

Training Trust

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Early years and playwork

Description of the provider

1. The Training Trust (the Trust) is a limited company and registered charity, set up in 1982 to provide training for young people in east and north London. The Trust contracts with the North London LSC to provide apprenticeship training in heating and ventilation, electrical installation, early years and playwork and business administration. Training and assessment in heating and ventilation and in electrical installation at levels 2 and 3 are subcontracted to Newham College (the college), but take place in-house for the other two sector subject areas, which are offered as apprenticeships only. Most in-house learners are in employment and attend background theory training for one day a week at the Trust's training centre in Gants Hill in the London Borough of Redbridge. At the time of the inspection, there were 146 learners enrolled on apprenticeships, of which 109 were construction apprentices at the college. Twenty-four learners were on early years apprenticeships. Approximately 34% of the learners overall come from a minority ethnic background and just over 70% are men. The inspection graded the early years programmes and incorporated judgements on the small amount of business administration provision and the subcontracted college courses in the report's main findings.
2. The senior management team reports to the board of trustees and comprises a chief executive, trustee representative, operations manager and a quality improvement manager. They are responsible for nine liaison officer/assessors and four recruitment, marketing and administrative staff.
3. The Trust recruits learners from a number of London boroughs. Many come from Waltham Forest, which is one of the most deprived boroughs in London. The unemployment rate in Waltham Forest in 2006/07 was 8% of the economically active population, compared with 6.9% for London as a whole. Residents from minority ethnic communities account for 36% of the local population.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Early years and playwork	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The early years and playwork provision is good. Achievement and standards and the quality of provision are good. The Trust's leadership and management are good, and equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. The Trust demonstrates that it has good capacity to improve. Success rates have improved significantly for most learners since the previous inspection, although the trend in improvements has not always been consistent, particularly for advanced apprentices. The inspection grade profile has improved overall since the previous inspection, and leadership and management have remained good. The Trust's arrangements for quality improvement are good, as is the effectiveness of the steps taken by the provider to promote improvement since the previous inspection. The Trust has rectified almost all of the weaknesses identified at the reinspection in September 2005 and in its 2006/07 self-assessment report.
6. The self-assessment process is good. Managers involve staff fully in the process, as well as the trustee representative who attends all meetings to discuss self-assessment. Staff have a good awareness of most of the strengths and areas identified through self-assessment. The use of data to support accurate judgements in the most recent self-assessment report is good. Inspectors grades matched all of those in the report, as did most of the judgements, but inspectors identified a small number of additional strengths and areas for improvement. The report is clear and mostly self-critical, but it is too descriptive in places. The quality focus group carries out regular monitoring of the Trust's quality improvement plan, but some of the actions do not have sufficiently precise outcomes or target dates for completion. The Trust did not involve the college sufficiently in writing the self-assessment for construction in the most recent report.

Key strengths

- High success rates for apprentices
- Good development of learners' skills and high standards of work in early years and playwork
- Very good progress reviews
- Strong focus on improving learners' achievements
- Good support for staff
- Good arrangements for quality improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient support for learners with additional learning needs

