

# Inroads Essex Ltd

## Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		06-08 May 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate-4</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate-4
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is inadequate because:

- the monitoring of students' progress from their starting points is weak; managers do not have an accurate picture of the overall performance of the students
- managers have not observed any lessons and do not provide sufficient guidance to teachers and learning support assistants to improve their practice
- managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in assuring the quality of the provision and swiftly implementing improvements
- too many teachers focus on task completion and provide too much help for students, rather than fostering learning; students have too few opportunities to learn in groups
- teachers do not assess and record students' progress effectively
- planning starts too late in students' programmes to prepare them for their next steps when they leave
- the centre staff have not had training in the most recent equalities legislation and do not monitor the achievements of different groups of students
- no member of staff who works at the centre is trained to a sufficiently high level to be a safeguarding contact.

### This provider has the following strengths:

- the calm and inclusive atmosphere that provides a welcoming setting for students, particularly those who felt marginalised in their previous educational settings
- the provision of appropriate work experience for students, including four very effective external work placements, where students flourish.

## Full report

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

- Observe lessons and sessions led by learning support assistants, implementing a programme of support where required; make sure that teaching and learning support staff focus on learning and the development of independent learning skills.
- Develop and carry out assessments of students' starting points to provide a baseline from which to measure their progress, and which take sufficient account of their previous experience and achievements.
- Develop and implement a mechanism for capturing students' progress, so that managers have reliable management data to review their performance.
- As a matter of urgency, train more members of the teaching staff to an appropriate specialist level to teach students with very high needs.
- Develop and implement an action plan that identifies how managers will monitor all aspects of provision over the year, so that the centre has sound quality assurance mechanisms to judge performance.
- Make sure that all stakeholders are involved early in planning students' progression routes, so that students are better prepared when they finish their course.
- Train a member of the centre's staff to be the named safeguarding officer for The Junction site.
- Implement the centre's equality and diversity policy so that all the staff are updated on legislation, and monitor the achievements of different groups of students.
- Build on the good practice in the centre, particularly the better teaching and the newly developed horticulture facility.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Inadequate
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- The centre, known as The Junction, provides study programmes for students aged 16 to 25, with high needs, all of whom are studying at below entry level 1. Many of the students have felt marginalised in previous educational settings because their behaviour was found challenging. Half of the students use communication aids as their main medium of communication. Two thirds live completely or partially in supported living settings. Most of the activities are non-accredited, although the students undertake an award in independent living. Inspectors observed activities across the whole of the provision.
- Managers have not ensured that students have an accurate baseline assessment, so they do not have accurate data about how well students make progress compared to their starting points. Although teaching staff record the progress made by students in lessons monthly, managers have not collated the data to capture students' achievements over time.
- Most students achieve their award in independent living, although a few failed to complete their portfolio of work. Rates of attendance and retention are high.
- Many students make good progress in developing their social and communication skills through activities in the local community, such as shopping and using a local library. Students demonstrate good development of skills in art and craftwork, with many examples of their work on display around the building.
- The four students on external work experience placements develop employability skills well, demonstrating increasing confidence, flexibility in choices of tasks and greater perseverance.

Managers have found creative ways to provide internal work experience placements for the majority of students.

- All students learn how to develop healthy lifestyles. For example, tutors encourage them to make sensible dietary choices and take part in weekly swimming sessions.
- Many students achieve their communication and numeracy objectives. However, it is not always clear that these are appropriate for students, because of the lack of an assessment of their abilities at the start of their programme.
- The progress of students who use communication aids is often limited because teachers do not make sufficient use of a range of alternative communication media.
- Many teachers enable students to start to manage their own behaviour well; however teaching staff do not record these achievements.
- Too few students develop independent learning skills, as the focus in lessons is too often on task completion rather than on developing skills.
- Managers do not analyse achievements by different groups in order to identify any gaps in performance.
- Staff do not plan students' destinations early enough to enable students to continue to learn and engage in community activities when they leave the centre.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate, which is reflected in students' outcomes, as managers cannot accurately assess students' progress from their starting points. Members of staff provide a welcoming and caring environment, but they lack the necessary experience to teach students with very high needs.
- Teaching staff care for the students well. Most hold care qualifications and are often experienced in working with individuals whose behaviours can be challenging. However, the vast majority of teaching staff are not qualified teachers and not trained to a level appropriate to teach and support the students effectively.
- All students have one-to-one teaching for much of their timetables, studying in rooms separated from other students. While this arrangement works well when students first attend the centre, it results in limited opportunities for social interaction.
- A common weakness in these individual lessons is the failure to allow students sufficient time to process a task or instruction and to work out for themselves how to respond. Teaching staff tend to intervene too quickly, confusing the students, and in some cases, completing the task for them.
- Planning for the few group sessions is weak, with teachers not identifying and providing specific resources and strategies to meet the individual needs of the students.
- The most effective sessions are those where students are taking part in realistic, practical tasks and where teaching staff use questioning effectively to enable students to make choices and reflect on their own learning.
- Assessment practice is inadequate. Students do not have an effective baseline assessment to identify clearly what they can do. Long-term objectives for students are sometimes below the level they have achieved in previous settings, with no recorded rationale for them. Teaching staff take insufficient account of previous activities and achievements in order to provide a sufficient level of challenge.
- Teaching staff record students' progress monthly during the programme, but these reports vary in scope and precision. They mostly identify what the student has achieved during that month, but it is not clear how this relates to any previous learning.

