

# People and Business Development Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58563

**Name of lead inspector:** Deavon Baker-Oxley HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 10 December 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Unit A Blois Business Centre  
Steeple Bumpstead  
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**Telephone number:** 01440731731

## Information about the provider

1. People and Business Development Limited (PBD) was established in 2007. The company started training in 2008, specialising in early years and play work.
2. PBD provides training in health, social care and public services. The organisation is funded through a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). Funding is also received through the Children Workforce Development Council. Two directors and a training manager oversee eleven assessors and two part-time administrators. The assessment team is dispersed throughout the south and east of England from Dorset to Norfolk. PBD's head office is in Steeple Bumpstead, Haverhill, Suffolk.
3. There are currently 261 learners on programme for this contract year. All learners are employed. All learning and assessment takes place in the workplace. PBD uses technology to support the delivery of the apprentice and Train to Gain programmes. PBD use web-based evidence portfolios and a recently-developed interactive e-learning system for learners and assessors.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of PBD:
  - Child Care Company (early years).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships	50 learners 65 apprentices

## Summary report

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

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

## Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of PBD is good. Outcomes for learners are good. Although success rates were satisfactory overall for 2009/10, PBD has implemented significant actions for current learners and they are now making good progress on their programmes. The quality of provision is good overall. Training and assessment are very effective. Assessors use learning materials and learning technology effectively to support training. Assessment of learners' work is good, with good written feedback to learners to support further development. However, reviews of learners' progress are not comprehensive and do not fully involve employers. PBD's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Its partnership working is satisfactory. However, this needs further development to benefit learners effectively. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Leadership and management are good. PBD's directors provide effective leadership. Directors and managers have high expectations and set challenging targets. The management of training and assessment is good. Staff are well experienced and provide good motivation for learners, with high levels of encouragement and support. Arrangements to promote and reinforce understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. PBD has satisfactory arrangements for the safeguarding of learners.

## Main findings

- Current learners are making good progress, and many learners will complete before their planned end date. Outcomes in 2009/10 for learners on apprenticeship programmes were satisfactory and just above the national average for the sector. Outcomes for Train to Gain learners were low. The number of learners achieving their qualification in the agreed timescale was very low.
- Learners enjoy their learning and are very motivated to succeed at work. They are enthusiastic about their training and how it supports their professional practice. Learners acquire increasing confidence, self-esteem and skills of self-reflection.
- Assessment practice is good. A wide range of well-chosen assessment strategies is used which directly address the qualification requirements and individual learner needs. Assessment planning is detailed and learners understand what is required of them.
- Particularly good and effective use of e-technology is made. The learners, following induction, quickly master the information technology (IT) skills necessary to manipulate confidently the software used. The e-portfolio system is highly regarded by learners who find it an enjoyable, effective and very efficient tool for the presentation of work and the management of their learning.
- Learner progress is very carefully tracked. Learners receive good quality feedback from assessors with clear guidance for improvement. Achievements are recorded electronically and progress is clearly displayed. This immediate feedback is motivating for learners who are able to track their overall progress within each unit and identify the specific requirements that remain uncompleted.
- Few learners complete a basic skills screening activity to identify support needs. Where basic skills needs in written communication are identified, assessors will often use alternative methods of assessment, particularly the recording of verbal questioning. Currently, no specialist resources to support the improvement of basic skills levels are in place. Links with specialist organisations are underdeveloped and rarely used.
- Informal communication is excellent but there is insufficient recording of discussions. The involvement of employers in the learning and assessment process is variable. Most managers have a good and productive working relationship with assessors. Managers are not routinely involved in progress reviews or assessor feedback from observations. Their e-portfolio access and knowledge are variable.
- The programme is delivered very effectively with flexibility meeting the needs and interests of learners and their employers. The programmes offered directly address the employment needs of the sector. E-learning allows learners to work very productively and at times most convenient to them and their work settings.

