17 February 2010

Mr D Pomfret
Principal
The College of West Anglia
Tennyson Avenue
King’s Lynn
PE30 2QW

Dear Mr Pomfret

**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 2 February 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.

This visit focused on provision for learners on courses in uniformed (public) services. The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with five staff, five employers and nine 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 seen and to identify some areas for development and outline the main findings below.

**The main strengths**

- Learners benefit greatly from the very close links with the uniformed service employers. Learners receive detailed information on the required employment entry standards. They are able to take recruitment tests for the various uniformed services which, if they are successful, allows them to be fast-tracked through the recruitment process. Learners take part in a wide range of armed forces residential courses which helps them to understand the work of the different trades within the armed forces and to make informed choices about their future careers. The college arranges a
good range of courses for female learners, such as ‘women in the fire service’, as alternatives to the male-only infantry courses, to ensure that they have learning experiences that match those of their male counterparts.

- Uniformed service employers benefit from the close links with the uniformed (public) services staff and the high standards achieved by college learners. Employers are able to recruit learners who are highly motivated and have a good understanding of their future job roles. The close cooperation between uniformed (public) services staff and employers encourages employers to promote employment opportunities to learners from other departments in the college.

- Uniformed (public) services staff make particularly effective use of the good employer links to take part in a wide range of professional development activities to update their knowledge.

- Serving uniformed services personnel visit the college frequently to work with learners. Two part-time members of the uniformed (public) services staff are also serving personnel. They have supported the development of specific links to develop learners’ understanding of the work of the uniformed services. One member of staff has developed equality and diversity courses which are used with a wide range of learners across the college in addition to uniformed (public) services learners.

- Learners aged 14 to 16 on the uniformed (public) services course benefit from appropriate personal development activities, such as assault course training, and talks on policing.

- Some learners are on the Army Bursary scheme. They are paid a bursary for each year of study, are provided with an Army mentor and attend additional Army courses to help prepare them for a career in the Army. These learners gain good employability skills. They are expected to have a good attendance record and to complete their work on time to join the Army.

Areas for further development

- Continue to implement the changes to the management of the first diploma in public services to improve the retention rate further.

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

Charles Hooper
Additional Inspector