

ITEC North East Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		17-21 September 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-Grade 2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-Grade 3
Outcomes for learners		Good-Grade 2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-Grade 2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-Grade 2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Overall, outcomes for learners are good and trainers deliver much good teaching with examples of excellent one-to-one coaching. The provider has developed a range of good systems to monitor the quality of teaching. Learners develop good workplace skills.
- Senior managers have clear plans for the future of the organisation and have developed rigorous systems to manage their staff more effectively to maximise their performance.
- Trustees provide a good oversight of the provision and give managers some clear guidance about strategies and future plans and keep a reasonable watch on the performance of learners.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Success rates for a small number of learners on information and communication technology (ICT) for users and for intermediate business administration declined last year. The success rates for the small provision in sales and telesales are also low. The variation in success rates for learners between programme areas is too high.
- Although teaching and learning have improved, trainers in ICT do not sufficiently make allowance for the different needs and abilities of learners, and the setting of short and medium-term targets needs to be improved. Opportunities to explore and promote equality and diversity in teaching sessions are missed.
- The observation of the teaching and learning process has not yet had a major impact on the quality of training. Systems to observe subcontractors have not yet been fully developed.

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Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Halt the recent decline in success rates for the small proportion of learners in some aspects of the provision and ensure that learners on all programmes achieve their learning goals in a timely way. Also, interrogate data more rigorously to identify low performance and monitor performance by different learner groups.
- Improve the quality of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment so that learners on all programmes have provision of outstanding quality.
- Ensure that the quality-assurance processes deliver outstanding provision for learners, particularly for the new subcontracted providers.
- Ensure that all relevant staff receive training and achieve qualifications in equality and diversity so that they are then able to promote equality and diversity more effectively to learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Since the last inspection in 2009, success rates for learners overall have improved and in 2010/11 were good at several percentage points above the national average. However, in 2011/12 the overall success rates declined very slightly to just below the national average. In business administration, the largest area by learner numbers, success rates in the majority of areas have been good. ▪ Success rates for learners in marketing and sales and in customer service have improved significantly and are now good. However, for the very small number of learners in sales and telesales, success rates are low. Success rates on ICT programmes had been improving up to 2010/11 but in 2011/12 success rates declined for practitioners and particularly for users. A subcontractor delivering work programme and employer responsive literacy and numeracy provision is achieving very high success rates. ▪ Learners on intermediate-level programmes perform less well than those on advanced-level programmes, and learners aged over 25 years on intermediate-level programmes also perform less well than other age groups. Females perform less well than males at intermediate-level but perform better than males at advanced level. Minority ethnic learner numbers are too small to be statistically valid, but learners with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability perform better than learners without. ▪ Learners produce good standards of work and they develop very good workplace skills that are highly valued by their employers. Many learners gain promotion at work and take up posts of responsibility with higher pay as a result of achieving their learning goals. Most current learners are making good progress. ▪ A reasonable number of learners progress from intermediate-level programme to advanced-level programmes at ITEC in both business administration and ICT programmes. 	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching, learning and assessment overall have improved since the previous inspection and these are now generally good. In business, administration and law the good teaching is reflected in the high success rates on advanced administration and business management courses and also on marketing and sales, and customer service courses. However, learners on intermediate administration and business management courses and the small number of 	

learners on sales and telesales courses are less successful.

