

BTCV Enterprises Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 55704

Name of lead inspector: Mike White HMI

Last day of inspection: 09 August 2012

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. BTCV Enterprises Ltd (BTCVE) is a company limited by guarantee and a wholly owned trading subsidiary of a nationally registered charity, the BTCV Group. BTCV has provided employability and skills programmes since 1982. BTCVE has a contract with the education funding agency to provide Foundation Learning. It also acts as subcontractor for a number of Department for Work and Pensions funded employability programmes. The vast majority of BTCVE's work is government funded with Foundation Learning representing approximately 10% of annual revenue, currently with 362 learners on programme.
2. BTCVE's head office is in Doncaster. It has centres providing Foundation Learning in Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland, Washington, Bristol, Totnes and Telford. BTCVE is led by a managing director who is supported by four operational managers, a finance manager, a quality and support manager. Foundation Learning has a team of 19 teaching, support and administrative staff. The managing director reports directly to the chief executive officer of the BTCV Group. Foundation Learning in Bristol, Totnes and Telford is managed and delivered by BTCV Group staff under a subcontract agreement with BTCVE.
3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - B-Skill Ltd (construction)
 - YES Centre (functional skills)
 - Duchy College (functional skills)
 - Alkali Training Academy Centre (retailing, child care, office skills)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners:	
Foundation learning, including	512 learners
Entry to Employment	

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Foundation Learning	3

Overall effectiveness

4. BTCVE successfully meets its strategic mission of working with the most disadvantaged people and those facing significant barriers to their learning. Learners enjoy their programmes and develop good personal and social skills. The achievement of vocational qualifications and functional skills is satisfactory. The transition to Foundation Learning had a very negative impact on learner progression rates which were very low in 2010/11 but have significantly improved in 2011/12.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most sessions engage and motivate learners although some do not have enough variety of activity. Learners can choose from a good selection of vocational qualifications. However, there are insufficient opportunities for work placement or work taster activities for learners in the North East. BTCVE makes good use of a number of different partnerships to support learners. All learners receive good personal support from motivated and well-qualified staff to help them overcome barriers to achieving.
6. BTCVE actively seeks learners' views on the quality of provision and uses them to help improve. The self-assessment shows that they know the strengths of the provision and the areas that need to improve. It takes its responsibilities towards safeguarding learners and promoting equality of opportunity seriously

and learners from different groups achieve equally well. However, the outcomes of quality improvement activities are not used effectively by the Foundation Learning team to ensure that all learners have a consistently high quality experience. Value for money is satisfactory.

Main findings

- Following a decline to very low levels, progression to further education, employment or training has improved significantly although remains low and are now satisfactory. Learners' achievement of vocational, employability, and functional skills qualifications has also improved and is satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the outcomes of different groups of learners.
- The numbers of learners benefiting from vocational training has increased significantly. Learners develop satisfactory or better vocational skills. They report improvements in their self-confidence and social skills such as team working.
- Learners enjoy their programmes. They have a satisfactory understanding of safeguarding, how to remain safe and are confident in how to report any concerns. Internet safety is promoted well. Learners on practical conservation activities exhibit good awareness of health and safety and personal risk assessment. Learners develop a satisfactory awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Teaching and learning are effective, with sessions that engage learners, helped by the use of some well-prepared good quality resources, although some sessions do not allow enough learner-centred activity. Accommodation is of a basic standard and sometimes access to information learning technology (ILT) is insufficient. Target-setting is not fully informed by initial assessment with an insufficient focus on personal development.
- The range and content of the provision offers learners sufficient choice and flexibility to meet their development needs and enable them to achieve their goals. It allows progression to employment, training and education. BTCVE uses learner feedback effectively to develop the provision. There are insufficient opportunities for work experience, work tasters or involvement in community projects in the North East.
- BTCVE satisfactorily uses partnership working to support learners to progress and achieve. Satisfactory additional learning opportunities are available with subcontracted provision. BTCVE works well with partners to share information and provide solutions and support when required to address learners' barriers to progress.
- Support and care are good. Support needs are identified well and individualised support and guidance from dedicated advisors are very effective at overcoming barriers to learning. Information, advice and guidance are timely and effectively integrated into the programme to help learners make informed choices.
- The recent introduction of a performance management system is contributing well to improving programme performance. Team standardisation meetings are

frequent and communication is good. The management of subcontractors is satisfactory. BTCVE's performance reporting to the board of trustees has been strengthened recently and is satisfactory.

