

Blackburne House Education

Not for profit organisation

Inspection dates		26–29 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Learners overcome their barriers to progression and develop good personal, social and employability skills. Many progress to further or higher education or employment. As the result of good work experience, which all learners take part in, a good proportion progress to employment.
- Good teaching, training and assessment ensure that a large majority of learners complete successfully their foundation-level courses and also their long courses.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with outstanding features. Tutors plan sessions carefully to include a good range of practical and interactive activities that involve learners fully and help them to apply their learning.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The chief executive, senior managers and the board of governors understand exceptionally well the needs of learners, the overwhelming majority of whom are disadvantaged women. They have developed a particularly responsive provision for them.
- Blackburne House Education (BHE) takes learners' views seriously and responds promptly to them.
- The organisation's approach to the promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding: it ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity and respect through everything which it does.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet outstanding.
- Most learners' success rates in English and mathematics qualifications are not good enough.
- Success rates of learners on courses between five and 24 weeks at intermediate and advanced levels are not high.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve learner outcomes by ensuring:
 - all tutors set learners clear and achievable personal learning goals, plan and deliver for individual learning and record their progress and achievements systematically
 - learners' portfolios, especially on English and mathematics courses, are moderated frequently to ensure that slow progress by learners is identified swiftly and rectified.
- Increase the proportion of the sessions which are outstanding by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching, learning and assessment across all courses
 - ensuring tutors are confident and skilful enough to integrate successfully the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in teaching, learning and assessment
 - ensuring tutors always provide written feedback, which is detailed, and guide learners on how they can improve.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The overwhelming majority of learners are women who are refugees or asylum seekers. They have had disrupted lives, have suffered from mental health problems or emotional upheaval, and have multiple substantial barriers to participate in learning. They improve significantly their personal, social and employability skills and enhance substantially their capacity to take control of their lives and transform their lives and the lives of their children and dependents.
- Since the last inspection, success rates of learners on courses over 24 weeks have been high and significantly above national averages. In 2011/12, success rates for learners on foundation-level courses between five to 24 weeks duration were high, but on intermediate- and advanced-level courses required improvement. Success rates on foundation English and mathematics courses were low. BHE has implemented new measures to improve these success rates; for example, now it offers new courses. However, the impact of these changes is too recent to judge.
- Based on BHE's data, in 2012/13, success for learners on intermediate courses improved significantly to national averages. Success rates for a small minority of learners on advanced-level courses between five to 24 weeks duration declined sharply due to a few learners who left for personal and health reasons.
- Retention rates on most courses are high. Learners achieve units of a progression qualification as part of their work experience. All current learners are making good progress from their starting points.
- The standard of learners' portfolios is good and some are outstanding. As the result of good and varied activities in teaching and training sessions and work experience, learners enhance significantly their personal and employability skills, for example, being able to confidently deal with customers. Learners on construction courses develop outstanding independent learning and analytical skills. For example, they presented their research about a carpenters' block plane confidently to their peers.
- Owing to the tutors' strong focus on the development of learners' resilience and personal skills, they develop a positive view of themselves and become more confident of their strengths. Learners say they make better life choices and feel better equipped to deal with personal or

family crises, for example, when dealing with domestic violence. Learners who are asylum seekers or refugees and are disconnected from their families or relations, integrate well with the local community. They use their newly developed skills, such as writing skills, well to tackle their housing and legal affairs.

