

Learner Report

A summary of the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

September 2008

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) undertook a follow-up review in April 2008 of Shetland College of the quality of education and training at Shetland College (following on from a full review of the college in December 2005). This Learner Report gives you a summary of what HMIE thought about the college. Shetland College accepts fully HMIE's findings.

HMIE's report, published in August 2008, was positive in almost all aspects. HMIE awarded Shetland College "Good" grades in all cross-college areas reviewed. HMIE also reviewed the learning and teaching process, and identified two areas where the college had innovative ideas which were "sector-leading".

In December 2005 HMIE identified that in the majority of cross-college areas the college could make things better for its learners. At the start of academic session 2006/07 the college's new senior management team drew up plans to ensure that at this college, the learner experience and learner outcomes are of the highest quality. As a result of the April 2008 follow-up review HMIE is now confident that:

- **the college has in place effective learning and teaching processes overall**
- **learners are progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes overall**
- **the college is managing well and improving the quality of services for learners**

You will see below that all the grades awarded to Shetland College are "Good". This shows that the strengths outweigh the weaknesses across all of the cross-college areas reviewed, and shows that considerable progress has been made since the earlier review of December 2005.

The college's senior management team and staff are pleased with the progress made, and will continue to work hard at improving your learning experience and making your time at college as enjoyable and worthwhile as possible.

CROSS-COLLEGE ELEMENTS	HMIE GRADE April 2008
Educational leadership, direction and management	Good
Access and Inclusion	Good
Guidance and support	Good
Resources and services to support the learner	Good
Staff	Good
Quality assurance	Good
Quality improvement	Good

The college has in place effective learning and teaching processes overall

HMIE reported that they were confident that the college had in place effective learning and teaching processes overall. HMIE felt that most learners were well motivated, fully engaged in a range of classroom and workshop activities, and used well-designed materials and appropriate learning facilities in developing their skills and knowledge. Most learners also worked well independently, developing appropriate skills and a deeper understanding of their subject area by engaging in practical activities, in a positive and relaxed learning environment. Almost all staff planned learning and teaching activities well and incorporated a variety of activities and tasks which were effective in developing learners' skills.

HMIE also reported, however, that the majority of staff did not use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sufficiently in their teaching and therefore missed opportunities to enhance and consolidate learning. HMIE also said that staff did not plan sufficient opportunities for learners to recognise and develop citizenship skills.

Learners are progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes overall

In their report, HMIE said they were confident that learners were progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes overall. HMIE felt that almost all learners had built upon their prior learning, made good progress in their studies and increased their self-confidence as a result of their college experience and had developed a positive attitude to learning. Most learners had improved their vocational and employability skills through participation in relevant work placements or realistic project work. More than a few learners had been successful in reaching the finals of local and national training awards and competitions. Retention rates were high across almost all programmes and attainment rates were very high for most part-time programmes.

However, HMIE also reported that programme attainment rates for more than a few full-time programmes were low, that attainment rates were low in more than a few units and in the majority of core skills units.

The college is managing well and improving the quality of services for learners

HMIE reported that they were now confident that the college was managing well and improving the quality of services for learners. The director had moved the college forward significantly, and the Board of Management provided an effective overview of college direction. The college had productive partnerships with local schools, NAFC Marine Centre, and with a wide range of community development organisations, and the director and senior managers provided effective and

enthusiastic leadership for the development of lifelong learning and access and inclusion strategies.

The college had developed an appropriate range of introductory programmes to provide entry points to certificated learning and had a particularly effective range of programmes for school pupils. Learners had ready access to the Internet through the UHI network at the Gremista campus and in community learning centres, and staff in the five rural and island learning centres worked productively alongside community organisations to broaden access to learning in rural and island locations. Guidance and support staff worked well with teaching teams to ensure that support for learners was well coordinated and managed, and had developed effective links with external support agencies and employers which enhanced the services and support available to learners.

HMIE also reported that the college ensured fair and consistent recruitment and induction of learners across all teaching sections and all college staff were accessible and responded effectively to learners' needs. There were sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff within the college and a wide range of assistive technology, equipment and resources to support learners with additional needs. The college ensured that learners were well prepared for moving into employment or to higher levels of study.

There was a wide range of formal and informal opportunities for learners to provide feedback to staff on their college experience, staff commitment to quality improvement was strong and staff worked well in teams to identify and implement actions to improve the learner experience across the college. Overall, the successful implementation of action plans had led to improvements for learners.

HMIE identified eight main points for action in session 2008/09 to consolidate the progress made by the college: progress and equalities measurement and monitoring; the consistent application of guidance and core skills development across teaching areas; the consolidation of a health and safety culture for the college; training for all staff in child protection and equalities issues; the development of evaluative mechanisms and further monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching and support services, and the systematic monitoring of all quality improvement activity to inform future planning.

The college's senior management team, in collaboration with all college staff, will address these main points for action throughout session 2008/09 and continue to ensure that your experience as a learner is of the highest quality. They will:

- measure and monitor attainment to ensure all learners progress well and achieve appropriate outcomes
- measure and monitor learner profiles from selection to completion to ensure all learners have equal opportunity in the learning and teaching process
- ensure that all learners undertake core skills development at appropriate levels through core skills assessment and profiling before starting their programmes

- continue to develop a health and safety culture through progressing a programme of risk assessment
- monitor teaching staff's use of ICT in all subject areas to ensure the engagement of all learners in class work and enhance the quality of learning and teaching
- monitor how teaching staff integrate the development of citizenship skills into learning and teaching activities (from citizenship training delivered in August 2008)
- provide equality and diversity training for all staff in January 2009 and assess the impact of this training and equalities policies on the learner experience
- develop more ways to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and support services, which will include focus groups to get feedback from learners, online forums to explore learner issues, new models for learner evaluation forms and meeting agendas to enable more focus on learner views

If you would like to read the full HMIE report, please ask a member of college staff or go online at: www.hmie.gov.uk

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