



Dudley College of Technology

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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Provider reference
130475

Introduction

Dudley College of Technology was inspected in March 2004. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in sport, literacy and numeracy, construction (including work-based learning), engineering (work-based learning), hairdressing (work-based learning), health and social care (work-based learning) which were found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory curriculum areas and work-based learning were re-inspected on 1 and 2 February 2006. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

| Curriculum area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Sport | 4 | 3 |

Context

The college offers full time courses which include the BTEC First Diploma and National Certificate in Sport, AS and A2 Sport and Physical Education and the NVQ Instructing in Exercise and Fitness. There are 125 full-time and 75 part-time students. The majority of full-time students follow additional fitness and coaching qualifications. There are no courses at level 1 or 4.

Strengths

- Good pass rates in vocational enrichment courses
- High success rates in key skills
- Good sharing of effective practice
- Good course management

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on A2 Sport and Physical Education

- Retention rates in many full-time courses are below the national average

Achievement and standards

The high success rates in 2003/04 on the majority of the full-time courses have declined in the last year and two of these courses have dropped below the national average in 2004/05. Since the introduction of an NVQ level 2 programme retention rates have improved. Key skill success rates have shown significant improvements with the majority now above the national average. Students follow additional fitness and coaching qualifications with much success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory or above. However, in some classes there are insufficient opportunities for students to extend their learning and demonstrate applied knowledge. The sports accommodation is old but it has been improved to provide a safe and appropriate space for learning. Learning resources are satisfactory and provide ample opportunities for a broad range of practical exercises. Assessments are now well planned and quality checks are regularly completed to the satisfaction of the awarding bodies. Work experience is integral to all full-time courses. There are good links with local schools and the sports and leisure industry. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Good use is made of the individual learning plans to set targets and monitor progress.

Leadership and management

Leadership and Management are good. A new curriculum leader appointed since the last inspection has raised the standards of course management and compliance monitoring. However, the performance of the A2 students over the last three years is still to be addressed. The sport and travel team work closely and share best practice across the division. Risk assessments are now routinely completed and actions addressed.

| Curriculum area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Literacy and numeracy | 4 | 4 |

Context

The college screens learners to identify and assess their literacy and numeracy levels and needs at entry. In 2005/06 1648 out of 2749 learners were assessed as having support needs of which 761 (46%) took up the

support. Literacy and numeracy is delivered in discrete classes, through additional learning support and through integrated provision.

Strengths

- Detailed monitoring of learners' progress in adult literacy

Areas for improvement

- Poor achievement in literacy and numeracy
- Insufficient differentiation to meet individual needs
- Inadequate monitoring of initial assessment
- Ineffective systems to collect and analyse data

Achievement and standards

Success rates, whilst improving in 2004/05 towards the national average, are not yet satisfactory and remain low. For example, key skill success rates in application of number level 1 improved from 18% to 25% and in communications level 2 from 7% to 29%. The majority of learners on key skills courses and the certificate in adult literacy and numeracy do not achieve. Learners make satisfactory progress in classes and extend and practise skills in literacy and numeracy. Many learners have confident verbal skills. In some classes attendance is poor.

Quality of provision

Tutors plan classes with care and account for broad literacy and numeracy needs. There are insufficiently targeted individual learning objectives, and detailed targets are generally not set. However, in adult literacy clear setting and tracking of targets and progress was evident. Initial assessment of learners' support needs is not always addressed or met in a timely fashion. Individual learning plans are in place and contain useful basic information but most are not yet sufficiently robust. However, in adult literacy, individual learning plans are detailed, active and key documents which are used by tutors and learners to plan and monitor progress.

Leadership and management

Managers have made some progress. This has yet to have a significant impact on learners' success. The self-assessment report is too generous and does not take sufficient account of poor achievement, focussing too much on developing systems. Support provided to help tutors improve is not yet leading to sufficiently effective target setting and differentiation in classes.

Systems to collect and analyse data are not effective in helping staff and managers to target actions to improve.

| Curriculum area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Construction (including work-based learning) | 4 | 2 |

Context

Construction offers craft and technician courses at level 1, 2 and 3. These include full-time programmes for 16-18 year olds, a woman only NVQ plumbing course and apprenticeships for work-based learners. Current programmes include technician studies, trowel occupations, carpentry and joinery, plumbing and electrical installation. There are also bespoke courses for the gas, electrical and water industries. At the time of inspection, there were 1961 learners, of whom 1463 were adults. There were some 110 employed apprentices.

Strengths

- Improved success rates on many courses
- Good retention and pass rates on plumbing courses
- Effective use of ILT
- High standard of student portfolios

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress of framework completions in electrical installation and construction crafts
- Poor attendance in carpentry
- Poor co-ordination of work-based learning

Achievement and standards

Success rates on many college based courses are at or above national averages. In plumbing they have significantly improved. For 2002/03, the pass rate for NVQ plumbing level 2 was 8% and in 2004/05 82%. Retention was 14% in 2002/03 and in 2004/05 75%. Progress on apprenticeship programmes is slow, particularly in both electrical and construction crafts. Only 6 out of 19 electrical installation learners have achieved the full framework. Attendance in carpentry lessons is poor.

