



Dear colleagues

Well, the sporting promise of the last few weeks didn't come to much, apart from a marginal win for England's cricketers in the one day series. So if you feel in these somewhat difficult times that you are in need of inspiration, I suggest you look no further than the latest ISC inspection report. Ruskin Mill is the third college in this round to be judged outstanding by Ofsted – many congratulations to them.

The three colleges, Thornbeck, Beaumont and Ruskin Mill (you can find their reports at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxfind/name?type=1048576&search=&submit=Search>) at first sight have little in common – different learner groups, approaches, delivery methods etc. But in another sense, it is their very differences that characterise them all – the message is that being outstanding does not require you to fit any given mould, rather it allows you to believe in what you do and demonstrate that you can **do it very well**. Here are some quotes from their reports:

- The promotion of individual learning is outstanding. Highly qualified teaching staff and specialist therapists work very well together. They use a highly effective transdisciplinary approach to minimise barriers to learning and set high standards of achievement.
- To reinforce the learning and to increase confidence, learners have access to electronic and recorded versions of their work to remind them of what they have achieved.
- Teaching focuses strongly on each student's choices and interests and engages their attention exceptionally well through real practical tasks.
- High quality Person Centred Learning Plans are detailed and comprehensive. To make the plans fully accessible to learners they are kept on personal electronic storage devices and this helps to develop learners' information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Tutors use highly effective questioning techniques to help students think about the task in hand and to check learning. Tutors are exceptionally skilled at helping students to manage their own behaviour.
- The promotion of communication, social interaction and independence in lessons is particularly effective.
- Outcomes for learners are outstanding and are strongly focussed on individual need.

I hope you will all enjoy a break over the summer and come back refreshed and determined!!

Alison



Helen Sexton – National Star College

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to let you know that I shall be leaving National Star at the end of August, following ten years as Chief Executive & Principal and almost 30 years in total. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the college working with the most incredible students and staff and I know it will go on from strength to strength.

With my stepping down, and given the massive growth in the organisation over the past ten years, the Board has decided to separate the roles of Chief Executive and Principal. They are currently recruiting a Chief Executive to replace me when I leave and hope to be in a position to make an appointment by mid-June.

I am extremely pleased to be able to let you know that Kathryn Rudd (former Deputy Principal) has been confirmed by the Board into the substantive post of Principal with effect from 1 April 2010. We are very fortunate that in Kathryn we will have such a talented, excellent and well-respected new Principal.

Our new Chief Executive and Kathryn will work together to enable us to maintain our position in the independent specialist college sector and to develop new specialist provision and services that will sustain the organisation going forward.

Best wishes.

Helen

JUMPCuts is a training and production partnership that make high quality digital media, co-produced by people with learning disabilities.

JUMPCuts has to date produced nine DVDs designed to help young people and adults with learning disabilities deal with sometimes difficult situations in an educational and user friendly way. The DVDs are suitable for use in a variety of training and advocacy contexts. Titles include Germ Academy, Listen to Us, Best Interest, Headroom and How are you? They can be previewed on <http://www.jumpcuts.org.uk/>

JUMPCuts can also deliver film, animation and digital storytelling training to both staff and service users; using creativity to empower, whilst also providing practical work based and transferable skills.

The DVDs are available for the introductory price of £10 (ex VAT) each plus £1.50 postage. Buy two or more and save 15%. Comprehensive work books and student magazines accompany the award winning Teeth the Musical and Shape Up films and are available at the introductory price of £90 (excl VAT) and include the DVD and 10 magazines. To order call 01278 433187 or email info@jumpcuts.org.uk.

Signs4 Life

A new initiative to encourage more teaching staff & students to take up sign language as an extra language and skill has been launched. Signs4Life is an award winning organisation that is involved in bringing sign language into the public sphere and promoting and engaging deaf people (adults & children) into mainstream society. We are currently undertaking our deaf awareness & sign language courses with organisations as varied as The British Red Cross, schools, prisons, social services, care homes, museums, hospitals, housing associations, holiday parks, libraries and Royal Mail.