- There are no differences in the performance of groups of learners. Learners have high levels of understanding of equality and diversity and respect each other's cultural differences. Learners recognise that each individual has had a different set of life experiences and demonstrate a willingness to learn from each other. Learners are particularly sensitive to individuals who have fragile lives, and who, for example, feel extreme levels of anxiety.
- Learners have a good understanding of progression routes to other courses and employment opportunities. The proportion of learners who progress to further courses, including higher education or employment, based on the organisation's comprehensive system for recording and monitoring of learner destinations, is good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good as reflected by learners' outcomes. Tutors ensure that learners develop good employability skills, and in a number of sessions they skilfully develop learners' vocational talents in, for example, construction, beauty therapy and volunteering. Most tutors plan sessions well and include a wide range of interesting learning activities which build on learners' prior knowledge and experience. Tutors are very enthusiastic and motivational.
- In the better sessions, tutors introduce a sense of fun, enabling more the reluctant learners to engage in the subject and participate in sessions fully. They use effectively the good resources available in information and communication technology, construction craft and health and beauty therapy to teach learners good vocational techniques.
- In good or better sessions, assessment is robust and systematic and tutors challenge learners effectively to achieve higher outcomes. They are very ambitious for learners and use questioning techniques well to help learners to discover and explore different aspects of the topics.
- In the less-effective sessions, tutors tell learners too quickly what the answer is, or how to complete an activity rather than using questioning techniques skilfully to extend learners' thinking and understanding. Not all tutors give sufficiently detailed written feedback, including feedback on spelling and grammar, to help learners understand what they are doing well and how they could improve.
- Staff support learners exceptionally well to ensure they have the resilience and confidence to learn, develop and keep themselves healthy. All learners attend health and well-being sessions that teaches them simple practical techniques to apply in their daily life, including laughter therapy and meditation.
- BHE supports learners exceptionally well, with free childcare, help with travel costs and funding of an educational maintenance allowance. Learners benefit from referrals to specialist agencies, including housing advice and food banks.
- Staff are well qualified and learners benefit from the range of experience some tutors have of working in the community and their own social enterprises. The staff reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of the learners they teach. A number of staff were previous learners at BHE and hence have a good understanding of learners' needs. These staff use their progress from learner to tutors well to motivate learners.
- In a small minority of sessions, tutors do not always plan for individual learning. Not all tutors use information learning technology well or innovatively. In one session, learners found it difficult to hear material on laptop speakers.

- Tutors use the results of learners' comprehensive initial assessments well to devise an individual programme for each learner to develop all aspects of learners' needs. For example, building their self-esteem and self-worth. They assess the language and literacy levels of information and communication technology learners well to make sure they can meet the demands of the programme. However, not all tutors set and record the individuals' learning targets in sufficient detail and therefore learners cannot always evaluate their pace of progress.
- A good range of reflective practices empowers and motivates learners to explore their existing personal skills and what they need to do to gain employment. Staff manage and monitor learners well who benefit significantly from a range of good quality work placements at the end of their programme.
- There are instances of the development of written and spoken English skills being exceptionally well embedded. For example, in construction, the tutor used laminated cards with difficult but relevant words which she gave out to learners to learn during a practical session. Learners knew their tutor would test them later on in the session. However, as not all tutors plan the development of learners' English and mathematics skills, learners do not develop sufficiently their English and mathematical skills or achieve successfully their functional skills qualifications.
- Learners receive very effective advice and guidance to ensure they start on suitable courses, which has resulted in high retention rates. A work club supports learners very effectively to choose their options for progression into employment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is highly effective. There are a great deal of enrichment activities which promote diversity, for example, external speakers provide learners with an in-depth knowledge of the community. There are some exceptional examples of promoting equality; for example, in a construction class the tutor set learners the task to consider how they will describe different styles of kitchen fittings for a blind customer.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Strong, determined, innovative and passionate leadership and management have ensured that BHE offers a highly responsive provision for learners who are at high risk of social and economic exclusion. Detailed and ambitious strategic planning benefits learners. For example, the chief executive has developed five businesses which contribute significantly to the cost of providing education and training and also a good range of work experience for learners.
- Outstanding partnership working with a number of local, regional and national organisations and employers provides good opportunities for learners to develop their personal and employment skills. For example, a group of beauty therapy learners developed a good range of personal and vocational skills through offering massage therapy to cancer patients in a local hospital.
- The provision is managed well. An open management style enables and encourages managers and tutors to contribute effectively to the development of the provision.
- Governance is outstanding and highly effective. The board members have a wide range of very relevant experience of strategic, operational, educational, and financial leadership and management and use it well to develop Blackburne House Group enterprises, including BHE. There are a number of excellent policies and procedures which are implemented well, including a comprehensive induction programme for new board members. The process of review and assessment of each board member's competences is outstanding. The board provides highly effective support and challenge for the senior managers.
- Good staff development, which includes regular training, well-developed mentoring opportunities, and strong performance management processes, has contributed well to the improvements in the quality of provision. All tutors, including the tutors whose teaching practices are graded as outstanding, agree an action plan and an individual development plan. The well-planned development of a number of learners who are now tutors or teaching

