

EEF Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 51693

Name of lead inspector: Derrick Spragg HMI

Last day of inspection: 08 January 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: EEF Technology Centre,
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Information about the provider

1. The EEF Limited (EEF) is a membership-based organisation that represents engineering and manufacturing employers across the United Kingdom and provides a range of support services to its member companies. EEF Technology Centre, located in the West Midlands, is a specialist work-based learning provider for engineering manufacturing and technology and is the only EEF training centre in the UK. In October 2008 the EEF in the West Midlands merged with the other EEF regional associations to form EEF Limited. Forty three staff and associates are involved with training, of whom, 27 are full time. EEF has a general manager who oversees the day-to-day operation of the centre. Four managers take responsibility for different aspects of training and report to the general manager.
2. EEF contracts with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Birmingham and Solihull for apprenticeships, which make up over 77% of the learners, and for Train to Gain programmes. The majority of learners take part in programmes in engineering and manufacturing technologies and that was the focus of the inspection. The Train to Gain provision includes some learners on business improvement techniques and other management programmes which were not inspected. EEF manages a consortium of schools, colleges, employers and other partners for the Young Apprenticeship (YA) programme in the north east of England. Consideration of the YA programme formed evidence towards leadership and management but was not part of this inspection. EEF provide a range of commercial training services. LSC contracts amount to less than 10% of income. Approximately 92% of learners are male and 10 % from minority ethnic groups. In 2009/10 of the learners who started, 6% declared they had a learning difficulty or disability. The proportion of people with a minority ethnic heritage in the West Midlands is 11 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally (2001 census data). Unemployment rates are higher in the West Midlands than nationally.
3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - Aldercar Community Language College
 - City of Wolverhampton College
 - Hereford & Worcester Group Training
 - Hopwood Hall College
 - Midland Group Training Services
 - New College Bromsgrove
 - Newcastle under Lyme College
 - Rochdale Training Association
 - Stephenson College
 - Walsall College

■ West Nottinghamshire College.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
<p>Employer provision: Apprenticeships Train to Gain</p>	<p>228 apprentices 112 learners</p>

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Engineering manufacturing technology	2

Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of EEF’s training provision is good. Apprentices and Train to Gain learners receive good training. EEF has implemented many improvements since the last inspection and overall performance shows an improving trend. However, a number of advanced apprentices did not finish their apprenticeship within the planned time over the past four years. This is something EEF have begun to rectify in 2009/10.
5. Apprentices and Train to Gain learners enjoy their training and a high proportion of them achieve their learning goals. EEF promotes the health and safety of learners very effectively and learners say they feel safe. Training is good both at the centre and in the workplace with very effective coordination achieved by EEF staff who are very responsive to employers and support learners very well. The programmes meet the needs of learners and employers particularly effectively.
6. Leadership and management including arrangements for safeguarding and equality and diversity are satisfactory. EEF plays a prominent role in local and national policy initiatives and engages particularly effectively with users to support improvement. However, key indicators are insufficiently detailed and the impact of performance review and evaluation at the corporate level is reduced. Safeguarding meets government requirements; however progress with the

management action plan to fully implement arrangements is slow. Although promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and there are no significant gaps in the performance of different groups of learners, strategies for further development lack sufficient challenge.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of learners who achieve their learning goals is high overall. Learners enjoy taking part in training. Attendance is good. Learners develop good work related skills. Learners say they feel safe.
- The overall success rate for 2008/09 for Train to Gain learners is good at 90%. The overall framework success rate for engineering apprenticeships is high averaging 78% since the last inspection in 2005; although in the most recent year, 2008/09, it declined to 74%.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of advanced apprentices who complete their programme on or before their planned end date is low and although, above the national average and now improving, further improvement is required.
- The quality of training is good. Learners receive good practical and theoretical training in the EEF training centre. Learners experience good on-the-job training and employers provide good support.
- EEF works particularly effectively with employers, colleges, schools and other partners to meet the needs of young people and adult learners.
- Personal support for learners from EEF staff and employers is good. Learners and parents/carers receive very clear information about training and learning opportunities and the most appropriate way to develop careers.
- EEF influences and plays a prominent role in local and national policy initiatives to promote and support engineering manufacturing skills training.
- The use of management information is effective at operational level however key indicators are insufficiently detailed and the impact of performance review and evaluation at director level is reduced.
- EEF engages particularly effectively with users to support improvement. Employers make a strong contribution to the improvement and development of the provision.
- Safeguarding is satisfactory and meets government requirements. However slow progress in the full implementation of the management action plan holds up further development.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and there are no significant gaps in performance of different groups of learners. Strategies for further improvement lack sufficient challenge.