Learning British Sign Language is no different from learning another language. It opens communication between deaf and hearing people. There are over 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. All our sessions are highly interactive and are designed specifically so that participants can learn the basics quickly but memorably.

There are mainly two courses we run (details below) a 6-week course and a 3-hour seminar. All courses are certificated and delivered inhouse by CACDP accredited and experienced tutors.

At the end of our course, teachers & students will be able to:

- Identify the barriers that deaf and hard of hearing people face
- List the ways in which deaf and hard of hearing people communicate
- Understand and demonstrate how to implement positive methods of communication, and offer an equal service to deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Recognise basic everyday signs (Good morning/afternoon, do you need any help? what is your name? please, thank you, let me help you)
- Apply the finger-spelling alphabet and numbers
- Explore deaf community & culture
- Signs specific to teaching & mentoring (6-week course only)

If you would like further information please visit our new interactive website www.signs4life.org.uk or email us info@signs4life.org.uk or contact Fozia on 07964 019 764

Organisations advertised in this bulletin are not necessarily endorsed by Natspec.

Going green

The Annual Green Gown Awards, organised by the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges, recognise excellence in sustainability within the further and higher education sector.

At the awards ceremony in London on June 16th, the National Star College were announced winners of the Colleges and Smaller Institutions category for their submission "Climate Change is not just about Polar Bears - Our Whole College Approach to Sustainability". The judges' comments highlighted that this was "a vibrant, collaborative initiative that involved exceptionally strong levels of staff and student engagement".

The National Star College submission

Climate change is not just about polar bears and the loss of the ice caps and sustainability is not just about climate change. Our whole college approach is based on creating fun ways to engage students and staff in what are undoubtedly the most crucial issues of today – how to live as sustainably as possible on the planet, how to leave a legacy to be proud of for our children and grandchildren and how to play a leading role in Corporate Social Responsibility. If it's not fun we won't be successful in changing our world. The National Star College's commitment to sustainability encompasses all parts of college life and is promoted through both student and staff activities. The Senior Management Team has had a long-term commitment to protecting the College's future, which historically has focused upon developing the infrastructure through sustainable practices. Focused whole college development training has impacted upon the culture and enabled a bottom up as well as a top down approach. Initiatives have led to the appointment of sustainability champions, carbon reduction and energy saving programmes. The whole college approach encourages students and staff to focus on sustainability at college, at home and in the wider community.

THE INITIATIVE

National Star College has an established commitment from students and staff, and in turn all partners to promote, practice and celebrate sustainability. Emphasis is placed upon embedding sustainability practices into the day to day experiences of students and staff. This results in people who naturally think GREEN, taking their practices with them into their future lives and communities. All departments across college are committed to the ongoing initiative and projects through Sustainability Champions and the 'Go Green' group. This commitment is enhanced by an additional £15,000 for resources for sustainability based curriculum and projects from the Education department this academic year. Activities have encompassed the three R's, renew, reuse and recycle as well as understanding the energy the college uses and importantly how to save it! External partnerships have been vital in both informing students of good practice in both the local community and work environment with enduring mutually beneficial partnership being made. There has also been a strong focus on reducing costs as well as carbon. Our £950,000 Biomass District Heating System, which was financed against a seven year pay back projection, has reduced our fuel costs by 18% in year one with greater savings (wood chip instead of oil) projected and a 35% reduction in the College's total carbon footprint. Changing to low energy light bulbs across the whole college estate had a pay-back period of less than two years. Our waste management initiatives have already achieved a 65% cost reduction in waste disposal against mounting landfill disposal costs with an 80% reduction in waste to landfill targeted. In our IT department a £10,000 saving on annual electricity costs has been achieved through 'virtualising' our server provision. In our catering department all disposables (cups, cutlery and take away boxes) are sourced from Vegware – packaging made from plants.

