

# Intec Business Colleges Plc

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>22–26 April 2013</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	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:

- Success rates are high with the majority of learners making very good progress and developing a wide range of skills to improve their employment prospects
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Training is well planned and structured with assessors using their skills and knowledge very effectively to engage and motivate learners.
- Comprehensive and highly effective assessment planning uses a wide range of assessment methods to support learners' timely progress and development.
- Individual learning support is good in developing English, mathematics and functional skills. Assessors are skilled at ensuring that learners have a positive approach to functional skills and recognise their importance in the workplace.
- Leadership is strong, decisive and leads to improvements in the provision for learners.
- Performance management is very good and has a strong focus on improving success rates and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff development is good with a commitment by the company to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve.
- Partnership arrangements with employers are highly effective and encourage progression into higher qualifications.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Success rates for a minority of learners need to improve.
- Teaching is good but too few teaching and learning sessions are outstanding.
- Written feedback to learners is not at a consistently high level to enable all learners to improve their skills in spelling and grammar.
- The self-assessment process does not make full use all of the available data and other information to identify clearly or to measure success criteria within the quality improvement plan.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for the small number of 16 to 18 year old apprentices by more frequent visits, and the use of a wider range of methods to record achievement.
- Further reduce the achievement gap between male and female learners by continuing to monitor male learners to identify any at risk of leaving the programme.
- Improve the standard of teaching and learning in weaker sessions by ensuring all trainers and assessors effectively reinforce equality and diversity during assessment and training activities by constantly monitoring the performance of staff through observation of teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of feedback to learners on their written work particularly in the routine correction of spelling and grammar.
- Further develop self-assessment arrangements to improve the quality of the provision by making better use of the existing performance data to support judgements and by clearly identifying timescales for improvement activities.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Overall success rates for apprentices are above the national average and have remained so for the last three years. The number of apprentices who completed their programme within their planned timescale is also above the national average. Success rates for learners in the workplace learning provision are also above the national average with the majority completing early or within their planned timescale.
- The monitoring of current apprentices shows a large majority are making very good progress with many on target to achieve early. The retention of apprentices and the proportion of those successfully achieving their frameworks have improved from the same period in the previous year.
- Success rates for learners on the classroom based employability courses, for clients referred from Jobcentre Plus are also good, with most successfully achieving. Achievement of functional skills in English and mathematics is good.
- There are little differences in achievement of apprentices by ethnicity but managers are working to reduce the achievement gap between males and females with females currently achieving better. Apprentices requiring additional learning support achieve well compared to national rates. Success rates for a small number of apprentices aged 16 to 18 are lower than other apprentice groups.
- Learners demonstrate good work skills in business administration and management. Learners gain confidence and are motivated to progress. Employers value the skills that they develop and can identify the positive impact for their company particularly in a significant reduction in staff turnover.
- Learners enjoy their studies and all learners confirmed that their studies had increased personal confidence and motivation. One learner in particular who had held a management position for a number of years without a qualification could identify the benefits of gaining a qualification to improve future employment prospects.
- The standard of written work is good and apprentices take pride in the production and presentation of their portfolios. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and safeguarding.

- In workplace learning progression has significantly improved with more learners progressing to higher level qualifications. On employability courses learner progression into sustained employment is good. Progression to higher level courses for apprentices is good. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many apprentices progress to supervisory positions within their employment although data are not routinely collected to support this.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good reflecting the high numbers of learners successfully achieving qualifications. Assessors have high expectations of their learners who are motivated to complete work quickly and make good progress improving their skills and confidence. Employers provide good support to learners in the workplace and have strong levels of commitment to the learning programme.
- Good care and support improve learners' personal and work related skills. Learners are well supported by their assessors through frequent visits, email and telephone support. Learners develop skills in a range of administration, team leading and management activities, such as, using data to inform decision making, creating graphs, analysing financial information, dealing with customer feedback and interviewing candidates for jobs.
- Comprehensive and in some cases outstanding assessment planning supports learners' good progress and development. During visits, learners and employers are very involved in organising assessment activities plus presenting and assessing evidence. A wide range of holistic assessment methods and naturally occurring evidence are used to meet framework requirements such as activity sheets, web-based documents, witness testimony and recorded professional discussions. Learners produce an exceptionally high standard of workplace evidence based around improvements to business and reflecting their increased skill levels and performance in the workplace.
- Individual coaching sessions are good especially for the functional and key skills aspects of the apprenticeship. Assessors are skilled at engaging and motivating learners. One-to-one coaching occurs at each visit and this has improved learners' understanding of and preparation for examinations. Regular coaching and off-the-job training sessions support learners in articulating their knowledge and understanding to complete written questions, improve skills and to develop independent learning. Assessors make good use of motivational questioning techniques to help learners present evidence for making effective decisions for projects such as to improve productivity.
- Assessors have highly productive relationships with employers. Assessors are very sensitive to employer work patterns and visits are planned according to differing shift patterns and business needs. The organisation of examinations and testing is well planned and delivered in the workplace. Assessors have extensive and varied experience in all aspects of business administration, management and customer service.
- Short and medium term target setting are good and are reviewed through frequent visits, encouraging learners to achieve and progress. Longer term target setting on individual learning agreements in a minority of cases does not always reflect the short term targets on assessment plans.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and takes account of all aspects of the qualification. Assessment focuses on evaluating the skills and knowledge learners have to identify the best optional units for their job roles and career aspirations. Employers contribute effectively to the choice of additional units. In a minority of cases, following initial assessment, learners do not receive their English and mathematics results.
- Very good verbal feedback enables learners to improve and progress towards their learning goals. Learners' work is assessed quickly and assessors accurately record learners' progress and

achievements. Learners have a clear understanding of the learning objective to be achieved between assessor visits. Written feedback to learners does not in all cases correct mistakes in spelling and grammar.

