

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Birmingham Institute of Education, Training & Technology**

**18 November 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
- **learnirect** 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.

## Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Birmingham Institute of Education, Training and Technology provides training in basic skills, information and communications technology, and business and careers guidance. It provides most of this training in collaboration with a range of local training providers, except for Jobcentre Plus provision which it provides alone. Birmingham Institute of Education, Training and Technology is situated in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. It has had a contract with Jobcentre Plus since April 2001 to provide New Deal 18-24, and work-based learning for adults, and New Deal 25+ clients provision in foundation studies.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of the foundation programme is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, equal opportunities is outstanding and quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	1
Quality assurance	4

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- very clear and responsive strategic direction
- very effective action to widen participation
- very good teaching on ESOL programmes
- good use of national basic skills core curriculum-linked learning materials

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate development planning
- poor self-assessment report
- insufficient account taken of individual learning needs on basic skills provision
- inadequate progress reviews

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better analysis and use of equal opportunities data

## THE INSPECTION

1. Three inspectors spent a total of 12 days visiting Birmingham Institute of Education, Training and Technology (Biettec) in November 2002. They conducted interviews with 12 of Biettec's staff including the senior project manager, deputy project manager, quality and policy leader, and tutors. Inspectors observed eight learning sessions and interviewed 17 clients. They examined a range of documents including 10 clients' portfolios of evidence, and 15 individual learning plans, learning materials, clients' records, and Biettec's plans, policies and procedures. They studied the company's self-assessment report which was produced in August 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Biettec has had a contract with the West Midlands Jobcentre Plus since April 2001 for New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+, and work-based learning for adults. There are 10 clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, and 35 clients on New Deal 18-24. All clients are on foundation training programmes. Tutors and assessors at the company's premises in Small Heath provide the training, assessment and verification. Biettec employs 33 staff, who are managed by the senior project manager.

3. Although some parts of Birmingham are prosperous, particularly in the construction industry and the retail trades, the areas which Biettec clients come from have high rates of deprivation. All of the clients are from areas with the highest rates of unemployment. The unemployment rate in Birmingham is 5.7 per cent, compared with 3 per cent nationally. All of the clients are from minority ethnic groups. Most of them speak English as an additional language. According to the 1991 census, Birmingham's minority ethnic communities represent 21.5 per cent of the population, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally. The proportion of young people achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in Birmingham in 2001 was 41.2 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

### New Deal 18-24

4. The following applies to both New Deal 18-24 and New Deal 25+, and work-based learning for adults.

5. Most clients make good progress. For clients on the New Deal 25+, and work-based learning for adults' programmes, there has been a significant increase in job outcomes from 29 per cent in 2001-02, to 48 per cent in 2002-03. All training is satisfactory to very good. The standard of training on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes is particularly good. Biettec has introduced the new national basic skills core curriculum to Jobcentre Plus clients. Tutors make good use of good, up-to-date learning materials, which link well to the national basic skills core-curriculum in teaching literacy and numeracy and ESOL. In the basic skills training provision, insufficient account is taken of the individual learning needs of clients. There is ineffective use of language in the induction pack for pre-entry level clients and progress reviews are inadequate.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

6. Biettec was founded in 1998 as a non-profit private company. The company has a board of directors and a board of trustees from the local communities. The senior project manager, who is also a founding member of the board of directors, has overall responsibility for management of the company. The senior management team includes the senior project manager, a deputy project manager and the quality and policy leader. The quality and policy leader is responsible for the organisation of the clients' training. Eight tutors provide the training for Jobcentre Plus provision. A team at the company's office in Small Heath provides administrative support. Biettec has a policy and arrangements for equality of opportunity. It has a quality assurance policy and procedures. The organisation completed its first self-assessment report in August 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- very clear and responsive strategic direction
- good planning and organisation of training programmes
- very effective action to widen participation
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- clear and well-written policies and procedures for quality assurance

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate development planning
- inadequate target-setting
- insufficient monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance arrangements
- weak use of feedback
- poor self-assessment report

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of action points in meeting minutes
- better analysis and use of equal opportunities data

7. Biettec's board of directors and its senior managers have set a very clear strategic direction for the company. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The company aims to provide training for clients who come from minority ethnic communities, and who have been unsuccessful or have not taken part in existing arrangements for education and training, to improve their employment prospects. Biettec particularly encourages women to join its training programmes. The company's mission statement clearly reflects these aims. The board of directors, managers and staff are committed to, and work hard to, achieve these aims. They work with the local communities to gain their support and to provide training which meets their needs. The

company also has good links with Jobcentre Plus.

