsby, 34% of the learners achieve 5 GCSE's A\*-C including English and mathematics. Unemployment in Grimsby is higher than the national average.

Most learners who are at entry levels and level 1 are taught on a basic skills programme. Approximately 50% of all learners aged 16-18 are level 1 in literacy and numeracy programmes. Approximately 78% of all 16-18 year old learners are drawn from three poorly performing schools. Adult literacy and numeracy qualifications are delivered through various satellite centres in the neighbourhood. Some learners are offered 1:1 support and in the local centres.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Learners make good gains in their levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. They use these skills to become more effective at work, recognise the value of literacy and numeracy for their chosen vocation, develop appropriate learning and thinking skills and make much faster progress on their course work.
- Learners on full-time vocational courses with literacy and numeracy support also make satisfactory progress.
- Success rates for key skills of communications and application of number at level 1 for 16-18 year old learners are very good. They have been consistently good for the last three years and in 2007/08 are around 70%, some 15% above the national averages. Success rates at key skills level 2 are also above the national averages, but the rate of success is not as good as at level 1. The number of aged 19+ learners taking these qualifications is low.
- Success rates for 16-18 and 19+ learners on literacy and numeracy at level 1 are satisfactory and in line with the national averages.
- Work based learners are making good progress with their numeracy and literacy skills. Literacy and numeracy is well accepted by the learners as essential skills. The tutors work together with the employers to help the learners learn and develop new concepts or reinforce existing skills and concepts. The college offers satisfactory 1:1 support for Train to Gain learners to help them achieve their learning aims but the materials and help is not made fully relevant to the context of vocations and skills. The college does not have sufficient appropriately qualified tutors. New flexibility in the funding eligibility requirements has helped the college to offer more relevant and short qualifications in the Train to Gain programme. Success rates at level 2 for learners in the workplace are good. The employers speak very highly of the standard of the learners work and enhanced self-confidence.

- Retention, achievement and success rates for learners receiving literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory.
- Attendance rates on the classes observed were low. Retention rates on some programmes are also low. Retention rates for specific groups such as probation learners are outstanding.

### The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

- Initial assessment is conducted at very early stages and is extremely thorough in all aspects except assessing the learning style of the learners. Learners are enrolled early in the summer months. Initial assessment is used to identify correct starting points for the learners and is further updated on a regular basis by using a range of assessment tools. This helps the learner and the tutors to identify areas for development and focus their teaching accordingly.
- Lesson planning is thorough. Tutors are given carefully structured prompts to plan all stage of the lessons. Each stage of the lesson is carefully executed. Tutors take full responsibility for improving the quality of learning and teaching and routinely evaluate their lessons with useful comments on how they can improve their practice.
- Learners make satisfactory progress in sessions.
- Information and learning technology is used appropriately.
- Tutors diligently review learners' progress through thorough checks during progress reviews.
- Staff are deployed well to maximise the effectiveness of the sessions to the learners. Many classes have additional learning support tutors and they work well with the main tutors.
- Support is very good and well-managed. Support for dyslexic learners is outstanding. However, for some ESOL learners, the college does not make use of the national database to establish the equivalent value of their existing qualifications from their mother countries and design a programme to help speed up their progress and language learning.
- Ongoing assessment and feedback is appropriate. Learners are given useful guidance to improve their practice.
- Learning materials and assignments are contextualised in most vocational areas except in plumbing however learners see literacy and numeracy as an essential part of their course.
- The pace of learning is challenging in most sessions. In some sessions teachers do not relate teaching of their vocational context or provide insufficient challenge for some well qualified ESOL learners.
- Individual learning plans are not as well developed. Target-setting is not specific or measurable.
- Learning resources are very good. However the quality of computers is variable. Some parts of the college have poor quality of the computers and the connectivity is poor.

### Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

The quality of leadership and management in the subject sector area is good.

- Roles and responsibilities for staff are clear. Staff are generally well qualified and deployed appropriately. They work in close collaboration with the vocational tutors to make literacy and numeracy relevant to their chosen study and vocational area. Senior management strategy to devolve the deployment of staff and development of skills in literacy and numeracy to the vocational area is working well.
- Staff training, through the learning curve- the colleges' in-house staff development resource is excellent. The college spends a considerable amount of its resources on in-house training to develop the classroom skills of its workforce. The college has signed a skills pledge and is committed to ensure that its entire tutor group achieves a minimum of level 2 qualifications in literacy and numeracy. All learners complete their induction through using moodle, its VLE resource and they complete a module of key skills.
- Managers have put strong emphasis on initial assessment and early enrolments to ensure more thorough planning of learning.
- Observation of teaching and learning is thorough. The college grades 74% of its teaching in this area good or better and 24% as satisfactory. The college has worked very hard to raise the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection and monitoring visit. It has robust action plan to raise standards of teaching and learning to good or better.
- The level of resources including information and communication technology (ICT) is good and tutors use these resources to good effect.
- Staff make effective use of broad range of available data to set targets.
- Learners and employers views are used well to inform planning and development.
- Quality improvement plan is appropriate. Curriculum and the growth in this area are well managed.
- Good practice is effectively shared. Staff work well together in teams. Communications are good.

How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?

Social and educational inclusion at Grimsby Institute is outstanding. It is making strong contribution to community cohesion.

- Basic skills provision is offered flexibly in all parts of the neighbourhood including rural areas, employers and in the town centre. The college is working from 31 venues in addition to seven satellite centres of its own, so learning venues are close to the learners' home or place of work.
- The courses are highly relevant to the needs of the employers and the community.
- Learners from all sections of the community including hard to reach groups are taking part in learning and enjoying and achieving their objectives and making progress.
- Learning environment is highly inclusive and conducive to learning. Relationships in the classrooms are good.
- Marginalised groups such as those affected by mental health issues, homeless and ex-drug users are actively identified and included on

programmes run from the Open Door centre and the learning shop in the Grimsby town centre.

- Visually Impaired learners are provided with good support through the well equipped Unit.
- Excellent dyslexia assessment and support is making substantial difference to the lives of a growing number of learners. The college currently supports 85 learners.
- Achievement levels and progression for all learners are high.
- High levels of individual attention are given to the learners.
- Programmes meet the needs of learners and employers closely.
- The support for learners with lower than expected levels of literacy is effective. They are making progress as expected.
- Learning is fully inclusive. The quality of interaction between groups is contributing highly to the community cohesion in the college.
- Assessment is very flexible and is available on and off site. It can be taken on paper or on computers.
- Tutors take great care to structure their lessons to include topics of interest to learners.
- The college receives 57% of its funding from the LSC. It has successfully diversified its income stream and has continued to provide tuition at the required levels except in ESOL.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- ICT resources in several parts of the college curriculum
- how to encourage learners to continue developing skills and applying these effectively outside the classes
- greater contextualisation of literacy and numeracy in vocational areas without entry levels qualifications such as plumbing, bricklaying and construction
- differentiation of strategy for additional support and full integration of literacy and numeracy into vocational areas
- ensuring greater consistency in the use of targets in individual learning plans
- more effective differentiation to meet the needs of all learners particularly ESOL learners who have gained qualifications from overseas countries.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy and numeracy in your setting.

As was explained in the 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 inspector for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Harmesh Manghra  
Her Majesty's Inspector