

# Kettering Borough Training

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 52843

**Name of lead inspector:** Derrick Spragg HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 12 February 2010

**Type of provider:** Local Authority

**Address:** Drovers' Hall,  
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## Information about the provider

1. Kettering Borough Training (KBT), established for more than 30 years, works within the human resources service area of Kettering Borough Council (KBC) as a separately funded business with governance from KBC. KBT achieved re-accreditation for Investors in People in July 2009.
2. KBT provides apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in health and social care, engineering; building craft and mechanical engineering services, hairdressing, administration, customer service and accounting and finance and provision for Entry to Employment (E2E). KBT contracts with Leicester Learning and Skills Council. Government funding takes account for nearly 100% of its income. KBT is a consortium member of a European Social Fund project for learners who are not in education, employment or training and is a member of the Tresham Business Solutions Train to Gain consortium.
3. The inspection covered apprenticeship programmes in building craft, mechanical engineering and administration. KBT's team consists of a manager, business manager, reception/administrator, five co-ordinators, three E2E staff including a placement co-ordinator, and one main administration trainer/assessor and two health & social care trainer/assessors.
4. The unemployment rate in Northamptonshire for those aged 16 to 24 was 13.5% (March 2009) and 22% in Kettering. Kettering is in a predominantly rural area and the proportion of people in the local area with a minority ethnic heritage is just under 3%. The proportion of learners currently involved in training at KBT with a minority ethnic heritage is 5%.

5. The following organisations provides training on behalf of KBT:

Tresham College, Kettering  
 Moulton College, Northampton  
 New College, Nottingham  
 Leicester College

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Entry to Employment	38 learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> Apprenticeships	145 apprentices

## Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 3
Capacity to improve		Grade 3
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		3
Quality of provision		3
Leadership and management		3
Safeguarding		3
Equality and diversity		3
Subject Areas		
Construction planning and the built environment		3
Business Administration		2

## Overall effectiveness

- Most learners achieve at a satisfactory rate. Learners training in administration, customer service and hairdressing achieve well. Learners gain skills and develop confidence. Overall, across all programmes too few learners achieve in the planned time. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory and good in business administration. KBT works well with employers to provide good training at work. Individual support for learners is good. Reviewing learners' progress and individual planning lacks rigour. Managers provide good leadership and have a good understanding of what KBT needs to do to improve, although new quality improvement arrangements are not working fully. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe. KBT promotes equality and diversity effectively although misses opportunities to reinforce learners' understanding at a minority of progress reviews.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for apprentices are satisfactory overall and good in business administration. Learners gain skills and develop confidence. Learners use safe working practices. Learners say they feel safe.
- Attainment of learning goals is very good in administration and customer service, good in hairdressing, satisfactory in health care, engineering and construction. The number of learners who progress from Entry to Employment is low over the past two years but increasing in 2009/2010.
- The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Training and learning is satisfactory with most learners experiencing good on-the-job training. Progress monitoring, reviewing, target setting and recording has lack of rigour.
- Learners have a good choice of programmes that meets their needs well. Programmes meet employers' needs although in a minority of cases they have insufficient information about apprenticeship frameworks and timescales.
- Partnerships particularly with employers benefit learners. The partnership with the main Tresham College has not been working effectively in respect of issuing timely certification.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learner's value supportive visits by KBT to the workplace that help them progress.
- Managers provide good leadership. Their changes to the organisation have given staff a stronger sense of purpose and motivation to raise standards.
- The use of management information remains underdeveloped and governance arrangements are not formalised.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory and learners feel safe. KBT promotes equality and diversity effectively overall although opportunities to reinforce learners' understanding are missed at a minority of progress reviews.
- A thorough review of operations has highlighted key areas for development and KBT has a good understanding of what is required to improve. New quality improvement processes and the policy to engage users formally in improvement are not working fully.
- Value for money is satisfactory overall but too many learners across all apprenticeship programmes do not complete on time. KBT has been unable to exert sufficient influence with its main subcontractor to obtain certificates in a timely manner to confirm achievements in construction.

## What does KBT need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the number of learners who do not complete their programmes within the planned time by introducing better individual planning, using reviews to monitor progress more systematically and include employers more in the planning of programmes and to help ensure completions are timely.

- Improve the work of subcontractor by applying service agreements that specify quality standards relating to the learning processes identify requirements for timely completion and have high expectations about learners' achievements.
- Continue to raise the quality of the learners' experience and their achievements by fully implementing the new quality improvement processes and engaging users in the continuous improvement process.
- Improve the overall management of training by implementing formal governance arrangements with KBC, including identifying and using key performance indicators, and using management information more to plan and evaluate performance.
- Continue to promote equality and diversity by ensuring all learners have the opportunity to understand what this area means to them individually and at work.

