

INSPECTION REPORT

Inglewood House

09 July 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Inglewood House is a privately owned day nursery in Sonning, near Reading in Berkshire, for 168 children aged from three months to eight years. In 1999 an in-house training college was established to provide national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in early years childcare and education. Currently, it trains five foundation modern apprentices and ten advanced modern apprentices.

Overall judgement

The quality of work-based training for young people and Inglewood House's leadership and management are satisfactory, although quality assurance is unsatisfactory. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

Work-based learning for young people

Work-based training for apprentices in early years childcare and education is satisfactory. Retention rates are very good and the on-the-job training resources are exceptionally good. Apprentices make good progress towards their qualifications. Inglewood House invites apprentices who have successfully completed their NVQ at level 3, to apply for staff vacancies that are available at the time and where possible offers them employment. Apprentices are not sufficiently involved in building their portfolios. There are good opportunities for assessment by observation in the workplace. There are some weak assessment practices.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of Inglewood House are satisfactory. There is an open and participative management style with good internal communication. On- and off-the-job training is effectively co-ordinated. Staff and apprentices are well aware of their roles and responsibilities. Overall arrangements to ensure equal opportunities are satisfactory and there is good promotion of cultural diversity. However, Inglewood does not promote its training enough to attract men and people from minority ethnic groups. The quality assurance framework is incomplete and the quality assurance procedures that do exist do not adequately cover the training. Staff and apprentices are not directly involved in the self-assessment process. The management information system is satisfactory, but little use is made of measurable targets to monitor performance and bring about improvement.

GRADES

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- particularly good retention rates
- good rate of progress towards NVQs
- exceptionally good resources for on-the-job training
- effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good promotion of cultural diversity

KEY WEAKNESSES

- some weak assessment practices
- insufficient involvement of apprentices' in portfolio-building
- incomplete quality assurance framework
- failure of quality assurance arrangements to include training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more systematic initial assessment
- more effective target-setting in progress reviews
- more training for staff in training and assessment
- wider involvement in self-assessment process

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Inglewood House was founded in 1992 by its current proprietors as a small, privately owned day nursery. As demand for childcare places grew, the nursery expanded and began accepting NVQ apprentices on work placements in 1994. In 1999 the nursery again expanded to provide 168 childcare places, becoming the largest day nursery in England. At this time, the proprietors opened a small, in-house training centre to provide work experience, training and assessment in NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Inglewood House has 55 staff and currently provides training for five foundation modern apprentices and 10 advanced modern apprentices.

2. Modern apprenticeship training is funded through a contract with the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Reading area is prosperous. Several large national and international companies are situated in the area. The town is well situated with easy access to London, the Southeast and the west. In June 2001, unemployment in the Reading unitary authority area was 1.3 per cent, substantially lower than the national average of 3 per cent. Reading has a large number of minority ethnic communities, which account for 9.5 per cent of the population. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in Reading achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 45.7 per cent, below the national average of 49.2 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

3. Two inspectors spent a total of six days at Inglewood House in July 2001. They interviewed 15 apprentices and conducted 11 interviews with Inglewood House's staff. Inspectors observed training and assessment sessions. They examined a range of documents including four apprentices' portfolios of evidence, apprentices' records, the company's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature and the awarding body's reports. Inspectors studied Inglewood House's self-assessment report, which had been produced in May 2001.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Health, social care & public services