Quality of provision

In theory lessons teachers effectively use ILT to enhance learning. Well planned lessons use interactive whiteboards alongside visual aids and learner workbooks. Learners are motivated. The standard of portfolios is good in plumbing and bricklaying. These are well presented and consist of photographs and witness testimony with good action plans. All learners are screened for additional support but students are often taken out of practical lessons at the expense of practical skills development. The resources are to industrial standards. For example, in electrical installation, students have access to well equipped workshops and up to date inspection and testing equipment.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of construction has improved significantly since the last inspection. Weaknesses identified on college based programmes have been fully addressed. New appointments have been effective. The provision has been rationalised and is focused on learner success. The self-assessment-report is self critical and accurately reflects the provision. Co-ordination of work-based learning is poor. Individual learning plans do not always reflect the progress of work-based learners. There is a lack of liaison with the work-based learning support team and the curriculum team.

| Work-based learning area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Hairdressing | 4 | 3 |

Context

The college offers work-based learning programmes in Hairdressing. There are currently 49 learners following the apprenticeship framework. Learners spend one day per week in hairdressing salons in and around Dudley.

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning
- High standard of practical work by first year learners

Areas for improvement

- Poor communication between teams
- Insufficient updating of individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Low success rates in 2002/03 on the apprenticeship framework have improved and are now satisfactory. The way in which achievement data is collected and processed has improved framework achievements. Retention is improving. In 2003/04 only 35% of learners were retained, however the college have put strategies in place and current learner retention is 88%. Learners apply themselves conscientiously and professionally and develop good practical hairdressing skills. Most learners' are making satisfactory or better progress in practical lessons. In particular first year apprentices demonstrate good practical skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are good. In theory and practical lessons learners are well motivated and take responsibility for their learning. Key skills lessons are good and relevant to hairdressing. Teaching is supportive and individual coaching is effective and learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Internal verification is now satisfactory. The use of smart targets and learner tracking has improved. Reviews are good, thorough and regular. Individual learning plans are not updated sufficiently and completed targets and reviews are not recorded in these plans.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However there is a lack of effective communication between the curriculum area and the work-based learning team. Up to date documents are not shared with the curriculum area. The self-assessment is largely accurate. The college have appointed a new hairdressing work-based learning manager and work-based assessor, which is having an impact on improving the provision. Actions to improve the quality of the provision are mostly effective but further improvement is needed.

| Work-based learning area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Engineering | 4 | 3 |

Context

The college offers a wide range of apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships from level 1 to level 3 in engineering manufacture and motor vehicle repair and manufacture. There are currently 77 learners following a work-based learning programme.

Strengths

- High achievements on mechanical services
- Good key skills planning and teaching
- Good use of ILT in many lessons

Areas for improvement

- Low achievements in motor vehicle
- Ineffective workplace assessment practice
- Weak target setting

Achievement and standards

Apprenticeship success rates have improved since the last inspection. At the advanced level success rates are now at the national average, but in 2004/05 apprenticeships were still low. During the 12 months prior to the inspection the proportion of apprentices who left the programme with a full framework was high in mechanical services. However, this in part is due to the large number of learners who should have completed the framework much earlier. Success rates for motor vehicle apprentices have remained poor. Pass rates on the technical certificate courses followed by work-based learners are high.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use relevant examples and techniques drawn from current industrial practice. The planning and teaching of key skills are good. ILT is used effectively in many lessons. The system used to record the assessment of work-based motor vehicle apprentices is good. General monitoring of individuals' progress is effective, but individual NVO unit tracking is not well developed. Internal verification is inconsistent in its application. In engineering, internal verification plans and reports do not fully inform the management of learning. Assessors regularly visit engineering learners in the work place. However, opportunities to capture naturally occurring evidence that would demonstrate learner competence are often missed. Generally assessment practice is satisfactory, but there is considerable variation in practice.

Leadership and management

The management of the work-based programmes is satisfactory. Teams meet regularly to plan and discuss individual learner progress. A system that identifies learners who are likely to take longer on their programme than planned is working well. Teachers understand and use the new tracking system. However, target setting for individual learners is sometimes weak. Some apprentices are not clear of the precise progress they are making or

what is expected of them to complete different aspects of their programme in a timely manner.

| Work- based learning area | Original grade | Re-inspection grade |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Health and social care | 4 | 4 |

Context

There are a wide range of courses for full-time and part-time learners including health and social care, adult care, counselling and public services. Courses range from entry level to level 4. There are 243 learners aged 16 – 18 years and 41 adults on full-time courses. There are 1034 adult learners and 71 learners aged 16 to 18 years on part-time courses. There are currently 6 learners on apprenticeship programmes.

Strengths

- Effective linking of training

Areas for improvement

- Poor achievement of frameworks
- Inadequate target setting to improve learner achievement

Achievement and standards

Achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor. In 2003 and 2004 there was 0% achievement in early years and care for both apprentices and advanced apprentices. Progress in the achievement of the technical certificate for learners currently on programme is slow. However, arrangements are in place for the technical certificate and key skills to be started at the beginning of the qualification. The standard of learners work is satisfactory. Learners apply their knowledge and skills to improve their practice in the workplace.

Quality of provision

On and off the job training is effectively linked. NVQ assessors attend off the job training sessions and are available to support learners. Regular visits are made to the work place and employers are kept informed of learner progress. Teaching is satisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans clearly outline what it is intended that learners should achieve. Key skills are not fully embedded in the vocational curriculum. Reference is made to key skills in the learning outcomes but not in tutor or learner activity. There are missed

opportunities for the assessment of key skills in the work place. Target setting is inadequate to improve learner achievement. Short-term targets are not set to identify where progress is needed or how this is to be achieved. Tutors do not identify specific and measurable targets or closely monitor subsequent actions.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Actions have been put in place to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. These have not had time to impact on learner achievement and progress is slow. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Some sharing of good practice has taken place through staff development. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the remaining areas for improvement but is overgenerous in the grade awarded.