- Few formal links with community agencies exist to provide specialist support for learners with specific learning or personal needs. At induction learners are not provided with links to specialist agencies that may provide personal or learning support and there are few referrals to such agencies whilst on programme.
- Support for learners is good. Learners have very regular and very productive support from assessors who respond thoughtfully and sensitively to individual learner needs. However, there is insufficient consideration of personal and professional issues at the regular learner progress reviews. There is no planned discussion of health and safety or diversity issues.
- PBD's strategic management is good and is highly responsive to external agencies. It is very responsive to government initiatives in providing training. PBD successfully shares its values and vision with its staff team. The organisation operates within an open and supportive management culture, creating a positive environment which actively supports continuous quality improvements.
- PBD's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. However, the reinforcement of equality and diversity, during learners' reviews, is insufficient to effectively ensure learners are confident when discussing issues relating to equality and diversity. There has not been any formal recent training for staff dealing with recent changes in legislation and its interpretation.
- PBD's safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory and meet government requirements. However, no formal recent training for staff has taken place.

### **What does People and Business Development Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to improve overall success rates and planned end dates for learners by setting challenging targets.
- Ensure that all learners complete an effective, appropriate initial assessment of their basic skills levels and that resources are in place to address the needs identified.
- Ensure that the regular, planned progress reviews include discussion of health and safety and equality and diversity issues and other individual learner concerns. The involvement of employers in reviews is to be encouraged.
- Institute a regular programme of safeguarding and equality and diversity training for all staff.

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

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

- enjoying their work and being aware of the progress they are making
- the relationship with their assessors who are supportive, encouraging and helpful
- assessors answer questions and queries quickly and are very easy to contact

- being able to fit the work in around their family life.

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

- the resources website was not relevant
- to keep the same assessor all the time
- a few learners would like a paper-based portfolio system

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

**What employers like:**

- an excellent company who are a pleasure to work with
- assessors are very professional, have high standards and good professional practice
- the training is contributing to raising the standards and quality of care in the nursery
- PBD always responds quickly to any queries and questions raised. There are good communication links. The e-learning materials are very good and there is effective tracking and feedback to the learners.

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

- better idea of what the learner is working on
- it would be helpful to meet the managers from time to time.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

6. PBD has a good capacity to improve. This is the provider's first inspection. Strategic management is good with highly effective day-to-day operational management of the programmes. Outcomes for learners have improved significantly and are satisfactory overall, with current learners on target to complete within, or before, their planned end dates.
7. The self-assessment process is good and inclusive of all staff. The views of learners and employers are used to inform improvements. Effective use is made of data to inform the process and support judgements made. However, the self-assessment report was overly descriptive and some aspects were not graded. In a few aspects PBD's judgements were more generous than those of inspectors. Inspectors agreed with a number of areas for improvement identified in the report, although they also highlighted further recommendations.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

8. Current learners are making good progress, and many learners will complete before their planned end date. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall for 2009/10. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory and are in line with the sector national averages. In 2009/10, 74% of learners achieved their framework. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are satisfactory at 78% for 2009/10. However, both apprentices and Train to Gain learners made slow progress towards attaining their learning goals. The provider has taken effective action to address the slow progress of learners. There is no variability in the outcomes for different learner groups.
9. Learners develop good work skills and apply these effectively. They relate child care theory to practice and show good evidence of how this is demonstrated in the workplace. Learners acquire increasing confidence, self-esteem and skills of self-reflection. Learners enjoy their learning and are very motivated to succeed at work. Learners speak enthusiastically about their training and how it supports their professional practice and experience.
10. Learners feel safe, respected and adopt good safe working practices. They are very aware of their rights and responsibilities at work and extend this effectively to the support of children in their care.

### The quality of provision

**Grade 2**

11. The quality of provision is good. Teaching, training and assessment are very effectively delivered. They support learning and the development of the practical skills required in early years settings. Learners value highly the knowledge and vocational experience of their assessors. This enriches the learning experience and particularly the application of theory to vocational

practice. A wide range of well-chosen assessment strategies is used which directly addresses the qualification requirements and the specific needs of learners and their employers. Learners understand what is required of them and tasks are normally completed and assessed promptly. Observations of vocational practice are regular, planned and very professionally managed. Assessors provide detailed and affirming feedback to learners with clear guidance on how to improve.

