

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **British Printing Industries Federation Ltd**

20 May 2002



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 Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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 **learn**direct provision
- adult and community learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of her majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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 Jobcentre Plus programmes 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

The British Printing Industries Federation Ltd is a national organisation which offers training in printing skills. It provides work-based learning for 739 young people who are employed in the printing industry. All learners are modern apprentices. Most training takes place in the workplace, although some learners attend college for off-the-job training. The organisation contracts for government-funded training in England and Wales, but due to the low numbers of learners in Wales, this area was not inspected. The organisation's head office and administration centre are in Farringdon, London. The federation also offers privately funded specialist training courses for people employed in the printing industry.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The organisation's work-based learning for printing learners is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the training are also unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

Leadership and management	5
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	5
Quality assurance	5

Visual & performing arts & media	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good on-the-job learning opportunities
- high level of practical skills in the workplace
- effective links with external organisations

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress by learners
- poor implementation of action plans
- poor management of training co-ordinators
- inadequate monitoring of quality assurance
- poor awareness of equal opportunities by learners, staff and employers

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more detailed individual learning plans
- more direct observations of assessors

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 54 days inspecting the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF) in May 2002. Inspectors interviewed 99 learners and held 31 interviews with BPIF's staff. They examined 64 portfolios of evidence. They also examined the individual learning plans of those learners who were interviewed and sampled those of other learners. Records of learners' progress were examined. Inspectors visited 44 workplaces and interviewed 54 workplace managers and supervisors. They examined the organisation's policies, procedures and promotional materials, internal and external verifiers' reports and minutes of meetings. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report which the organisation had produced in November 2001. They also studied data held by the organisation and development and action plans it had produced as a result of self-assessment. Inspectors observed progress reviews, and also observed and graded four learning sessions. Inspectors took into account the findings of the Training Standards Council (TSC) inspection in September 1998 and the findings of reinspection in October 1999.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Visual & performing arts & media	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. The BPIF is a business support organisation which is dedicated to improving the efficiency and profitability of companies in the printing, packaging and graphic communications industries. It was founded in 1901 and has operated work-based learning since 1991 and government-funded training since 1996. The BPIF has a head office in London and five regional business centres in Birmingham, Bristol, Newmarket, Salford and Wakefield. Training is an integral part of the services that the BPIF offer the printing industry and includes government-funded and commercial training programmes. BPIF employs 81 staff, most of whom work full-time. In addition to training, the organisation offers a wide range of services and support to the industries it serves. These include specialist advice and consultancy, insurance, pensions and involvement in environmental projects. The government-funded training programmes cover origination, machine printing, print finishing, carton manufacture, mechanised bookbinding and administration (known as print commercial) operations. Currently, there are 660 advanced modern apprentices and 79 foundation modern apprentices.

3. All of the learners are employed in the printing industry. The BPIF has established links with large commercial printing companies and small employers such as high-street print shops. It contracts with the national contracting service (NCS) and ELWa, the body for allocating government funds in Wales. At the time of inspection, there were less than 10 learners being funded by ELWa. The BPIF has no direct contracts with local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs).

4. As a national provider of training, the BPIF serves areas with widely varying rates of achievements by school leavers. In 2001, the proportion of pupils leaving school with five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above varied from 27.1 per cent in Knowsley in the Northwest to 63 per cent in Redbridge, London. The proportion for England as a whole was 50 per cent. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups also varies widely across the areas. It ranges from 1.4 per cent in the Northeast and the Southwest to 20.2 per cent in London. In September 2001, the rate of unemployment varied from less than 1 per cent in the Southwest to 5.2 per cent in the Northeast. This compared with unemployment rates of 2.9 per cent for England as a whole and 3.7 per cent for Wales.