- Learning support is good to develop English, mathematics and functional skills. Apprentices have a positive approach to functional skills and recognise their importance to workplace activities. Good learning resources are used well by assessors to promote apprentices' understanding and naturally occurring opportunities develop learners' English and mathematics skills well.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Initial sign-up sessions with employers and learners are used well to inform the range of programmes on offer and the requirements of the different qualifications available. Assessors advise and guide learners throughout their programme to help them overcome any barriers to making progress. Comprehensive progression interviews and initial assessment of functional skills are used well to inform and guide learners.
- Equality and diversity topics are covered thoroughly at induction and learners have a very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Assessors refresh learners' knowledge of equality and diversity during workplace visits by using a list of questions. Assessors do not always use naturally occurring examples during learning sessions to extend and develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Good, decisive action by Intec's chief executive officer in identifying reasons for some slow progress in improving the quality of the provision resulted in a successful restructure of the company. The high level of commitment by the new leadership team is improving the learner experience and ensuring that the company responds successfully to new challenges and opportunities. Following the restructure, communication and decision making throughout the company is more effective and is now good. Intec has good capacity for sustained improvement.
- Performance management is very good. Appraisals and job reviews promote the values and strategic direction of the company well and contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff identified as underperforming benefit from good professional support, appropriate additional training and clear performance improvement targets. Good use is made of performance data and key indicators as starting points for discussions; agreed targets are developmental and suitably challenging. Staff are reflective and display a high level of insight into the effectiveness of their performance.
- The recently introduced system for observing teaching, learning and assessment is good. The system has a stronger emphasis on the skills developed and the progress made by learners. Senior staff across the company formally observe learning and assessment activities and although inspectors identified some inconsistencies in the recording of observations early indications are that where areas for improvement are identified appropriate action is effectively taken.
- Quality assurance arrangements are good. The quality improvement calendar identifies the key elements of the apprenticeship programme. Results from quality assurance activities lead to improvements in the provision. The involvement of learners in evaluating their provision through better use of surveys and focussed discussions has led to practical improvements such as reducing the number of times learners are required to enter their personal details, enabling staff to spend more time with learners during inductions.
- Staff are well qualified and experienced. Staff development is good. All assessors have completed courses that prepare them to teach in the learning and skills sector resulting in improvements in the quality of teaching, assessing and reviewing. Assessors are now more confident in their planning of learning and increasingly reflective of their own practice; they use a wider range of teaching methods, questioning techniques and resources.

- The self-assessment process requires further development. At the 2012 monitoring visit inspectors acknowledged the progress made in self-assessment and improvement planning. However, the self-assessment report is largely descriptive and lacks critical judgements. The quality improvement and operational plans do not always clearly identify success criteria or set clear measurable milestones, failing to reference the good use being made of key performance indicators, data, surveys and other information to evaluate, improve and plan provision.
- Intec works very effectively with an extensive employer base to help develop and tailor programmes of study that help support their individual business needs, providing opportunities for learners to develop their work skills and employability. Employers find Intec responsive and value the time that they take to understand their business and the flexibility of arrangements for training and assessment to suit both learners' and employers' needs.
- The attention given to improving learners' English, maths and employability skills is good. Intec was slow to implement a functional skills strategy, however since the appointment of the programmes and qualifications manager, good staff training has taken place across the company and a wide range of useful resources and guidance are now in place.
- Intec's approach to equality and diversity is good. The strong focus and priority Intec now gives to equality and diversity helps learners improve their knowledge of equalities and protects them in the workplace. Recent actions such as using an external consultant to identify areas for improvement, running training for staff and ensuring that equality and diversity are discussed at all relevant meetings are contributing to the improvements.
- Actions to improve the lower achievement of male learners aged 16 to 18 such as more frequent, shorter visits from assessors, the use of a wider range of methods of recording achievements and greater support from employers are beginning to improve outcomes for this group.
- Safeguarding practices at Intec are good. Intec meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners and staff. Appropriate training and effective cooperation with a range of agencies support the safeguarding arrangements. Staff and learners can contact the designated safeguarding officer or her deputy at any time using a dedicated phone number. Incidents are managed sensitively and appropriately recorded with identifiable resolution. The recruitment of staff reflects current recommended practice and the management of health and safety is effective.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Intec Business Colleges Plc

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Administration</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Business management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

Intec Business Colleges Plc	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 4,134
	Part-time: 17
Principal/CEO	John Herman
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
Website address	www.getoncourse.net

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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	0	7	0	140	0	39	0	11
Part-time	0	0	0	56	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	115	931	8	777	0	5		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	56							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ N/A</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

Intec Business Colleges Plc (Intec) was founded in 1982 and provides training mainly in business administration, business management and customer service nationally to a variety of employers of different size throughout the country. A small number of learners are following courses in retail, commercial enterprise and employability. In addition to training programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency, training is also provided in Scotland and to private learners. The head office for Intec is located in Rugby. Intec's Skills Funding Agency programmes represent around 75% of the company's business. Training is provided mainly on employers' premises.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Stephen Miller HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the managing director 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, telephone calls 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 provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas 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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