8. The planning and organisation of learning is good. Managers prepare a teaching and planning folder for each tutor. The folder is based on the groups of clients which each tutor looks after. The folder is comprehensive and contains schemes of work and individual lesson plans and other relevant information on the provision of learning. Schemes of work are detailed and cover context, resources, curriculum and awarding body references and teaching methods. The schemes of work are supported by lesson plans with learning objectives, timings, learning activities and space for reviews of the success of lessons. In addition, there are weekly plans which teachers have to submit to the quality and policy leader to ensure teaching, training and learning corresponds to schemes of work. The teaching and planning folders contain further useful guidance including information on learning styles, teaching and learning approaches, assessment and resources. Training teams meet regularly to discuss standards of teaching and learning.

9. Although the company has a very clear strategic direction and mission, its development plan lacks detail on how it intends to accomplish its mission. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. The development plan has some information on actions to be taken, critical success factors, impact and outcomes. However, there are no target dates for achievement of actions, the actions identified are too vague, critical success factors and outcomes cannot be measured and actions are not allocated to individuals for monitoring and reviewing their progress, or for monitoring progress towards completion of the development plan. There is no evidence that the development plan has been reviewed or updated.

10. The arrangements for the setting of targets for achievement, including job achievement and retention rates, are inadequate. Biettec uses national targets from Jobcentre Plus. These targets are too broad to take account of local circumstances and the range of clients in training with Biettec. Although the company aims to improve retention rates and the number of job achievements, no written targets are set for groups of learners, minority ethnic groups, male and female learners and the company. The use of targets for clients in most individual learning plans is weak.

11. Biettec has a clear management structure and has clear lines of responsibility. There are regular meetings and meetings between managers and staff. Although minutes of meetings are brief, they are informative. However, they do not contain action points or allocate responsibility for individuals to carry out.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 1**

12. Biettec has taken very effective action to widen participation from under-represented groups. Clients are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, and those who have been resident in the United Kingdom for many years and have been unable to develop their English language skills or find employment. Staff work with groups of learners who have traditionally not participated in training, for example, women from minority ethnic groups. Biettec makes good use of the positive action guidelines within the Sex Discrimination Act 1998 to promote training to women from minority ethnic groups. Female staff visit women in their homes and talk to family members to reassure those who have concerns about taking part in training. Clients are used as successful role models within their local communities. The company has effective relationships with the Jobcentre Plus, careers services and local communities. Links with community leaders are used to promote education and training. Biettec has listened carefully to the needs of the local communities and developed their courses so that they are culturally and religiously acceptable, particularly for women. These courses give women the opportunity to learn new skills which are immediately useful and develop confidence by working with other women. Many of the clients have never participated in any form of education or training before attending the training centres. Biettec has successfully encouraged participation in training among women who were previously isolated and did not take part in training and education.

13. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity. Both staff and clients are provided with equal opportunities training. Biettec is particularly sensitive to clients' cultural and religious needs. Women-only classes are provided to ensure an acceptable environment for training for all religious needs. All staff have a good understanding of diversity. Bilingual staff and clients with English skills are used effectively to help clients who have a poor knowledge of English. Learning resources have been developed to meet the cultural and religious needs of the clients. Many clients have not only improved their English skills, but have also overcome cultural barriers to employment. Clients have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and the importance of respecting those from other cultures. Very good working relationships are formed between staff and clients and among groups of clients from very different cultural backgrounds and faiths. There is effective integration of clients from very different communities. Biettec provides an environment for learning in which clients feel safe and well supported by staff who have a good understanding of the difficulties they face. These strengths are not recorded in the self-assessment report. Biettec's premises are accessible to people with restricted mobility. Biettec has policies and procedures against harassment and bullying. The complaints procedure is clear and all clients are aware of how to register a complaint. Complaints are recorded confidentially and effective action is taken. The clear grievance and disciplinary procedures are made known to both clients and staff.