Safeguarding

Event in Birmingham – Wednesday 29th September 2010

<http://conferences.teachingexpertise.com/cpd/childprotectionbham/70/home/tex>

E&D

List of future LSIS E&D events

<http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Events/Pages/default.aspx?pageEventsRollUp=1>

7th Strand: Promoting Transgender Equality resource is live on the leadership learning environment.

Please follow the following link to the resource: - <http://www.leadershiplearning.org.uk/login/index.php>

Supported employment and people with learning difficulties

Free training courses for staff and learners

This is a flavour of the feedback received from the first of nine free training events held in Preston last week:

"Just to let you know again it was a fantastic day."

Guidance and curriculum officer

"Excellent training session."

Learner

"We thoroughly enjoyed the conference last week and have returned fired up once again for seeking ways in which we can support learners in to paid work."

College support worker/mentor

"I will use the Making it Work document and utilise contacts & resources."

Lecturer

The "Making it Work: Learning for Work and people with learning difficulties" training courses are targeted at teaching staff in further education colleges, adult and community learning services, work-based learning, voluntary sector organisations and post-16 school provisions involved in running vocational courses and training for people with learning difficulties.

There are eight more regional courses running in the autumn term.

LO	Thursday 23 September 2010, The Abbey Centre, Westminster
WM	Tuesday 28 September 2010, Maple House, Birmingham
EM	Wednesday 6 October 2010, The Derby Conference Centre, Derby
Y& H	Wednesday 13 October 2010, St George's Church, Leeds
NE	Wednesday 21 October 2010, Durham County Cricket Club, Chester le Street
EA	Tuesday 2 November 2010, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge
SE	Thursday 11 November 2010, Reading Museum & Town Hall, Reading
SW	Wednesday 17 November 2010, Hestercombe Gardens, Taunton

Follow this link for more details and to reserve a place on the course in your region.

<http://www.niace.org.uk/campaigns-events/events/making-it-work-learning-for-work-and-people-with-learning-difficulties>

Cable sets out new priorities to Skills Funding Agency

Business Secretary Vince Cable has written to the Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency setting out how government funding for 2010-11 should be spent. Priorities include increasing the number of apprenticeships places; reducing the number of 18-24 year olds not in employment, education or training; and encouraging more people

Colleges to bid for capital gain

Colleges have been given the opportunity to bid for a share of £50 million for building projects. Around 150 colleges who have yet to significantly benefit from the capital programme will each receive approximately £225,000 under a £30 million Renewal Grant - bringing real benefits to the learning and training of young people. A further £20 million will be made available to colleges through an Enhanced Renewal Grant.

[Click here to read more](#)

Vetting and barring to be reviewed

Home Secretary Theresa May has announced a review and a potential remodelling of the criminal records and vetting and barring regimes to bring them back to common-sense levels.

[Click here to read the stakeholder newsletter containing important information about the impact of the Government decision on the CRB application process](#)

Disability and the Equality Act 2010: What you need to know and do

Half day briefing seminars: 12.30pm to 3.45pm

Tuesday 14 September 2010, St George's Conference Centre, Leeds

Wednesday 15 September 2010, London Metropolitan Archives, London

Tuesday 21 September 2010, NIACE Renaissance House, Leicester

Association of National Specialist Colleges (NATSPEC), a company limited by guarantee.

Registered in England number 5908897.

Registered office: Derwen College, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3JA

Background and Aims

The Equality Act will come into force in October 2010. It creates a piece of anti-discrimination legislation across eight 'protected characteristics' including disability. It brings in a number of significant changes with reference to new forms of protection for disabled people and strengthening of the existing duty to make reasonable adjustments.

These seminars, brought to you jointly by Skill and NIACE, will examine the Equality Act and what its implementation will mean in practice for learning and skills providers, with particular reference to disabled learners and carers who are learners. The seminars will provide the opportunity to discuss through case studies, ways in which provider policies and systems can avoid indirect discrimination and strengthen duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners. The seminars will help you meet the Ofsted grade in equality and diversity (a limiting grading factor in the Ofsted framework).

