

Engineering

Construction Training Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		8–10 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The programme is not sufficiently challenging for all learners.
- The training does not effectively develop learners' personal and social skills, as well as their standards of English and mathematics.
- Learners do not have routine access to relevant information, advice and guidance.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good or better.
- Managers do not quality assure all key training stages so they can identify areas for improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not set and monitor comprehensive and ambitious performance management targets that lead to timely quality improvement.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Very high proportions of learners complete their qualification and move to a good range and variety of work with more responsibilities. All learners gain a very good range of relevant additional qualifications that are highly regarded by the industry.
- Learners develop a good understanding of health and safety which matches the very high expectations set by the sector.
- Learners successfully demonstrate the application of high-level technical skills that they can apply very competently to practical workplace situations.
- Learners benefit from good assessment by staff who have very good knowledge of the industry.
- Managers have successfully improved the quality of provision in many key areas and ensured all learners achieve their qualifications.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the effectiveness of teaching and learning through better planning and the use of a wider variety of teaching strategies that includes the use of initial assessment test results to better individualise learning and support.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers through the setting and monitoring of comprehensive and ambitious performance management targets that lead to timely improvement and significantly raised standards. These should be fully informed by the outcome of a recruitment process review to ensure programmes challenge all learners.
- Better recognition and development of learners' personal and social skills through the introduction of an appropriate training strategy.
- Introduce effective arrangements to support and raise the standards of learners' English and mathematics.
- Ensure all learners are able to make informed and realistic decisions about their future by providing good access to independent information, advice and guidance.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity by reviewing, updating and implementing the equality and diversity plan so that it reflects all recent legislative changes and best practice.
- Further raise standards by fully implementing the self-assessment process and using its outcomes to prioritise quality assurance and improvement of all key training stages measured against demanding performance objectives.
- Ensure all managers receive safeguarding training that updates their understanding and allows them to improve further the arrangements to protect all learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- In 2011/12, all learners who commenced training successfully completed their qualification and did so within the planned time. Since the previous inspection, the rate at which learners succeed by their agreed date has significantly improved.
- Learners enjoy participating in learning and having the opportunity to acquire accreditation to prove competence. Different groups of learners progress and achieve at a similar rate. However, learners often have significant prior attainment before commencing training, resulting in little further progress in extending their skills and knowledge as the programme is not sufficiently challenging.
- Most learners successfully demonstrate the application of high-level technical skills within the workplace and are able to perform tasks independently and with confidence. For example, learners skilfully apply their good theoretical knowledge to the critical analysis and interpretation of complex drawings and the marking out and plating of large isometric beams.
- Engineering Construction Training Ltd (ECT) does not effectively develop learners' English and mathematics skills. Learners are not encouraged to raise their skill levels beyond those identified at initial assessment and do not improve sufficiently.
- Learners gain a very good range of relevant additional qualifications that are required by the industry. For example, they achieve certification and develop a high level of skill and knowledge in operating pendant and remote-controlled gantry cranes and the safe use of oxy/fuel gas cutting and pre-heating equipment. Learners develop a very good understanding of health and safety and the sound application of their principles as a contribution to meeting the very high standards required by the industry, for example when moving large, complex and heavy loads.

- ECT does not develop learners' personal and social skills sufficiently. Learners do not receive adequate guidance and support to aid their further development to enhance long-term employability and promotion prospects.
- Following training, all learners progress to higher levels of workplace responsibility in a wide range and variety of jobs within the industry that meet local and national priorities. They have an adequate understanding of their next career progression stage, particularly the importance of achieving the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 to gain the required construction or engineering skills card essential for employment within the sector. However, learners have little appreciation of other career and progression opportunities.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning require improvement and do not reflect the good learner outcomes.
- Prior to commencing training, most learners have attained very good industry-related skills and knowledge which assessors further reinforce using satisfactory individual coaching sessions. However, assessors do not adequately plan teaching and learning activities to address all individual learners' needs. Where a narrow range of teaching strategies is used, assessors often fail to extend learners' understanding and promote progress beyond that required by the NVQ.
- Learners benefit from good assessment that effectively engages them through assessors' use of very effective probing questions to test their knowledge and understanding. Assessors skilfully plan assessments to help learners concentrate on a specific activity such as burning techniques so they remain fully engaged with the task. Learners highly value the constructive and motivating assessor feedback that very effectively identifies further improvement actions.
- Assessors have very good construction- and engineering-industry experience that they skilfully use to support assessment. For example, using examples drawn from experience, an assessor was able to apply his specialist understanding of safe working on site excavations to the identification and addressing of gaps in a learner's knowledge of best practice.
- Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. For example, in one case an assessor, rather than the learner, contributed a written description to explain photographic evidence. Learning resources are good but assessors make insufficient use of them to promote learners' independent learning skills.
- Initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and skills development needs are adequate. Assessors suitably update individual learning plans following assessment and use them to inform a detailed tracking of learners' progress against targets that are suitable but not ambitious. However, assessors do not routinely use the outcomes of initial assessment effectively to plan individual learning or identify additional support needs.
- Since the previous inspection, assessors have significantly improved practice to ensure all learners know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Learners appreciate the detailed informal feedback they receive from assessors which encourages them to succeed further. However, formal reviews mainly take place after the final assessment visit and are therefore ineffective in monitoring learners' performance and setting further targets to support progression.
- The provider does not effectively help learners to develop their English and mathematical skills. Many learners clearly understand the benefits of improving these skills but no effective arrangements are in place to deliver relevant support.
- Assessors have a sound knowledge of industry-specific careers and progression routes that they use to support learners effectively. However, the provider does not systematically plan and make available to all learners the full range of available information, advice and guidance. Staff do not record the outcomes of sessions in sufficient detail and agreed objectives focus on additional industry-specific training within the company rather than on wider career and progression opportunities.

