

RE-INSPECTION OF HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

The provision in engineering, information and communication technology, and hospitality and catering is now satisfactory.

Background

Herefordshire College of Technology was inspected in May 2002. 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 the engineering, information and communication technology, and the hospitality and catering areas which were found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, all unsatisfactory provision will be re-inspected normally during one week.

If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of the engineering, information and communication technology, and hospitality and catering areas took place on 10-11

December 2002, and 5-6 March 2003. The final re-inspection visit took place on 23-27 February 2004.

Engineering

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good pass rates
- good links with the employers of work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates on some courses
- inadequate resources in workshops
- insufficient resources in sound engineering
- lack of effective action planning for individual students
- much dull teaching of theoretical aspects of courses
- weak self-assessment procedures and practice.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress had been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Engineering courses now have good retention rates. Pass rates are improving but, for adults, are still below national averages. In engineering systems maintenance and sound engineering competences, retention and pass rates are very good. Achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is unsatisfactory. Students' course work at all levels is satisfactory. Punctuality at classes is good and attendance at the lessons inspected was satisfactory at 79%.

Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is insufficiently good teaching. Teachers plan lessons well, make good use of learning technology and make frequent checks on learning. There is good training in the workplace. Some less experienced teachers have less well developed teaching skills. Feedback to learners does not provide them with sufficient information to help them to improve.

Resources in workshops and sound engineering are now sufficient to meet current requirements. There is a good range of courses in engineering. Many students gain additional qualifications. They receive good support and complete individual learning plans. The internal verification process has failed to identify some poor practice in assessment. Self-assessment arrangements have improved and a revised course review system is beginning to work effectively.

Information and communication technology

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for part-time adult programmes
- good teaching on adult programmes
- a wide range of part-time courses
- good management of part-time adult courses.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates for full-time courses
- poor pass rates for key skills programmes

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning on full-time courses
- no manager with overall responsibility for ICT
- ineffective management of full-time courses.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress had been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

There are good pass rates on courses for adults. The CLAIT and IBT courses have been above national averages for retention and achievement for the last three years. Courses for 16-18 year old students are less successful. Retention on the AVCE course has declined and is low. Pass rates for key skills are still poor and below national averages at level 1 and level 2. Students show good understanding of basic concepts and acquire good practical skills. Attendance at lessons inspected was good at 84%.

Standards of teaching and learning are now good across the range of provision. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods, plan lessons well, prepare good learning materials and use learning technology effectively. Assessment is carried out regularly and effectively, and teachers provide helpful feedback.

The management of ICT has changed and improved, and is now satisfactory. Progress has been made in improving the quality of provision and developing a more coherent approach across the college. There is good support for students. A wide range of courses, with good opportunities for progression, is available for adult students, but action to address deficiencies in the curriculum for 16-18 year old students has been slow.

Hospitality and catering

In the May 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good links with schools
- good progression from NVQ level 2 to NVQ level 3 courses.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- poor development and low standard of students' practical skills
- poor development and low levels of achievement in key skills
- low retention rates on NVQ courses
- insufficiently rigorous assessment and internal verification
- inadequate individual learning plans to monitor student progress
- a narrow range of hospitality and catering provision
- ineffective management of the curriculum area.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress had been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

There are high pass rates for most qualifications, and for NVQ supervisory management and NVQ food preparation and cooking the rates are above national averages. Pass rates continue to be unsatisfactory for some courses. Retention rates have improved and are above national averages for some NVQ courses. Students now develop good practical skills in food preparation and service, but specialist pastry skills are not as well developed. There is effective development of students' key skills, particularly in ICT.

Standards of teaching and learning are now satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well, give thorough briefings and ensure that students are well prepared for practical sessions. Close supervision ensures that students are corrected where necessary. Effective de-briefing sessions involve students in reflecting on their own performance. Some aspects of assessing and monitoring students' progress are still not fully effective.

Leadership and management are now satisfactory. Self-assessment has addressed many weaknesses, but internal verification procedures are not fully implemented on some courses. There are good links with local schools. The range of provision is still narrow. Some students have been

enrolled onto programmes at too low a level, despite their good achievement in GCSE subjects. Changing facilities for students remain inadequate.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.

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