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Ms L Burr  
Director  
The Academy (Malton)  
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Dear Ms Burr

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: the role of employers in work-related education and training

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation during my visit on 12 November 2009. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit provided valuable information that will contribute to our national survey of good practice in the role that employers play in work-related education and training. Published reports are likely to list the names of contributing organisations but individual contributors will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with six staff, four employers and seven learners, and scrutiny of the examples of good practice provided. A range of documents, case studies and data were reviewed.

I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice seen and to identify some areas for development, and outline the main findings.

The main strengths

- Timely success rates are high and well above the national rates. Overall success rates on hairdressing and beauty therapy apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are consistently high, although in 2007/08 they declined and were close to the national rate.
- The Academy has particularly strong, sustained links and very good working relationships with employers, which it has developed over a

number of years. In addition, the provider has increased its employer base significantly in the past year from 28 to 55. Salon owners receive good support and information to run their businesses effectively, such as updates in legislation on payroll and holiday entitlement.

- Academy tutors spend much time working in commercial salons, and keep their knowledge and practical skills up to date. Employers appreciate the benefits to learners of the tutors' experience and currency in the industry.
- Employers' views are regularly sought and acted upon to improve the provision and the opportunities for learners. Contact and communication with employers is regular and effective.
- On- and off-the-job training are linked closely and planned well. Employers have a very good understanding of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units. They use the learners' action plans well to help them progress and maximise opportunity for assessment. Assessors and workplace staff collaborate well to ensure that learners have individual training and assessment programmes.
- Workplace managers provide learners with good additional specialist vocational training and practice. They support The Academy well in preparing learners for competitions and shows.
- Employers have a good understanding of learners' progress and the review process is structured well and rigorous.
- Many workplace staff have gained the assessor award, with the encouragement and support of The Academy. They gain a particularly good understanding of the apprenticeship frameworks and assessment methodology. As a result, they provide timely training, assessment and support for learners.

The main area for further development

- Increase the number of work-based assessors to provide assessment opportunities for learners.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the provision. If there are any points you wish to discuss, please contact me. We gather information on the impact of our visits. To this end, you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete six to 12 months after the visit. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Gallacher  
Additional Inspector