- All learners feel appropriately protected in the workplace and have an adequate understanding of their rights and responsibilities with respect to equality and diversity. Assessors actively promote the use of non-stereotypical language and the benefits of mutual respect of which learners have a good understanding. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is adequately tested and developed during progress reviews, though the recording of these sessions and the setting of future action points are not always fully effective.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Managers set and successfully communicate an ambitious vision for all the learners to gain an appropriate NVQ at level 3 and additional qualifications that enhance their employment opportunities and meet business objectives. Strategies to raise quality are generally successful, though the pace of implementation is not always quick enough, and some key standards are set for compliance purposes rather than addressing known delivery shortfalls. Performance management is adequate but senior managers have yet to set a full range of demanding development objectives to aid performance monitoring and drive improvement.
- Assessors provide learners with good-quality assessment supported by adequate individual coaching, although assessors do not ensure they are always effectively planned. Managers place an over reliance on recruiting learners with existing skills and knowledge that meet some or all of the programmes aims. This has resulted in ECT overly focusing on assessment and its improvement rather than on learners' training, with too much use of informal rather than systematically robust performance management of teaching and learning.
- Leaders and managers have rightly prioritised improvements to staff skills using relevant teaching, assessor and vocational technical training that make a good contribution to improving the provision's quality. Training centre accommodation is of a high standard and includes a good range of resources to support learning. However, managers do not effectively promote the use of learning resources for independent study and learners make little use of the available material outside of taught sessions.
- Leaders and managers have a realistic understanding of the provision's quality and they use data and users' views appropriately to inform self-assessment. The monitoring and implementation of identified improvement actions by managers have been generally effective and contributed to the significant rise in the proportion of learners who succeed within an agreed timescale. However, they have failed to prioritise completion of the self-assessment process for the current year and have overly delayed the full implementation of some key improvement actions, including the introduction of comprehensive quality-assurance arrangements.
- Managers use their detailed knowledge of industry skills requirements to plan a curriculum that successfully meets both learners' and employers' training needs and the demands of work shift patterns. ECT offers a good range of additional specialist training that addresses national priorities and makes a very good contribution to learners' effectiveness in carrying out their work role and improving current employability. However, too few learners find their programme challenging or effective in significantly extending their competence.
- Managers implement a suitable range of policies and procedures that protect and promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity both within and outside the workplace. However, managers have been slow to review and update equality and diversity plan targets and actions to improve promotion among staff, learners and employers further or reflect all recent legislative changes and best practice. Managers have identified the under-representation of women and minority groups within the industry, and have made some useful links with schools and professional bodies to encourage recruitment. The impact of these actions has been limited.

- ECT meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners who feel safe during training and can raise concerns that they are confident assessors will appropriately address. Safeguarding arrangements protect all learners and effectively enhance their understanding. Managers adequately monitor the effectiveness of procedures to provide a safe learning environment but have not received recent safeguarding training.
- Managers place significant emphasis on raising the standard of learners' health and safety knowledge and professional practice through the creation of an organisational culture that values and celebrates adherence to safe working. The company uses a good range of techniques, including theatre-based behavioural safety training, to engage and promote learners' understanding of expected standards. In addition, assessors successfully promote the role of the learner in establishing and maintaining sound health and safety work practices.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Engineering Construction Training Ltd

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Building and construction	3

Provider details

Engineering Construction Training Ltd

Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: n/a
	Part-time: 70
Training manager	John Dodd
Date of previous inspection	July 2009
Website address	sfrplc.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Part-time	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	n/a	42	n/a	n/a
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Number of learners aged 14-16	n/a							
Number of community learners	n/a							
Number of employability learners	n/a							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	n/a							

Additional socio-economic information

The provider is a division of the Severfield Rowen Group plc and has training centres at Dalton in North Yorkshire and Bolton in Lancashire. Most current training and assessment are designed to service the needs of the Severfield Rowen Group and those of their supply chain employers. Learners work across the United Kingdom on predominantly large civil engineering construction projects.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Nigel Bragg HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the training manager 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 and monitoring visit reports. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, and online questionnaires to collect the views of learners and employers. These views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the subject area listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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