- Insufficient formal monitoring of the subcontracted college provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good, as identified through self-assessment. Success rates are high for apprentices, who account for most of the learners. They have improved significantly over the last three years to 2006/07 and are well above national rates. In 2007/08 to date, the overall apprenticeship success rate has declined to just over 70%. Timely success rates show a similar pattern of improvement up to 2006/07, but have fallen in 2007/08 to date to 59%. Success rates for both early years and playwork and construction apprentices were very high and significantly above national rates up to 2006/07, but have declined in 2007/08 to date to 71% and 73%, respectively. Business administration apprenticeship success rates were satisfactory in 2006/07, but are very high in 2007/08 to date at 86%. Success rates for learners from minority ethnic groups are higher than those for learners overall, but are lower for learners with additional support needs.
8. Success rates for the smaller numbers of advanced apprentices are satisfactory. Trends in improvement have been inconsistent. For example, the success rate was at the national rate in 2006/07, having declined from the previous year, but has risen in 2007/08 to date to be very high at 88%. There were no timely achievers on advanced apprenticeships in 2006/07, but the timely success rate has improved significantly in 2007/08 to date to stand at 84%.
9. Early years and playwork apprentices develop good skills. They demonstrate good communication skills with children and parents. Learners plan their work effectively and employers frequently give them additional responsibilities in the workplace, which increases their self-confidence. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is high. More than 60% of the learners achieved merits or distinctions for their technical certificate work in 2007/08.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The quality of provision is good, as are teaching and learning. The Trust identified most of the strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of provision through self-assessment. Its observation of teaching and learning process is reliable and accurate and identifies that most training sessions are good. Tutors plan training sessions well and include a wide range of practical and relevant work related activities. Learners benefit from the well structured training days at the Trust's offices. In early years, they have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity issues.
11. Assessment practices are good overall. The assessment and internal verification of most parts of learners' qualifications are thorough. Learners take an active role in assessment planning. Assessors give very helpful feedback to help learners improve. Managers use internal verification well to identify issues for discussion at team meetings and during staff appraisals. The assessment of communications key skills in early years is weak. Learners' key skills portfolios do not contain sufficient evidence to confirm their

competence in communications. Assessors do not always correct errors in grammar and punctuation.

12. Progress reviews are very good. Learners benefit significantly from self-assessing their own skills at reviews and comparing the outcomes with employers' feedback. Assessors set meaningful targets to improve learners' technical and practical skills, as well as personal skills such as their attitudes and timekeeping. Very effective work related questioning provides relevant reinforcement of equality and diversity and health and safety. Reviews give a clear indication of learners' progress, which motivates them to succeed. The provision of additional learning support is insufficient, as identified through self-assessment. Tutors do not have enough confidence and experience to support learners with skills for life needs. Learners have separate plans for additional learning support, but the plans do not focus on the development of specific literacy and/or numeracy skills.
13. The extent to which the Trust's programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The Trust has a good relationship with the college and partnership working with employers is effective. The Trust's reputation amongst a wide range of businesses in different employment sectors across London is good. It does not offer advanced apprenticeships in early years and playwork or business administration.
14. Support and guidance for learners are good. Interviews for places on the Trust's programmes are thorough and learners have a comprehensive induction to their training, which they can recall accurately. Regular communications with employers and at staff meetings ensure the Trust rectifies any important issues regarding support for learners quickly and effectively. Advice and guidance are appropriate. The Trust encourages learners to seek further training opportunities once they have completed their apprenticeships.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. Leadership and management are good, as identified through self-assessment. Managers focus strongly on improving learners' achievements. Success rates are high for most of the learners and they have improved significantly since the previous inspection. In early years and construction, which account for most learners, success rates for apprentices are consistently above national rates. All meetings have a clear focus on issues that most affect learners. Managers set clear weekly targets for staff that identify those learners who require particular attention and/or support. Each member of staff receives a weekly printout showing a range of useful information and reminders about the learners they manage.
16. Support for staff to enable learners to succeed is good. New employees receive a thorough induction to the Trust. The learning environment at the training centre is purposeful and all staff are extremely professional. Managers have confidence in their staff to make important decisions and in their ability to be innovative and to develop new ideas. The management style is consultative and supportive. Senior managers discuss how they can best support staff at their monthly meetings. Staff take part in a wide range of internal and

external training activities that have a strong focus on improving important parts of the Trust's apprenticeship programmes, such as induction, assessment and target-setting.

