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Mr G Slotwiner
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Dear Mr Slotwiner

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you again for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and learners, during my visit on 9 February 2010 to look at work in literacy.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of learners' work and observations of teaching and learning.

Features of good practice

- Venture Learning has a well thought out, whole organisational approach to the development of Skills for Life, with a clear strategy in place for literacy learning. Managers of provision for learners aged 14 to 16 and for learners over 16 learners have a good understanding of literacy learning. They provide staff with helpful training and support.
- The organisation assiduously keeps up to date with developments in literacy learning. It is currently actively involved in piloting functional skills qualifications, and managers have developed very helpful workbooks for learners to use for their functional skills development.
- Senior managers invest significantly in resources for literacy learning. Many of the discrete functional or key skills lessons that apprenticeship learners attend are double staffed to provide extra help. Venture Learning also provides effective additional literacy support to individuals and has recently purchased a new computer suite for learners' use.

Areas for development

- We discussed the need to continue to secure improvements in teaching and learning in literacy to maximise learners' progress. These should include better planning to meet individual learners' needs, a greater variety of classroom activities, and the routine use of information and learning technology in lessons.
- Venture Learning's own observations of literacy teaching and learning need to provide clearer judgements and more clearly identified action points to secure improvements in lessons.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen Tyler
Additional Inspector