Audience

These seminars will be of particular interest to staff working in Adult and Community Education Services; Further Education Colleges; Work-based Learning and voluntary sector organisations that provide education and training:

- Senior managers
- Staff with an Equality and Diversity Role
- Governors
- Student Services staff
- Lecturers and teaching staff.

Event information

- Arrival and registration is at 12:30pm. The event will end at 3:45pm
 - Event fee per person (includes lunch, tea/coffee):
£75 (NIACE Members and/or Skill Members)
£105 (Non NIACE Members and/or Skill Members)
- NB: NIACE does not charge VAT on conference and course fees

For more information, to download an application form or to reserve a place online, visit the NIACE website: <http://www.niace.org.uk/campaigns-events/events/the-equality-act-2010>
Enquiries to NIACE Events Team - Tel: 0116 204 2833 / E-mail: events@niace.org.uk

The **Office of Fair Trading** has added two new modules to its free web-based toolkit for adult education that uses everyday consumer situations as contexts for learning numeracy and literacy. LLU+ created the new materials, which help learners to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence **to avoid scams** and **to deal with the challenges of buying and running a car**. There are now five modules to download, with comprehensive Teachers' notes, User guides and curriculum referencing.

[Go to Skilled to go](#)

[Book a free Skilled to go workshop for you and your colleagues](#)

[Order a Cascade Skilled to go resource to train your colleagues](#)

What is 'usemyability' (UMA)?

The UMA web resource will feature as the main product of a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme project led by University of Worcester in partnership with University of Plymouth and University of Gloucestershire. The resource (that will be located at www.usemyability.org later this year) will provide support to academic and Careers Service staff, employers and to disabled students themselves in relation to their development of their employability skills and attributes. The following are examples of the skills employers are looking for in graduates:

1. Drive/initiative
2. Flexibility
3. Literacy
4. Numeracy
5. Oral communication
6. Problem solving
7. Self organisation
8. Teamwork
9. Time management
10. Written communication

What are we looking for?

We are looking for case studies from:

- Disabled students/disabled graduates
- Employers of disabled graduates
- Employers who provide work experience for disabled students
- Work based mentors/link tutors
- Staff in higher education (including academic staff, disability professionals, Careers Advisors, link tutors)

And as an incentive...

If you submit a case study which is accepted for inclusion in the web resource, you will receive £50.00.

What information do we want?

We are looking for accounts of your personal experiences, for example:

- how disabled students have developed their employability skills/attributes whilst at University;
- how disabled students have developed their employability skills/attributes through work experience, work placement or volunteering;
- strategies that have been implemented in the work place to enable disabled students to engage effectively in work experience;
- strategies implemented in the work place that have enabled disabled graduates to become or continue to be employed;
- issues encountered concerning disclosure of a disability and solutions found;
- good (or bad) practice regarding adjustments to the learning or working environment;
- examples of advertising or marketing from recruiters targeting disabled graduates that promotes disclosure;
- any other examples of practice that others might find useful to know about.

How to present the information:

We welcome case studies in a variety of formats:

- Text: no more than 250 words. Please submit as MS Word file.
- Video: This does not have to be 'professionally' produced, a mobile phone version will be OK too. The video clip should last no longer than 2 minutes. Please submit as MP4 file (.mov or .wmv files may be acceptable too.).
- Digital stories: find an example here: <http://www.life-pilot.co.uk/profile/digital-story-example>
- Audio: Please submit as an MP3 or .wav file.

You do not have to disclose your identity through the case study, though this is inevitable of course if you choose to submit a video of yourself talking. All personal information received will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be shared with other parties.

