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Ms S Walling  
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Dear Ms Walling

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 4 March 2010. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up 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. Published reports are likely to list the names of contributing organisations but individual contributors will not be identified in the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with eight staff, two employers, and two learners; and scrutiny of the examples of good practice provided. A range of documents, case studies and data were also reviewed.

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

The main strengths

- Overall success rates on Train to Gain provision are high and improving. In 2008/09, overall success rates were 86% for level 2 programmes and 73% for level 3 programmes. Overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes are well above the national average at 78% in 2008/09 for both apprentices and advanced apprentices.
- Sustained job outcomes are high on both New Deal programmes. Some 85% of participants aged 19 to 24 who move into employment sustain

their job for at least six months. For those aged 24 and over, the rate is 87%.

- Collaborative working with employers is very effective. Intraining works particularly closely with employers, responding flexibly to changing industry needs, to ensure that training meets the business needs of the organisation. A detailed evaluation helps employers to identify training needs and business targets for their company. It enables them to operate more effectively and supports staff to progress. As a result of this process, Intraining develops specific training packages for businesses that are delivered at times to suit individual organisations. Frequent, planned review meetings ensure that training continues to meet employers' and learners' needs. Where specific training does not meet funding requirements, Intraining offers short courses to enable employees to develop key skills and knowledge to support them in their job role and possible accreditation.
- Communication with employers is frequent and planned well. Regular meetings with individual employers and learners provide good opportunities to discuss the learners' programme and future assessment needs. They are used very effectively to ensure that learners' on- and off-the-job training is of a high standard. Detailed reviews are used to plan learners' work roles to enable them to complete their training within the planned time. They are also used well to identify additional tasks to be completed at work to support the development of a range of relevant workplace skills. Wider training and development needs and opportunities are also identified through this process, enabling learners to complete additional training courses that meet employers' needs and offer possible promotion opportunities. The introduction of electronic portfolios and monitoring are supporting the review process very effectively. They give learners and employers a much clearer understanding of the progress they are making and help to plan future learning. However, not all assessors are currently using this process.
- Intraining works closely with local communities, using a detailed analysis of local labour market information, to identify skills gaps in employers and match these to identified skills employees may have from declining industries. Following this matching, Intraining provides tailored training to promote progression into employment for those who are unemployed, or are at risk of becoming unemployed. In addition, it works particularly closely with large national employers to promote job opportunities to support unemployed people to access and successfully complete online job applications and other recruitment and selection processes.
- Intraining has a strong commitment to employers and to improving the skills and employability of those of working age. To meet this commitment, all staff are set challenging targets for engaging and sustaining contact with employers, linked to positive outcomes. These targets are particularly effective in increasing the number of employers the organisation works with, and consistently raising the quality of the training that is being offered.

## Areas for further development

- Continue to develop and implement the electronic monitoring and portfolio system to ensure this very highly effective process is accessible to all employers and learners.

As I explained previously, 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

Elaine Clinton  
Her Majesty's Inspector