

Broadland Council Training Services

Inspection date

22 August 2007

Inspection number

300640

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	10
Equality of opportunity	10
What learners like	11
What learners think could improve.....	12
Learners' achievements	13

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Business administration, management and law.

Employability training within preparation for life and work, and equine studies within land based provision were not inspected.

Description of the provider

1. Broadland Council Training Services (BCTS) is part of the Business Support and Leisure Services department of Broadland Council in Norwich, Norfolk. It offers work-based learning in business administration, equine studies, and employability training. BCTS is contracted to Norfolk Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Sixty per cent of BCTS's provision is funded by the LSC. It also offers commercial business training and foundation and performing arts outreach programmes for 14 to 19 year olds. BCTS is based at a training centre north of Norwich. The centre operates with 23 council employees including three of whom are part time. There are six subcontracted staff. At the time of the inspection there were 25 learners in business administration; ten advanced apprentices and 15 apprentices. A further 40 learners were undertaking employability training and equine studies.
2. BCTS was previously inspected in March 2003. Land based provision, foundation programmes, leadership and management and equality of opportunity were judged as good. Quality assurance and business administration were satisfactory.
3. In August 2005, the proportion of school leavers in Norfolk achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 52.4% compared with 56.3% nationally and 56.6% in the East of England region. In the Norwich district, from which BCTS draws most of its learners, this figure drops to 45.5% and increases to 55.5% in Broadland with the highest figure of 67.9% in the south Norfolk district.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Business administration, management and law	Good: Grade 2
---	---------------

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Leadership and management are good. The quality of provision overall is satisfactory. Provision in business administration is good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.
5. BCTS is socially inclusive. Learners on employability training programmes are from areas of deprivation and have low skill levels. Learners in equine are working in a specialist skill area for Norfolk which has few government funded providers. Learners in business administration support the succession needs of staff at the local district council and other local employers.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. BCTS has demonstrated good capacity to improve. It has made good progress since the previous inspection. Learners' success rates overall have improved significantly and are above national averages and well above for advanced apprentices. Overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships for all subject areas have risen from 35% in 2003/04 to 71% in 2005/06. Links with local employers and projects have increased for learners on employability training programmes. The senior team have strengthened their management of the centre through careful financial control, good networking with local and national providers and agencies, good staff development and consolidation of quality and communication systems. BCTS has received an increase in LSC funding for the coming year. The support from the District Council is very good and committee members are closely involved with the centre. Business administration provision is moving to a new and more appropriate venue in September.
7. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Feedback from learners, employers and staff contribute to the judgements in the report. Each subject area writes its own self-assessment report which is moderated by another area. The leadership and management section was reviewed by all staff who were given the opportunity to comment on its content and accuracy. Staff have ownership of the report. Data is used effectively to set targets and to regularly monitor performance. Learners' progress is monitored effectively. The development plan and quality assurance cycle are used effectively to monitor and update actions from the report. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the report.

Key strengths

- High success rates for advanced apprentices.
- Good support for learners.

- Good co-ordination of training.
- Clear strategic direction.
- Good staff development.
- Good arrangements for quality improvement.
- Good leadership and management.

Key areas for improvement

- The poor quality of accommodation.
- The poor promotion of equal opportunity with some learners.
- The low numbers of learners.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

8. Advanced apprentice success rates in business administration are good. Success rates have improved significantly over the last three years and are now well above national averages at 82%. The latest available data for 2006/07 which is not yet complete, shows a continuing trend of improvement. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory and around the national average of 57%. At the previous inspection success rates for apprentices were poor. Over the past three years, success rates for apprentices have improved by 10%. Learners are making good progress and achieving their frameworks swiftly. They have a good understanding of the programme and how to complete their qualification. Learners are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. Accountancy learners are successful in passing their examinations.
9. Learners develop good workplace skills such as using IT systems, producing reports and managing customer enquiries. Learners work successfully, both in a team and independently. Some learners have been promoted and some have been given significant responsibilities in their jobs. Employers value the learners highly and make good use of their skills and abilities. The standard of learners work is appropriate to the level of the apprenticeship.
10. The self-assessment report accurately identifies that success rates for apprentices have improved since the previous inspection but need to improve further.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners attend off-the-job training regularly at the BCTS centre. They enjoy a wide range of activities in their lessons including discussion, practical activities and the use of videos and quizzes. Customer service learners make good use of a portable telephone system which helps them practice their telephone skills. Tutors interact well with learners and sessions are generally lively and informative. Lesson plans generally lack detailed and measurable objectives. They do not identify how the lesson is evaluated. Lesson observations do not include comments on these gaps.
12. Learners benefit from additional courses delivered as part of the council's staff training programme. Learners can choose one course from a wide range of topics such as first aid, developing assertive behaviour and digital photography. The courses are popular with learners. During the last year, over 30 learners took part.
Staff have developed a good and well-structured programme for local government apprentices which is receiving increasing interest from existing council employees. Accountancy learners receive satisfactory training from a specialist provider who is contracted by the employers and not by BCTS.