Please submit your case studies, preferably via email, to Matt Smith (matt.smith@worc.ac.uk) who is the Research Officer at the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support (CILS) at the University of Worcester.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Matt on 01905 542181

(matt.smith@worc.ac.uk)

or

Dr Val Chapman, the Director of the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support and Director of the UMA project, on 01905 855402 (v.chapman@worc.ac.uk)

Matt Smith, MA
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www.worc.ac.uk/cils

Updates from the Pearson Research Institute

We are running a Funding Masterclass on 11th October in partnership with the Association of Colleges. The last two with the AoC fully booked very quickly so I wanted to let you know about it before it is advertised more widely. This practical masterclass will be relevant to anyone with an interest QCF funding

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(14-19, adults and train to gain / apprenticeships). The Masterclass will be delivered by Nick Linford, author of both www.fundingguide.co.uk and www.dataguide.co.uk . To find out more and book a place visit: www.aocmsevents.co.uk/qcf2010

The Learning Aim Database was updated today by the Data Service to include 2010/11 data and funding rates. Be warned that not all the data has been populated yet:

<http://providers.lsc.gov.uk/LAD/aims/searchcriteria.asp>

Audit Commission

[Against the Odds: Re-engaging Young People in Education, Employment or Training](#)

Since 1990, a yearly government survey has indicated that between 9 and 10 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds is without a wage, schooling or training. Now a new study by the Audit Commission looks at the financial, personal and social cost of teenagers who are so-called NEET - not in education, employment or training. It has found that the problem may be worse than the annual 'snapshot' survey shows, but that a new approach can make scarce resources work harder for those at greatest risk.

But it isn't just about the money, although the Audit Commission's remit is to look at the financial aspects of the issue, the personal and wider social impact should not be forgotten.

In *Against the Odds*, an analysis of the records of 24,000 young people in ten areas countrywide suggests that as many as one in four may be outside school, work or training, and that the number affected varies widely across the country.

We show that there are different groups present in 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training. There is a need to understand their separate circumstances before interventions can be planned and carried out, to best use existing resources in straitened times. Using information better and working with partners is critical to finding cost-effective ways to lower these levels.

The report is supported by a number of documents, including a guide for councils' overview and scrutiny function, a summary document that includes self-assessment questions, fieldwork data to help councils benchmark their teenage population not in education, employment or training and a methodology paper that explains how the Connexions data was used in this study. These materials will be available from Wednesday 7 July on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/neet

We will also be publishing materials later in the month for practitioners, these are practical guides to help reduce specific groups of young people who are not in education, employment or training, such as young offenders, teenage parents, young people with special educational needs, young carers and care leavers. We are aiming to make a local funding mapping tool and a tool for determining the financial implications of not tackling the problem locally available in the autumn.

For questions about the contents of this report please contact Emma Belton - Audit Commission - on telephone 0844 798 1117 or e-belton@audit-commission.gov.uk

I hope that you find this report useful and informative, and I welcome any comments you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Sullivan

Chief Executive, Audit Commission

Jisc Tech Dis

ADVISER (JISC TechDis) £35,940 p.a.

1 year Secondment

35 hrs wk

Ref: 0107

It's on the Academy's web page at

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/aboutus/vacancies>

Jenny Rippon

Operations Manager

JISC TechDis Service

C/O The Higher Education Academy Building

Innovation Way

York Science Park

York

YO10 5BR

Specialist Colleges Advisory Group

In previous years the ISCs e-learning group has been formulated by the LSC programme, it is now recognised that the landscape surrounding the colleges has changed and therefore the Independent Specialist Colleges Advisory Group is wishing to extend the participation to a range of Colleges in the sector and therefore it has agreed to invite a further four Colleges to sit on the Group.

The Group's Chair Chris Mayho is now seeking to encourage nominations of individuals who can give time to the group (approx 4 meetings a year - possibly in London), to participate with electronic communications and to actively support the group.

To nominate yourself or a colleague (with their permission) for membership, please provide a formal nomination with the name of the college, the individual, their role, their experience and what would be the rationale for selecting them as opposed to another member of the ISCs community.

Nominations to be received by: Friday 30th July. They should be sent (electronically if possible) to jenny@techdis.ac.uk marked SCAG nominations. Postal address: Jenny Rippon, Operations Manager, JISC TechDis Service, C/O The Higher Education Academy Building, Innovation Way, York Science Park, York, YO10 5BR.

