

The Bassetlaw Training Agency Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		11 – 13 December 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- A wide and comprehensive range of quality work placements meets the needs and interests of learners. Learners are very positive about their work placement experiences and receive good support from employers to gain confidence and develop skills which enhance their employment prospects.
- The curriculum successfully prepares learners for progression into work place learning by offering individual programmes and qualifications to support employability skills. Initial assessment is thorough and accurately identifies learners' needs. Well managed regular reviews of learners' progress are used very effectively to track and sustain learning in the workplace. Reviews are responsive to learners' needs, timely, systematic and well-structured to support progression.
- The provider and workplace supervisors have high expectations for the majority of learners. They set challenging targets with clear deadlines for completion and are well supported by both tutors and employers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Outcomes are mainly good but not yet outstanding. In particular, the proportion of learners progressing onto other training or into employment requires improvement.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are mainly good and are not yet outstanding.
- The recording and assessment of non-accredited learning is underdeveloped and not sufficiently well structured to monitor progress over time and provide a reliable measure of progress from the learners' starting points.
- Leadership and management are mainly good but are not yet outstanding. It is too early to judge the full impact of some recent initiatives and both the accuracy and use of management information require improvement.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve learners' rate of progression into employment or further education by working with other local providers and agencies to overcome barriers posed by family or community pressures.
- Increase the amount of good teaching, learning and assessment by further developing the planning of learning to specifically identify opportunities that relate to functional skills improvement. Make stronger links with vocational learning placements to identify naturally occurring situations at work to reinforce English and mathematical skills.
- Further develop the recording of progression of learning goals declared by learners at the initial self-assessment stage. Systematically track development at reviews, provide clear feedback on the development of non-accredited learning and relate this to work place learning.
- Give detailed feedback to learners on how their work can be further improved by focusing on specific areas of development, in addition to the correction of spelling and grammar.
- Develop workplace learning records in partnership with employers to support reflective learning identifying social skills, personal organisational learning, problem solving and progress made relative to starting points and learning goals.
- Use data as a management tool to evaluate fully the impact of the achievement and progression of all learners and to identify any achievement gaps. Evaluate current strategies to engage and promote wider participation of male learners. Evaluate learners' knowledge of equality and diversity in more depth at reviews.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of learners that progress to further education, apprenticeships or employment is satisfactory and improving. At the start of the Foundation Learning programme retention was very low but has improved year on year since then. The progression rate for those retained is high.
- A high proportion of learners who are interested in child care progress either directly into employment or onto higher level training in this sector.
- The achievement of vocational qualifications in child care is high. For some qualifications such as health and safety and manual handling the achievement rate is very high. Most current learners working toward vocational qualifications are making good progress. There are no identified differences in the achievements of different groups of learners.
- Learners make satisfactory progress in functional skills. Most start from a very low level, develop their skills in mathematics, English and information and communication technology and are entered for accreditation at the level most appropriate for them, where pass rates are high. Some become so enthused that they continue to attend classes even after they have left the programme.
- Learners develop good employability skills. They gain in self-confidence and the ability to communicate effectively. They recognise the value of functional skills in supporting their progression. They also learn the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and are reflected in improving achievement and progression rates. Tutors structure and sequence learning carefully to meet individual needs, reinforce key objectives and acknowledge prior learning. Learners draw on their own practical experiences to support their development of knowledge concepts and attitudes. For example, in a customer services session equality and diversity were related skilfully to the learners' current workplace. Frequent and specific references are made to work-related situations supporting links from theory to practice. Good associations are made to relevant work placements to reinforce key objectives. Learners receive regular praise and feedback in sessions.
- The provider uses an extensive range of employers across a wide spectrum of vocational activity to provide learners with valuable work experience. Learners are carefully matched to appropriate placements to meet their individual needs and interests, develop confidence and employability skills. Placements are arranged quickly after the initial assessment. Work placements are used to break down barriers to learning, change perceptions about learning and raise expectations of achievement. Employers comment on the good communication and prompt support given to sustain learners in placements.
- Employers are highly supportive of learners and value their contributions in their work place. Further training and learning routinely goes beyond the statutory requirements of the employer. Learners are prepared well to undertake job roles and are fully integrated into the workforce. Reviews of progress towards the achievement of qualifications are regular and thorough, challenging targets are set and systematically monitored to keep learners on track. However the monitoring of more general employability skills is underdeveloped and requires improvement to fully measure progress against starting points.
- Staff use their expertise well in planning to meet individual needs. Expectations of learners are high and good behaviour is encouraged. Attendance is closely monitored and particular attention is given to safeguarding vulnerable individuals. Independent learning is encouraged and transport to work is supported where appropriate.
- Assessment of learning is detailed with clear guidance given to learners. Progress through the programme is carefully monitored. However although assessment includes corrections of spelling and grammar, the marking of written formative assessments is insufficiently detailed to provide feedback and encouragement to consolidate learning.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and systematic. Effective guidance leads to learners being placed with appropriate employers who are sensitive to the learners' needs. Support is timely, breaks down barriers to learning and improves self- confidence. Individual learning plans are well structured; challenging targets are set and links are made from assessment outcomes to plan learning for qualifications and workplace achievements.
- Learners value highly the regular reviews and the close monitoring of their progress. They show ambition to improve and change their circumstances often against a family and community culture of benefit dependency. Tutors skilfully break down barriers to attainment and work responsively with partners to provide services to support mental health and counselling needs.
- The development of functional skills is satisfactory. Learners start their programmes with low levels of academic attainment in mathematics and English and appreciate the value that these subjects have in support of their progression to other levels of learning. Teaching and learning plans include functional skills at a general level in vocational areas but do not make specific reference to learning sessions or workplace activity.
- Advice and guidance appropriately places learners on suitable programmes. The need to attract learners from under-represented groups is recognised. Female learners out number male learners. Strategies to attract male learners remain largely unsuccessful.