### **Work-based learning for young people**

5. Work-based learning for young people is unsatisfactory. Although the organisation has well-designed workbooks with detailed activities for key skills, some learners have only recently received them. Retention and achievement rates are poor. Of the 1,763 learners who started the advanced framework since 1996-97, 660 are still in training and 84 have completed. Since 1998-99, 79 of the 163 learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship are still in training and six have completed. Progress for some of those still in training is slow, with 24 learners still on an advanced modern apprenticeship from 1996-97. Learners are usually well supported by their employers and receive good on-the-job training from their supervisors. Initial assessment of learners is poor and is not used as a basis for the individual learning plans. There is no initial assessment of basic skills. The progress review process does not adequately action plan for the future and the review is often poorly recorded. Although the organisation is taking steps to increase the proportion of learners who remain in training, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that this has started to improve.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 5

6. The BPIF is managed by a chief executive and three executive directors who have responsibility for finance, administration and commercial, competitiveness, and membership. The BPIF's commercial training manager is directly responsible for government-funded training programmes and reports to the director of finance, administration and commercial, who oversees the strategic development of the training. The BPIF employs 81 full-time staff and 18 subcontractors. Twelve full-time staff and 18 subcontractors are directly involved with training. A team of 23 training co-ordinators visit learners in the workplace to offer advice to employers, undertake progress reviews, and support the learners. Background knowledge and key skills training is usually given by the training co-ordinators in the workplace. A small number of learners attend a local college if a suitable course is available. For those learners, background knowledge and key skills training is carried out when possible. The company has a wide range of policies and procedures including health and safety, equal opportunities and quality assurance. The BPIF has produced three self-assessment reports since October 1998. The latest report was produced in November 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- effective links with external organisations

### WEAKNESSES

- slow implementation of action plans
- inadequate monitoring of quality assurance
- poor awareness of equal opportunities
- no continuous monitoring of equal opportunities with employers
- ineffective sharing of good practice
- insufficient use of management information
- poor management of training co-ordinators

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer presentation of the strategic plan relating to training

7. The BPIF has developed strong links with external organisations such as print colleges and universities and prominent employers in the industry. It also has strong links with the national training organisation, which ensures that they keep up to date with the changing needs of the industry and can influence the developments of print-related training. The BPIF works closely with the awarding bodies and other educational institutions to develop and accredit new and revised qualifications. Examples of this include the development of a professional certificate in print management with a university partner. In partnership with the Print Sector Hub, the BPIF are developing an

on-line distance learning national vocational qualification (NVQ). This will allow learners in remote areas of the country to gain easier access to training and support. The BPIF has membership of the Trade Association Forum, the training providers' council and the Association of Learning Providers.

8. There is insufficient use of management information to develop and improve the training. Retention rates of learners and their achievements are not clearly monitored except for funding purposes. The recruitment of new learners is monitored each month but no clear targets are set. There is insufficiently thorough monitoring of learners' progress and the process is not clearly understood by some training co-ordinators. Full-time training co-ordinators have their learners' progress scrutinised by their line-manager each quarter but this process is not followed with part-time training co-ordinators. The self-assessment report highlighted poor monitoring of learners and the poor use of performance indicators as key weaknesses. Insufficient action has been taken to rectify this. Learners who exceed their expected target date for completion are inadequately monitored. When dates are changed, the original target dates are often not recorded and insufficient focus is placed upon the learners completing on time. The BPIF's monitoring and management information systems were also highlighted as a weakness in the 1998 inspection report.

9. The training co-ordinators are poorly managed. The BPIF recognises the need to improve the line-management of the training co-ordinators and have plans to replace the current system with four regional managers. While the training co-ordinators are committed to offering good support for their learners, there are considerable variations in the quality of the support. Some have a poor understanding of progress monitoring and there are examples of poor use of reviews and insufficiently clear short-term targets for learners. There is ineffective use of appraisals to identify individual staff development needs. While some staff development takes place, the system used for highlighting specific training needs is through self-assessment. The BPIF recognises the rapid pace of change within the industry in their annual strategic plan, although there is no overall staff development plan to ensure that staff are prepared for the challenges identified. Current staff development is insufficiently linked to BPIF's strategic objectives. The strategic plan relating to training has not been presented in an appropriate format for key stakeholders. There is no date on the plan and it is still in the form in which it was drafted for approval at a management board meeting.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 5**

