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Mr J Mutton
Principal
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Dear Mr Mutton

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 Certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (CTLLS) provision on 2 to 4 May 2012, for the time your staff gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which they 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.

Outcomes for trainees

Success rates for the CTLLS course have risen significantly over three years and are now high; they are well above national benchmarks. Both retention and successful completion rates have risen and are high. Trainees' attendance is also very high. At the time of my visit the current cohort had just completed the programme; it is clear that these improvements have been sustained and that the success rate for this cohort is very likely to be 100%.



All trainees are on the most appropriate course. Careful attention is given to making sure that the course matches their role well and takes full account of their future career and professional development plans. The college provides very clear progression routes through Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector (PTLLS), CTTLS and Diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS) programmes. There are many examples of trainees who progress through the courses as their role changes and others who have taken on more responsibility and/or teaching hours as they progress through the qualifications. There is also very good progression on to the college's own continuing professional development (CPD) modules/courses and trainees are actively encouraged to undergo further professional development. The college uses a rigorous process of interviews, tasks, initial assessments and checking teaching hours and mentoring arrangements. This ensures that individual support needs are clearly identified and lead to high quality personalised support; importantly, trainees are 'not set up to fail'. The support is particularly strong for those who might need help with the assignments and academic writing.

Initial assessments are used well to inform each trainee's individual learning plan (ILP) and initial action plan. The college also usefully uses the first formal lesson observation to establish a baseline for each trainee. This puts the college in a strong position to place more focus on monitoring each trainee's progress against individual expectations, as well as ensuring that they meet the requirements of the qualification. The ILP also requires trainees to repeat the initial assessment at the end of the course; this helpfully enables them to measure their 'distance travelled' and to appreciate how much progress they have made.

Trainees are much more confident teachers as a result of the training. They are able to plan and use a range of different teaching approaches and they are much clearer about the purposes of assessment and how to assess learners' progress and achievement. The trainees are reflective and clear about the need to evaluate learning in order to evaluate the impact of their teaching and/or support they provide for learners.

The good progress trainees make through the course is due to:

- the quality of the training sessions, best summed up by: 'everything we do I can apply to my lessons' - the sessions are informative, active and lively; trainees can relate the theory covered in the sessions to their practice; and they value the feedback from the tutor and their peers following micro-teaching
- the well-planned assignments that promote trainees' thinking and reflection about their teaching; many trainees are stimulated by the intellectual challenge and all appreciate the high quality of the feedback they receive
- mentoring arrangements that mean that all trainees have mentors, almost always in their specialist area - this means that all trainees receive extensive practical advice and guidance that leads to improvement in their teaching



- lessons observations that are generally well-spaced through the course and lead to feedback and development targets that support each trainee's progress well
- individual tutorials that are generally also well spaced throughout the course and valued by trainees - they are a key part of making sure that all get the support and guidance they need - they also encourage trainees to reflect, drawing on feedback from lesson observations and their reflective journals
- the effective collaboration between the CTLLS tutor and mentors
- trainees' use of their reflective learning journals and how well these are monitored by the tutor - when they are completed well, they 'tell the story' of the trainee's progress and development extremely well
- the very careful tracking of trainees' teaching hours, the embedding of functional skills in their teaching, achievement of assignments and of all other requirements of the qualification.

The key strengths

- High quality leadership and management, demonstrating strong capacity to sustain high quality and to secure further improvements where required.
- The course is very well managed and organised with comprehensive and clear documentation; the position statements, focusing on specific issues, are particularly useful in identifying what is working well and what needs some further development.
- The very strong leadership that provides a clear sense of direction with a focus on how to continue to improve the course and the outcomes for the trainees.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning that has a clear focus on the analysis of the outcomes for trainees and how to sustain and improve these further. The team is already thinking about how to deal with the proposed changes to teacher training in further education and skills and how to tighten even further links with college-based continuing professional development.
- The experienced and knowledgeable team of teacher trainers who provide high quality training sessions.
- The initial assessments ensure that all trainees are on the most appropriate course, that they receive high quality personal support matched to their particular needs that have led to significant improvements in the success rates.
- Clear progression routes, including on to college CPD modules, and the encouraging of trainees to continue with further professional development.
- The overall quality of monitoring, feedback and personal support for trainees and the extensive good practical guidance and advice they receive given.



- The attention given to meeting each individual trainee's personal and professional needs.

The key areas for further development

To improve feedback to trainees and developmental target setting even further:

- develop a clear, sharp set of lesson observation criteria, based on the college's own lesson criteria and taking account of the professional standards
- increase the focus of all evaluations on 'learning' - observations and feedback on trainees' teaching, trainees' own evaluations of their teaching and in setting developmental targets
- bring together for trainees the evaluative feedback on their teaching with the resulting developmental targets and action plan
- link this process more closely to the reflective learning journal - encouraging trainees to reflect and record their progress, to evaluate the impact of their training on their teaching, and linking more closely their evaluations of their own learning and evaluations of their teaching.

To help each trainee make as much progress as they can:

- rigorously monitor individual trainee's progress against clear expectations established through the selection procedures and from the first baseline assessment of their teaching.

Success rates are already very high. However, these are based on the pass rate rather than how well trainees achieve beyond this threshold level. The analysis of this progress made by trainees against individual expectations should be used to take self-evaluation and improvement planning to an even higher level.

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

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector

