

# igen Ltd

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 52435

**Name of lead inspector:** Sheila Willis HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 8 March 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 1 Eastgate  
Leeds  
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## Information about the provider

1. igen Ltd (igen) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Leeds that manages and delivers a range of programmes including information, advice and guidance, training and employability. igen provides services to young people and adults who face multiple barriers to learning and employment including drug misuse, offending behaviour, multi-generational unemployment and disadvantage. The igen group is made up of the igen Trust, which has charitable status and igen Ltd which is a wholly-owned subsidiary. The majority of igen's provision is publically funded. igen is the lead partner of a partnership of 11 providers for the Foundation Learning programme. Partners include other training providers and representatives of the voluntary sector. They provide vocational training in motor vehicle, health and social care, business administration, hairdressing and beauty, travel and tourism, horticulture and construction. igen partners are situated in and around Leeds and igen has learning centres in Leeds and Doncaster. Currently 464 learners are enrolled on Foundation Learning programmes.
2. Yorkshire and Humberside Young People's Learning Agency provide funding for the Foundation Learning programme. igen also receives funding from the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency for a range of other programmes for young people and adults that include an employability skills programme, information, advice and guidance services and the REAL programme that provides alternative curriculum opportunities to young people aged over 16 years and for those aged 14 to 16 still in statutory education. igen is the lead agency for a Connexions targeted support contract in Leeds. These other programmes were not in scope for the inspection.
3. Leeds ranks 68<sup>th</sup> in the 2010 national Indices of Deprivation. Over 68% of foundation learners attending igen programmes are from eight of the most deprived wards in Leeds. In January 2012, 8.1% of young people in Leeds were not in education, employment or training and the status of a further 9.2% was not known. In 2009/10, 51.4 % of 16-year-olds achieved five GCSEs at Grade A\* to C including English and Mathematics, which is lower than the national average of 55.1% for England.

The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:

- ACHE
- Best Ltd
- Dimensions
- Groundwork
- International Confederation of Fotebol de Salão
- JHP Training
- Meanwood Valley Urban Farm

- NACRO
- Progressions UK
- YMCA Training

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<b>Provision for young learners:</b>  Foundation Learning, including Entry to employment	311 part-time learners 727 full-time learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Foundation Learning	3

## Overall effectiveness

- The senior management team and the board of directors, some of who are recently appointed, provide effective strategic planning and management to guide the organisation. The transition to Foundation Learning in 2010/11, had a very negative impact on learner progression rates which were low but are now improving in 2011/12. Processes to assure the quality of the provision are satisfactory and the self-assessment report is mostly accurate.
- Learners have a good choice of vocational training opportunities and most satisfactorily achieve three or more qualifications. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills and enjoy their learning programmes. They behave well in learning sessions and improve their self-confidence throughout their training. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners make a good contribution to their communities through a range of fundraising and volunteering activities.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most tutors provide a range of learning activities to make sessions interesting and enjoyable. Learners develop good literacy, numeracy and language skills in sessions, but some partner organisations do not provide specialist tutors to develop these skills and these learners generally make slower progress. igen makes good use of a number of different partnerships to develop and enhance the provision for learners. The

good range of partners enables learners to select from a wide and varied range of vocationally relevant qualifications to best meet their needs and aspirations. Learners receive very good support to help them stay on their programmes and achieve their qualifications. Learners feel safe and are safeguarded well by the organisation. Staff promote equality and diversity particularly well to learners. Learners develop a good understanding of equality and diversity issues and their relevance at work. igen provides satisfactory value for money.

## Main findings

- Progression rates were low in 2010/11 at 28%. However, significant improvement has been made this year supported by changes in delivery and targeted learner support. The achievement of vocational qualifications and functional skills is satisfactory, but there is significant variation in the performance of different partners.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills. They enjoy their programmes and grow in confidence as their skills develop. Attendance is satisfactory and well managed by most partners. The behaviour of learners is good.
- Learners feel very safe both in the learning centres and at their placements. They have a good understanding of safeguarding and confidence in igen to deal promptly with issues if they arise. The promotion of health and well-being is good. Learners benefit from a good range of enrichment and volunteering activities.
- Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the best sessions activities are varied, the pace is lively and good learning takes place. Information learning technology is used effectively to add interest and variety. Functional skills are well embedded in vocational training, but the lack of specialist tutors impedes learners' progress in some partner organisations.
- The range of provision meets learners' needs satisfactorily. The induction process effectively helps learners to select an appropriate programme to meet their needs. A good range of community and voluntary work helps to develop learners' skills. However, there are too few opportunities for work experience.
- A wide range of partners are used well to provide a varied programme to meet the needs of significantly disadvantaged young people. Good use is made of the provision within igen to provide progression opportunities. Links with employers are insufficient and severely limit the development of work placement opportunities.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Systematic and robust risk assessment effectively identifies vulnerable learners during their induction and interventions are swiftly instigated to ensure they are safe. Learners receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance to help them progress. However, the quality of guidance services varies across the partners.
- igen has demonstrated good strategic management in response to rapidly changing government policy and funding contexts. Internal performance management processes are thorough, but igen's performance management of

its partners has failed to improve learner outcomes fast enough. Audits are too focused on compliance and not sufficiently on quality improvement.

- Communication is good. Managers keep staff well informed and make effective use of target-setting at all levels, monitoring performance carefully through a wide range of regular individual and team meetings. Data management is particularly good and effectively informs decision making.
- Well developed and highly effective safeguarding policy and procedures are effectively applied to ensure learners' safety across the partnership. igen responds rapidly and effectively to learners' welfare issues. A well developed and rigorous risk assessment identifies vulnerable learners at induction. Links with support agencies are well developed.
- igen has a strong organisational culture of promoting equality and diversity. Close monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners leads to improvement in closing achievement gaps. Equality and diversity themes are well promoted in the curriculum. Learners have a good understanding of bullying and harassment and are well protected.
- The self-assessment process and subsequent report is reliable. Quality-improvement processes are satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning is regularly applied across all partners, but there is insufficient analysis of the key judgements to effectively inform staff development.

### **What does igen need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the progression rates for learners into education, training or employment by developing meaningful and sustained links with employers and providers of apprenticeships and other training.
- Further develop opportunities to establish an effective work-experience programme to benefit learners.
- Better monitor the quality of advice and guidance across the partners to ensure learners receive effective help to enable them to progress.
- Further develop processes to more effectively monitor the performance of partners by analysing compliance with procedures and the quality of the provision.
- Better evaluate the outcomes of teaching and learning observations to identify best practice and areas for improvement to inform the staff training plan.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- being treated as adults and made to feel welcome
- the enjoyable and interesting learning programmes
- the helpful and supportive tutors
- that their views are respected

- getting help with mathematics and English
- knowing who to talk to and where to go if they need help
- developing skills that help them make progress
- making new friends and developing more confidence.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- more information about what they can do next
- the extent of the help they receive in finding a work placement, job or an apprenticeship
- the pace of learning so that they can achieve their qualifications quicker and get a job.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

**What employers like:**

No employer views were available.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

7. igen demonstrates satisfactory capacity to make and sustain improvement. The provider demonstrated a sound trend of improvement in Entry to Employment provision. The transition to Foundation Learning in 2010/11 impacted very negatively on learner progression rates. In 2010/11, progression rates into education, training or employment were low but have shown improvement in 2011/12, supported by a range of effective interventions that are positively impacting on learner progression outcomes. However, progression rates across the subcontracted provision vary considerably. The senior management team and the board of directors, some of who are recently appointed, provide effective strategic planning and performance-management arrangements. The organisation has managed well the significant changes to its provision that have taken place over the last 12 months in response to Government strategies.
8. Self-assessment is inclusive and the report broadly accurate. It reflects the impact of low progression rates when arriving at overall grades of provision, which are lower than those awarded by inspectors at the previous inspection. Data are used particularly well to evaluate performance. The views of users are used well to inform judgements in the report.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

9. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Progression rates decreased significantly after Foundation Learning replaced the Entry to Employment programme. In 2010/11, only 28% of learners attained their primary learning goal of a positive progression to further education, training or employment. Progression rates remain unsatisfactory in some partner provision. Improvement actions, such as targeted support and programme delivery changes are increasing the progression rate this year. To date, 44% of learners progressed to further training, education or employment. igen analyses data well to monitor the attainment of different groups and takes effective action to reduce variations in achievement.
10. Success rates in vocational training are satisfactory, with many learners achieving three or more qualifications. Success rates in functional skills are satisfactory overall. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills and enjoy their learning programmes. Learners' behaviour and self-confidence improve throughout their training. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and an effective monitoring system is contributing to further improvement.
11. Learners feel very safe. Tutors place a strong emphasis on health and safety during induction and throughout the programme. Health and well-being is actively and effectively promoted by centre staff, and supplemented by guest speakers for specific events, such as fire safety and arson awareness, anger

management, drugs and alcohol awareness. In the igen centre in Leeds, learners are provided with breakfast and fruit and healthy snacks are available throughout the day.