- In ICT, lessons are of a variable quality and not all learners experience high-quality learning, although some learners receive outstanding one-to-one coaching in the workplace. This variability in the quality of teaching is reflected in the ICT success rates which are good on advanced ICT practitioner courses but require improvement on intermediate ICT practitioner courses and all ICT user courses. Learners' skill development in business, administration and law, and ICT is mostly good.
- Current staff, who are well qualified and experienced, successfully motivate and challenge learners and encourage them to produce a good range of high-quality evidence for their portfolios. The virtual learning environment (VLE) is underdeveloped and of limited use to learners. In ICT, modern mobile communication technologies, such as email and videos for observations, are not used consistently.
- Learners are satisfactorily inducted into their apprenticeship programme. They receive relevant information about the content of the programme and what they are expected to achieve. However, the presentation is too heavily focussed towards giving information and insufficient opportunities are provided for learners to be actively involved in the induction process.
- Learners' starting points are clearly determined through initial and diagnostic assessments but insufficient importance is given to identifying and addressing learners' additional learning needs. Business, administration and law learners are set challenging tasks and progress monitoring is good although progress reviews do not focus sufficiently on learners' wider development. Progress monitoring of ICT learners is poor.
- Learners with low levels of literacy and numeracy have good opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and obtain nationally recognised qualifications. Success rates for these learners are very high and learners' employability prospects are improved. Apprentices who are not exempt from functional skills requirements receive good support to develop their skills and prepare for their assessments.
- Through effective subcontracting arrangements, learners have good opportunities to study short courses in end-of-life care, the safe handling of medicines, and equality of opportunity. Learners' assignments are carefully assessed by tutors and they receive detailed feedback. Retention is very high and progress is good.
- Most learners receive good information, advice and guidance when they begin their programmes and at appropriate times thereafter. Assessors give good advice about learning and progression routes often in conjunction with employers. Information, advice and guidance for some ICT learners, however, need to be improved so that they are specifically focused on their learning and career-development needs.
- While learners have a basic understanding of equality and diversity, their knowledge is insufficiently extended during progress reviews. Although learners are treated fairly, equitably, courteously and with respect, equality and diversity are not promoted during, and integrated into, teaching and learning activities.

Information and Communication Technology

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and this is reflected in the success rates for 2011/12. Success rates for intermediate and advanced ICT users are very low and considerably lower than for the previous year. Similarly, success rates on ICT practitioner courses are good at advanced level but in need of improvement at intermediate level.
- Most current learners develop good workplace and technical skills. Work in learners'

portfolios is of a high standard. Many learners have taken on extra responsibilities at work and have been awarded pay rises or achieved promotion.

- Trainers have good technical knowledge and the planning of most teaching sessions is now good. While some one-to-one teaching and learning is outstanding, learners' experience within teaching sessions varies. Learning is often insufficiently differentiated to meet learners' individual needs and modern mobile communication technologies are not used consistently.
- Trainers work hard and successfully to establish good, caring and supportive relationships with learners. New trainers have been employed recently and they have been particularly successful in dealing with learners' slow progress, for instance through more frequent and focused visits to workplaces.
- The use of individual learning plans requires improvement. Insufficient importance is given to agreeing short- and medium-term targets with learners and employers to ensure that learners make the required progress. Progress monitoring lacks rigour and current learners and their employers are not always aware of the slow progress that is being made.
- Learner progress reviews are inadequate. Learners' failure to complete planned actions and make the expected progress are not always followed up to identify the underlying reasons and to identify any further support that may be needed. Employers are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews.
- Learners who do not hold key or functional skills qualifications make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. The approach to delivering functional skills is currently under development to include in-centre training.
- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. The units that learners select at the beginning of their framework are not always suitable and have to be modified much later in their programme.
- Equality and diversity is insufficiently promoted within teaching and learning sessions. The employee rights and responsibilities element of the framework and most employers' inductions cover equality and diversity adequately to promote learners' understanding. However, learners' knowledge and understanding of equality issues are not checked and extended when their progress is reviewed.

Business, Administration and Law

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the good outcomes for learners across the majority of programmes. Assessors are well qualified and use their good understanding of the organisations in which learners work to plan relevant assessment activities and to develop learners' occupational skills. The majority of learners are on target to achieve by, or before, their planned end date.
- Off-the-job learning includes a range of interactive activities that encourage learners to work both independently and collaboratively. Assessors make good use of resources to support learners' occupational and personal development. The VLE is underdeveloped although learners are positive about its contribution to their learning experiences.
- Learners are set challenging targets which help them to make good progress. Assessors provide good support, including at least monthly visits to their workplace for training and assessment purposes. The standard of learners' work is high with a good range of evidence presented in their portfolios.
- Reviews are clearly focused on the progress learners are making towards the completion of their qualification. However, opportunities to discuss learners' broader

developments, including their personal, thinking and learning skills to support their reflective practice and further develop their independent learning skills, are neglected.

