

# Develop EBP (formerly known as Bedfordshire and Luton Education Business Partnership)

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 51686

**Name of lead inspector:** Nick Crombie HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 19 November 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent Learning Provider

**Address:** 15 Doolittle Mill  
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## Information about the provider

1. Develop EBP operates throughout Bedfordshire and Luton and was formerly known as Bedfordshire and Luton Education Business Partnership. It changed its name in September 2010, but the range of its operations was unaffected. The company is based in Ampthill and sub-contracts most of its Foundation Learning and Entry to Employment (E2E) to providers in Bedford, Dunstable and Luton. It delivers its own Foundation Learning programme in Flitwick. It was last inspected in May 2006.
2. This inspection focused on the Foundation Learning and E2E provision, and some aspects of apprenticeships, which together comprise about a third of the organisation's turnover. The Foundation Learning programme is funded by the Young People's Learning Agency in the East of England. A small contract with the Skills Funding Agency, to deliver apprenticeship training in children's care, learning and development, business administration and health and social care, is being transferred to another provider.
3. Develop EBP is a non profit making organisation limited by guarantee. It has a board of directors with representatives from the local community, businesses, training and education. The company is managed by the Chief Executive and a team including two directors of learning and three other managers. There are currently 19 other full-time staff, three part-time staff, and three temporary members of staff.
4. The percentage of young people in 2008/09 gaining five GCSEs including English and Maths was 46% in Luton and 48% in Bedford compared with 50% in England.
5. Around 6% of 16 to 18 year olds in Bedford and Luton are not in education, employment or training. The percentage of people claiming job-seeker's allowance is 2.9%, 3.6% and 4.4% in Dunstable, Luton and Bedford respectively compared to 3.5% in Great Britain. In Bedford, 15% of the population is of non-white descent, and 35% in Luton. People of Asian descent comprise 21% of the Luton population.
6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
  - Active Support
  - Diverse FM
  - DJ Academy
  - Eastern Training
  - First Place
  - Sport Support
  - Youth Matters

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> Foundation Learning including Entry to Employment (E2E)	245 full-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships	22 learners 65 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		2
Leadership and management		3
Safeguarding		1
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		Grade
Preparation for life and work		3

## Overall effectiveness

7. In 2009/10, just over half of learners went from the E2E programme into education, employment or training. The number of learners achieving qualifications has reduced over time and too few learners gain literacy and numeracy qualifications. There is no significant difference in the performance of different learner groups. Learners' attendance is good in some subcontractors, but poor in others. Learners say their learning environments are welcoming, friendly and secure.
8. In general, learners develop their vocational, personal and social skills well and make good progress. The overall standard of learners' work since starting the programme is good. Most teaching and learning sessions observed were good but assessment of, and support for, learners' literacy and numeracy needs were only satisfactory. Initial assessments of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are not always used to plan for their individual learning needs accurately. Learners have access to a good choice of modules and subjects to meet their needs and ambitions. Tutors and staff provide good learning and personal support to help learners achieve their potential.
9. Develop EBP has increased its range of resources and complementary programmes for young people and, in particular, disadvantaged groups. Staff are supported well to gain relevant qualifications. The arrangements for

safeguarding are outstanding. There are several examples of prompt and very effective safeguarding interventions by Develop EBP and its subcontractors.

10. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is good. Develop EBP's culture is based on supporting the achievement of each learner, although some subcontractors are not yet achieving consistently high standards for all. During learning sessions, tutors challenge common stereotypes effectively and raise learners' awareness of diversity. Develop EBP monitors closely the relative performance of different learner groups, and is prompt in its actions to reduce any differences.
11. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Performance management of E2E subcontractors is satisfactory but there is no overarching approach or strategy for identifying and implementing general and specific improvement actions across the group of subcontractors.

