

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: TheLightBulb Ltd
Date of visit: 24 July 2007

Context

This visit follows the inspection in March 2006 at which TheLightBulb Ltd (TLB) was graded as satisfactory for leadership and management and for its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality improvement was judged inadequate. Business administration and law were judged good and construction, planning and the built environment were judged satisfactory. Overall effectiveness was satisfactory and inspectors judged the provider was in a good position to make improvements. Since that inspection TLB has moved to new premises in Basildon. It no longer provides vocationally related qualifications (VRQs) and now provides train to gain programmes in customer service, plant operations, team leading, and information technology (IT), and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in site logistics at level 2 and site supervisor at level 3.

Achievement and standards

Are learners completing their NVQ at level 2 on time?	significant progress
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At the previous inspection achievement rates on business administration VRQs, the largest area of provision, were high. However, for some learners on specialist plant operations programmes progress in completing the NVQ was slow, although all achieved their NVQs at level 2. Since the start of the train to gain programme in January 2007, all 34 learners have completed their NVQ on time. TLB has made significant progress in setting challenging and individual target dates for learners to complete their qualification.

Quality of education and training

Has the implementation of literacy, numeracy and language support improved?	reasonable progress
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The provider has made reasonable progress in implementing literacy, numeracy and language support. Systems for enrolment and initial assessment have been standardised. TLB is successful at networking with other providers and has established a quality improvement group. Tutors work well to ensure the teaching of

basic skills as an integral part of all learning programmes and record effectively the support they provide. Staff attend training to develop their awareness and understanding of skills for life. Suitable resources to support learning on and off site are being developed. Although all learners complete a satisfactory initial assessment, information collected is not used sufficiently to meet their support needs. Learners are referred to other providers that provide specialist support, although few take advantage of this.

Leadership and management

Has the strategy for skills for life been implemented?	reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection TLB had no skills for life strategy. A clear strategy now exists and includes satisfactory background information identifying strategic priorities. TLB clearly recognises the challenges facing employers and employees nationally. The strategy successfully highlights the importance of raising awareness among staff of ensuring skills for life are taught as an integral part of the main vocational programme. However, the strategy does not provide clear direction regarding the challenges and benefits of promoting skills for life to employers and learners. It includes statistics showing regional skills for life needs, but does not indicate whether TLB's learners have a similar level of need. There are no clear goals to support learners, or targets to indicate the numbers of learners who require support for their literacy, numeracy and language skills or qualifications.

Does TLB now formally monitor the performance of subcontractor?	significant progress
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The provider has made significant progress in improving the management of its subcontractor. A clearly recorded joint approach exists to quality assure programme delivery and improve the learner experience. Both parties have regular monthly meetings and frequent communication to review and share ideas and discuss any problems. Improved initial assessment is jointly managed and learners' individual programmes contain realistic targets for completion. A useful monitoring system helps staff to monitor progress against the targets. An improved audit system is planned from September.

Have the arrangements for internal verification improved?	reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made in improving internal verification systems since inspection. At inspection TLB had no consistently applied arrangements for sampling or standardisation. Now all TLB's candidates are sampled twice by a contracted internal verifier. The assessor, trainee assessor and internal verifier have standardisation meetings to discuss assessment decisions. The subcontractor now

has satisfactory sampling and internal verification systems. Standardisation decisions are discussed at monthly meetings, which review the progress of all learners.

Has the self-assessment report and development planning been developed?	reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection the self-assessment report and development plan were satisfactory and inspectors were broadly confident with the self-assessment process. The current report is more realistic in grading sector subject areas based on relevant information. Although some judgement statements are good, others are not substantiated and some are no more than normal practice. The post inspection action plan is good and links well to the self-assessment report. The company identifies well which actions need prioritising. The development plan contains updates that provide sufficient information of progress.