-
13. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Tutors make good use of career diagnostic tools to identify a suitable job for a learner and to ensure they are on the appropriate course. Some learners are employed before they start training and results from the diagnostic help them reflect on the type of tasks that they most enjoy in their work. Individual learning plans are sufficiently detailed.
14. Programmes meet the needs of learners effectively. Programmes are appropriately structured with enhancements such as IT training and the technical certificate taught at the training centre. Learners clearly understand the structure of the programme which is reinforced through a useful student handbook. Good attendance and behaviour is celebrated through a 'student of the month' scheme. Learners are rewarded with a shopping voucher and their photograph is displayed in the classroom. Programmes meet the needs of employers well, particularly in local government.
15. Assessment is frequent. Assessors meet every six weeks to review learners' progress, to standardise assessments and to share good practice. Learners are assessed and observed regularly in the workplace and in the training centre as part of their weekly attendance. Tutors review learners' work carefully and take every opportunity to encourage them to produce a wide range of evidence.
16. Support and guidance is good. Staff are helpful and approachable and easily accessible to learners. Learners value the regular progress reviews which are monthly for the first three months and then quarterly. New learners quickly settle into their programmes. Tutors and training officers respond promptly to any emerging issues or concerns. Learner progress reviews are comprehensive and properly recorded. Employers are closely involved in reviews. They are highly appreciative of BCTS staff. Tutors are skilled and knowledgeable, and learners frequently seek their advice for pastoral and professional problems. Many learners maintain contact with their tutors after they have completed the programme. One successful apprentice who left two years ago promotes work-based learning in local schools on behalf of BCTS. Tutors and training officers are highly focused on developing well-rounded apprentices and helping them to achieve their goals. Most learners progress from Level 2 to Level 3 programmes. Administration learners enjoy healthy competition by comparing their progress on a large monitoring chart in the classroom. Additional support is offered to learners where appropriate including the provision of specialist equipment.
17. Training is particularly well co-ordinated by BCTS staff. Tutors, training officers, administrators and the centre manager work together effectively to plan, implement and monitor the programmes. Staff meet regularly to monitor learners progress and to identify opportunities to add value to their experience. Tutors keep fully informed about business administration developments and are involved in a number of local and national provider networks and initiatives such as a pilot programme for functional skills. Staff development is encouraged and the results of learning are shared at team meetings.
18. The quality of the learning environment within the BCTS training centre is poor. Classrooms are cramped and have no natural daylight. Space is restricted with too many files, training materials, and learners coats and bags in the classrooms. Noise from groups of learners is heard too easily throughout the building. Toilet facilities are barely adequate.

Computer facilities are satisfactory and have recently been updated. BCTS are moving the business administration training to new and more appropriate premises in the autumn.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are good. Business administration programmes are managed particularly well. BCTS has a clear strategic direction. The strategic goals are clear and well understood by staff, managers and councillors. These goals take good account of labour market information and contribute to Broadland Council's broader strategic aims. The council monitors the performance of BCTS effectively. Staff development at BCTS is good. The staff training plan is based on a detailed skills audit. Courses are planned to meet the identified skills gap in the organisation. Individual training needs are met effectively.
20. Communications within BCTS are effective. There are regular, effective meetings which ensure that all staff are kept fully informed and that good practice is shared. There are good links with local employers. In accountancy, BCTS has good links with the specialist training provider, who is contracted by employers, but has little influence in resolving issues raised by the learners.
21. The management of literacy and numeracy support is good. Language support is available if required. The quality of literacy and numeracy support for learners on foundation programmes is good. The area has a clear and effective strategy for skills for life. Learners have action plans to meet their additional support needs. However, some learners would like more time for literacy and numeracy work.
22. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall, although the promotion of equality of opportunity with some learners is poor. During induction all learners receive a student handbook which contains the BCTS equal opportunities statement. While this is detailed, it is written in language which some learners find difficult to understand. Many learners receive some help with understanding this, but not all receive the opportunity.