## Main findings

- In 2009/10, the rate at which E2E learners progressed into education, employment or training was satisfactory, at around the national rate. In the first three months of the Foundation Learning programme this year, 73% of learners entered education, and three-quarters of these into further education. Too few learners gain literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners' attendance is satisfactory in most subcontractors, but poor in others.
- Learners are motivated and understand how new skills and qualifications will help them achieve employment. Learners make good progress overall and they enjoy their learning. The standard of learners' work and behaviour is good. Learners feel safe at their providers and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Teaching and learning sessions observed were predominantly good. This corresponds to the organisation's grade profile from its formal observations of teaching and learning. Tutors use a good range of teaching and learning methods. Learners enjoy the sessions and contribute their ideas. In the few less successful sessions tutors do not make sufficient allowance in their teaching methods or use of resources to meet each learner's needs.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory and produce clear information on learners' needs. However, the results are not always used well enough to produce accurate individual learning plans. A few tutors are not sufficiently qualified or experienced to support the needs of learners with low literacy, language and numeracy skills fully.
- Most tutors carry out frequent reviews with learners to assess and plan learning but some of the objectives set are vague and the progress of some learners is not monitored effectively.
- The programme meets learners' needs and interests well. Learners particularly enjoy the specialist provision in sport, garden maintenance, music technology, radio presenting, and disc jockey skills. Some learners have good opportunities

to develop their confidence and work-related skills through work experience placements.

- Develop EBP has built strong partnerships with a wide range of subcontractors and specialist organisations which serve the needs of learners, not least through providing specialist and extended opportunities for learning and development.
- Tutors and staff provide good support to help learners achieve their potential. Many learners have significant social barriers to overcome and trust their tutors with confidential information. Tutors sometimes act as advocates to help learners overcome particular difficulties.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Develop EBP has a very strong focus on supporting young learners to achieve their potential and has progressively increased its range of complementary programmes, for young people and, in particular, disadvantaged groups. Staff support the organisation's vision and contribute directly to achieving it.
- Develop EBP has created some good resources for teaching, training and learning including a dedicated new training suite. Staff are supported well to gain relevant qualifications. Subcontractors' skills are improved further through training, for example in safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. Safeguarding has a very high priority within Develop EBP. It has a particularly good range of training and information materials and staff, subcontractors and learners have a very good awareness of safeguarding young people. Prompt safeguarding interventions by Develop EBP and its subcontractors appear, in one or two cases, to have saved lives.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is good, and at the core of Develop EBP's culture. Learners and staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity in principle and practice.
- Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Performance management of E2E subcontractors is thorough but quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently well developed to promote consistently high standards of delivery across the provision. Self-assessment is satisfactory.

### **What does Develop EBP need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve outcomes for learners by improving the consistency and quality of target setting and reviews to ensure learning programmes are wholly personalised.
- Support all tutors to gain appropriate qualifications or develop expertise in supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Make better use of initial and diagnostic assessment to improve the quality of personalised targets in learning programmes and providing appropriate additional support to enable learners to complete their main programme of learning successfully.
- Identify key themes for improvement across the Foundation Learning provision, encompassing all subcontractors and Develop EBP itself. Develop and

implement appropriate quality improvement arrangements to promote consistently high standards of delivery, which ensure that each learner receives the full range of support he or she requires, and achieves their personal goals.

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

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

- being helped to build self confidence
- feeling safe at the centres and being treated with respect
- having a progression route for the future
- learning through practical activities
- the high level of support provided by tutors
- being provided with breakfast and lunch, at some providers.

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

- more support with food at some centres, such as providing breakfast clubs
- more indoor facilities at some sports locations
- widening the range of programme units to choose from at some providers
- access to appropriate adaptive technology to support individual learning and support needs.

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

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

- the very positive experience of working with Develop EBP
- how some learners have progressed from work experience on an E2E programme into full time employment and onto successive levels of learning.

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

- employers expressed no views on improvements.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

12. Develop EBP's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The overall grade profile at this inspection is satisfactory compared to predominantly good at the previous inspection. However, Develop EBP recognises clearly that progression and achievement rates need to improve from their currently satisfactory level. Effective, and more regular, performance monitoring of, and reporting by, subcontractors now provides early indicators of under-performance.
13. Improvement actions are prompt and generally effective. The range of programmes now on offer meets learners' needs well. Training for subcontractors is helping improve the quality of delivery. Some under-performing subcontractors are no longer working with Develop EBP and new ones have been appointed in specialist areas. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory although focused too much on individual initiatives rather than on improving the wider provision. Self-assessment is broadly accurate.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

14. In 2009/10, the progression rate from the E2E programme into education, employment or training was around the national rate, at 56%. In the first three months of the Foundation Learning programme in 2010/11, the progression rate was 73% although nearly three quarters was accounted for by September enrolments into further education. This figure is therefore not indicative of the full year. The rate at which learners achieve qualifications is satisfactory, but reducing over time. Too few learners gain literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners' attendance is good in some subcontractors, but poor in others. Apprenticeship and Train to Gain success rates are high and improving.
15. All learners interviewed were motivated and interested in their programmes. They see their programmes as relevant and can identify how improved skills and qualifications will help them achieve employment. In general, learners develop their vocational, personal and social skills well and make good progress compared to their starting points. Some are re-engaging in learning after an unproductive experience of formal education. The standard of learners' work since starting the programme is good.
16. Learners gain relevant work skills and experience, which increase their prospects of employability. Learners are well behaved and respectful of tutors and each other. They feel safe at their providers and are guided well in using safe working practices. Learners describe their learning environments as welcoming, friendly and secure. Tutors encourage learners to take personal responsibility for their safety and security.



17. Learners have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Many learners demonstrate good background knowledge about how poor nutrition affects their performance on programme and attitude to life generally. One tutor provided effective coaching to a learner who persistently overslept. The learner agreed changes to his lifestyle and behaviour. Learners' involvement in community-based activities and collaborative approaches to learning encourage learners to value others' beliefs, work as a team and support others in the group.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

18. Overall teaching, learning, and assessment are satisfactory. The teaching and learning sessions observed were good, and in line with Develop EBP's own assessment following formal observations. In the better sessions, tutors use a wide range of teaching and learning methods to engage and motivate learners. Sessions are appropriately paced. Learners enjoy participating in sessions and are motivated to contribute ideas and answers. Many learners use information communication technology effectively to research information for job search, in music technology and to video record their learning. In less successful sessions, learning objectives are unclear and tutors do not adapt tasks and materials sufficiently to meet learners' individual needs.
19. Initial diagnostic assessments of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are satisfactory; clear information is produced on learners' needs. However, the assessments are not always used well enough to produce accurate, personalised learning plans. Most tutors carry out frequent reviews with learners to assess and plan learning but some key objectives are insufficiently specific. Overall, too few tutors are sufficiently qualified or experienced to support the needs of learners with low literacy, language and numeracy skills.
20. Subcontractors offer a good choice of modules and subjects to meet individual learners' needs and aspirations. Learners particularly enjoy the specialist provision in sport; garden maintenance; music technology; radio presenting; disc jockeying; retail and craft. Learners benefit from stimulating approaches to personal and social development. Some learners have good opportunities to develop their confidence and work-related skills through work experience placements.
21. Develop EBP has developed and maintains good partnerships with a wide range of agencies and specialist organisations. It liaises with these partners very effectively to identify, target and attract young people who would benefit from the programme. The working relationship with the Connexions service is strong. Links with specialist agencies are very effective in helping learners overcome barriers to learning such as homelessness, drug abuse or family problems.
22. Tutors and staff provide good learning and personal support to help learners achieve their potential. Many learners have significant social barriers to overcome and feel comfortable talking about personal issues with tutors. Some

learners have received financial support or help with transport in getting to and from their sessions. Tutors sometimes act as advocates to help learners overcome personal difficulties. Information and advice on potential progression routes are good.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 3

