

Dear Students and Staff,

We are delighted to share our latest Ofsted Inspection findings with you. As you will see we have been recognised as continuing to be a 'Good' provider of adult learning opportunities.

What we do, we do for our students and not for Ofsted. This is our philosophy on which we build everything we do. On that note we would like to thank you all for the 'business as usual' approach that was evident across the organisation at the time of inspection. We are incredibly proud of the organisation we continue to build; the high standards of teaching, learning and assessment we facilitate and the strength of the learning outcomes our students achieve. We could not do this without the energy, enthusiasm and commitment to learning that you all demonstrate. It is always a pleasure to showcase this to our colleagues in Ofsted and wonderful to be externally recognised for this. Thank you all!

Whilst there are only four overall grading judgements Ofsted use (Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate) there is a variation within each category that is not recognised other than by evaluating the findings at inspection. We are incredibly proud to share with you, as is evident in the judgements within the report, that we are very good with many emerging outstanding elements. Ofsted found that ACRES has improved since our previous 'Good' judgement in 2014. The inspection team immediately recognised the rate of momentum within our continuous improvement culture and the impact that this is having on high standards of teaching, learning and assessment and the resulting outcomes for our students. We are on the cusp of becoming an outstanding provider and this is a direct reflection of the input of students and staff alike.

A short inspection results in a letter confirming the outcome of inspection and not a full report. The letter attached will show judgements made on the themes within which Ofsted inspected us, based on our self-assessment of our organisation.

You can see from this letter that some of our strengths are:

- Leaders and Managers have continued to work closely with our tutors to continue to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that our students make good progress with their qualifications or their personal learning goals
- Managers have researched and developed local market intelligence very well to identify the needs and interests of our students and communities and this is being reflected in our provision offer
- Students develop good practical and technical skills as a result of good teaching, learning and assessment
- Students and Staff exemplify British Values evident in mutual respect and consideration of others
- Students benefit from high quality teaching, learning and assessment both within and beyond the classroom which positively impacts and strengthens their learning outcomes.

What does not appear in the letter is feedback which we received during the inspection which we would like to share with you and here are some of the headlines:

- Significant progress has been recognised since the last inspection, all delivered with energy and enthusiasm and high expectations of ourselves and others

- Development of students' technical skills, supported by suitably challenging learning goals, is good with some exceptional examples seen, resulting in them developing skills at an appropriate pace for their own ability
- Students develop confidence and improve their well being
- Students develop skills to the expected standard and in many cases beyond expectations and can apply new skills learnt to further work/projects
- Students use technical language accurately and apply it to their learning well
- Students record, reflect and apply their learning and are consciously aware of the skills and knowledge they are developing and how to use it to continually develop
- Students and Tutors share ideas and new-found skills to extend learning beyond what is being 'taught'
- There is very good progression evident
- Many sessions are at least good and in some cases outstanding, many with outstanding elements
- Tutors' expectations of students is high, enabling students to make good progress in accordance with individual starting points
- Tutors are highly skilled at setting all students at ease
- Our students say highly positive things about their learning experience and their achievement of their personal learning goals
- A "tremendous" amount of work was recognised in the greater collation and analysis of data to inform and secure improvements, with some work being recognised as "powerful" in supporting strategic and organisational development initiatives
- ACRES' provision is now more targeted, with a reduced course cancellation rate.

We all play our part in these amazing results so here are a few thank yous:

- Thank you to all our students for the commitment to your learning and the energy you show to secure learning outcomes which are challenging and inspiring.
- Thank you to all our tutors whose energy, enthusiasm, dedication and commitment enable them to plan and facilitate such high-quality teaching and learning, enabling such wonderful outcomes for our students.
- Thank you to all our managers and staff who work relentlessly in the background to develop a provision which meets the needs and interests of all our students and communities and develops a platform on which we can continually develop the high standards of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that our students benefit from challenging, individualised learning outcomes and have fun along the way!
- Thank you also to our Board who continue to challenge us and support our high expectations and our vision for our organisation.

So, what next?

Our culture of continuous improvement and visionary leadership which encourages innovation and creativity, together with our ever-enhancing standards of teaching, learning and assessment in delivering a provision which meets the needs and interests of our students, coupled with our passion for what we do, puts us well on the way to being recognised as a provider of outstanding learning opportunities. We look forward to continuing to work with you all in this direction. A HUGE thank you and well done to each and every one of you!

Helen D'Silva - ACRES' Adult Learning Manager      Hugh Hennebry - Chair of ACRES' Board