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	2

4. Inglewood House offers foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in early years care and education. Until the end of March 2001, Inglewood House offered only NVQ training. The 15 people who were still in training in April 2001 converted to modern apprenticeships. The training is planned to enable apprentices to complete one or both apprenticeships in two years. There are 10 modern apprentices and five foundation modern apprentices. The first year that Inglewood House offered modern apprenticeships was 2000-01. Inglewood House carries out an initial assessment of apprentices' suitability for work with children. Most applicants have a trial period of four to six weeks in various parts of the nursery, before starting training in September. Others join in January to replace apprentices who have completed their training. Apprentices are recruited through Inglewood House's relationships with local schools, advertisements in the local press and word of mouth. Apprentices are assessed at the end of the trial period. Those who are suitable for work are then offered a position. Apprentices receive a training allowance while on the programme. Those who achieve the level 3 NVQ are given permanent employment if possible. All on-the-job training and assessment takes place in the nursery. Apprentices train with the children for four days each week. On the fifth day, they attend off-the-job training in the on-site training centre. Apprentices also receive key skills training. Each September, a programme of group theory sessions is planned. The maximum number of apprentices in each group is five. Later in the training, as apprentices progress at different rates, they meet the training manager individually. Apprentices assess their own progress every 12 weeks and compare their views with their supervisors' assessments of their performance against the same criteria. Five members of staff are trained assessors with two more working towards their qualifications. One assessor, who is occupationally experienced and qualified, does most assessments. There are two trained internal verifiers and a third member of staff is in training. Currently, internal verification of assessments is carried out by a subcontracted internal verifier.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started							24		0
Still in training							15	62	0	0
Individual learning plan completed							12	50	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan							2	8	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed							6	25	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed							6	25	0	0

STRENGTHS

- particularly good retention rates
- good rate of progress towards NVQs
- exceptionally good resources for on-the-job training
- effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good observation opportunities in the workplace

WEAKNESSES

- some weak assessment practices
- insufficient involvement of apprentices in portfolio-building

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more systematic initial assessment
- more effective target-setting in progress reviews

5. Most apprentices complete their training. In the last contract year, Inglewood House had a 92 per cent retention rate. There is sensitive follow-up of those who leave early. One of the two early leavers became too ill to continue training and the other left the area. Apprentices make good progress towards their qualifications. Twelve of the 24 apprentices in 2000-01 achieved the goals on their individual training plans within a year. Six of these achieved level 3 NVQs and are employed in the nursery. Five of the six who completed level 2 NVQs have progressed to advanced modern apprenticeships. One apprentice left the country. Five apprentices converted from level 2 NVQ to foundation modern apprenticeships. Five more have changed from level

INGLEWOOD HOUSE

3 NVQ to become advanced modern apprentices. The good retention rate and good progress towards NVQ achievement were correctly identified as strengths in the self-assessment report.

6. Resources for on-the-job training are exceptionally good. This was identified in the self-assessment report as a strength. Training is planned so that apprentices work with different age groups to give them experience of work with babies and children aged from three months to five years. They also have experience with older children up to the age of eight, who attend the nursery on a play scheme during the summer holidays. The rooms in the nursery are very spacious and contain a wide range of good quality equipment and materials. There are excellent outdoor facilities for children to play. Apprentices experience all aspects of the early years childcare and education curriculum. Induction is satisfactory. Apprentices receive inductions from experienced staff each time they move to a new class. They demonstrate and give clear explanations of procedures relevant to the training. Apprentices are monitored while they practise. They are given appropriate help and congratulated for good work.

7. Off-the-job training is planned and structured to cover significant aspects of the NVQ. Links between each session and the different units of the NVQ are not explained at the start of training sessions. The aims of off-the-job training and what the apprentices will do to achieve those aims are not fully explained to the apprentices. In some instances, there is not enough discussion among apprentices and instead the trainers give instructions and the apprentices make notes. In other cases apprentices are encouraged to contribute based on their own knowledge and experience. There is effective co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training. The training manager co-ordinates the process with the support of nursery staff. Apprentices understand how the theoretical training relates to what they do in the workplace. A checklist of the skills that an apprentice needs to develop for their NVQ is given to the apprentice's workplace supervisor. This helps the supervisors' understanding of the NVQ requirements and enables them to give the apprentices appropriate coaching and support. Although nursery staff are effectively used to develop apprentices' skills at work, they do not provide off-the-job training to give it more variety. The training manager gives all the off-the-job training and carries out most assessments.

8. There is a full-time experienced and qualified assessor. Apprentices' skills are assessed by frequent observations of them carrying out their work. One day each week is used for these observations. Apprentices are able to demonstrate everything they have learned in training in a real work setting. Not all apprentices have adequate plans for their assessments. They have little control over when they will be assessed. Assessments are carried out for a specific unit of the NVQ. If apprentices show competences relevant to another part of their qualification, this is not recorded at the time of the observation. A record of the apprentices' skills with children is written from notes recorded during the observation. Apprentices are not asked to evaluate their own performance after an assessment. While there is good feedback about units that have been completed, formative feedback is brief and general. Apprentices are not clear about which parts of the requirements of their NVQ have been satisfactorily assessed.

