

London Early Years Foundation

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58845

Name of lead inspector: Maria Barker HMI

Last day of inspection: 8 October 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 121 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4LX

Telephone number: 020 78211258

Information about the provider

1. London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) was founded in 1903 as the Westminster Health Society, changing its name to Westminster Children’s Society in 1985 and finally to London Early Years Foundation in September 2009. LEYF is a charity and social enterprise which has grown considerably in the last five years. Its main business is early years provision. It runs 20 nurseries with an annual turnover of £7.2 million.

2. LEYF has provided National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for its staff since 1992. It has a training centre, Centre for Research, Learning and Development (CRLD), staffed by a core team of five. LEYF has received government funding for NVQs since 2007 and, since 2009/10, holds a contract with the Skills Funding Agency for advanced apprenticeships in child development and well-being. The programme accounts for over half of CRLD’s provision. In 2009/10, LEYF recruited 25 learners; the first cohort of 17 learners started in autumn 2009 and the second cohort of 8 learners started in April 2010. No learners have yet reached their planned end date. LEYF has recruited 18 learners to start the programme later this autumn. LEYF recruits learners from London and nearby counties. The programme comprises two days off-the-job training and three days in the workplace each week. LEYF employs most learners in its own nurseries. Two learners are employed in an external nursery.

3. As LEYF is a new provider, this is the first inspection of government funded training.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	25 advanced 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	2
Subject Areas	
Child development and well-being	3

Overall effectiveness

- As this is a new programme, it is too early for any learners to have completed the advanced apprenticeship. They enjoy their learning, particularly the theory sessions, and generally make satisfactory progress. Apprentices develop appropriate skills in working with children. All learners have a mentor in the workplace, and increase in confidence with their support. Learners feel safe and have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety in the workplace. Apprentices make a good contribution to their local communities through a variety of additional activities, such as football coaching and play work.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good, for example the theory sessions. LEYF does not integrate key skills effectively into the programme and learners do not make appropriate progress in key skills. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory, although some learners do not receive written feedback about their progress in good time. LEYF does not identify learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills at the beginning of the programme and does not always arrange appropriate individual learning support. Overall, the provision meets the needs of apprentices and employers appropriately. Partnership working is satisfactory, external speakers contribute well to the programme. Learners receive good personal support both from their mentor in the workplace and from the staff at LEYF.

6. LEYF provides good leadership, with clear ambition to improve the provision further. However, the coordination of all aspects of the programme is insufficient. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. LEYF has more male learners and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds than most providers. LEYF takes account of learners' views on improving the programme. However, it has not yet developed its quality improvement arrangements sufficiently and does not share good practice effectively.

Main findings

- Learners develop appropriate workplace skills. They apply health and safety procedures and risk assessment in the workplace. They plan activities independently to support the developmental needs of children in the nursery.
- Although learners make satisfactory progress towards their overall learning goals, they make insufficient progress in the key skills requirements of the framework. Most learners in the first cohort have not completed their key skills tests or portfolios.
- Learners make a good positive contribution to the community. Most learners take part in activities to support their local communities. These range from supporting local festivals, conferences and workshops to football coaching and providing play activities.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. LEYF provides good teaching of the theory content of the programme. Learners particularly enjoy this part of the programme. The teaching of key skills is less effective. In particular, difficulties in employing staff with appropriate experience and skills have delayed the coverage of application of number.
- Staff have insufficient expertise in the requirements of the advanced apprenticeship programme, particularly with regard to key skills. They do not effectively coordinate on- and off-the-job training or integrate key skills.
- LEYF has ineffective initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. As a result, it provides insufficient additional learning support to meet their individual needs. LEYF recognises this as an area for development, and is working towards rectifying this for the cohort recruited to start the programme this autumn.
- LEYF provides good personal care and support for learners. All learners are allocated a mentor in their workplace; some mentors provide exceptional personal support for learners to increase their self-confidence. LEYF's student liaison officer and tutor provide a wide range of support.
- LEYF has good leadership that promotes a responsive and supportive team approach to the development of this new area of provision. The team is highly committed to developing outstanding provision within an innovative programme which emphasises the application of theory to workplace practice. LEYF is developing the role of mentors in the workplace to support learners' progress.

- LEYF does not collect and use management information effectively. LEYF has recognised this area for improvement and has made arrangements to introduce a nationally recognised management information system.
- LEYF monitors the progress of learners insufficiently. A comprehensive and systematic process of progress review and target setting has yet to be developed.
- The promotion of equality and diversity at LEYF is good. The current cohort of learners includes a higher proportion of male learners and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds than national figures. The cohort of newly recruited learners, due to start their programme later this autumn, mirrors this profile. LEYF has a strong commitment to social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Currently, LEYF mechanisms to monitor and review the quality of provision are embryonic. Quality assurance and improvement processes, including self-assessment and action planning, are yet to be fully developed and implemented. LEYF is in the process of consolidating appropriate quality improvement arrangements.

