

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Kingsbury Training Centre Limited
Date of visit: 15 January 2008

Context

Kingsbury Training Centre Limited (KTC) is a private training provider and has offered publicly funded training for young people since 1981. It is a limited company, with a training centre and administrative offices in Erdington, Birmingham. The facilities at the centre include three construction skills workshops, classrooms and a computer suite.

KTC offers Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes funded by Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with vocational training options in brickwork, woodwork and painting and decorating. At the time of the monitoring visit, 48 young people were in learning. KTC also offers a programme of learning for disadvantaged young people aged 14 to 16 from local schools, however the provision of which was not in scope for this monitoring visit.

This monitoring visit follows an inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in June 2006, when the overall effectiveness of provision, leadership and management, quality improvement and preparation for life and work (employability training in E2E) were judged to be satisfactory and equality of opportunity judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

What progress has there been in raising achievement and standards?	reasonable progress
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E2E progression rates into education, employment or training increased from 48% in 2005/06 to 56% in 2006/07 and remain satisfactory. Many learners enter the construction industry or further construction training. The standards of work in the vocational skills of brickwork, woodwork and painting and decorating remain high. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for learners to gain accreditation for their vocational skills development. Out of 102 learners, there were 26 learners who gained qualifications in bricklaying, carpentry and painting and decorating in 2006/07. A new qualification was introduced from September 2007, with six learners to date gaining this. Time-keeping and attendance remain key areas for improvement for many learners on E2E.

The quality of provision

What progress has there been in the development of learners' vocational skills?	reasonable progress
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Arrangements for the development of learners' vocational skills remain satisfactory, with three on-site construction workshops to support the development of learners' vocational skills. Learners can either stay in one of the vocational skill areas of brickwork, woodwork or painting and decorating, or can have a taster of all three craft skills. Learners' portfolios are put together well and demonstrate the high standards of learners' practical craft work, with clear records evidenced by photographs, plans and drawings of practical work. Learners value the practical vocational skills they develop in the workshops.

What improvements have there been in the provision of work experience for E2E learners?	insufficient progress
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Insufficient work experience was a key weakness at the previous inspection and learners do not receive sufficient work experience at present. At the time of the monitoring visit, out of 48 learners, only three were out on work experience placements. Over the last 12 months, the maximum number of learners out on work experience placement at any one time was 15. The measures taken to increase work experience placements have had insufficient impact. KTC has not organised work placements in alternative contexts related to the construction industry, for example with builders' merchants or DIY stores. Work experience is not yet an integral part of learners' experience on this employability training E2E programme.

Arrangements for learners to develop their skills in searching and applying for jobs are now satisfactory. Learners are suitably timetabled to carry out jobsearch and other preparation for employment activities, however, access to the use of information technology to support these activities is insufficient.

What progress has there been in improving initial assessment, target-setting and reviews?	insufficient progress
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Weak progress reviews was a key weakness at the previous inspection. The initial assessment processes are now satisfactory. Target-setting and reviews have not sufficiently improved. Targets are not set for all aspects of the programme, for example, the development of personal and social skills, and literacy and numeracy skills. These are not sufficiently integrated with the target-setting and review process.

Targets are often exactly the same for many learners and are not sufficiently related to a learner's individual needs. The E2E activity plans and reviews do not provide learners with sufficient information to be useful to guide learning.

In many cases, key objectives are too vague and do not contain specific timescales, for example for the achievement of external qualifications. Short-term targets promoting incremental progress towards learners' overall key objectives are not sufficiently identified or recorded. Learners have insufficient information on what is expected of them on a day to day basis. Records of the progress learners have made are sufficiently specific. KTC has identified similar concerns, but this has not yet resulted in significant improvements in target-setting and reviews.

What improvements have there been in the support for and accreditation of learners' literacy and numeracy skills?	insufficient progress
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Inadequate literacy and numeracy support was a key weakness at the previous inspection and remains inadequate. Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory, however, learners only receive one hour of literacy and one hour of numeracy teaching and learning a week. This is insufficient and lesson planning is inadequate. Lesson plans in literacy were only produced for the first few weeks of January 2008 with little formal lesson planning before this. In numeracy, lesson planning is completed for whole group sessions, however, there is not enough planning to meet learners' individual needs. Tutors use a narrow range of learning materials and rely too heavily on photocopied paper-based resources. Literacy and numeracy lessons are not made sufficiently relevant to the construction industry. No use is currently made of information and communications technology to support teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.

Since the previous inspection in June 2006, learners on E2E did not have any access to accredited qualifications in literacy and numeracy for a period of eighteen months.

Leadership and management

How effective is self-assessment and improvement planning?	insufficient progress
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The self-assessment process is well-established. All staff are actively consulted about and involved in the production of the self-assessment report, with some input from learners. The self-assessment report was partially accurate in identifying some key strengths and areas for improvement. However, the self-assessment process failed to identify the key weaknesses in E2E of inadequate target-setting and reviews, and inadequate literacy and numeracy support.

A development plan is in place for 2007/2011, which clearly identifies strategic and operational objectives as well as outlining KTCs planned future development. It is not clear how these plans will be fully implemented.

How effective is the implementation of quality improvement?	insufficient progress
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Progress in implementing quality improvement is insufficient and key weaknesses from the previous inspection still remain.

The monitoring of target-setting and reviews identified some key areas for improvement, but progress in securing improvements in practice has been slow and to date, ineffective. Literacy and numeracy support remain inadequate. Actions to improve work experience opportunities for learners are to date insufficient.

Observations of teaching and learning are inadequate. Observations of training take place on an annual basis, however, the feedback from this mainly focuses on what the trainers are doing and do not sufficiently focus on what learners are doing, on their learning or their progress during the sessions. Observations identify areas for improvement, although this does not result in clear action-planning, with clearly identified timescales to secure effective improvements. KTC regularly seeks feedback from learners, but the response rate to the use of questionnaires is poor.