

Ethnic Minority Business Services

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		11-13 December 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
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:

- Learners make very good progress and gain self-confidence.
- Retention rates are high.
- Learners receive particularly effective personal support, and benefit from good teaching that motivates and inspires them to achieve their potential.
- Leaders create and successfully embed a shared vision to raise learners' aspirations and to create a culture of high expectations that encourages them to succeed.
- Ethnic Minority Business Services (EMBS) has developed very effective partnerships to provide clear progression routes to further and higher education.
- The highly effective engagement of the ethnically diverse local community and the learners within the organisation shape and inform the development of the provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The range of options in the study programme does not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to develop vocationally relevant skills.
- The important work placement aspect of the programme is not yet available to learners.
- The curriculum does not challenge the more able learners sufficiently well.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of options in the study programme to provide opportunities for learners to develop practical and employability skills through teaching, learning, and vocationally relevant work placements.
- Develop the curriculum further to provide adequate range and challenge for more able learners.
- Identify appropriate work placements that meet the learners' career aspirations.
- Develop and implement robust procedures to support learning and safeguard learners during work placements.
- Provide guidance for work placements providers and learners, so that expectations are clear regarding the purpose for learners and the support that EMBS will provide.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Achievement rates are high and progression on to the next level of their programme is very good. Retention rates are high. Learners' attendance is good across the programme, particularly on the level 3 accredited extended project.
- Learners enjoy their programmes and make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Different groups of learners progress and achieve at a similar rate. In the previous two years, achievement rates were low and some groups of learners were not achieving as well as others. Effective management action has significantly improved the achievement rates of learners through the reorganisation of the teaching team and groups of learners.
- Learners progress and develop their functional skills in English and mathematics well. Learners demonstrate good development of reflective and analytical skills, and independent study skills. The standard of learners' written work is good. Learners demonstrate improved confidence in their ability to achieve and succeed and understand the long-term benefits of study and achieving, developing a positive attitude to learning.
- EMBS gives insufficient attention to the development of learners' workplace skills. The current learners' study programme does not contain planned work placement.
- Progression onto further study, training and employment was good in 2012/13. A large majority of learners progressed to apprenticeship training, further and higher education or into employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in learners' high achievements and good progress. Tutors plan varied and stimulating activities well to develop and reinforce skills and knowledge. These include practical tasks to engage learners. They utilise a range of effective strategies to support and monitor learning and make good use of resources including technology to meet learners' needs and interests.
- Tutors' enthusiasm for their subject engages learners very well. Learners develop new skills, increase their knowledge and understanding, and gain in confidence. Tutors promote good interactive and collaborative learning during group work and manage this skilfully. In one lesson, tutors effectively encouraged learners to reflect and give feedback on their peers' presentations.

- Learners undertake an accredited extended study project that leads to universities and college admissions services (UCAS) points for entry to university. Activities encourage the development of independent learning and tutors coach learners effectively, providing practical tips and advice on how to improve their standard of work. Learners develop a good range of research, analytical and presentation skills.
- Thorough initial assessment processes identify individual learning needs. Tutors use the results effectively to identify the skills that learners need to develop and to plan learning accordingly. However, the range of options in the study programme is narrow and does not sufficiently challenge learners, particularly the more able, to extend their skills.
- Individual learning plans have precise targets that enable learners to understand the skills they need to develop. Tutors monitor learners' progress well and provide good regular written feedback to learners, enabling them to develop and improve their work. Most learners are clear about the progress they have made and what skills they need to improve further.
- Assessment of learning is good. Tutors provide constructive verbal and written feedback that tells learners what they need to improve and motivates them to progress further. Effective liaison with parents ensures that they know the progress learners are making. Assessment procedures meet the requirements of the awarding bodies.
- Learners show a significant improvement in their functional skills in English and mathematics and they understand well how this will help them to achieve their overall learning aims. The standard of work in the extended study project is good and is generally marked well. Tutors do not sufficiently emphasise the development of transferable employability skills. They demonstrate the practical application of functional and other skills well but do not contextualise these to the work place sufficiently.
- Learners receive good support that helps them to overcome barriers to learning. This includes effective personal support from a mentor to meet their individual needs. They find the staff approachable and value the support they receive, which motivates them to make progress. In some cases, staff liaise with parents to provide additional support and encouragement to learners.
- Learners benefit from good impartial initial advice and guidance that supports them in planning a learning route to accomplish their career aims. They benefit from referral to other specialist agencies that can help them overcome barriers to learning. The guidance and teaching staff work together effectively to inform the planning of learning.
- A thorough induction to the programme prepares learners well. High profile motivational speakers inspire learners to succeed and staff set out their expectations of the learners. However, the provider does not offer sufficient guidance to learners about the overall programme. Consequently, learners do not always understand how the volunteering scheme will contribute to the aims of increased employability and progression into employment, or onto higher-level study.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is effective. Tutors know the learners well and generally plan a range of activities to meet their needs. A group profile identifies and records individual needs and barriers to learning. EMBS has embedded equality and diversity into the programme very well and learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Tutors promote positive relationships and there is an ethos of mutual respect and trust. The high expectations of tutors motivate learners to maintain good standards of behaviour. Learners feel safe and at ease at EMBS.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers have effectively set and communicated a clear vision of high expectations for the organisation by raising learners' and tutors' ambitions, creating a positive attitude to learning. Good partnership work provides good opportunities for learners to experience the environment of higher education. Learners'