Apprentices sometimes use written evidence to show their knowledge, when other methods would be more appropriate.

9. Apprentices complete their NVQs before starting key skills training. They are unsure what evidence is required for key skills. The assessment of apprentices' knowledge and skills is unsystematic. Inglewood House does not plan how to increase apprentices' key skills. Evidence for the NVQ which could also be used for key skills has not been assessed. The problems with key skills training were identified in the self-assessment report.

10. Inglewood House does not do enough to enable apprentices to understand and manage the evidence in their portfolios. When assessments are planned in advance, the apprentice and the assessor discuss them. The assessor then writes them down. The brief written reports of workplace observations do not enable apprentices to understand fully which parts of their qualifications they have completed satisfactorily and what evidence they still need. When an apprentice has finished the training programme, the assessor fills in the records of what types of evidence the apprentice has used and where the evidence can be found.

11. The level of learning support apprentices will need to achieve their qualifications is not systematically assessed when they start learning. The initial assessment identifies how suitable apprentices are for work in the nursery. These refer to personal qualities such as confidence, rather than the learning needs of individuals. There are no systematic plans to support apprentices with basic skills needs. No staff are qualified to give this support. However, the training manager gives individual help to apprentices with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Apprentices, supervisors and the assessor all take part in reviewing the apprentices' progress. However, there is insufficient focus on what the apprentice has to do to achieve the qualification. Frequently, no targets are set during reviews. When targets are set and written down, they tend to refer to developing characteristics linked to employment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

12. The two proprietors privately own the day nursery and training centre at Inglewood House. The training centre's strategy is the responsibility of one of the proprietors and the other is responsible for health and safety. She works closely with the training manager who has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the training centre, supporting the apprentices and giving training. Experienced and qualified staff work alongside the apprentices in the nursery, providing on-the-job training involving individual coaching, demonstrations and acting as mentors. There are six qualified assessors at Inglewood House, including one of the proprietors and the training manager. The training manager is also qualified as an internal verifier and one of the nursery managers is training to become an internal verifier. Inglewood House has an equal opportunities policy and a number of quality assurance arrangements, although there is no overall quality assurance policy. It produced its first self-assessment report in May 2001. An action plan was included in the report.

STRENGTHS

- clear strategic objectives understood by staff and apprentices
- good communication
- good promotion of cultural diversity
- effective response to apprentice feedback

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient promotion of training to under-represented groups
- incomplete quality assurance framework
- failure of quality assurance arrangements to include training
- little use of measurable targets to drive improvements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more training for staff, in training and assessment
- more detailed equal opportunities policy and procedures
- clearer questions on feedback forms
- more thorough internal verification
- more critical self-assessment
- wider involvement in self-assessment process

13. Staff and apprentices fully understand Inglewood House's strategic objectives and values. These are recorded and communicated to staff in a range of documents including the mission statement, staff and apprentices' handbooks, job descriptions and contracts of employment. Meetings are held three times a year for staff and apprentices, where the standards expected of them are discussed and reinforced, for example, how

they should deal with the children and work with parents. Precise targets are set for the recruitment of apprentices, and their attendance and retention and achievement. Monthly reports are produced on apprentices' attendance and progress towards units of the NVQ. An annual management review report is produced, including data on retention and achievement during Inglewood House's academic year, which runs from September to August. Inglewood House is unaware that data needs to be referenced to the LSC contract year, which runs from April to March.

14. Staff are appraised annually. This process includes self-assessment by staff members. The results of the appraisals are used to determine their training needs. All staff are involved in training on first aid, food hygiene, health and safety, and child protection. The training manager has recently completed a key skills qualification to enable her to help the apprentices with their key skills training. Staff evaluate any training they receive and records are kept of the value and quality of this training. There is a wide range of staff development and training, but this is linked mainly to the business objectives of Inglewood House. There is insufficient emphasis on the development of staff training skills. Work-place supervisors who have recently trained as assessors are carrying out very little assessment. Their skills are not sufficiently used to benefit the apprentices and maximise assessment by observation of apprentices using their skills in the workplace.

