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Mr P Carroll  
Deputy Principal  
Trafford College  
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Dear Mr Carroll

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and learners, during my visit on 11 February 2010 to look at work in literacy.

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 included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of learners' work and observations of lessons.

#### Features of good practice

- In all the lessons observed, learners are making good progress. Learners contrast their poor experiences and disappointing outcomes in English and literacy at school with literacy learning at Trafford College. They now greatly enjoy literacy classes, and describe how they have significantly increased their self-confidence, improved their spelling and punctuation and produce structured writing. Parents are now able to help their children with English at home. Learners' achievement of externally accredited literacy qualifications at levels 1 and 2 is good.
- Trafford College structures literacy learning provision effectively. Learners sit external tests when they are ready and then leave the provision. Those still in learning subsequently benefit from studying in smaller groups, with increased levels of individual attention.
- Teaching and learning in literacy are good. They are planned well to take good account of individual learners' needs and abilities. Well-structured lessons include an interesting range of activities and effective group and individual work. Teachers are skilled and experienced. They demonstrate a good

understanding of which strategies will work best with particular learners. They make good use of well-produced and helpful worksheets and handouts which they often design individually for different learners. Teachers have a good rapport with learners and combine both formal and informal approaches effectively in the classroom. Learners generally work productively in lessons and at a good pace, with higher level learners receiving good levels of challenge.

- The college has a well-organised and considered approach to initial and diagnostic assessment, to the identification of learners' support needs, and to the provision of additional learner support in classes, individually and in small groups. Teachers pay particularly close attention to the recording of learners' support activities and progress. They ensure very effective communication between learner support, vocational and personal tutors.
- The college offers a wide range of literacy learning. This includes discrete provision and in-class support for learners aged 16 to 18 on full-time vocational courses, additional learning support for individuals and small groups, learning in the workplace for adults, and provision located in the community. The college has well-established links with the local council and local employers enabling it to contribute effectively to meeting workforce development needs in literacy. Provision is very flexible, offered at times and locations which suit learners and employers.

#### Areas for development

- We discussed the need to increase learners' use of information and learning technology (ILT). Adult learners describe how their children use ILT to support their literacy skills development at school and regularly state they would also find this useful. Greater use of ILT would also provide greater variety for learners, particularly for those learners who learn in the workplace.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathleen Tyler  
Additional Inspector