

Birmingham Electrical Training Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		23–26 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-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:

- most current apprentices are making very good progress towards completing their apprenticeships; apprentices develop their mathematics skills well throughout the programme
- most apprentices develop good vocational skills, become more confident, work with minimal supervision and produce a high standard of work; many quickly progress to supervisory roles
- the quality of training at Birmingham Electrical Training Ltd (BET) and in the workplace is good; staff link theoretical studies well to practical applications, which reinforces learning
- assessment is good; training officers rigorously assess apprentices' skills and knowledge frequently, at times to suit apprentices and their employers
- staff use initial assessments well to plan training programmes; training officers and employers provide high levels of extra support for apprentices who need it, which helps them succeed
- The range of programmes and the delivery models meet very closely the needs of employers
- staff track and monitor the apprentices' progress very well and ensure that employers are fully informed
- apprentices benefit from good information, advice and guidance throughout their programme
- tutors and training officers develop apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity well
- managers have introduced successfully several initiatives which have improved provision; all inspection grades have improved since the previous inspection.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- training officers do not routinely help apprentices to improve their skills in written or verbal communication, or in the use of information communications technology
- staff do not fully record feedback on apprentices' assessed work, so that they are unable to reflect fully on what they need to do to improve their skills
- quality assurance arrangements do not capture all aspects of the learners' experience to drive improvement rigorously; the appraisal process does not take sufficient account of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to drive up the quality of provision rapidly.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision through rigorous performance management of staff by establishing close links between the outcomes from observations of teaching, learning and assessment, the appraisal process and continuing professional development. Monitor closely the impact of actions taken to improve provision as a result of these links.
- Develop further tutors' and training officers' ability and confidence to coach apprentices in English and ICT, in the context of the needs of their industry and their future employment.
- Ensure that all tutors and training officers record fully developmental feedback on apprentices' assessed work to ensure that they are effectively reminded about how they could improve their work and skills further.
- Extend quality arrangements to cover all aspects of the learners' experience. Ensure that the key recommendations following inspection feature prominently in the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan and that leaders and managers monitor these closely to their successful completion.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- BET is a private company founded in 1991 to train electrical installation apprentices. BET has one operational centre based in Birmingham but works with learners and employers across the West Midlands. Staff work with approximately 120 employers, mainly in the West Midlands, providing apprenticeship training. Most apprentices start straight from school at age 16 or 17. All apprentices follow advanced programmes and are employed by electrical installation contracting companies. Programmes are tailored to suit the specific needs of employers and also meet two of the priorities of the local enterprise partnership: to reduce unemployment levels to at least the national average and to increase the proportion of the working-age population with qualifications at NVQ level 3 or above.
- The provider's own in-year data indicate that managers have arrested the previous decline in apprentices' success from 2012/13 to 2013/14. The number of learners staying on until the end of their programme has improved significantly since that time. The level of apprentices' success overall, and within planned timescales, has improved significantly during 2014/15. Almost all of the current apprentices make good progress towards achieving their framework.
- Managers have introduced very close monitoring systems across all aspects of the framework, which ensure that apprentices make good progress and complete their programmes within planned timescales. This closer monitoring of apprentices' individual progress ensures that high levels of support are available to any apprentice identified as being at risk of not achieving within planned timescales. Consequently, the proportion of learners who are past their expected end date for completion has significantly reduced in the last year.
- The vast majority of apprentices develop good, relevant, practical skills and expertise during their training, for example in the installation of electrical systems into workplaces, schools and domestic properties. They complete first-fit and containment work well, meeting the high standards expected within the trade. They gain good, relevant additional qualifications that improve their range of understanding and competence as well as increasing their usefulness to their employers. Many apprentices achieve promotion in the workplace into supervisory or management positions or start their own electrical contracting businesses. They develop skills and gain qualifications that result in them being entrusted with significant, responsible tasks in

the workplace and to work with minimum supervision. Employers benefit from the valuable contribution apprentices make to their business.

