

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING of the former Rugby College provision now managed by Warwickshire College and catering as a part of Stratford-upon-Avon College.

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

The overall provision in hospitality, leisure and tourism is now satisfactory.

Background

Rugby College was inspected in March 2003, and merged with Warwickshire College in August 2003. The provision of hospitality and catering in the former Rugby College was passed to Stratford-upon-Avon College, which has COVE status for this work. The remainder of the provision at the former Rugby College continues to be managed by Warwickshire College. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection of the former Rugby College under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act in March 2003. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in business, and hospitality, leisure and tourism, 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 Monitoring Visit

In accordance with the above procedures, and because the colleges have merged, a re-inspection monitoring visit of business, and hospitality, sport and travel took place on 27 and 28 April 2004 involving Warwickshire College and Stratford-upon-Avon College.

Hospitality, leisure and tourism

In the March 2003 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 pass rates in food preparation and travel services
- Good teaching in travel and tourism
- Extensive and challenging enrichment activities

Weaknesses

- Low retention on sport and travel courses
- Students' underdeveloped practical skills in food preparation
- Ineffective management in some courses
- Weak assessment and internal verification

The majority of enrolments on the Rugby campus in this area of learning in 2003/04 are in hospitality. Following the re-inspection monitoring visit of April 2004, inspectors judged that good progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area has now reached a satisfactory level.

Some good progress has been made on the weaknesses identified at the inspection. There were twelve observations of teaching and learning overall, covering practical and theory classes. Nine were in catering. None of the teaching was unsatisfactory. An appropriate standard of teaching in travel has been maintained since the inspection. In a lesson on holiday contracts, students related theory to practical activities well. Travel students on travel shop courses are given practical experience in the on-site shop and in some high street travel shops. Practical work on map orientation in sport was challenging and students responded positively. In catering, two-thirds of the teaching was good and one-third was satisfactory, though none was excellent or very good. Some good teaching was seen in food preparation theory, where part-time students made good progress and drew well from their on-the-job experience to develop their understanding of new work. In food production and food service, in a realistic working environment in the training kitchen and restaurant at Rugby, the practical work was judged good because the teaching was well planned and organised and students made progress towards well-defined learning goals. They gained practical skills, working under pressure to produce saleable products of a commercial standard. The quality of NVQ students' learning varied according to the wide range of their abilities, but the most able made good progress and the teachers ensured that the work was differently structured and paced to allow all students to make some progress.

In food preparation and production there was evidence of satisfactory, sometimes good, development of practical food preparation and cookery skills. For example, NVQ 2 students in a production class carefully prepared a julienne of leaks and carrots to garnish a main course dish, and could describe how and why it would be used. In an evening production class, all students contributed to the good standard of the finished dishes that were sent to the dining room, and the best students demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of the work in hand.

Course organisation and management are satisfactory overall. Stratford College has deployed a programme manager to manage the provision on the Rugby site, and the head of school for catering at Stratford closely monitors developments at this campus, ensuring that the management practices of the COVE at Stratford have been adopted at Rugby. Warwickshire College have recently appointed a programme area manager for sport and travel to the Rugby campus in recognition of the need to ensure there is good co-ordination of provision and consistent implementation of policies and procedures across all college campuses. While there is consistent application of procedures in the sports provision, this is not currently always the case in travel. For example, there is ineffective tracking of students' progress on the NVQ level 2 in travel services and insufficient communications between assessors and teachers to co-ordinate students' assessments. The on-site travel agency assessor has no access to schemes of work or lesson plans and does not attend any curriculum meetings at Rugby. A rota is in place for students to work in the travel agency, but the assessor is not automatically given this information.

Weak assessment and internal verification have been improved overall. In hospitality, the Stratford-upon-Avon College systems of internal verification and quality assurance have been applied to the provision at Rugby. Assessment is timely, accurate and carefully recorded. Student portfolios are well organised and meet the requirements of the Hospitality Awarding Body for NVQs. In sport, the assessment and internal verification systems are applied consistently and meet awarding body requirements. There is standardised documentation for assessment and internal verification for the first diploma course. In travel, underpinning knowledge assignments and internal verification are in place. However, the inconsistent updating of internal verification records between campuses has led to some students and teachers only recently being informed that some evidence in portfolios does not meet the required standards for the NVQ level 2 in travel services.

The in-year retention rate overall is satisfactory across the provision. There has been good progress in raising retention rates in sport and travel since the last inspection with most courses currently above national averages. At the time of the visit, the in-year retention rate on the first diploma in sport course is 94% and the in-year retention rate for the NVQ level 2 travel services course is currently above the national average. The travel agent certificate has also shown improvement but the in-year retention rate remains below the national average. The student attendance rate is good.

The re-inspection of business at the Rugby campus is incomplete and an overall judgement stating that it is now satisfactory cannot be given. This area will be re-inspected at the end of the stipulated two years, in the spring term of 2005.