- Safeguarding is given a high priority and learners feel safe, know how to report concerns, and are confident in the sensitivity of staff to respond to those concerns. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Although the provider works with different organisations to widen participation there is no overarching strategy for this and data are not used effectively to inform actions.
- Learner views are frequently collected and used to improve the programme although feedback is not routinely collected from other partners or stakeholders. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The outcomes of quality improvement activities are not systematically used by the Foundation Learning team to ensure a consistently high quality experience for all learners.

What does BTCVE need to do to improve further?

- Provide more work experience, work taster, or community project opportunities in the North East so that learners are better prepared for work and significantly more progress into employment.
- Ensure all lessons are planned to meet the individual needs of learners, using ILT imaginatively and providing more interactive activities so that all learners are fully engaged and challenged.
- Ensure individual learning plans and reviews identify in sufficient detail the personal and social development targets and actions needed so that learners understand the skills they have developed, what they need to do to progress, and are fully aware of their achievements.
- Establish and further extend the recent changes in reporting performance to the board of trustees enabling them to provide rigorous challenge and support for continuous improvement.
- Develop and implement a strategy for widening participation by under-represented groups which is informed by detailed analysis of internal and external data.
- Ensure that frequent quality improvement activities, including audits and observations, take place, are thoroughly analysed, and outcomes used by the Foundation Learning team to secure a high quality experience for all learners.
- Improve outcomes for learners by better use of all available management information and data to identify and analyse the detailed reasons for non-completion, non-progression or early withdrawal and use this analysis with staff to develop targeted actions.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**What learners like:**

- the friendly and supportive staff
- the way staff treat learners respectfully and as adults
- the opportunities to experience different types of occupations
- the availability of a designated people to speak to if they have a problem
- participating in a programme that is enjoyable and has a relaxed atmosphere
- the opportunity to gain new skills and qualifications
- the provision of practical and theory training
- the opportunity to meet new people.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the mini-bus transport reliability
- the consistency of the weekly timetable so that it does not keep changing
- the resources for project work
- the speed of the computers
- the provision of resources to pass time during session breaks
- the quality of accommodation in some locations
- planning for individual future aims and qualifications.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

7. Staff have made an effective transition from the previous programme to the Foundation Learning programme. Following a decline in performance in 2010/11, the rates of progression into further education, training or employment have increased significantly in the current year and are now satisfactory. The achievement of vocational qualifications and functional skills has also improved significantly and is satisfactory. Learners develop good personal and social skills.
8. Judgements in the self-assessment report are largely accurate and staff have appropriate involvement in the self-assessment process. The views of learners are collected frequently, used effectively to bring about improvements, and the outcomes appropriately communicated to learners. However, the views of other users and stakeholders are not formally collected. Staff are enthusiastic, well qualified and benefit from good continuous professional development.
9. The implementation of a new staff performance management system is having a good impact on improving outcomes for learners. Actions to improve programme performance have been effective although they are insufficiently informed by detailed analysis of management data to identify reasons for learner withdrawal or non-achievement. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory having recently been strengthened through more frequent audit visits and a more rigorous observation of teaching and learning process ensuring grades are more accurate.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Following a decline to very low levels in 2010/11 during the transition from Entry to Employment to Foundation Learning, the rates of progression into further education, training or employment have significantly improved in the current year and are now satisfactory. Learners' achievement of functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Learners develop good work-related knowledge and skills and their achievement of vocational qualifications is satisfactory. Different groups of learners achieve at a similar rate.
11. Learners enjoy learning and most are making satisfactory progress given their very low levels of prior attainment. They quickly become more self-confident, developing improved social and personal skills. In the South West and West Midlands learners improve their work skills through good involvement in community-based conservation activities. However, in the North East few learners benefit from work experience, work tasters or other community-based activities.

12. Learners feel safe and are confident in how to report any safeguarding concerns. They develop a good understanding of internet safety including how to respond to cyber-bullying. Learners participating in horticulture activities complete personal risk assessments and show a good understanding of safe working practices.
13. Learners develop a satisfactory understanding of health and well-being through a range of materials and promotional activities. Although only recently introduced, the achievement of qualifications in sexual health awareness, substance abuse and alcohol awareness is good. However, the impact of this training through changes in learners' lifestyles is not sufficiently assessed.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