induction successfully creates a very motivational learning experience, which fosters high ambitions. Managers have taken effective action to remedy the low outcomes for learners. The restructuring of the organisation has enabled staff to gain a good understanding of their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

- Managers have deployed effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The teaching and learning observation process is rigorous and makes effective use of external moderation for graded observations. Managers use the outcomes of teaching and learning observations well to plan continuous staff development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, by developing tutors' confidence in the use of interactive white boards. Tutors share good practice well during meetings. The management of staff performance is good and informed well through very effective teaching and learning observation and staff appraisal processes. All staff are appropriately qualified.
- EMBS has taken effective action to rectify the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Data are collected and analysed well and used to inform decisions to improve provision. Tutors and managers monitor learners' progress effectively and take appropriate remedial action when under-performance is identified.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and all staff contribute to the process. The quality improvement plan is comprehensive. EMBS gathers learners' feedback at regular intervals, considering the strengths and weakness of the provision and use learners' views to improve provision.
- EMBS has undertaken effective research to establish the needs and attitudes towards education and training of the local community. The outcomes of this research were used well to ensure that the programmes meet the needs and interests of the learners and the local community. For example, EMBS considers the timing and location of its programmes to ensure that learners can attend. Effective structuring of the programmes enables learners to progress from one level to the next in a sequenced manner. However, the provider gives insufficient attention to the content of the programme relating to employability skills. Plans are in place to introduce work placements and work experience for learners in the next academic term.
- Leaders and managers promote equality and diversity well, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap. A clear code of conduct for learners supports them in achieving their learning goals and creates a positive learning environment. EMBS develops learners' understanding of their policy on equality and diversity and of their expectations during induction. Equality and diversity is embedded well into the providers' strategic plans and priorities. Managers regularly monitor the impact of these plans and they take action to address areas for improvement. Training in equality and diversity is effective and leaders, managers, staff and learners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. EMBS actively supports equality and diversity by inviting the community into the training centre.
- The provider meets its statutory duties for safeguarding learners. Appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place to protect staff and learners. However, this needs to be further developed to include the learners' work placement environment.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Provider Ethnic Minority Business Services

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-19 study programmes
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

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16-18							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 43							
	Part-time: N/A							
Principal/CEO	Mr Zahid Bhatti							
Date of previous inspection	03 April 2009							
Website address	www.embs.org.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	5	-	10	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Contextual information

Ethnic Minority Business Services (EMBS) is a private training provider, established in 1988 to provide counselling and employment training for members of minority ethnic groups in Oxfordshire. The main office and training centre is in Oxford. The provider also has a smaller training and administrative facility in Banbury. Both offices are centrally situated and are easily accessible by public transport. The number of secondary school pupils attaining five GCSE grades at A*-C varies between and within locations but is comparatively low in Oxford West and Abington. According to the 2001 census, Oxford had a minority ethnic population of 12.9% compared with 8.7% in England and Wales. The most recent estimate of Oxford's unemployment rate is 5.7% for 2012, which is below the national average of 7.8%.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Deavon Baker-Oxley HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the General 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 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 partners; 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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