



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

#### **Priority Skills Area level 2 Programmes North West Regional College**

**May 2010**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROVISION FOR PRIORITY SKILLS AREA LEVEL 2 STUDENTS AT NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE**

The focused inspection of the North West Regional College's essential skills provision for students on the designated priority skills programme at level 2, in January 2009, identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the need for the essential skills and vocational course teams to improve the co-ordination and planning of the provision in essential skills; and
- the need for action by both essential skills and vocational staff to improve the outcomes and levels of attainment in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy.

In the interval since the inspection, the North West Regional College has taken the following steps, which affect the work of the curricular area:

- the deployment of a Senior Lecturer to support the work of the Head of School;
- the agreement and implementation of a policy for the delivery of the essential skills provision across the college;
- the design of a new knowledge management tool to assist managers and staff to monitor and evaluate the learners' progress in essential skills, and in their professional and technical programme areas;
- the emergence of some examples of good practice in teaching and learning within essential skills, including the effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning; and
- the appropriate priority given to improving teaching and learning in the staff development programme.

Since the original inspection in January 2009, the Inspectorate has carried out an interim monitoring visit in September 2009 and a final follow-up inspection in May 2010.

The improvement plan produced by the college in response to the inspection findings was of good quality.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the inspection:

- the commitment by senior management to addressing the areas for improvement and their demonstrable capacity to effect change;
- the review of the action plan for essential skills and the setting of measurable targets for improvement;
- the increased emphasis on the quality improvement of the essential skills provision;
- the range of effective early intervention methods to address the needs of students at risk of underachievement;

- the introduction of internally funded, innovative curriculum development projects to enhance, support and develop teaching, learning and assessment in essential skills;
- the increased involvement of the Heads of School in the quality improvement of essential skills and the support they provide to staff;
- the sharing of good practice in essential skills and the ongoing focus on performance review of the provision by senior management; and
- the significant improvement in success rates in the essential skills.

The area which requires further action includes:

- the ongoing embedding of the initiatives taken to date to ensure sustained improvement in retention and success in the essential skills provision.

## CONCLUSION

In the area inspected, the quality of education and training provided by the North West Regional College is now very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the learners; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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