- Teaching staff model and demonstrate respectful ways of interacting with students and staff and they support students well in this regard. However, they do not consider ways in which other aspects of equality and diversity could be promoted through the curriculum to prepare students for life in a diverse society.
- The provision for English and mathematics requires improvement. Topics, such as time, are included in learning activities, but checks to ensure that topics are sufficiently challenging and monitoring students' progress in developing their skills do not take place.
- Students have good access to laptops and electronic tablets which aid their learning. However, many learning resources are not age appropriate, and additional communication media are not used often enough to support learning. The resources in the training kitchen do not include sufficient adaptive equipment to promote independence.
- Information, advice and guidance are inadequate. Managers have not ensured that students' are prepared for their next steps at the end of their studies sufficiently early enough.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not monitored the quality of provision sufficiently and have not implemented improvements to ensure that the provision is adequate. They have not taken steps to improve the practice of the teaching and learning support staff. Too few members of the teaching staff have professional qualifications at the right level, or have the specialist expertise for teaching the students. Managers do not have sufficient data to evaluate the overall quality of the provision.
- Observation of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Managers do not observe lessons and rely on informal and anecdotal evidence about the effectiveness of the teaching; they have paid too little attention to the learning that takes place in lessons. However, the centre manager and the inspectors agreed the strengths and areas of improvement in the jointly observed lessons.
- While all members of staff have a monthly review with managers, with targets for improvement, managers place too little emphasis on teaching, learning and assessment within these meetings. Managers support teaching staff to attend training, but this is mainly on care topics. They have not ensured that the centre has sufficient qualified, specialist and experienced teaching staff to teach young people with very high needs.
- Self-assessment arrangements are inadequate. Managers take account of the views of parents and carers, but teaching staff are not involved. Managers have not identified actions for improvement arising from the current report.
- The quality assurance of much activity related to students' programmes is inadequate and improvements have not been sufficient. For example, teaching staff and managers record incidents of where students' behaviour challenges, but managers have not developed a mechanism to demonstrate the extent to which these have reduced over time. Managers do not monitor the non-accredited activity.
- Study programme requirements are met as each student has an individual timetable, focusing constructively on external work placements and internal work-related activities. A newly developed horticulture project provides a good example of an approach to learning that engages students well; managers liaise well with local employers to enhance students' experiences.
- However areas for improvement in the curriculum remain. Managers have not included planning students' next steps and destinations in their design of the curriculum, so students are not prepared fully for life once they leave the centre. The extent to which students' study programmes link with the daily lives of many of them who live in supported settings is unclear.

Students are automatically exempted from the requirement to study for an award in English and mathematics, but this is not always appropriate for a few of the more able students.

- All members of staff encourage the development of an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere and foster a calm environment. Through their own behaviour, they model respect for everyone in the centre. However, senior managers have not implemented the equality and diversity policy and ensured that members of staff have received training in relation to the most recent equalities legislation.
- The safeguarding arrangements require improvement. The centre has a range of appropriate policies to protect students, who feel safe and supported. Members of staff are well trained in subjects such as restraint and physical intervention, and are alert to signs of abuse. Risk assessments are detailed, used by staff, and updated where necessary. No-one at the centre site is trained to a sufficiently high level to be a named safeguarding contact, although two named directors are available by email or telephone in the event of a concern. Managers were unaware of the lack of adapted equipment to promote students' safety and independence in the training kitchen.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Inroads (Essex) Ltd

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	4			4		4			
Outcomes for learners	4			4		4			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	4			4		4			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4			4		4			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Independent living and leisure skills	4

Type of provider	Independent Learning Provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	17							
Principal/CEO	Ms Sansha Allen-Jones							
Date of previous inspection	N/A							
Website address	www.inroadsessex.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+
	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
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 traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	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	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:	■ N/A							

## Contextual information

This is the provider's first inspection. The centre, known as The Junction, opened in 2012 and was initially a subcontractor of Nacro Ipswich. It is now wholly owned by Inroads Essex Limited, and based in Stowmarket, Suffolk. All students undertake study programmes and attend the centre for three days a week. Two students have home tuition. The majority of students are male and over 19. All of the students have very high needs; the centre specialises in providing for students whose behaviour is seen as challenging. Half of the students use augmentative communication aids as their main medium of communication. Two thirds of the students live wholly or partially in supported living settings. Most of the provision is non-accredited apart from an award in independent living. For much of the timetable, learning support assistants teach the students on an individual basis with work planned by tutors. Tutors lead the group lessons.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Joyce Deere HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Centre 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. 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, and perused assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant 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:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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