10. The BPIF has a basic equal opportunities policy which is reviewed and updated each year. All training co-ordinators are given a detailed handbook which includes clear guidance on equality of opportunity. The organisation has a good range of well-designed marketing and publicity materials, some of which have positive images of gender mix and minority ethnic representation. Many learners and some training co-ordinators have poor awareness of the wider areas of equality of opportunity such as bullying and harassment. Staff are inadequately trained in these areas. Training focuses on equal opportunities legislation and fails to raise awareness and understanding among staff. Equal opportunities training for staff is infrequent and insufficiently planned. Learners have only a small amount of equal opportunities training during their induction, and this is not reinforced throughout their training programme. The BPIF do not adequately check training co-ordinators' or learners' understanding of equality of opportunity. The BPIF has identified a recent decline in numbers of learners from under-represented groups and this has prompted a detailed and comprehensive study which is currently in progress. A member of staff has been asked to liaise with other organisations to share good practice.

11. Learners are employed in the printing industry before starting their apprenticeship. When an employer has not had any learners with the BPIF before, they are checked to ensure that they either have an equal opportunities policy or are willing to develop one with help from the BPIF. Employers are given clearly written guidance notes on equality of opportunity, which includes a ready-prepared equal opportunities policy that can be adopted by companies which do not have one of their own. An action plan is developed at this stage to deal with areas of concern or further development. However, the action plans are not followed up and there is no continuous monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace. The information given to employers is insufficiently reinforced. Some learners have suffered harassment or verbal abuse in the workplace but this is not identified or checked. Inspectors identified examples of inappropriate language used by some training co-ordinators, employers and learners.

## **Quality assurance**

## **Contributory grade 5**

12. The BPIF has a wide range of quality assurance procedures to cover all aspects of its business and they are reviewed each year. A master copy of all documents is held at the organisation's head office and all members of staff have updated copies on CD-ROM. The BPIF is accredited with a national quality assurance standard. Quality assurance is the direct responsibility of the director of finance, administration and commercial. The self-assessment process included the comments of learners, employers and staff. The self-assessment report and development plan highlighted many of the weaknesses identified during inspection. Some of these weaknesses were identified in October 1998 but inadequate progress has been made to deal with the weaknesses of poor retention and achievement rates, slow progress by some learners, and poor initial assessment.

13. The original TSC inspection in 1998 identified no monitoring of the quality of training in colleges as a key weakness but little has been done to deal with this problem. The BPIF has written a contract to establish closer links with colleges and to ensure checks are

made, but it has yet to be fully implemented. Six of the 13 colleges used by the BPIF have recently signed the contract and there are plans to start monitoring the quality of training from September this year. Most learners do not go to college and rely on the training undertaken by their employer or work-based supervisor, with support from their training co-ordinator. The organisation has inadequate procedures to check the quality of training given by employers and supervisors. The process relies on answers to a questionnaire but there is inadequate focus upon the quality of training. No observations of training take place. The BPIF has no clear procedures to monitor the performance of training co-ordinators when they are teaching background knowledge or key skills. Insufficient checks are made of the handouts and learning materials used by training co-ordinators.

14. When good practice is identified it is not always shared among staff. All internal verifiers have developed their own verification and sampling plans, and some are better than others. Some training co-ordinators record progress reviews thoroughly and write clear action points for learners, but most do not. Training co-ordinators meet once a month in their region, but some do not attend. Part-time co-ordinators are often unwilling to share good practice. Internal verifiers' meetings are held every six months with occasional additional meetings but this is not sufficient to ensure a good process is in place. Internal verification has failed to identify poor assessment practices in most areas of the country. There are, however, some thorough assessment practices being undertaken in one of the areas. Some of the training co-ordinators have insufficient understanding of how to use the recently developed training materials and induction pack.