23. Develop EBP has a very clearly stated vision to support and promote the achievement of learners. This vision underpins the progressive expansion of the organisation and directly shapes comprehensive strategic and business planning. The organisation has increased its range of programmes for young people and, in particular, disadvantaged groups. A range of highly inclusive business development meetings and good internal communications harness the talents of Develop EBP staff and enable them to contribute directly to the achievement of the vision.
24. The management and delivery aspects of the apprenticeship provision are sound. Apprentices are monitored and supported well. Assessors' workflow is manageable and well planned. Develop EBP creates good resources for teaching, training and learning including a dedicated new training suite. A well-structured virtual learning environment has just been introduced for apprentices. The subcontractors' facilities are generally appropriate for purpose.
25. The analysis of staff training needs is good. Training staff are either adequately qualified and experienced or working towards appropriate qualifications. However, too few staff are yet sufficiently skilled or experienced to support learners' literacy, numeracy and language development. Subcontractors' skills have been further improved through training, for example in safeguarding.
26. The arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. In the past six months, a very solid foundation of policy and practice has been developed successfully. Safeguarding has a very high priority within Develop EBP. Designated safeguarding staff, one man and one woman, have received thorough training. A particularly good range of training and information materials has been developed, including well-designed learner handbooks, reference and display materials. Staff, subcontractors and learners have a very good awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues relating to young people. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, records and monitoring are thorough. Checks include staff with access to personal information on young learners but no direct contact. Partnership working in this area is good. There are several examples of prompt and very effective safeguarding interventions by Develop EBP and its subcontractors.
27. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is good. Policies and procedures are comprehensive, up-to-date and meet all legislative requirements. Learners receive a thorough introduction to equality and diversity at induction that is subsequently promoted and reinforced well during reviews. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is generally good, using well-

planned and stimulating learning activities. Common stereotypes are challenged effectively and raise learners' awareness of diversity. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity in principle and practice. Develop EBP staff have received satisfactory formal training and awareness raising sessions. Physical access to Develop EBP's learning environments is good. Marketing materials promote diverse images of learners, including male and female learners in non-traditional occupations.

28. Detailed equality and diversity impact measures are in place, monitored, updated and revised regularly. Develop EBP monitors the relative performance of different learner groups closely, and is prompt in its actions to reduce any differences. Effective initiatives have widened participation, not least through the appointment of subcontractors working in specific sectors of society. Develop EBP is largely successful in supporting learners to achieve in the programme it delivers itself, but not all subcontractors reach consistently high standards for learners' achievement of qualifications and progression.
29. Develop EBP has good arrangements to engage with learners and employers to identify and initiate improvements. Feedback is collected and acted upon promptly. Improvements include expanding the training offer to include additional programmes and securing a dedicated new training centre.
30. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. They are formally structured around a month-by-month, company-wide 'plan, do and evaluate' model which supports a consistent focus on quality improvement. The collation, analysis and monitoring of performance data is satisfactory. Performance management of E2E subcontractors is satisfactory overall and provides prompt indicators of under-performance. Improvement actions are generally effective. However, there is no overall approach or strategy for identifying and implementing general and specific improvement actions across the group of subcontractors. The arrangements for observing teaching and learning are satisfactory, but while observation judgements are generally sound and sufficiently developmental, there is sometimes a lack of depth to observers' judgements.
31. Self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Self-assessment is based on an inclusive process in which all aspects of the provision are assessed. The self-assessment report is detailed but insufficiently evaluative. The judgements and contributory grades awarded in the current report, covering 2008/09, are not consistent with the overall SAR grade profile.
32. Value for money is satisfactory. Learners' outcomes are satisfactory. The quality of provision is good. Resources for teaching and learning have been improved. Performance management is thorough but the arrangements for improving subcontractors' performance are underdeveloped.

## **Information about the inspection**

33. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of work-based learning 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 Skills Funding Agency or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
34. 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 the E2E and Foundation Learning programmes.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## Develop EBP

**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>		
Full-time learners	99	99
Part-time learners	0	0
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>3</b>	
<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?	3	
How well do learners progress?	2	
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>	3	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</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?	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	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?	3	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1	
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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