- Equality and diversity are well promoted. The understanding and advancement of equality and diversity are taught well and skilfully contextualised to the work place. However reviews do not sufficiently reinforce this learning through detailed questioning to test knowledge.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors demonstrate good strategic planning. They recently sought out other small work-based learning providers and founded a consortium in order to minimise the loss of income that would have otherwise occurred had their apprenticeship contracts been moved to other larger providers. Managers also restructured The Bassetlaw Training Agency Limited (BTA) and internally reinforced the links between apprenticeship and foundation learning programmes.
- BTA's quality manager works closely with those from other providers in the new apprenticeship consortium to produce common quality improvement arrangements such as policies, procedures and audits, drawing on the best practices they identify. BTA staff then apply these arrangements to the Foundation Learning programme. Consequently new policies and documented procedures are comprehensive and up to date; however it is too early to judge the full impact of these changes.
- The new observation of teaching and learning arrangements, which form part of the quality improvement arrangements above, include a greater focus on learning, joint observations and regular moderation between organisations to standardise grading judgments and post-observation action planning.
- Curriculum management is good. The well-planned curriculum focuses on extensive work experience with appropriate attention to functional skills and opportunities to pursue vocational qualifications as well as overcoming barriers to progression. The provider maintains links with over 500 local employers to ensure that learners can benefit from work experience placements best suited to their stage of development.
- Staff engage effectively in the well-established self-assessment process. Each department monitors and modifies its quality improvement plan throughout the year before using it to produce its self-assessment report, which senior managers incorporate into an overall report. The report produced immediately before inspection was written against the new common inspection framework and was largely accurate.
- Managers do not make sufficient use of data to monitor performance of the Foundation Learning programme, set targets for the programme or to identify differences in achievement between groups of learners. BTA's management information system was designed for apprenticeship programmes and does not readily produce data in the most useful format for the management of the Foundation Learning programme.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policies are comprehensive and up to date and implemented well. BTA's Foundation Learning programme caters for young people from an area of high deprivation, many of whom have previously low levels of academic achievement and multiple barriers to learning. Staff help learners to combat harassment and bullying. They challenge stereotyping and encourage learners to consider careers which they might otherwise have dismissed as inappropriate to their gender.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Policies and procedures are comprehensive with an appropriate particular emphasis on child protection. Staff have a good awareness and knowledge of reporting procedures.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Bassetlaw Training Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
	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 the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation learning	2

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	N/A
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ N/A

Additional socio-economic information

The Bassetlaw Training Agency Ltd operates from its premises, a former primary school and Headteacher's house in Worksop. The firm also owns and operates a childcare establishment in the area. Until recently it had a direct contract funded by the Skills Funding Agency to offer apprenticeships in business administration, customer service and childcare which it now offers under subcontract with a consortium of which it is a member. The immediate area is one of the most deprived in the country with high youth unemployment and low levels of qualification among the population.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Cliff Rose HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Foundation Learning Programme Coordinator 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. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, and online questionnaires to gather 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 directly funded provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision and graded the sector 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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