volunteers provides good role models for learners. The chief executive and senior managers take swift action to challenge and improve weak performance. Staff development to enable all tutors to embed English and mathematics in teaching and learning requires improvement.

- The self-assessment and quality improvement processes are thorough and implemented well. The process of lesson observation has been successful in ensuring that the vast majority of teaching and learning sessions are good or better. The records of observation of the sessions focus well on learning and indicate mostly accurate judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The improvement plan based on the self-assessment is thorough, objective and an effective tool for improvement.
- BHE monitors the quality of provision effectively. Management information is used well to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of provision. Sharing of good practice, for example through peer observation, is effective in improving teaching practices. However, the number of outstanding sessions is not high enough. Internal moderation of learners' portfolios on English and mathematics courses requires improvement.
- BHE responds promptly to views of learners gathered through evaluations, learner forums and satisfaction surveys. For example, in response to learners' views, the organisation has planned to offer an open-day with a focus on progression options. The chief executive meets learners and shows a particularly keen interest in their views. The analysis of learners' views is very detailed and recorded well.
- BHE's understanding of the needs of vulnerable women is exceptional. It uses an extensive range of local and national research and information very effectively to inform and target its resources and capacity to develop provision for this group of women. Managers and tutors have shaped successfully the curriculum, which develops significantly the capacity of learners to improve their lives. The design and development of construction provision, which includes work experience and provides women with the opportunity to develop employment in construction crafts, is excellent.
- An outstanding ethos of promoting equality and diversity permeates through everything which the organisation does. Learners from diverse cultures with varied social and personal experiences learn together well. BHE's equality and diversity action plan reflects well the Equality Act 2010; it is used purposefully to improve equality. For example, BHE uses data well and works exceptionally hard to ensure that staff reflect the cultural background of learners by closely monitoring the staff profile. The organisation advertises for new staff in communities that are under-represented in its staff; the staff cultural background reflects the learners fully. A wide range of well-considered posters and displays promotes equality and diversity, and strongly challenges stereotypes.
- BHE meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Arrangements to ensure that learners work in a safe working environment and have any safeguarding issues addressed promptly are highly effective. Learners report that they feel safe; some extremely vulnerable learners understand who they need to report any concerns to and feel confident they will receive a prompt response. All staff that teach or support and guide learners have undergone all necessary checks as to their suitability to do so.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Women's Technology and Education Centre

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	16-19 study programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Employability training	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Not for profit organisation									
Age range of learners	16-18, 19+									
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 27									
	Part-time: 507									
CEO	Claire Dove OBE									
Date of previous inspection	June 2008									
Website address	www.blackburnehouse.co.uk									
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	4	23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Part-time	13	82	3	62	1	32	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19			19+			Total			
	N/A			N/A			N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher					
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A									
Full-time	N/A									
Part-time	N/A									
Number of community learners	177									
Number of employability learners	N/A									
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency									
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 									

Contextual information

BHE is a registered charity, recognised as working specifically with women and is exempt from the relevant sections in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. It is part of Blackburne House Group; five separate social enterprises that support the aim of BHE. The organisation operates from Toxteth. Toxteth is a residential area of Liverpool that is recognised as a geographic area, but is part of a number of electoral wards. The area has high levels of unemployment and social and economic challenges.

Most of the courses are between five to 24 weeks. A significant number of learners are refugees, asylum seekers, lone parents, the long-term unemployed, carers or women who have not achieved any qualification. BHE also offers provision for women in safe houses. Around 40% of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Liverpool is ranked as first in terms of overall indicator of deprivation.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Shahram Safavi HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Learning 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 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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