- Carefully structured written and oral feedback provides learners with detailed and clear guidance that assists them to progress towards their qualification. Employers are regularly involved in progress reviews and target-setting and they identify good work-related opportunities for skills development. When required, good coaching is provided to help learners improve their spelling and grammar.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Assessors work with learners and employers to identify appropriate on-the-job training opportunities and progression routes. Learners are actively encouraged to complete further qualifications related to their career development and employers' organisational needs. Learners are often promoted to more senior positions as a result of completing their programmes.
- Although the learners' induction is adequate, it relies too heavily on the use of a slide presentation which does not give enough opportunity for learners to participate actively, nor does it take into account the different starting points or experience of individual learners. Information given at induction is not easily recalled and there is little evidence of it being reinforced when progress is reviewed.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactorily introduced at induction and supporting resources are available on the VLE. While learners have an adequate understanding of equality and diversity, their promotion in teaching, learning and assessment is underdeveloped. Learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity are not extended during progress reviews.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior managers at ITEC have a clear vision for the future of the business and have taken very effective actions to bring all operations to a single centre and recruit new senior managers as part of both a cost-cutting and quality-improvement strategy. Strategies to expand the business are effective and proving successful by engaging with subcontractors who deliver in new subject areas of provision. Internal systems of communicating between managers and staff are effective and ensure that all participate in developing and improving the quality of provision.
- ITEC has taken extremely rigorous action, including capability and disciplinary procedures, to remedy underperformance by some trainers, resulting in significant numbers of new staff being recruited. Performance management of staff is now much more effective involving the regular and frequent monitoring and review of individual performance that focuses strongly on accountability and responsibility for their job role. Trainers and assessors all work towards reasonably challenging targets based on learners completing within their planned time but these targets do not yet sufficiently focus on the impact of improving teaching and learning.
- Following a thorough review of quality systems and procedures, ITEC now has a good range of policies and procedures to support the drive for increased performance management of staff. Although it recognises the need to improve the quality of the observation of teaching, actions have not yet had the desired impact. However, the systems have enabled very effective individual interventions for learners identified as making slow progress.
- ITEC offers a range of provision that successfully meets the needs of both learners and the 200 employers with whom they work. The plans to expand the business by working with subcontractors to widen the range of provision and targeting specific learner communities are good. The current arrangements enable provision in literacy and numeracy, hospitality, and care to be added to the company portfolio of subject sector areas in which training is

provided.

- Although ITEC has appropriate policies and procedures for promoting equality and diversity, promotion during teaching sessions and at learner reviews is insufficient to increase learners' understanding of equality. ITEC analyse performance of different groups by age and gender, but they have not developed a detailed action plan to affect any change in these to narrow the identified achievement gap.
- ITEC meets and exceeds its statutory requirements for safeguarding its learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF 2012)

Provider name: ITEC North East Ltd

Learning types:

Apprenticeships.

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Information and Communication Technology	3
Business, Administration and Law	2

Provider details

ITEC North East Ltd	
Inspection dates	17-21 September 2012
Lead inspector	Tim Gardner HMI
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year 2011/12	372
Principal/CEO	David Baker
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2009
Website address	www.itecne.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection			
Apprenticeship level	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher
Number of apprentices	93	191	N/A
Age of full-time learners	14–16	16–18	19+
Total by age	N/A	99	185
Number of part-time learners	N/A		
Number of main sites	3		
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)		
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following four subcontractors: ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KP Skills Ltd ■ J and K Training Ltd ■ The Bridge Ltd ■ Pattinson and Millburn Training Ltd 		

Additional socio-economic information

In the North East region, almost 15% of adults have disabilities limiting their daily activities and this is the highest level of all regions in England. The employment rate during the first quarter of 2012 was 66.6% compared to the national rate for England of 70.5%. In the region, 56.8% of pupils achieved five or more grades A* to C at GCSE level or equivalent including English and mathematics in 2010/11, compared with 58.4% for England as a whole.

¹ The main subcontractors only

Information about this inspection

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality consultant as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners and employers. These views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Subject inspectors looked in detail at a sample of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in information and communication technology and business, administration and law.

What inspection judgements mean

Provider		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding provider is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its learners' needs. This ensures that learners are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good provider is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its learners' needs. Learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A provider that requires improvement is performing less well than it might be reasonably expected in one or more of the key areas. This provider will receive a full inspection 12-18 months after the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A provider that is inadequate is one where the provider is failing to give its learners an acceptable standard of education and/or training and the provider's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the provider. This provider will receive a re-inspection within 12-15 months after the date of this inspection.
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