The reinforcement of equal opportunities during learners' progress reviews varies, with some very good and some unsatisfactory. BCTS is aware of this and has recently taken action to improve the promotion of equality of opportunity at progress reviews. All staff undertake regular training in equality of opportunity.
23. BCTS monitors the ethnic and gender profile of its learners effectively. The ethnic profile of BCTS learners shows a higher proportion of young people from a minority ethnic background than the local population. BCTS is aware of the gender imbalance in its provision with 75% of learners being female. It is taking appropriate action to recruit more male learners. Success rates are monitored effectively by ethnicity and by gender.

24. An example of good practice is the very effective project which links employability training learners with young people in Kenya and Senegal. The project has caused much debate with learners about the differences between the three cultures.
25. Quality improvement arrangements are good. The self-assessment process is very consultative. Staff take ownership of the report and development plan. They follow a clear cycle of quality assurance throughout the year. Processes to identify problems, determine appropriate actions and implement them are effective. Evaluation of learner, employer and staff feedback is frequent and effective.
26. The quality of provision has improved since the previous inspection. Overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships for all subject areas have risen from 35% in 2003/04 to 71% in 2005/06. However, at 44% the success rate for equine studies apprentices in 2005/06 were below the national average of 53%. BCTS has introduced a number of effective measures to improve the success rate which, for the last year, improved to well above the national average. Links with local employers and projects have increased for learners on employability training programmes. Since the previous inspection, BCTS has introduced new training projects for school pupils at risk of exclusion, some of whom progress to employability training.
27. BCTS has an appropriate range of operational quality procedures. These cover all the key aspects of the training process such as induction and reviews. However, a number of these are insufficiently detailed to ensure that staff fully understand the process. Some aspects of the quality assurance processes are informal, relying on verbal communication. There is some inconsistency in the implementation of these procedures. Internal verification is satisfactory. Observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The scheme is well-established but observations grades do not use the latest inspection system. The criteria for judging teaching does not differ from that used to judge assessment.
28. The management of resources is satisfactory overall. Staff are appropriately qualified and have relevant commercial and educational experience. All staff undergo appropriate police checks. Some of the accommodation is poor and inappropriate for business administration learners. Management information is used effectively to monitor performance.
29. Numbers of learners on all programmes are low. Learners sometimes study alone or in pairs with tutors and do not draw upon a broad business experience. However, by moving to new premises and an increased contract from the Learning and Skills Council, BCTS plans to increase learner numbers.

What learners like

- 'Being in control of my progress'.
- The tutors and training officers – 'they are friendly and not like teachers at school'.
- 'The tutor is always available on the phone'.
- 'Tutors know what they are talking about'.

- The pace of learning.
- The relaxed atmosphere at the training centre.
- Carnival workshops (employability training learners).
- 'I like the way that its taught – the NVQ lets you be with the horses and not in a classroom' (equine learner).

What learners think could improve

- The quality of the classrooms.
- The excessive noise in the centre from other learners.
- Communication about the structure and timing of training from the specialist accountancy provider.
- Extend the residential for employability training learners.
- 'Introduce trips to the big equine yards with very specialist equipment'.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes for Business administration, management and law** managed by the provider 2004 year to 2006 year

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/c college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	23	43	46	35	28
		timely	22	23	30	18	18
	04-05	overall	14	36	47	29	32
		timely	13	23	34	15	23
	05-06	overall	22	82		82	
		timely	23	78		78	
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	21	62	51	48	38
		timely	17	29	25	12	18
	04-05	overall	13	54	56	46	46
		timely	15	27	35	20	29
	05-06	overall	19	63		58	
		timely	17	65		59	

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'