- Self-assessment is effective and appropriate processes are in place for quality improvement at operational level. Action planning for improvement is satisfactory and in some cases is very thorough. The current draft of the self-assessment report is not presented in a way that is easy for the reader to follow.

What does EEF need to do improve further?

- Improve the proportion of advanced apprentices who achieve at or within their planned end date by ensuring, for example, that the planning and pace of assessment aligns more closely to the individual's needs.
- Broaden the range of key performance indicators to more effectively reflect the qualitative aspects of the provision and provide a better basis for evaluation by directors.
- Further develop safeguarding arrangements by fully implementing the comprehensive management action plan developed in 2009.
- Implement more challenging strategies for widening participation in learning through partnership working, by celebrating diversity more strongly and by ensuring employers promote equality and diversity successfully.
- Continue to improve outcomes by providing highly individualised and well-structured training including good skills development.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the very good practical training at EEF
- that the quality of teaching, training and assessment is excellent
- the superb support
- the frequent monitoring officer visits
- the opportunity to gain formal qualifications at work
- the good training opportunities provided by employers.

What learners would like to see improved:

- a more disciplined approach to marking project work
- more planned tasks at work to increase assessment opportunities
- that the content of the college course more closely reflects what I do at work.

What employers like:

- that the training the apprentices receive benefits the company
- the very supportive and excellent communication
- the well coordinated training
- the excellent service we receive
- that EEF is managed by engineers who understand employers' needs
- the support and regular updates on progress given by monitoring officers

- the employer's involvement in the apprenticeship programme.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the communication with work based managers (in one case).

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. EEF carries out improvements particularly effectively and has responded well, in most cases, to the key challenges from the previous inspection. In particular, the proportion of learners who achieve their learning goals has increased and in Train to Gain programmes, there is a strong improving trend. The coordination of training has improved. Overall fewer learners now complete after their planned end date and the trend is improving.
8. Management information systems and the use of data to support improvement planning at operational level have improved. Systems to manage individual learning programmes and monitor learners' progress have improved. The management team's capacity to self assesses and carry out quality improvements has increased. Good systems for quality improvement are now operating and staff and users are thoroughly involved.
9. The current self-assessment report is broadly accurate and uses data effectively to support judgements. Although the promotion of equality and diversity has improved, not enough is done to strengthen and reinforce equality and diversity with learners and employers.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. The proportion of learners who achieve their learning goals is high overall. Learners enjoy taking part in training. There are no significant differences in the attainment levels of different groups of learners on similar programmes. Learners attain good standards of work and many learners' achievements exceed the requirements of the qualifications. Attendance is good.
11. Overall success rates are good. In 2008/09, 90% of Train to Gain learners achieved NVQ qualifications at level 2 or 3. The average overall framework success rate for engineering apprentices since the previous inspection in 2005 is high at 78% although in the most recent year 2008/09 it dropped to 74%. The proportion of learners on the programme led apprenticeship provision who gain jobs is high averaging 74% over two years. Timely success rates for apprentices, although improving and above national averages, remain low particularly for advanced apprentices at 54% for 2008/09.
12. Learners attain high standards and develop good work related skills. They show good understanding of the work they do. Learners use safe working practices. Learners' awareness of health and safety is good. They successfully complete health and safety qualifications that include risk assessment awareness. Learners state that they feel safe both in the training centre and in the workplace.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. The quality of training is good. Learners receive good practical and theoretical training in the EEF training centre. Learners experience good on-the-job training with structured programmes in the work place. These include, in many cases, a range of good quality additional training and work experiences. The training programmes are particularly good at helping learners to gain appropriate work ethics, such as personal discipline, setting high standards of work, timekeeping, and respect for others. This is particularly in the centre where learners experience a realistic engineering environment. Training staff use their skills and experience well to develop learners.
14. The planning of training overall is satisfactory and the number of apprentices who complete on time has improved recently. However, in the past, a number of advanced apprentices did not complete within the planned period for a variety of reasons including in some cases unsatisfactory planning. Progress reviews are satisfactory with good employer involvement but in some cases, the records indicate insufficiently challenging and specific targets are set.
15. The range and content of training meets the needs and interest of users very well. EEF closely aligns the programme to employment opportunities within the engineering and manufacturing industries. The achievement of additional NVQ units at level 2 further enhances employment opportunities for unemployed learners. Progression opportunities are good. For example a significant number of advanced apprentices progress from national certificates through to higher national certificates and foundation degree courses. The achievement of additional level 2 units of competence have been added to learners' main learning aims at the request of employers to better represent their skill requirements. Learners achieve a good range of additional qualifications in the workplace including, for example, safe working at heights from mobile elevated working platforms.
16. EEF works particularly effectively with employers, colleges, schools and other partners to meet the needs of young people and adult learners. Managers and staff work very well with employers to develop training programmes and to ensure that qualifications align closely with employers' needs. EEF actively develops strategic partnerships with employers and training providers in other parts of the country to provide work based engineering programmes. EEF coordinates a very successful partnership for the provision of the young apprenticeship programme in the North East that has achieved outstanding outcomes.
17. Personal support for learners from EEF staff and employers is good. Learners, parents and carers receive very clear information about training and learning opportunities and the most appropriate way to develop careers in engineering. Parents, carers, teachers and employers attend open days and evenings at the centre and see at first hand what is involved in the training programmes. EEF has achieved the Matrix award for adult information, advice and guidance. Learners' achievements are celebrated. EEF provides support for learners

