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Mr D Bucknall
Operations Manager
Nova Training
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Dear Mr Bucknall

Ofsted subject survey: identifying good practice in post 16 citizenship education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22 June 2009 to look at work in citizenship education.

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 observations of lessons, discussions with students and staff and scrutiny of documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- Nova successfully integrates citizenship learning within its work across all of its five centres. It is viewed as an essential element of the E2E programme along with work skills and skills for independence.
- Citizenship education generally meets the needs of learners, many of whom had not previously enjoyed a positive experience in formal education. The citizenship perspective has enabled Nova to focus on some of the issues and obstacles faced by learners including attitudes and motivation. There is a solid foundation in place on which to build.
- There are good examples of learner engagement including the community project 'what it's like to live here' which enabled learners to meet with older people in a care home to share perspectives across generations. The focus on community and neighbourhood more generally encourages discussions about attitudes, views and personal motivation and helps learners develop a more positive outlook on the future.

- Learners interviewed by inspectors saw the relevance of citizenship education to their day to day lives.
- There is dedicated citizenship time in the programme; tutors meet regularly to share ideas and materials. Programme leaders have forged good working relationships with other post-16 citizenship providers in the region.
- Good attention is given to quality issues such as lesson planning, programme review and staff networking. Tutors are self critical and receptive to advice and support.
- Learners' experiences and recollection of citizenship education from school is minimal, in part reflecting a poor school attendance pattern for many.
- Resources and teaching materials are good. They are well organised and their presentation assists tutors in delivering citizenship learning. There is however some confusion within documentation and in lesson plans in relation to citizenship content, concepts and processes. Greater clarity about such issues and about principles underpinning citizenship would further assist teaching and learning.
- Assessment is linked largely to evidencing Key Skills, the acquisition of personal and communication skills, improvements in attendance and in attitude. The nature and depth of assessment is limited by virtue of the 22 week programme, but scope exists to further develop approaches to assessment.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop post 16 citizenship.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your LSC and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector