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Ms S Daley  
Principal  
Boston College  
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Dear Ms Daley

Ofsted 2009/10 good practice survey programme: the role of employers in work-related education and training

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation during my visit on 29 October 2009. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit provided valuable information that will contribute to our national survey of good practice in the role that employers play in work-related education and training. The published report for this survey will list the names of contributing organisations but individual contributors 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 help form the judgements included interviews with staff, employers and learners and scrutiny of the examples of good practice provided.

I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice seen and to identify some areas for development and outline the main findings below.

The main strengths:

- Overall success rates on Train to Gain provision continue to be high at 85% or higher over the last three years.
- The involvement of employers in full-time childcare courses is good. Employers contribute to regular guest speaker sessions for learners. They provide information on the standards and expectations of learners in the workplace, are involved with learners in designing and implementing 'activity days' such as 'messy play' and the employers' assessment of learners is a key part of learners' work-placements.

- Communication links with employers are very strong. Good and open communications between college staff and employers provide an effective exchange of information leading to the further development of the college provision and to suitably trained health and social care learners. The development of the employers' early years and care academy and the childcare employers' forum has been effective in enabling employers to identify suitable option choices, to communicate industry trends, to exchange relevant information to promote further learner training and to share good practice.
- The college has responded well to the needs of health and social care employers and learners. Train to Gain courses have National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units relevant to the needs of individual employers and to the current legislative requirements in the health and social care sector. An enhanced training package is available which includes relevant additional qualifications such as manual handling. All internal verifiers have been practising care home managers and understand the sector. Close individual support for health and social care learners has helped them to succeed and created an environment which has encouraged other learners to undertake training. The training has improved health and social care staff's understanding of their work roles. A career progression route that includes supervisory and management roles has been established.
- The college provides good access to the provision of background knowledge workshops by offering them in different localities throughout the college's wide rural catchment area. The geographic accessibility of the workshops encourages learners to attend and to complete their training.

The main area for further development is:

- continuing to improve success rates on the diploma in childcare and education and the timely success rates on the Train to Gain provision.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop provision. If there are any points you wish to discuss, please contact me. We gather information on the impact of our visits. To this end, you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete six to 12 months after the visit. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

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

Yours sincerely

Charles Hooper  
Additional Inspector