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

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

- friendly, supportive and responsive staff at KBT
- achieving lots
- that training improves skills, experience and confidence
- KBT staff are available to help when you ask
- being well prepared for job roles at work
- the good training at college.

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

- provision of all the information on training
- more off-the-job training – a planned programme with dates in advance.

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

#### **What employers like:**

- the support KBT provides
- good links between KBT and employers
- KBT staff are always available and communications are good
- KBT staff are very well aware of our needs
- good standards and that KBT staff push learners to develop and progress at a good pace
- KBT are very responsive to employers' needs, including providing training for learners on request
- learners benefit our organisation by bringing fresh attitudes.

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

- communication and information about the off-the-job training
- links between training on and off-the-job
- flexibility in the off-the-job training
- awareness of the content of the programme and framework
- information about learners' timescales for completion to help them progress.

## **Main inspection report**

### **Capacity to make and sustain improvement**

**Grade 3**

7. A trend of steady improvement in overall performance has taken place, particularly considering the current year's achievements. KBT reviews its operations and uses the findings well to identify areas for improvement. However, a few aspects of the quality improvement process are new and not fully operational. Constructive changes to the organisation by leaders and managers give staff a stronger sense of purpose and raise standards. Areas for further development are clear including the need to implement governance arrangements to reflect the changes to the organisation. A policy for gathering users' feedback is in place. Informal arrangements have operated in the past with actions to improve taken as a result. The self-assessment report is in draft. It is accurate for leadership and management but not sufficiently self critical in the detail for the subject areas although graded correctly for those areas inspected. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but changes in the organisation have resulted in delays to full implementation.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**Grade 3**

8. Outcomes for apprentices are satisfactory overall and good in business administration. Overall success rates in 2008/09 are at a satisfactory level at 70% but timely rates are low. Success rates for learners in business administration are very high at 95% in 2008/09. They have been high for last four years at over 90%. Success rates are at a satisfactory level in health care and engineering. Overall success rates for 2008/09 are low in construction at 44% with a high number of late completions due to problems KBT encountered accessing certification. The rate for construction in 2009/10 at period five, increased substantially. The progress rate for learners from Entry to Employment to positive destinations was low at 39% in 2008/09 but increased to 50% at period five in 2009/10.
9. Learners gain good skills and develop confidence. Learners understand the need to be both qualified and skilled to ensure their economic well being and that qualifications increase their employability. Apprentices respond well and take responsibility at work for challenging tasks. Employers value their skills and knowledge. Learners feel safe. They follow safe working practices. They are also aware of how to make informed choices about their health and well-being. Learners contribute well to community development and projects that enhance and develop their communities.

### **The quality of provision**

**Grade 3**

10. The quality of provision is satisfactory. It is good for on-the-job training and learning. Employers provide good training for learners to develop their skills and confidence. Off-the-job training is satisfactory and well planned in construction and the built environment. However, the co-ordination between on and off-the-

job training is not enough and leaves learners and employers with insufficient information about the learning taking place. Off-the-job learning sessions in business administration are effective when they take place but only feature intermittently.

11. Induction and initial assessment are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory and the apprentices are clear on what they have achieved. Internal verification is robust and meets awarding body requirements. The monitoring of progress through reviews has insufficient clarity and detail to plan effectively what the learner needs to do to develop and employers are not routinely involved in reviews.
12. Learners have a good choice of learning programmes relevant to their individual career and employment goals. The range of programmes meets well the needs and interests employers. Learners effectively develop a good standard of skills at work that support career progression. Most progress to further learning programmes. Employers value the contribution that learners make to their organisations.
13. KBT has satisfactory partnership arrangements that benefit learners in the majority of the programmes it provides. KBT works effectively with a range of employers who provide good quality learning opportunities and supportive on-the-job training. KBT is responsive to employer requests and provides additional training for learners to allow them to progress to higher-level work roles. A minority of employers have insufficient information to engage fully in reviews and assessment. The partnership with the main subcontractor is ineffective. KBT has been unable to exert sufficient influence to obtain certificates in a timely manner to confirm achievements in construction.
14. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value supportive visits by KBT staff to the workplace that help them progress and deal with any barriers to learning. KBT staff are readily available and approachable, providing prompt responses to learners' requests for help, including effective support for those made redundant. Induction guidance is satisfactory and introduces learners to the structure and demands of the programme and their rights and responsibilities as learners. They receive appropriate information and advice to enable them to make informed choices on suitable learning programmes and timely advice to support their progression.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

15. The management team provides good leadership. In the recent past changes and improvement to the organisation have taken place and staff have a strong sense of purpose and motivation to raise standards. Staff are participating in the changes and engaging in learning and development programmes. They are confident in their new roles and apply new skills effectively. The use of management information by staff, although improving, remains underdeveloped. A review of the requirements for governance, in response to the recent changes in the organisation, is underway. Kettering Borough Council



recognises the need to implement governance arrangements although at present these are not in place.