14. Teaching and learning are effective. Better sessions engage and motivate learners through a variety of interesting activities, delivered by enthusiastic and skilled tutors. Functional skills are embedded well into land-based programmes. Teaching accommodation is generally adequate but in some instances cramped and with insufficient access to ILT. Weaker sessions are too tutor led with little stretch and challenge to learners. Initial assessment informs learning plans adequately and identifies barriers and support needs. The assessment process for functional skills is not fully embedded throughout BTCVE. The provider does not always ensure subcontractors have sufficient information to effectively plan for learners' individual needs early in the programme. Target-setting is broad with a focus on qualifications. Personal development and vocational experience targets are not set for the majority of learners and subsequent action planning is not sufficiently detailed.
15. The curriculum meets the needs of learners adequately and includes sufficient flexibility to respond to learners' preferences and interests. There is a good range of vocational units to choose from and the option of shorter qualifications which allow learners to achieve more quickly and reinforce the progress they are making. BTCVE delivers functional skills at all appropriate levels. External partners are effective in their delivery of a range of employability and personal development units such as awareness in sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. BTCVE plans the provision to provide progression routes to apprenticeships and further education. However, there are limited work placement opportunities so few learners benefit from work experience or work tasters. They do not have the opportunity to apply the good skills they have learned in the classroom.
16. BTCVE works effectively with partners to ensure learners have additional learning opportunities and support. Staff are proactive in setting up partnerships and there is a strong ethos of inclusion. The partnership with Connexions is particularly effective with good communication and information

sharing ensuring concerns are addressed swiftly and appropriately to maintain the engagement of learners. BTCVE works closely with youth offending teams to provide learners with a flexible programme to meet their needs. A partnership with a local school for learners with behavioural problems allows the use of the school's facilities to deliver practical aspects of a vocational course. Partnerships with subcontracted training providers effectively widen the curriculum offer to include childcare, construction, retailing and office skills.

17. The support for learners is good. Each learner has a personal support advisor who is the learner's key contact from recruitment to exit and high levels of trust are developed between them. Help and support is readily available and the high ratio of staff to learners enables this to happen very effectively. Advisors assess learners' individual support needs thoroughly and offer personalised support that is very effective in removing barriers to learning. External agencies are used well to support learners and signpost them when needed. Support for learners regarding travel arrangements for attendance at different centres for vocational training is good. Attendance of learners is good, encouraged by a weekly payment for full attendance. BTCVE has effective links with carers and parents. The induction process is thorough and good information and advice enables learners to make informed choices about their future.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

18. BTCVE has gone through a period of major funding changes and restructuring. This has been led effectively by senior managers. Strategic planning is appropriate and Foundation Learning clearly contributes to the vision, mission and key strategic objectives. Staff are enthusiastic, well qualified and supported by good continuous professional development. Communication is good and teams meet frequently. The management of subcontracted provision is satisfactory. The recently introduced performance management system is beginning to have a positive impact on the performance of the programme. Reporting of programme performance to the board of trustees has previously been weak but strengthened through changes to the process during the last 12 months and is now satisfactory.
19. BTCVE gives a high priority to the safeguarding of learners and arrangements are satisfactory. A topic group successfully leads the development of safeguarding arrangements. Learners feel safe and are confident in how they would report any safeguarding concerns. Risk assessments are thorough. All staff have received appropriate training and are subject to enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks which are recorded in a central register. Learners' understanding of safeguarding is satisfactorily developed and promoted during induction and subsequent progress reviews.
20. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. BTCVE promotes a strong culture of mutual respect which is appreciated by the learners. A topic

group leads on the development of equality and diversity, and policies and procedures impact measurement is an established part of its role. All staff receive frequent equality and diversity update training. Higher level training has been recently introduced and completed by some staff. Staff are also well supported by regional champions. Complaints are thoroughly investigated. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted during teaching and progress reviews although there are some missed opportunities to give learners a deeper understanding.

21. BTCVE works with a range of external organisations to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups. However, data are insufficiently used to inform the actions taken. The frequent analysis of learners' outcomes shows no significant gaps in the performance of different groups.
22. Focus groups and learner surveys are frequent and used effectively to improve the quality of provision. However, while feedback from other partners and stakeholders is collected informally it is not systematically analysed and used to inform improvement.
23. The self-assessment process is inclusive of staff views and learner feedback. Inspectors agreed with the judgements and grades in the self-assessment report. The quality improvement arrangements have been recently strengthened through more frequent improvement audits and a more rigorous observation of the teaching and learning process ensuring more accurate grades. However, the outcomes from these activities are not sufficiently well used by the Foundation Learning team to ensure that all learners receive a consistently high quality experience. The provision of management information has improved considerably although this is not yet fully used to inform quality improvement activities, for example leaver data are analysed in insufficient detail to inform quality improvement activity.
24. Value for money is satisfactory. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Accommodation is adequate and physical resources are satisfactory although some centres provide insufficient access to IT equipment.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality and support manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, and data on learners and their achievement.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and stakeholders. 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)**BTCV Enterprises Ltd**

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	16-18 Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	362	362
Full-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>	3	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	N/A	
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>	3	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	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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