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Miss C Turner
Director
The Care Learning Centre
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Dear Miss C Turner

Ofsted 2010-11 survey inspection programme: numeracy - tackling the challenge of ensuring that young people and adults gain the numeracy skills they need for their careers and personal lives

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 May 2010 to look at your work in numeracy.

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, learners and employers; scrutiny of relevant documents; observation of four learning sessions; and visits to four workplaces.

Overall, the Care Learning Centre (CLC) is good at tackling the challenge of ensuring that young people and adults gain the numeracy skills they need for their careers and personal lives.

Key findings

- The Care Learning Centre is successfully implementing its strategic decision to make numeracy, as well as literacy, an integral part of all its programmes. All teaching, learning and assessment take place in the workplace. Take-up of both Skills for Life subjects by learners on the Train to Gain NVQ in care programme is very high. The CLC has developed very good partnerships with employers to enable them to recognise the benefits of developing learners' numeracy skills alongside the vocational specialism.
- Staff have very effectively integrated the application of number into the apprenticeships and NVQ training. Very well-designed assignments that evaluate learners' vocational skills include assessment of numeracy skills that are relevant to work in care homes. In this way, apprentices who are

exempt from taking the application of number qualification are required to work on the numeracy skills required for their work.

- Managers use the self-assessment process very well to evaluate the health and social care and Skills for Life provision. However, the CLC does not self-assess numeracy as a separate subject. Managers rely heavily on qualification success rates and monitoring records, such as the individual learning plans, to evaluate the numeracy provision. They do not monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of numeracy well enough. Similarly, the improvement plan does not include the specific actions required to improve the quality of provision.
- Teaching and learning in numeracy are satisfactory. All training advisers teach and assess both numeracy and literacy. Only about a third of training advisers are numeracy specialists. In the learning sessions observed, training advisers provided good individual support and used a good range of resources to help learners develop the specific numeracy skills identified as areas for improvement. However, in the weaker sessions, they did not focus enough on promoting independent learning. They tended to provide too many prompts and did not give learners sufficient time to work out how to tackle a problem for themselves.
- The CLC is implementing a well-formulated programme for staff development and training. Managers have arranged for all staff taking part in the teacher-training programme from September 2010 to follow an extended programme which includes training towards a qualification in teaching numeracy at level 4. Sharing of good practice in teaching numeracy and the use of numeracy-related staff development resources are satisfactory.
- Overall success rates in Skills for Life on Train to Gain are high and above the national rates, although national figures are not available separately for numeracy and literacy. First-time pass rates in numeracy tests are high. The learners interviewed said they had gained significant confidence in carrying numeracy tasks at work and in preparation for their tests. They were pleased that they could tackle calculations, such as division and working out percentages, that they had previously found intimidating.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing thorough processes to evaluate all aspects of numeracy teaching, learning and assessment as part of self-assessment and quality improvement
- improving the teaching and learning of numeracy to ensure that learners become more independent so that they continue to develop their understanding of mathematical thinking and their ability to complete numeracy related tasks after they have completed their programmes
- implementing the staff development plans to develop the expertise of training advisers in teaching numeracy.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop numeracy at the Care Learning Centre.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Adriaanse
Her Majesty's Inspector