What does London Early Years Foundation need to do to improve further?

- Implement appropriate key skills provision and integrate it effectively into the programme.
- Review the structure of the programme to ensure that all aspects of provision are well coordinated and lead seamlessly to the learners' completion of the framework within planned timescales.
- Ensure that all staff contributing to the programme develop their understanding of advanced apprenticeship framework requirements so that a coherent programme of learning can be implemented effectively.
- Introduce effective initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills and act upon the outcomes to ensure that LEYF meets all identified additional learning needs promptly.
- Introduce an appropriate management information system and develop its use as a management tool to monitor the programme effectively.
- Develop a comprehensive process of progress monitoring through which staff, employers and learners have a clear understanding of each learner's progress achieved to date and agree clear, measurable and achievable targets throughout the duration of the programme.
- Implement appropriate quality improvement arrangements, in particular self-assessment and improvement planning. As part of this process of quality improvement, share internal good practice more effectively, for example in mentoring, and increase familiarity with good practice in advanced apprenticeship provision nationally.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the theory lessons
- the support received from tutors
- the opportunity to be on an advanced programme
- the personal support from mentors and staff at LEYF.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the organisation of the course, in particular, key skills
- better communication, for example when classes are cancelled
- written feedback on assessment as soon as possible
- more money to cover travel costs.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- good links with LEYF
- good training for learners.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more information about the programme
- more information about their learners' progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

7. As a new provider, LEYF has developed its provision with limited awareness of good practice in the sector. The team is keen to improve the provision and is gaining familiarity with good practice to develop the programme further. LEYF has identified that its in-house data processes provide insufficient information to monitor the provision effectively. It has made appropriate arrangements to introduce a nationally recognised management information system. LEYF recognises the need to develop the use of this system as a management tool.
8. LEYF has identified key factors that have impeded the progress of learners, such as ineffective arrangements for key skills provision. It is taking appropriate action to remedy these. It has improved recruitment procedures by developing an intensive step into the learning programme before enrolment. LEYF does not currently carry out an effective initial assessment of learners' needs for support in literacy, numeracy and language. It plans to introduce appropriate initial assessment arrangements for the newly recruited cohort of learners.
9. As 2009/10 was the first year in which LEYF offered an advanced apprenticeship programme, it is too early for LEYF to have engaged fully in a self-assessment process. The first self-assessment report, completed early in the programme, was a descriptive account of the key elements of the provision and did not include grades. The process generated an appropriate development plan. LEYF has successfully implemented many of the actions in the plan. LEYF is shortly to undertake a full, self-critical self-assessment of the provision which will generate a comprehensive improvement plan. LEYF uses feedback from learners and mentors effectively to improve the programme. It acts responsively to address issues as they arise.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. It is too early for any learners to have completed the programme. Most learners in the first cohort have completed their technical certificate but some have substantial gaps in their NVQ portfolios. Learners in this cohort have not completed their key skills portfolio and not all have passed the required key skills tests. LEYF is taking appropriate action to ensure that all learners complete the programme within an appropriate time frame. Learners in the second cohort are making satisfactory progress towards their framework.
11. Learners develop effective workplace practices and plan activities independently to support the developmental needs of the children they work with. Learners produce satisfactory written work in their portfolios and demonstrate their understanding of theoretical concepts of child development. Their assignments are well structured and demonstrate clear understanding of how to promote equality of opportunity for children in the nursery and an awareness of legislation relating to childcare.

12. Learners feel safe. They feel that they can confide in their tutor and the apprentice liaison officer should they have any concerns. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of health and safety in the workplace. They demonstrate safe working practices, particularly in applying safeguarding procedures relating to children.
13. Learners make a good positive contribution to the community. Most take part in activities to support their local communities, including participating in local festivals, conferences and workshops, for example staffing a stall at a London-wide baby show and making presentations to local boroughs. Some learners volunteer to provide play activities on Saturdays, working alongside the community policing team. Learners also provide football coaching and art programmes through local children's play centres.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

14. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good theory sessions include a wide range of learning activities with good learner participation. Learners enjoy being able to apply theory to workplace practice. The sessions extend learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Key skills provision does not meet learners' needs effectively. LEYF is aware of this and is taking appropriate action to improve the provision and integrate key skills into the programme.
15. LEYF does not carry out effective initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills and does not make appropriate arrangements to provide additional learning support. However, LEYF takes appropriate action to meet identified individual learners' needs.
16. NVQ assessment practice is satisfactory. Scheduled assessment visits to the workplace take place at least every eight weeks. Constructive feedback allows learners to reflect on their workplace practice, it outlines achievement to date and areas for development. However, not all learners receive written feedback within the agreed timescale.
17. LEYF has insufficient arrangements to monitor learners' progress. A tutorial review and an apprentice probationary review take place within the first eight weeks of the programme. Learners and mentors hold six weekly meetings in the workplace. Learners receive scheduled completion dates for assignments and dates of planned NVQ assessment visits. However, LEYF does not hold regular progress reviews which monitor learners' progress both on- and off-the job and agree specific targets for completion. Learners, staff, mentors and workplace managers are not fully aware of the progress made by individual learners or what they still have to do to complete the framework.
18. The range of provision is satisfactory to meet the needs of apprentices and employers. All apprentices gain additional qualifications such as paediatric first aid, safeguarding and food and hygiene certificates. The programme includes

appropriate enhanced professional development opportunities for learners, such as Makaton training, special needs programmes and nutritional programmes to promote healthy eating. These sessions develop learners' understanding of how to work more effectively with children. They also develop learners' understanding of progression opportunities, such as working with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or primary school teaching.

19. Partnership working is satisfactory. External speakers provide good specialist input to the programme. LEYF recognises the potential of developing more explicit links with partners to benefit learners.
20. Learners receive good personal support. All learners have a mentor in the workplace with whom they meet every six weeks to discuss progress and issues of concern. Mentors support learners well to help them develop their confidence, and personal and workplace skills. They agree action plans with learners to improve performance. The apprentice liaison officer supports learners with personal issues and identified additional learning needs. Appropriate adaptive technology is available. Learners also receive good personal and academic support from their tutor.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

21. LEYF benefits from strong leadership with clear ambition to provide outstanding provision. The CRLD team is highly motivated to develop an outstanding advanced apprenticeship programme. The current programme is innovative and based upon providing a firm understanding of theory and underpinning knowledge to inform workplace practice. However, the team does not have sufficient expertise in the requirements of the advanced apprenticeship framework. The team developed the programme with insufficient awareness of key processes, such as regular progress reviews. The programme does not coordinate on- and off-the-job training sufficiently, or integrate key skills effectively. LEYF has insufficient arrangements to monitor the progress of learners. LEYF has recognised this and is taking appropriate action.
22. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. LEYF has good arrangements to safeguard children in the nurseries, and learners have good awareness of safeguarding matters in relation to children. LEYF ensures the completion of enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks for all staff, including learners. All staff, including learners, complete appropriate safeguarding training. Meetings and discussions in the workplace reinforce learners' understanding. Although LEYF has appropriate arrangements to safeguard learners, it does not ensure that all learners, particularly those aged 16 to 18, are fully aware of these arrangements.
23. LEYF's promotion of equality and diversity is good. Over 10% of current learners are male and over half come from minority ethnic backgrounds, these figures are above the national average. The newly recruited cohort mirrors this profile. LEYF has arranged employment for one of the male learners in a nursery where the majority of employees are male. The mentor and manager

are positive role models, and help to develop his confidence and vocational skills. In addition to detailed policies regarding equality of opportunity, LEYF has a dignity at work policy which includes bullying, harassment and victimisation. Induction covers all relevant policies and procedures. An ethos of social inclusion is well established within the nurseries, and learners' understanding of equality and diversity benefits from their experiences in the workplace. LEYF provides effective support to all learners to enable them to complete the programme successfully.

24. LEYF has satisfactory arrangements to engage with users to promote improvement. It has devised appropriate questionnaires for learners and mentors to provide feedback on particular aspects of provision and holds meetings with group representatives. LEYF analyses the outcomes and acts upon suggestions for improvement.
25. As a new provider, LEYF has not developed its quality assurance and improvement arrangements sufficiently. It uses its development plan effectively to improve provision. In addition, LEYF reviews and refines the programme as areas for improvement emerge. It adopts a self-critical approach and is highly responsive in improving the quality of provision. LEYF has yet to complete a rigorous and critical self-assessment process. It is too early to identify the effectiveness of LEYF's approach to self-assessment. LEYF does not share good practice sufficiently, for example through regular meetings of mentors to improve the mentoring process.

Information about the inspection

26. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's chief executive, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, and data on learners and their achievement.
27. 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. Inspectors observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews and collected evidence from the apprenticeship programme overall.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
London Early Years Foundation
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	Employer responsive	
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	17	17	
Part-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	3	3	
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	3	
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?	3		
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		
Quality of provision	3		3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	3	3	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	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?	2		
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

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk