

Grade characteristics: Quality of teaching, learning and assessment¹

Outstanding (1)	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Much of teaching, learning and assessment for all age groups and learning programmes is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, the very large majority of learners consistently make very good and sustained progress in learning sessions that may take place in a variety of locations, such as the classroom, workplace or wider community. ■ All staff are highly adept at working with and developing skills and knowledge in learners from different backgrounds. Staff have consistently high expectations of all learners and demonstrate this in a range of learning environments. ■ Drawing on excellent subject knowledge and/or industry experience, teachers, trainers, assessors and coaches plan astutely and set challenging tasks based on systematic, accurate assessment of learners' prior skills, knowledge and understanding. They use well-judged and often imaginative teaching strategies that, together with sharply focused and timely support and intervention, match individual needs accurately. Consequently, the development of learners' skills and understanding is exceptional. Staff generate high levels of enthusiasm for participation in, and commitment to, learning. ■ Teaching and learning develop high levels of resilience, confidence and independence in learners when they tackle challenging activities. Teachers, trainers, and assessors check learners' understanding effectively throughout learning sessions. Time is used very well and every opportunity is taken to develop crucial skills successfully, including being able to use their literacy and numeracy skills on other courses and at work. ■ Appropriate and regular coursework contributes very well to learners' progress. High quality learning materials and resources including information and communication technology (ICT) are available and are used by staff and learners during and between learning and assessment sessions. ■ Marking and constructive feedback from staff are frequent and of a consistent quality, leading to high levels of engagement and interest. ■ The teaching of English, mathematics and functional skills is consistently good with much outstanding. Teachers and other staff enthuse and motivate most learners to participate in a wide range of learning activities. ■ Equality and diversity are integrated fully into the learning experience. Staff manage learners' behaviour skilfully; they show great awareness of equality and diversity in teaching sessions. ■ Advice, guidance and support motivate learners to secure the best possible opportunities for success in their learning and progression. 	

¹ Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills - June 2012, No. 120061

Good (2)	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaching, learning and assessment are predominantly good, with examples of outstanding teaching. All staff are able to develop learners' skills and knowledge regardless of their backgrounds. As a result, learners make good progress. ■ Staff have high expectations of all learners. Staff in most curriculum and learning programme areas use their well-developed skills and expertise to assess learners' prior skills, knowledge and understanding accurately, to plan effectively and set challenging tasks. They use effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies that, together with appropriately targeted support and intervention, match most learners' individual needs effectively. ■ Teaching generally develops learners' resilience, confidence and independence when tackling challenging activities. Staff listen perceptively to, carefully observe and skilfully question learners during learning sessions. Teaching consistently deepens learners' knowledge and understanding and promotes the development of independent learning skills. Good use of resources, including ICT and regular coursework contributes well to learners' progress. ■ Staff assess learners' progress regularly and accurately and discuss assessments with them so that learners know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. ■ The teaching of English, mathematics and functional skills is generally good. Teachers and other staff enthuse and motivate most learners to participate in a wide range of learning activities. ■ Equality and diversity are promoted and learners' behaviour is managed well, although some work is still needed to fully integrate aspects of equality and diversity into learning. ■ Advice, guidance and support provide good opportunities for learners to be motivated and make the necessary connection between learning and successful progression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■
Requires improvement (3)	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement and is not yet good. It results in most learners, and groups of learners, making progress that is broadly in line with that made by learners nationally with similar starting points. However, there are weaknesses in areas of delivery, such as in learning or assessment. ■ There is likely to be some good teaching, learning and assessment and there are no endemic inadequacies in particular courses, across levels or age groups, or for particular groups of learners. Staff work with and develop skills and knowledge in learners from different backgrounds satisfactorily. Staff expectations enable most learners to work hard and achieve satisfactorily, and encourage them to make progress. Due attention is given to the careful initial assessment and ongoing assessment of learners' progress, but these are not always conducted rigorously enough, which may result in some unnecessary repetition of work for learners, and tasks being planned and set that do not fully challenge them. ■ Staff monitor learners' work during learning sessions, set appropriate tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■

<p>and are capable of adjusting their plans to support learning. These adaptations are usually successful but occasionally are not timely or relevant, and this slows learning for some learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaching strategies ensure that learners' individual needs are usually met. Staff deploy available additional support carefully, use available resources well and set appropriate coursework for learners. ■ Learners are informed about the progress they are making and how to improve further through marking and dialogue with staff that is usually timely and encouraging. This approach ensures that most learners want to work hard and improve. ■ The teaching of English, mathematics and functional skills is satisfactory overall. ■ The promotion of equality and support for diversity in teaching and learning is satisfactory. ■ Advice, guidance and support help to motivate learners to succeed in their learning and progress. 	
Inadequate (4)	Comments
<p>Teaching, learning and assessment are likely to be inadequate where any of the following apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As a result of weak teaching, learning and assessment over time, learners or groups of learners are making inadequate progress and have been unsuccessful in attaining their learning goals. ■ Staff do not have sufficiently high expectations and, over time, teaching fails to excite, enthuse, engage or motivate particular groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. ■ Staff lack expertise and the ability to promote learning. ■ Teaching of English, mathematics and functional skills is inadequate and a significant proportion of learners do not receive appropriate support to address English, mathematics and language needs. ■ Learning activities and resources are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of learners and, as a result, they make inadequate progress. ■ Staff show insufficient understanding and insufficiently promote equality and diversity in teaching sessions. 	