12. Particularly good and effective use is made of e-technology. Almost all learners complete their portfolio electronically. They use the technology with confidence and enjoy this method of working. They manage their own files and confidently discuss their work and their achievements. Learners make good progress and find the software used a very efficient tool for the presentation of work and the management of their learning. Learner progress is very carefully tracked. Achievements are recorded electronically and both overall progress and progress within each unit are very clearly displayed. This immediate feedback motivates learners and is informative for employers who are also able to track the overall progress, progress within each unit, and to identify the areas of work that remain incomplete. However, there is variable access and use of this resource by employers who vary in their knowledge and understanding of the progress made.
13. Few learners complete a basic skills screening activity to effectively identify learning support needs. Where basic skills in written communication are identified as a barrier to achievement assessors will often use alternative methods of assessment, particularly the recording of oral evidence which is normally then scanned and stored as a written document. Currently, no resources are in place to support the improvement of learners' basic literacy and numeracy skills levels. There are few links with specialist organisations who could provide this support.
14. Most employers have a good and productive working relationship with assessors. Informal communication with the managers of settings and learners' employers is good, but there is insufficient recording of these discussions. The formal involvement of employers in the learning and assessment process is variable. Managers are not routinely involved in progress reviews, neither are they formally involved in the assessor feedback meetings following assessment activities. Their access to, and knowledge of, the e-portfolio are variable.
15. The programme is flexibly delivered and effectively meets the needs and interests of learners and their employers. Assessors work cooperatively and very productively with learners and staff in the early years settings. The e-technology allows learners to work at a time and pace convenient to them and to their employers. The programmes offered provide qualified status and opportunities for progression and promotion at work.
16. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive very helpful and effective individual support from assessors who respond thoughtfully to issues raised, providing the guidance needed to support success.



However, there is little discussion or recording of personal and professional issues at the planned and regular learners' progress reviews. Neither is there evidence of any discussion of health and safety or diversity issues.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

17. PBD's strategic management is good and is highly responsive to external agencies. It is very responsive to government initiatives in providing training. PBD successfully shares its values and vision with its staff team. The organisation operates within an open and supportive management culture, creating a positive environment which actively supports continuous quality improvements.
18. Performance management across the company is good. Senior managers monitor the performance of all assessors on a regular basis. This has led to a more detailed focus on learners' progression and achievement, which is being achieved through the setting of demanding targets. PBD's arrangements for the management of its subcontractor are effective. Staff appraisals are used effectively to set challenging targets both relating to outcomes for learners and assessors' professional development. All assessors are appropriately qualified. Technology is well developed and is used well to support learning effectively.
19. Communication is good across the organisation. Standardisation meetings are regular with effective sharing of good practice. Assessors meet frequently within regions. All assessors have laptops and company mobile phones. All have access to the online learning materials and e-portfolio to effectively support learners.
20. Safeguarding is satisfactory. PBD is compliant with all government requirements. All assessors have undergone Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. There is a named person with overall responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation. Safeguarding issues are covered as part of the learners' induction. Assessors are aware of the appropriate actions to follow if issues relating to safeguarding are reported. Learners feel safe. The organisation undertakes a young person's risk assessment as part of its policy for safeguarding young learners and risk assesses all new employers who wish their employees to be trained by PBD. Updating of safeguarding training for assessors is not fully prioritised.
21. PBD's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. A member of staff has overall responsibility for equality and diversity. Equality and diversity issues are covered satisfactorily during learners' induction. Learners are made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and what actions to take if needed. The on-line learning material effectively supports learning and learners' understanding of the issues of diversity, equality and inclusion satisfactorily. The provider now individualises learners' training end dates to meet each learner's differing learning and support needs to better support achievement of their programmes.
22. The company uses its resources well to provide good value for money. Financial management is good, with close monitoring of budgets. PBD provides good

quality learning materials to support learning and uses IT effectively to support training.

## **Information about the inspection**

23. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and data on learners and their achievement.
24. 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)**  
**People and Business Development 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 <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Part-time learners	261	261
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
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>	-	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	-	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
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?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</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>	-	
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?	2	
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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