16. Safeguarding of learners is satisfactory. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place for all relevant staff. Staff understand what to do in response to learners' welfare concerns. Appropriate training provides knowledge and skills for staff in respect of safeguarding. The application of health and safety policies and procedures is satisfactory. Learners are very aware that they can contact staff if they feel unsafe in any context. A policy is in place and further actions include ensuring employers are made fully aware of their responsibilities particularly in respect of young people and vulnerable adults.
17. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Arrangements for dealing with discrimination or harassment are clear and effective and learners understand them. KBT implements strategies to widen participation and promote inclusion. There are no major differences in the performance of different groups of learners. The promotion of equality and diversity is effective in induction and in training sessions. The way a minority of reviews are conducted lead to missed opportunities to reinforce learning and for learners to understand equality and diversity in the workplace.
18. A thorough review of operations has highlighted key areas for development and KBT has a good understanding of what is required to improve. KBT staff and other internal stakeholders in the council are involved in self-assessment. The draft self-assessment report is accurate for leadership and management but incomplete for the subject areas. Improvements are taking place including the quality of learners' experiences and the provision of new resources to increase learning outcomes. The new quality improvement processes and the policy to engage users more in improvement are in place but have not had sufficient time to raise standards. Upgrading of the agreements for quality improvement with sub contractors is taking place. The introduction of new observation processes is underway. Improving the quality and service of the main sub contractor is proving difficult to secure. KBT is unable to exert sufficient influence to obtain certificates in a timely manner to confirm achievements. Value for money is satisfactory overall, resources are satisfactory but too many learners do not complete on time.

## Subject areas

### Construction planning and the built environment

### Grade 3

#### Context

19. KBT offers a range of construction programmes for nine apprentices and thirteen advanced apprentices in building craft and mechanical engineering services. These include decorative finishes, plastering trowel occupations, wood occupations, plumbing and heating and ventilation and electrical installation.

#### Key findings

- Learners make satisfactory progress towards achieving their learning goals. The provider has not been able to obtain timely certification from Tresham College, the main sub contractor for construction. As a result, overall and timely success rates were low for 2008/09 at 44% although in the current year the rate has increased substantially. There are no differences in performance between different groups of learners.
- Current learners make progress at an appropriate rate and develop satisfactory or better skills. Learners work at a good pace, demonstrate good skills and work to industry standard.
- Learners understand the need to be both qualified and skilled to ensure their economic well being and that qualifications increase their employability. Apprentices respond well to high levels of responsibility on site. Employers value their skills and knowledge and learners are able to undertake complex tasks and work independently.
- Learners feel safe. They follow safe working practices. They are aware of how to make informed choices about their health and well-being. Many learners contribute well to community development and projects that enhance and develop their communities.
- Teaching, training and assessment support learning satisfactorily. On-the-job training is good. Employers provide good vocational support and training for learners to develop their skills. Planning for the off-the-job training is effective. Assessment is satisfactory and the apprentices are clear on what they achieve.
- The monitoring of learners' progress through reviews is constrained by the lack of timely communication between the provider and their sub-contractors for off-the-job training. The reviews do not effectively target what the learner needs to do to progress and do not provide enough detailed co-ordination between on and off-the-job training.
- The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners and employers. Learners have a good choice of programmes and levels that are relevant to their personal career paths. The range of work opportunities with employers enables learners to develop effectively the skills required to support their employment goals. Employers value the work standards learners achieve.

- Partnerships with employers are satisfactory. Learners contribute to community projects with other partners in the area. Partnership working with the main sub contractor is ineffective. Many learners have not had their certificates issued in a timely manner. KBT has been in regular contact with the main subcontractor but has not been able to exert sufficient influence to resolve the problem.
- Support, advice and guidance for learners are good. KBT staff deal with learners' welfare needs particularly effectively. The training co-ordinator provides high levels of support. For example, successfully supporting and placing learners when made redundant.
- The management of the construction training is satisfactory overall and performance is improving well in the current year. Staff are clear about their priorities and leaders and managers give good support to enable staff to achieve them.
- Improvements are taking place to the management of the programme. KBT has a clear view on what is required to continue to raise achievement levels and improve communications. New policies and procedures for quality improvement are in place but have not had sufficient time to have an impact.
- The safeguarding of learners is satisfactory and the coverage of health and welfare of learners is thorough. The promotion of equality and diversity is underdeveloped in the programme and only briefly covered in reviews.