through a direct line to a senior member of staff who learners know they can talk to confidentially. Individual learners' needs are understood well by staff through a rigorous and effective initial assessment process. Follow up to initial assessment further supports learners during an extended induction process. The support for unemployed learners and the assistance provided to seek employment is good. Learners with additional learning needs receive effective additional support including for language, number and communications.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

18. EEF influences and plays a prominent role in local and national policy initiatives to promote and support engineering manufacturing skills training. For example, EEF's influence was significant in ensuring Train to Gain engineering learners are able to access and achieve level three qualifications. EEF promotes training awards regionally and nationally which celebrate learners' success and the achievement of high standards.
19. Strategic planning is effective and realistic with clear options to improve and develop the learning programmes and services. Strategic partnerships are in place and seek to provide a strong base for the further development of EEF's aims for the training provision although these have not yet been realised.
20. The quality and use of management information supports operational management well. Managers communicate effectively with staff and provide a clear focus on learners' progress and achievement. However, key performance indicators are insufficiently detailed and at corporate level the impact of performance review and evaluation by directors is reduced.
21. Learners are protected and safeguarded adequately. Relevant staff are subjected to enhanced criminal record bureau checks. Health and safety policies and procedures are thoroughly applied. Learners understand well how to keep safe, protect themselves and who to contact if they feel unsafe in any context. A comprehensive management action plan is in place. However progress to develop arrangements further is slow.
22. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. There are no major differences in the performance of different groups of learners. EEF engage effectively in many initiatives to widen participation through local partnerships and promotional activity with schools. The proportion of people participating in EEF training from under represented groups has increased since the previous inspection and now reflects the region and industry's norms. EEF is fully committed to increasing participation further in the future.
23. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. EEF has introduced suitable actions to strengthen learners' understanding and employers' awareness, although these actions have not yet had sufficient time to be fully effective. Overall, although promotion of equality and diversity takes place, strategies are insufficiently challenging.

24. EEF engages particularly effectively with users to support improvement. Collection and analysis of feedback is systematic and frequent with a range of appropriate methods used. Employers make a strong contribution to the improvement and development of the provision through regular contact with EEF staff at all levels. Learners' views are actively sought formally and informally and used to improve the provision.
25. Self-assessment is effective and processes are in place for monitoring performance and standards. Improvements to teaching, training and learning take place and observations are effective in improving and sharing practices. The monitoring and review of other processes are satisfactory and subject to further development and improvement. The use of data is effective in monitoring and improving performance at an operational level. Action planning is effective and in some cases is very thorough. The current self-assessment report and development plan gives insufficient attention to the need to improve the timely success rates. The presentation and format of the current report is unhelpful to the reader.
26. EEF uses its resources very well to achieve value for money. The proportion of learners who progress, develop skills and attain their learning goals is high overall although in some cases the length of time over which this is achieved is inefficient. EEF manages resources effectively to meet the needs of learners. The training provision operates within EEF as a not for profit division and successfully achieves good levels of investment in resources which benefit learners.

Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Quality Manager, 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 local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, 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.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the main subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

EEF Limited

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 using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	340	340
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	na	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	na	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
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	
Leadership and management	3	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	na	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
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?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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