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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education**  
**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection of Essential Skills Provision in North Down and Ards Institute of Further and Higher Education**

**November 2006**

## Grading System

ETI is piloting a new 6-point grading scale to replace the original 4-point scale as set out below. Where a grade is recorded in this report, the grade is given on the revised scales.

<b>ORIGINAL GRADE</b>	<b>REVISED GRADE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
1	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence.
1	2	Consistently good; major strengths.
2	3	Important strengths in most of provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address.
2	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed.
3	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action.
4	6	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action.

## **NORTH DOWN AND ARDS INSTITUTE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION: FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROVISION**

The Focused Inspection of Essential Skills carried out in North Down and Ards Institute of Further and Higher Education in March 2004 found the provision had significant weakness. The Follow-up Inspection in November 2005 assessed the provision as having more weakness than strengths. The areas for improvement included the general management of the programme and in particular:

- the achievement of learners in external assessments;
- initial and on-going assessment to inform learning;
- the teaching approaches and learning materials; and
- the quality assurance procedures and staff development

As a result, the Department for Employment and Learning informed the Institute that for funding to continue, the provision had to improve significantly. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) was commissioned to monitor the provision over the next six months. Discussions took place with the Senior Management Team in the Institute and a series of visits was completed between May 2006 and November 2006

Over this period the provision has improved significantly: the following are the most important developments:

- the improved process of initial and diagnostic assessment;
- the continued and effective support of senior management for the essential skills provision across the Institute;
- the mostly very good collaborative planning and effective professional engagement to enhance the overall experience of the learners;
- the improved monitoring and review of the essential skills provision; and
- the excellent achievement rates in numeracy at 93% and the good achievement rates in literacy at 81% in 2005-06.

The following issues require further development:

- the ongoing development of formative assessment processes to inform teaching and learning; and
- the further embedding of a self-evaluative culture within the essential skills provision.

## **CONCLUSION**

The monitoring inspection visits confirm that the Institute has made very good progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the original inspection report and the provision now demonstrates major strengths. The Inspectorate is confident that the actions implemented will result in sustained improvements in the quality of their provision. No further monitoring visits are required.

Grade 2

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