All nominations will be treated confidentially and Jenny will work with Chris Mayho and the strategy group in the form of the advertising procedures.

Sal Cooke
Director JISC TechDis
c/o The Higher Education Academy Building
Innovation Way
York Science Park
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Tel: 01904 717580
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www.techdis.ac.uk

Next steps on special educational needs and disabilities

We are awaiting the publication of the Ofsted review by the end of July, but here is an indication that a much broader look will be taken across the whole system, including post 16.

Speaking at an Every Disabled Child Matters event on July 6th Sarah Teather, Children's Minister, said:

We want to make sure that the most vulnerable children get the best quality of support and care. Children with special educational needs and disabilities should have the same opportunities as their peers. The system needs to be more family friendly so that parents don't feel they have to battle to get the support their child needs.

That is why I will launch a Green Paper in the autumn to look at a wide range of issues for children with SEN and disabilities. Before then I will be looking at the results of the Ofsted review of SEN we are expecting later this summer, in addition to the many reviews of SEN policy in recent years. I'll also be listening to the views of parents, teachers and organisations with an interest in this area.

The system needs to be far more transparent. We need to give parents more choice and involve them in the decision-making process. The Green Paper will also look at how to manage the transition beyond school so that young people over 16 can get the support they need.

LSIS Learner Voice Awards

Great and the good of learning providers honoured at national awards

Learning providers, college practitioners and senior managers were honoured last night for their services as the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) announced its national Leading the Learner Voice award winners for 2010.

The great and the good amongst the country's leading learning professionals gathered at the Thistle, Marble Arch for the award ceremony, now in its fourth year.

And once again the standard of entries was so high that in the top category - the Leading Learner of the Year Award - two joint winners were chosen by the panel of judges – Kelly Omany (COR) of Lewisham College and Bill Hazon (COR) of North Lincolnshire Council of Community Learning.

The pair were among 20 winners honoured for their work in the event which reflects the different leadership roles vital to ensuring learners' views are accurately collected, listened to and acted upon in the FE sector.

Among the other big winners on the night was Simon Lord of Preston College, winner of the Student Governor of the Year title with Emma Champion of Fareham College, highly commended.

Ben Rowswell of Cornwall College won the Student Liaison Officer of the Year award with Graham Woolridge of Tresham College, runner-up.

Burton College stormed home in the Most Improved Provider category with Tresham College again among the winners, being highly commended.

City of Wolverhampton College fought off stiff competition to take the Community and Social Cohesion prize with College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London highly commended. **Derwen College won the Representative Organisation of the Year** award with Canterbury College highly commended.

The **Principal or Senior Leader of the Year** award went to Dick Palmer of City College, Norwich with **RNIB College's Norma Curtis, highly commended** while Donna Pender of Warwickshire College lifted the Leadership of Learners' award with Lancaster and Morecambe College's Adele Burrow, runner-up. Bournemouth and Poole College won the Provider of the Year award with Walsall College hot on their heels.

LSIS chair Dame Ruth Silver hailed the event as one of the "highlights of the year" while LSIS chief executive David Collins said praised all those who had been nominated.

"This thoroughly enjoyable evening recognised the excellence of the work being carried out in colleges and by providers. "The Learner Voice is certainly coming across loud and clear and making a significant contribution to the development of the sector.

"There are some great stories coming out from up and down the country and some great winners!"

Natspec endorsements

Events or consultants advertised in this bulletin are not necessarily endorsed by Natspec. Individual colleges or staff who are asked to present on behalf of Natspec, please check with a member of the Board of Directors before committing yourself to an event.

Natspec website

Photos of the Annual Conference will be available on the website soon.

Any problems accessing the Principal's forum contact Julian: webmaster@jewelion.com

Please let us have any news, events or job vacancies that you want placing on the website.

www.natspec.org.uk

Natspec Directory

To request a Natspec directory please contact:

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Andrew Harris

July 2010

Next Bulletin will be in September - hope you all have a great summer break