#### Good Practice

*The BPIF has recently sponsored excellence awards for learners in the printing industry. Several categories of awards are assessed and prizes are awarded. The competitions are open to other training providers and provide good motivation for young people.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	739	4

15. The BPIF has 660 advanced modern apprentices and 79 foundation modern apprentices. All learners are employed in the printing industry as machine printers, print finishers, originators, carton makers, mechanised bookbinders or administrators. A small number of learners attend a local college if a suitable course is available. They cover background knowledge and practical training and study towards an external qualification. This training is usually for one day each week for two years. The learners who do not attend college receive all their training at work. The BPIF supplies workbooks for each NVQ unit, which learners work through with the assistance of employers' staff and their visiting training co-ordinators. The workbooks are intended to give a basic understanding of the background knowledge and include assessment materials and guidance. A small number of learners are using e-learning linked to some of the colleges of print and other training providers, distance learning material or attend short courses given by the BPIF. The training co-ordinators usually visit all learners each month or every six weeks, and learners who do not attend college have four additional visits a year for pastoral and additional support. Assessment is usually carried out by skilled observers and training co-ordinators in the workplace. The training co-ordinators are also responsible for monitoring the assessment process and reviewing the learners' portfolios.

16. The skilled observer system has been developed by the printing industry as an alternative to the expert witness arrangements used elsewhere. The observers complete a half-day training programme and study an open-learning package which is produced by the BPIF. It includes the submission of two assessments to show skills and competences. Most workplace observers are not qualified assessors. The aim of the scheme is to improve the quality of assessment in the workplace.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	101		245		242		396		312		467					
Retained*	0		4		18		52		39		125	27				
Successfully completed	0		6		5		15		37		21	4				
Still in learning	96		178		136		149		77		24	5				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	26		43		64		30									
Retained*	0		1		7		4									
Successfully completed	1		0		3		2									
Still in learning	23		28		24		4									

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	1997-98		1996-97													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		16													
Retained*	0		3	19												
Successfully completed	0		0	0												
Still in learning	0		0	0												

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

## **STRENGTHS**

- high level of practical skills in the workplace
- good learning resources
- good on-the-job learning opportunities

## **WEAKNESSES**

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress by learners
- poor initial assessment
- poor review process
- ineffective management of key skills
- poor assessment practices

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more detailed individual learning plans
- better explanation of the framework to learners and employers
- more direct observations of assessors

17. Most learners produce good products in the work place. Examples were seen of four-colour process work, printing on tin and a wide range of printing on varied materials and packaging, including film. Learners are able to demonstrate competence in the use of high specification computer equipment in pre-press and print origination work. Some learners progress well within their companies and use increasingly more complex machinery as they become more skilled and experienced. Many learners are articulate and confident and take pride in the skills they have achieved.

18. Learners use well designed workbooks which contain detailed activities and work sheets to help them collect evidence. Key skills are now an integral part of the work sheets. A few learners have access to well-produced learning materials especially designed for use through the Internet, which have clearly written and detailed information supported by diagrams. Those learners who attend college have links to their college computer network which enables them to communicate quickly with their college tutors. Most colleges offer a well-structured training programme, although this is not clearly linked to the NVQ requirements, and in some cases, is not appropriate to the workplace. Some training co-ordinators offer good training in background knowledge



and support the development of practical skills well.

19. Most employers are committed to helping learners succeed. They offer good training in the workplace and some in specialist skills such as bookbinding. Employers have a wide range of up-to-date technology which learners are trained to use. Most employers are prepared to rotate learners so that they have the opportunity to work on different machines and tasks to help them progress. Some employers produce detailed training plans to ensure that learners gain a good level of knowledge in all aspects of print production. Some learners have been taken out on visits to exhibitions and to other employers by their training co-ordinators.

20. Retention and achievement rates of apprenticeship frameworks are poor. Since the last inspection, there has been no significant improvement in achievement rates. Of the 1,763 learners who started an advanced framework since 1996-97, 660 are still in training and 84 have completed. Since 1998-99, of the 163 learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship, 79 are still in training and six have completed. Over the past three years, the rate of apprenticeship achievements has declined. Since 1999-2000, only 11 of the 178 advanced modern apprentices who left during this period completed their apprenticeship and 37 achieved an NVQ at level 3. During the same period, only four of the 66 foundation modern apprentices who left completed their framework, and 23 gained an NVQ at level 2.