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

- Increase learners' timely success rates by ensuring they receive prompt and clear feedback including improving the quality of information for progress reviews and the setting of targets.
- Improve the quality of off-the-job training and of the co-ordination between on and off-the-job training by fully implementing the new quality improvement processes.
- Ensure that the certification of learner achievement operates in a timely way by improving the partnership and the service from the main contractor
- Promote equality and diversity more thoroughly through the review process by making sure staff are devoting time to this aspect and have the confidence and skills to implement KBT's policy for this area.

## **Business administration and law**

## **Grade 2**

### **Context**

20. KBT provides apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in administration, accounting and customer service. Some 29 learners are on administration programmes, four on customer services and one on accounting. KBT staff are responsible for training and assessments in administration and customer

service. For administration and customer service, most training and all assessment takes place in the workplace.

## **Key Findings**

- Overall success rates are very high. Since 2006/07, overall success rates have been above 90%. The success rate in 2008/09 for apprentices was 95%. The timely success rate was low at 65%.
- Learners make good progress relative to their prior attainment. They make very good progress in the technical certificate. The standard of learners' work for NVQ evidence is satisfactory. Learners enjoy their learning, are well motivated and are keen to progress to another programme. Progression rates are high.
- Learners develop good employability skills, including communications and increased self-confidence, which contribute well to their economic and social wellbeing. They develop and extend their workplace skills well, most take on responsibility and make good progress at work. Learners show a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work.
- Learners feel safe in the workplace and in the training centre. They have a clear understanding of health and safety in the workplace and adopt safe working practices. Induction training covers equality and diversity effectively and staff promote this area further during training. Reviews reinforce learners' understanding effectively. Learners' awareness of equality and diversity is good.
- On-the-job learning and training is good. Of-the-job training sessions are ad hoc in response to learners' requests and are insufficiently frequent. In the sessions that take place, rapport between learners and the tutor is good. Learners develop understanding and skills well. They work enthusiastically and with purpose in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Initial assessment and assessment are satisfactory. All assessment takes place in the workplace. Assessors visit learners approximately every four weeks. Planning for individual learning is underdeveloped and lacks continuity. The outcomes of the monthly assessment visits do not sufficiently inform the quarterly progress reviews.
- Resources are satisfactory. The provider's training room provides a good learning environment with high standard information communications technology (ICT) available. KBT makes use of technology to support learning but the use of ICT in learning and assessment is underdeveloped.
- The range of programmes meets well the needs and interests of learners and employers. Learners have a good choice of programmes and levels that are relevant to their personal career and employment goals. They are able to develop effectively the skills required to support career progression. Most learners progress to further programmes. Employers value highly the contribution that learners make to their organisations.

- KBT has good partnership arrangements to provide training programmes. It works well with a range of employers to provide good quality on-the-job learning opportunities. KBT responds effectively to employers' needs and provides training for learners to progress to higher levels of responsibility. Employers have insufficient information on how apprenticeships operate their role in assessment and the requirements for timely completion.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Training staff are readily available and approachable, providing prompt responses to learners' requests for help. Learners receive sound information and advice to enable them to make informed choices on the selection of programmes and timely advice to support their progression.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Training staff are well qualified and have good knowledge of the sector. They are motivated to improve the quality of the provision and raise the aspirations and expectations of learners.
- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Training sessions promote equality and diversity effectively. Processes to improve the quality of the provision are underdeveloped.

**What does KBT need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the timely success rate by strengthening individual planning for learning. Improving the quality of information for progress reviews and introducing a more structured schedule of training sessions to support learners' progress and timely achievement.
- Develop partnerships with employers further by raising their awareness about the apprenticeship frameworks, involving them more in the assessment and review process and by providing them with information about timescales for each learner's programme and completion date.
- Strengthen the use of ICT in learning by introducing and developing the use of e portfolios.

## **Information about the inspection**

21. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's 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.
22. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the organisation. They also 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)

## Kettering Borough Training

**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	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>			
Full-time learners	193	38	145
Part-time learners	0	0	0
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3		
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</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?	3		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
<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>	2		
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</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?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3		
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>	<b>3</b>
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>	3		
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?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4		
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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