15. There is particularly good informal communication throughout Inglewood House. There is an open and participative style of management. The proprietor encourages discussion and is readily available to staff and apprentices. The training manager is available to discuss training with apprentices and nursery staff. Any problems related to working practices, staff disputes or training are resolved promptly. Apprentices know whom to talk to if they have any concerns. They are able to recount occasions when the training manager has intervened on their behalf and resolved a problem. These incidents are not always recorded. Weekly management meetings are held between the proprietor and the training manager to discuss apprentices' progress and related matters. A steering group meets three times a year to discuss strategic matters and future plans. Meetings are purposeful, but recording of outcomes of the meetings is inconsistent. Minutes are taken at some meetings but not others.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. Inglewood House has a policy and procedures covering equal opportunities. All apprentices receive a copy of these during their induction and discuss the relevant issues. They understand their rights and responsibilities, which are outlined in their contracts of employment and job descriptions. There is a complaints and grievance procedure. Apprentices are aware of the procedure and state that they would use it if necessary. One apprentice used the procedure and was satisfied that the problem was investigated promptly, thoroughly and fairly. The appeals procedures for assessment and disciplinary issues are clear. Apprentices are aware of them and have copies of them in their handbooks. The policy and procedures are satisfactory but do not refer to the relevant legislation relating to equality of opportunity or contain defined timescales for the resolution of appeals and disciplinary issues. Nursery staff raise apprentices' awareness of and act as an informal monitoring system for equal opportunities. Inglewood House successfully celebrates cultural diversity. A colourful and imaginative display in the entrance to the nursery includes photographs of children and staff who are from different countries. There is a wall poster identifying the festivals of different religions and another, welcoming visitors to the nursery, in different languages. At the beginning of the day, music from different countries is played. Parents are invited to give talks about their cultures to staff and apprentices. Staff and apprentices do not receive equal opportunities training.

17. Data are collected on apprentices' gender, ethnicity and additional learning needs. However, there is not enough promotion of equal opportunities to attract under-represented groups. In the last contract year, one apprentice came from a minority ethnic group. There have been no male apprentices. Marketing materials do little to promote images of under-represented groups as staff, nor do they state that Inglewood House is an equal opportunities employer.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

18. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. There is no quality assurance framework to bring together the arrangements that exist. There is no system for evaluating the training provided by Inglewood House. Although informal communication between the staff, training manager and proprietor is generally effective, many aspects of planning and training are not recorded and therefore not evaluated. Inglewood House makes little use of measurable targets to bring about improvements in the training. Feedback from apprentices and nursery staff is regularly sought and analysed. This feedback is acted upon promptly. For example, apprentices requested computers and audio-visual equipment for the training rooms. These were then provided. However, the feedback questionnaires are designed in such a way that they do not provide data which are easily quantifiable. The quality of Inglewood House's training is not assessed regularly. The coaching, demonstrating and training carried out by nursery staff and the training manager are not measured against set standards. Documents about the collection of NVQ evidence are clear to everyone using them. Monthly progress review forms are not well designed and do not focus on apprentices' NVQ and framework targets.

19. In the past, the training manager, in her role as internal verifier, has conducted observations of assessors. Written feedback is given to assessors by a checklist and comments box and is descriptive. It does not outline areas for improvement and action points for the assessor to follow up. Apprentices understand assessment and verification procedures and how to appeal against decisions if necessary. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. Standardisation meetings are held three times a year. These focus on making improvements recommended by the external verifier and meeting the requirements of the awarding body. There is too much reliance on one assessor and internal verifier, which hinders the improvement of assessment practices. There are other trained assessors in the nursery but they are not being used. Existing quality assurance procedures are not adequately referred to in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report produced in April 2001 is detailed and comprehensive but is repetitive in places. The self-assessment process did not directly involve all staff and apprentices.