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Dean Hopkinson  
Director  
Smart Training and Recruitment Ltd.  
Smart House  
Castlehold Lane  
Newport  
PO30 1AJ

Dear Dean,

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Moving through the system

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 1 November to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of learners on your Entry to Employment (E2E) programme. I also looked at how well arrangements are made to support learners as they progress from your programme.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included:

- An initial meeting to discuss your E2E programme and the impact on your learners
- A meeting with staff responsible for your programme
- Observation of part of a lesson
- Review of documentation and learners' files
- Meeting a previous learner and their employer
- Meeting your Connexions personal adviser
- Meeting individual learners

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of your E2E learners is good with excellent development of personal and social skills. Learners develop a good level of self-confidence and team-working skills. They have a good understanding of the options available to them after their programme and are developing a good appreciation of the skills and attributes necessary for success in the workplace.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

#### Features of effective practice:

- Achievement and standards are good. Progression rates into further education, work-based learning and employment are good at 74% for leavers in 2007/08. A high percentage progress into apprenticeships. Achievement in the wide range of qualifications is good and encourages learners to view learning as a pathway to employment and ongoing training. The development of personal and social skills is excellent with learners gaining in confidence and able to face the challenges they have.
- The well-planned E2E curriculum links with the economic well-being outcomes and focuses on individual needs and progression. The wide range of relevant qualifications and activities includes employment skills, personal money management and literacy and numeracy at level 1, health and safety and customer service at level 2, key skills and work-experience. Effective use is made of the good links with external agencies, including Connexions, schools and employers, to enhance the content of the curriculum.
- Overall, careers education is good and is supported by effective liaison with the Connexions personal adviser. The company has recently retained the Matrix standard for information, advice and guidance services. The focus on careers extends across the whole curriculum. All learners have the opportunity to go on work-experience but this often takes place towards the end of their time on E2E.
- Strategic and operational planning is good. The E2E programme runs as a pre-apprenticeship programme and effectively focuses on this as the main progression route. Senior management recognises that some learners need a more generic E2E programme to develop the skills and motivation to enable them to focus on their career options. This is in the process of being planned. All of the staff work hard to maintain the excellent relationships with employers and activities include employer group lunches and the Smart talk newsletter as well as regular contact. The company delivers training for many of its employers.
- Work with schools is effective. The company is actively involved with diplomas, the young apprenticeship programme and the aim higher project which gives school students an insight into the world of work.

#### Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Maintain the increase in learners progressing into further training and employment with training.
- Review the timing of work-experience and the use of links with work in the E2E programme. This is presently being looked at.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the E2E curriculum and economic well-being in your organisation.

As I explained, 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 inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Jan LLoyd**

Jan LLoyd HMI