12. Learners make a positive contribution to their local communities by fundraising for local charities and community groups, volunteering and undertaking activities to improve the environment.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 3**

13. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors have a good rapport with learners and most use a range of teaching and learning strategies to enable learners to develop their skills and make good progress. In the best sessions activities are varied, the pace is lively and good learning takes place. Learners are encouraged to contribute to discussions and develop relevant communication skills. In less successful lessons, the planned activities do not engage learners sufficiently well. Learning is not always checked, which limits the tutor's ability to set relevant progress targets. The development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is good. However, the lack of access to specialist tutors in some partner organisations impacts on learners' timely achievement of functional skills. Information learning technology is used well to enhance learning and maintain learners' interest. Equality and diversity is promoted well in sessions.
14. The assessment of learners' work is timely and fair. Most learners receive detailed feedback with clear learning targets and guidance on how to improve. However, in some partner organisations, assessment processes lack rigour and some learners do not understand fully what they need to do next to make progress.
15. The range of provision satisfactorily meets the needs of learners. The partnership offers qualifications at different levels which are vocationally relevant and appropriate for learners. Many learners have little or no prior attainment. Induction activities are well developed and enable learners to make informed programme choices. Some partners offer community project placements which enable their learners to complete meaningful voluntary activities. Learners are effectively prepared for entering the world of work through job search, curriculum vitae writing, and interview techniques, but have too few work-experience opportunities, which limits their development of work-related skills.
16. igen makes good use of a wide range of different partnerships to develop and enhance the provision for learners. A number of staff represent igen on local and national networks. Benefits for learners include the development of a wide range of partnerships that provide a good range of vocational options to meet the needs of significantly disadvantaged young people. External speakers are used to raise the aspiration of learners. Other igen programmes provide alternative pathways for learners requiring significant support to deal with

challenging personal circumstances. Insufficient use is made of partnerships with employers to identify work-placement opportunities.

17. Care, guidance and support are good. Systematic and robust risk assessment effectively identifies vulnerable learners during their induction and prompt action is taken so that they are supported to remain on programme. Personal issues are dealt with sensitively and potential barriers to learning are dealt with appropriately. Learners receive satisfactory advice and guidance on the next steps available but the quality of the guidance provided varies across the partnership. igen has good links with statutory and voluntary agencies to support learners' varied needs.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

18. Leadership and management are satisfactory. igen has demonstrated good strategic management in response to rapidly changing government policy and funding contexts. A restructure has created a limited company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the igen trust and has a separate board. The appointment of two non-executive directors and a new chair of the igen Ltd board has extended the range of skills and experience of the board. Further rationalisation of staff teams is planned to better meet the changing needs of the company. Communication is good. Managers keep staff well informed and consult them over proposed changes.
19. igen makes effective use of target-setting at all levels, monitoring performance carefully through a wide range of regular individual and team meetings. Data management is particularly good and a wide range of reports inform decision making. Employer engagement is significantly under developed. Plans are well advanced to use established suppliers to develop work placements and training opportunities for learners. Although the performance management of partners takes place regularly, it has failed to improve some provision fast enough. Regular audits are too focused on compliance with procedures and do not sufficiently evaluate the quality of the provision to influence timely improvements in outcomes for learners.
20. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and supported by close working with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. igen's safeguarding policy and procedures are detailed and include close monitoring of their partners' arrangements. Thorough risk assessments identify learners' safeguarding and welfare issues which are effectively and rapidly responded to. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding issues. They undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, recorded in a central register. Staff use links with relevant agencies effectively to deal with safeguarding issues. Incidents and issues are logged and analysed to identify any necessary actions.
21. igen has a very strong organisational culture of promoting opportunities for learners. All aspects of equality and diversity are covered in induction and are effectively embedded into teaching sessions. Regular events celebrate diversity

and success. A well planned diversity week effectively focused learners on a wide range of diversity issues. Staff and learners show good levels of awareness of all aspects of bullying and harassment. Prompt action is taken when any form of bullying is identified. A social media policy is in place and firewalls prevent inappropriate access to internet sites. Detailed data relating to gaps in recruitment, retention, success and progression of different groups of learners are routinely analysed and reported to management. The board has only recently started to receive these detailed reports and so has yet to set challenging targets to improve the performance of different groups.

22. igen engages well with users, making effective use of learner and stakeholder evaluations carried out during and at the end of programmes to monitor levels of satisfaction and make improvements. Learner comments from partner organisations are shared to inform improvement.
23. Quality-improvement processes are satisfactory. Processes are currently being reviewed to bring together a single company-wide quality structure. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out regularly across all partners. Some observers focus too much on teaching and insufficiently on measuring if learning has taken place when arriving at their judgements and grades. Grades are analysed but there is insufficient analysis of the key judgements to effectively inform staff development. An established curriculum group of partner representatives shares best practice. The self-assessment report identifies the majority of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement and these are adequately reflected in the improvement plan. The self-assessment report uses data well to analyse the provision.
24. igen provides satisfactory value for money. Progression rates are low but strategies to effect improvement are starting to have a positive impact. The quality and availability of resources are satisfactory. Financial management is good. igen is developing and starting to implement its strategy to manage its resources in a sustainable way.

## Information about the inspection

25. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's operations director as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality-monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## igen

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>	104	104
Full-time learners	360	360
Part-time learners		
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	4	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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