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Lowell Williams
Principal
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Dear Lowell

Ofsted inspection of ITE provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications in the lifelong learning/further education sector

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your provision on 19 to 21 October 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and to a published national overview report. This report will identify the overall quality of provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications and identify the overall strengths and areas for development. However, in line with previous practice, inspectors will not make graded judgements of the quality of the provision in each centre; they will evaluate and feed back identified strengths and any points for further development. These are outlined below for your centre.

The published overview report will list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text.

Context

Dudley College has offered Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) and Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) since 2007 through a partnership with Wolverhampton University for an increasing cohort of trainees. Following a re-organisation the university has placed a reduced cap on trainee numbers on the college in the last two years. As a result of the cap, and with continuing strong interest, the college offered an OCR accredited PTLLS in 2009/10 and in the current year is offering an OCR CTLLS to ensure that learners are able to continue to access such training.

Because the number of trainees involved in the inspection was so small, this letter identifies the main findings rather than evaluating the strengths of the provision and any areas for development.

Key findings

- The success rate on the first OCR PTLLS programme in 2009/10 was 92% overall with 100% achievement. 25% (10) out of the original cohort have progressed onto the new OCR CTLLS programme with the vast majority of the remainder achieving a positive outcome.
- The college has a clear rationale for the OCR CTLLS programme, to continue to offer opportunities in teacher training for those who require it. However not all trainees are aware of the differences between the two CTLLS programmes it offers.
- The OCR has clear recruitment criteria which the college adheres to. All trainees fulfil the minimum requirements of the course and all have undertaken an initial assessment. No learners are currently identified as having an additional learning need.
- Feedback from teaching observations is evaluative, detailed, supportive and developmental. The tutor and mentor carefully identify a few key learning points, which will have the greatest impact on the quality of teaching, for the trainee to focus on. Teachers and mentors are experienced and well-qualified. Their roles complement each other well in supporting the trainee's development.
- Mentoring arrangements are appropriate. College mentors, who oversee two trainees, are experienced and well-qualified. The remaining work-based mentors fulfil OCR's requirements. All mentors have received course and mentor handbooks, and have been contacted by the course tutor. A few mentors attended a college briefing on the role and all are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- The college has opted to include a substantial unit on equality and diversity which ensures that trainees get a greater exposure to equality and diversity than with the alternative CTTL programme. Trainees value this focus highly and the teaching sessions and resources prepare them well to teach in diverse contexts. Equality and diversity is appropriately highlighted by tutors and mentors in lesson observation feedback.
- Trainees have good access to books and other learning resources in the college library. Trainees make reasonable use of the college's virtual learning environment where lecture notes and assignments are posted. The majority of trainees use email to communicate with the tutor.

As explained in the inspection guidance, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

William Baidoe-Ansah
Her Majesty's Inspector