21. Many learners make slow progress towards the achievement of their NVQs and their apprenticeship. Only a small proportion of learners complete the programme within the planned duration. Twenty four learners who started in 1996-97, 76 who started in 1997-98 and 132 who started in 1998-99 have not yet completed. Many learners who have achieved their NVQ have only just started key skills. Some learners take up to a year to achieve one unit of the NVQ. Learners are often given insufficiently demanding targets, and poor advice is often given to learners on how to complete their portfolio. Some learners collect large amounts of evidence, which is unnecessary to prove competence. Some learners are not given adequate time in the workplace to work on their NVQ and key skills. Assessment of NVQ units and key skills is slow, and the verification of completed portfolios is sometimes delayed. There is clear evidence to show that key skills are now an integral part of the NVQ training and learners use the new work packs. Many employers will only increase learners' wages when they have completed their apprenticeship.

22. There is no formal initial assessment taking place to ensure that individual learning needs are identified. Prior learning and experience are not assessed so that learners do not repeat skills and knowledge they have already gained. No assessment of learners basic or key skills is carried out. Completion dates for individual units are recorded on the learning plan but in all cases, the maximum amount of time is shown. There is no identification on the learning plan of who is responsible for each aspect of training, where it will happen and when. In some cases, learners are placed on an inappropriate level and insufficient account is taken of their learning needs.

23. Training co-ordinators maintain good working relationships with most learners. While some employers are clearly involved at progress reviews, many employers are not aware of what is happening and have no involvement. Most review records do not contain comments from employers. Training co-ordinators visit learners in the workplace every four to six weeks to carry out progress reviews, and the visits often incorporate assessments, and tutorials on background knowledge. Most reviews are not clearly recorded and lack detail about the purpose of the visit. There is insufficient guidance given to learners relating to improvements and progress against targets. Pastoral care, training and workplace issues are not always recorded to ensure that they are not overlooked.

24. Most learners are not working on the recently revised occupational standards for apprenticeships which integrate key skills with the NVQ. Many learners have only recently been introduced to key skills after achieving their NVQ some time ago. Some learners are not aware that they have to work on key skills as part of the apprenticeship. There is insufficient planning to ensure that evidence for key skills is collected at the same time as for the NVQ. Training for key skills in some colleges is not always linked to the workplace. There is poor understanding by some training co-ordinators of which previously gained qualifications can exempt learners from aspects of key skills training.

25. The assessment of learners' work is poorly planned. There are few occasions when discussion takes place with the workplace supervisors, managers or observers on how, when and where all aspects of the assessment will take place. There is no reference in the assessment plan to the role of the workplace observer in the assessment process. Many learners work through the NVQ units in order, regardless of their current experience and skills, and opportunities to collect evidence for later units are not always identified. There are few qualified assessors in the workplace. Most workplaces rely on trained workplace observers who sign statements to confirm that learners are competent. Not all workplaces have skilled observers and some are unable to work the same shifts as learners. There is poor supervision of observers by some training co-ordinators. In one company, an observer was signing off competences for learners but did not observe the work. The training for observers is inadequate. There are few observations of workplace observers by qualified assessors. Many observations are signed by learners' workplace colleagues who are not trained observers or assessors. In one workplace, learners were signing their own observation records and this was not identified by the training co-ordinator. In two organisations, the fathers of the learners were signing off competences. When training co-ordinators' visits are due, some learners are on opposite shifts or cannot be spared from the workplace.

### Good Practice

*In one company, the managing director took an interest in the learners' progress. The training manager of the company sat in on all progress reviews and made notes to ensure that they were fully involved in the learners' training. The notes were then copied to the learner and the managing director.*

### Poor Practice

*One advanced modern apprentice had been training for six months before finding out that he was colour vision impaired. This precluded him from working on and completing his NVQ unit in colour printing. This was not identified through initial assessment.*