

8 June 2012

Graeme Blench
Assistant Principal
City of Sunderland College
Shiney Row Campus
Philadelphia
Houghton-le-Spring
DH4 4TL

Dear Graeme

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

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave during my visit on w/c 30 April, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information that 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.

Outcomes for trainees

Success rates are currently high on the Certificate in teaching in the lifelong Learning sector (CTLLS) programme. Rates have improved during each of the past three years and are now around fourteen percentage points above national average. Retention has remained stable at or slightly above national averages for the past three years. On Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector (PTLLS) courses, success rates are at or slightly below national average, and have been so for the past three years. Retention on these courses has also remained around the national average for the past three years.

All trainees make good progress from their different starting points, and for some progress is very swift. At the end of the PTLLS and CTLLS courses, trainees are able



to talk fluently and enthusiastically about ways that training has improved their professional practice and enhanced their understanding of students' needs.

A good proportion of PTLLS trainees progress onto CTLLS courses, with a good number progressing who did not intend to do so when they began training. A good proportion of CTLLS trainees progress to Professional Certificate or Professional Graduate Certificate in Post-compulsory Education (PCET) courses linked to the University of Sunderland. In 2009/10 around one third of completing CTLLS trainees began PCET training, and all were successful.

The key strengths

- Good alignment of the initial teacher education (ITE) team and provision with successful college-wide improvement in teaching and learning, coaching and with quality enhancement initiatives.
- Very productive and successful strategies to enhance understanding of teaching and learning amongst learning support, human resources and other administrative and non-teaching staff through PTLLS training courses.
- A three-year trend of high success and retention rates for CTLLS courses, with current success rates around fourteen percentage points above national average.
- Good progression for trainees from PTLLS to CTLLS courses and from awarding body qualifications to higher education institution awards at graduate level.
- Trainees demonstrate a very good understanding of their own progress and development, and are able to identify clear improvements to practice as a result of training.
- Trainees are highly motivated and engaged, and have high personal and professional standards in their approaches to the courses and their own learners.
- High levels of support for trainees from a cohesive ITE team.

Areas for development

- Improve success rates for PTLLS courses in all modes of delivery.
- Improve the quality of classrooms available for ITE programmes so that trainees may develop their practice in a well-resourced, flexible and dynamic learning environment.
- Enhance the quality of trainees' micro-teaching experience by establishing guidelines for peer and tutor feedback that focus more consistently on learning and on strategies to enable learning.
- Develop electronic portfolios for trainees to enhance understanding of, and familiarity with, e-portfolios and the electronic individual learning plans that are used by their students.



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.

Many thanks again for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit.

Yours sincerely

Richard Beynon

Her Majesty's Inspector