- The teaching of mathematics is good and links well to apprentices' vocational work. However, these links for English and ICT are not sufficiently strong. Too few apprentices follow higher levels of qualifications in mathematics, ICT and English or develop to their full potential their levels of understanding during the programme.
- There are no significant achievement gaps. The low numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups and the very low number of women on programmes make statistical analysis invalid. The proportion of learners who declared a learning difficulty or disability is also very low.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Most current apprentices are making good progress towards completing their apprenticeships. They develop good levels of vocational skills, become more confident, work with minimal supervision, and produce a high standard of work. Enthusiastic, highly motivated and well-qualified training officers have valuable industrial experience and qualifications; they provide effective role models, inspiring apprentices to develop their skills to a high level and make good progress. Training officers and employers have high expectations of apprentices. They successfully support the majority of apprentices to complete their apprenticeship early.
- Training officers and employers give good pastoral support. They agree and plan visits very well to suit the needs of apprentices and employers, including making site visits and giving extra support for apprentices who need it. Staff support apprentices well with particularly helpful advice and guidance, for example, in creating good-quality, eye-catching curriculum vitae and covering letters when they need to seek employment.
- Assessment is good. Training officers rigorously assess apprentices' skills and knowledge frequently and ensure that they develop the necessary skills to be competent in their chosen field of electrical installation. However, the quality of written feedback to apprentices following submitted work is too variable and does not reflect the quality of verbal feedback provided. Feedback is not fully recorded on apprentices' assessed work, and so apprentices are not able to reflect back on fully on how they may improve their submitted work or their skills further.
- Training at the training centre and in the workplace is good. Training officers use their knowledge and experience well to motivate apprentices to succeed. They link theoretical studies well with practical applications. Workplace mentors ensure that apprentices have a thorough understanding of work practices and the high levels of skills expected by employers.
- Apprentices' starting points are accurately established at the start of programmes, and the initial assessments results inform well the planning of training. Assessors track and monitor the apprentices' progress very well using a recently introduced electronic portfolio system. Where employers or apprentices are not able to access this facility independently, training officers use a very effective paper-based tracking sheet to ensure employers and apprentices have a good understanding of the progress they have made and what work still needs to be done.
- Although most apprentices already have the framework requirement for functional skills, staff do not stretch and challenge them sufficiently to extend their skills in the use of mathematics and, particularly, English. Managers have purchased a proprietary online system for initial assessment of apprentices' abilities in English, mathematics and information communications technology. However, not all apprentices use this, and the providers' staff have yet to evaluate the extent of its use or its value. Most tutors have themselves completed functional skills at intermediate level to improve their own confidence and have started to use this skill well in helping learners gain a firm understanding of mathematics, but staff confidence and abilities to support learners in English is too variable.

- Staff provide good information, advice and guidance that steer apprentices particularly well into their chosen career path. As a result, apprentices are employed in very good workplaces that meet their aspirations well, and a good proportion progress quickly to supervisory roles and positions of responsibility, including starting their own electrical installation businesses. Past apprentices who are now employers often employ apprentices whom they subsequently enrol with BET for their training and assessment.
- All apprentices apply health and safety procedures particularly well in the training workshop and work environment. They understand industry health and safety practices and use them well. For example, they make sure that colleagues remain safe from electric shock through correct isolation procedures. Employers benefit from the work-readiness of apprentices, as a result of their training.
- Apprentices develop their mathematics skills well. They regularly use mathematics during their apprenticeship to calculate resistance, cable lengths and sizes and in some cases to cost installations based upon customer requirements. However, training officers do not routinely help apprentices to improve their written English skills and oral communication. They often overlook apprentices' punctuation, grammatical and spelling mistakes which are important skills to develop in readiness for running their own businesses
- Training officers develop apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity well. Their skilful questioning leads to meaningful discussions and develops well apprentices' understanding of the diverse nature of the customers and colleagues they work with. Apprentices' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity have significantly improved since the previous inspection.
- Although staff successfully drive learners' progress to achieve within expected timescales, the quality of written targets for apprentices is too variable. Apprentices' development targets, set during progress reviews, are not always specific enough. They are too focused on framework achievement and do not routinely focus upon the further development of apprentices' wider skills or set challenging timescales for the completion of assessed work.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers have introduced successfully several initiatives to improve the quality of provision within the organisation. Managers closely monitor the progress of all learners and act quickly and effectively to ensure support is in place where they identify areas of concern. This intervention has led to a significant improvement in the progress of current apprentices. However, leaders and managers do not use well enough overall data on success rates when monitoring the in-year performance of the organisation.
- Managers have successfully improved the quality of provision since the previous inspection. All inspection grades have improved since the last inspection, but a few recommendations for action stemming from the previous inspection report remain. Early indications through in-year data show that managers have arrested the declining trend in apprenticeship success rates. Managers have resolved most of the key areas for improvement identified at the most recent inspection. For example, apprentices now have good access to functional skills examinations and all staff have received training and are confident in promoting and embedding equality and diversity within lessons and progress reviews. Consequently, learners show good understanding and awareness of equality and diversity.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has significantly improved since the previous inspection. All tutors and training officers hold relevant industrial qualifications and experience and the vast majority hold teaching qualifications. A new observation process identifies strengths and development needs related to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors found observation reports to be accurate. However, information gained through the