17. Quality improvement is good. Where staff identify actions during meetings, they follow them up thoroughly at subsequent meetings. Similarly, actions to resolve day-to-day operational and longer-term strategic issues are timely and effective. The provider's annual quality cycle is clear and managers share the outcomes of quality improvement activities at quality focus group meetings. Staff discuss and share examples of both internal and external good practice, which have a significant positive effect on learners' and employers' experiences and attitudes. The observation of teaching and learning process for in-house provision is clear, detailed and accurate and brings about improvements in teaching and learning. The process monitors all aspects of learners' training, such as reviews and induction. The Trust uses learners' and employers' feedback well to bring about improvements to its training and assessment practices. Attendance rates are good overall, but the Trust does not formally monitor trends in attendance. Internal verification is satisfactory, but is not sufficiently thorough for key skills on early years programmes.
18. Business planning is effective. The Trust is currently exploring ways to expand its range of programmes into other areas of post-16 training, but is realistic about its capacity to do so with its existing resources. The trustees and senior managers have a clear and detailed view of the Trust's finances, which they share with staff. Meetings focus well on an appropriate range of strategic and operational issues and internal communications are good. The purpose of each of the staff and management meetings is clear and staff adhere to a framework of very appropriate standing agenda items. The Trust sets an overall target for apprenticeship success rates, but does not disaggregate this to identify targets for each of the programmes.
19. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The Trust has an appropriate range of clear and user-friendly equal opportunities policies and procedures for both learners and staff that comply with current legislation. Promotional materials contain appropriate visual images of learners from different backgrounds. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is similar to that for the local population, but the staff ethnicity profile is not and does not reflect the range of learners' diverse backgrounds. The equality and diversity group sets realistic success rate targets for different groups of learners and the Trust has achieved most of them in 2007/08. Success rates for learners from minority ethnic groups are higher than the Trust's overall success rate. The group carries out a number of other useful monitoring and development activities, including the review of equal opportunities training materials for learners. Initiatives to increase the numbers of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds are successful, but the Trust is less effective in recruiting men and women to early years and construction, respectively. The Trust analyses the conversion rate of applicants from different backgrounds into enrolments, but this analysis is currently under-developed. Staff attend a range of training on equal opportunities and both they and learners show a good awareness of different cultures and diversity in the classroom. The Trust has a skills for life policy, but support for learners with additional learning needs is insufficient. Success rates for these learners are lower than the provider's overall success rate.
20. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The Trust has appropriate policies and procedures to report any concerns about the welfare of

learners. Managers maintain a central record of checks carried out for all relevant staff. In the one safeguarding incident reported to date in early years, the Trust consulted Ofsted and took appropriate action to rectify the issue for both the nursery and the learner involved.

21. Formal monitoring of the subcontracted college's construction provision is insufficient. The Trust has a very good working relationship with the college and staff from the Trust provide a great deal of support for learners on the college premises. Success rates are high. Informal communications are good, but the Trust does not carry out sufficient formal monitoring of the college programmes. Formal meetings with the college to monitor the provision are not sufficiently regular and staff at the Trust do not have an accurate view of the quality of the training. They do not monitor overall attendance rates. The college did not contribute to the Trust's self-assessment of construction for the most recent self-assessment report.

What learners like:

- 'Everything is just great'
- Teaching which is relevant to the workplace
- Small group sizes and time with the tutor
- Good support and individual help
- Structure of the training day
- Enjoyable and fun induction
- Treatment and respect they receive

What learners think could improve:

- Understanding of their portfolios in business administration
- Opportunities to progress more quickly

Annex

Learners' achievements

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	18	39%	48%	17%	34%
		timely	15	27%	31%	13%	22%
	05-06	overall	12	75%	53%	67%	44%
		timely	10	70%	34%	60%	27%
	06-07	overall	7	57%	64%	57%	58%
		timely	15	0%	43%	0%	37%
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	53	66%	51%	49%	39%
		timely	54	33%	29%	31%	22%
	05-06	overall	87	74%	58%	67%	52%
		timely	96	63%	38%	58%	34%
	06-07	overall	44	86%	65%	86%	61%
		timely	19	79%	47%	79%	44%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'