frequent observations does not result in a summary report identifying the key characteristics of teaching and learning across the organisation. Although quality assurance systems are much improved, they still do not yet cover all aspects of the training process.

- Observation reports do not sufficiently link to rigorous performance management to inform appropriate professional development to ensure that performance of all staff improves. A new formal appraisal process began in December 2014, and all staff have now had their first appraisal. However, no staff have been set explicit targets related to success rates for apprentices or to the quality of their teaching, learning or assessment. The lead tutor and lead training officer monitor closely actions arising from observations of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors found the most recent self-assessment report to be appropriately evaluative. The self-assessment report and linked quality improvement plan have helped managers to improve the quality of provision within the organisation. Managers have monitored progress since the previous inspection effectively. However, the impact of a few actions from the previous inspection is not sufficiently evaluated in the self-assessment report, and in some cases improvements claimed are not backed by evidence. Although staff development is well focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment, areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection remain current, such as the coaching of English, short-term target setting and a recommendation on improving the pace of learning and extending levels of challenge for learners in theory sessions.
- Managers and staff have built very good relationships with all employers and have established a good reputation locally. BET is now the preferred supplier of training for many employers. Managers and staff consult closely with employers to ensure that the curriculum offer and the modes of assessment in the workplace meet employers' needs. Many employers are themselves former BET apprentices and have a good understanding of the composition of qualifications and frameworks. These good relationships ensure that training officers easily gain access to apprentices in the workplace to carry out assessment and reviews, and help ensure that all apprentices make good progress and achieve within planned timescales. The range of programmes and the delivery models meet very closely the needs of most employers.
- Managers and staff have successfully improved apprentices' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity significantly since the previous inspection where it was an area for improvement. All staff have attended training to raise their own awareness of equality and diversity and the benefits of living in a multicultural society. They are now confident in leading discussions with learners about aspects of equality and diversity. They have a bank of questions and scenarios that they use well to probe and extend learners' understanding and awareness throughout the programme.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. They meet the legislative requirements. An appropriate safeguarding policy is in place but review arrangements for the policy are unclear. It contains appropriate detail on aspects of safeguarding including how to stay safe on the internet. Managers use safe recruitment processes. All tutors and training officers have appropriate checks to ensure learners are safeguarded. Details are retained within a central register. All staff have undertaken training in safeguarding, to ensure they have a thorough understanding of how to safeguard all learners and recognise signs of abuse. However, the organisation lacks sufficient knowledge of the PREVENT agenda to be able to identify and reduce the potential for radicalisation and extremism in communities.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Birmingham Electrical Training

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	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
Building services	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	172							
Principal/CEO	Mr John Sims							
Date of previous inspection	February 2014							
Website address	www.birminghamelectricaltraining.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+
	0	0	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+		
	0	0	107	55	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
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"> ▪ No subcontractors 							

Contextual information

BET has one main site situated in Birmingham, a city with a population of just over one million. Unemployment in Birmingham, at 11%, is well above the West Midlands rate of 7% and the national average of 6%. At 13%, male unemployment is particularly high. Some 16% of the Birmingham population aged 16 to 64 hold no qualifications. BET provides training in electrical installation within its training centre and on employers' premises. A total of 11 staff are directly employed either as tutors who carry out teaching within the training centre, or as training officers who carry out progress reviews and assessment in the workplace. All apprentices follow advanced programmes and are employed by electrical installation contracting companies. They gain skills and knowledge through on-the-job training provided by their employers and through off-the-job training from tutors in the centre. BET does not subcontract any of its training to other providers.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Bob Busby HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the 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 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 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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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