14. Staff have a good awareness of the achievement and retention rates of clients in relation to their gender and ethnicity. There has been insufficient analysis or use of data to identify trends or set targets for improvement.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

15. There are clear, well-written policies and procedures for quality assurance, which cover all aspects of training. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Most of the policies and procedures have only been in place since September 2002. The policies and procedures include referral, initial assessment, induction, progress reviews, training, monitoring, and the use of assignments and internal verification. The comprehensive staff handbook contains all the relevant policies and procedures, a code of conduct for staff and clear job descriptions. The procedures for the observation of teaching sessions are particularly good. The paperwork for recording learning session observations is well designed. Although only three learning session observations have been completed, the reports are carefully written and contain many constructive comments to help tutors improve their teaching. Internal verification is satisfactory and carried out in line with awarding body standards. All internal verifiers have appropriate qualifications and are occupationally competent.

16. Monitoring and evaluation of the new quality assurance arrangements is insufficient. There is no system to measure improvement and there are no performance indicators in the quality assurance procedures. Biettec has no procedure for reviewing and updating the policies and procedures. There are no systems, policies or procedures for internal auditing to check that the procedures are being carried out properly. The company has acknowledged that this is a problem. The brief annual evaluation of the training programmes does not result in an action plan and no use is made of data to set targets to improve standards.

17. The use of feedback from clients to improve the training programmes is weak. Biettec has no policy or procedure for the collection or use of feedback. Some feedback is collected informally at progress reviews and through the use of questionnaires. However, the questionnaires focus mainly on whether clients have received and understood processes such as induction and jobsearch, rather than the quality of their training. There is no evaluation of training. The questionnaires mainly use closed questions and provide little useful information on how to improve training. The company does not collate or analyse the feedback and no action plan is produced. There is not enough evidence that the collection of the feedback has resulted in any improvements to the training programmes.

18. The self-assessment report is poor. Staff and clients were insufficiently involved in its production. Most strengths identified are normal practice. The report is not self-critical and the weaknesses identified do not relate to Biettec's own performance. There is insufficient evidence to support judgements. Although the report awards grades for quality assurance and equal opportunities there are no strengths, weaknesses or evidence to support the grades. There are two different sets of strengths and weakness given for leadership and management. The report does not identify the company's key weaknesses.

### **Good Practice**

*Clients are given activities relating to the celebration of diversity as part of their English programme. Clients learn about new cultures and religions through project work on Celtic and Hindu history, for example. Part of the project includes designing posters and displaying them around the training room.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Foundation programmes

### Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	35	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	10	3

19. There are 10 clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. Of these, four are on basic employment training (BET) programmes. These training programmes last for 26 weeks for 30 hours each week. Clients can take up to 15 days leave during their training programme. There are also 35 clients on New Deal 18-24 full-time education and training. Jobcentre Plus advisers refer all new clients to Biettec. Clients can join the training programme at any time. Before starting their training, all clients attend a two-day induction where they are given information about health and safety and equality of opportunity. Their training plan and timetable are also negotiated during induction. Biettec offers initial assessment and impartial advice to clients referred by Jobcentre Plus. Training programmes at Biettec are graded from pre-entry level to entry level 3, to meet a range of language needs for clients following training in basic skills or ESOL. Training programmes are linked to the new basic skills core curriculum standards. Biettec offers external accreditation in literacy for basic skills clients. Clients can gain internal accreditation in computer literacy skills, aromatherapy and craft skills.

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

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	87		69							
Retained*	47	54	41	59						
Planned learning completed	15	17	41	59						
Gained job	12	14	9	13						
Still in training	35	40	0	0						

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	31		45							
Retained*	25	81	19	42						
Planned learning completed	17	55	19	42						
Gained job	15	48	13	29						
Still in training	10	32	0	0						

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## STRENGTHS

- improving job outcomes for New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults
- very good training on ESOL programmes
- good use of national basic skills core curriculum linked learning materials
- good use of bilingual skills

## WEAKNESSES

- insufficient account taken of individual learning needs on basic skill provision
- ineffective use of language in induction packs for pre-entry level clients
- inadequate progress review

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better links between additional ICT courses and clients' main programmes of learning

20. Most of Biettec's clients have particularly low levels of prior attainment. Ninety per cent of clients have poor English language skills. Many do not have literacy skills in their first language. All of Biettec's clients come from minority ethnic communities. All clients live in areas of Birmingham where there is high deprivation and unemployment. In many instances, there are significant cultural barriers to employing the company's clients.

21. Biettec has worked very hard with local employers to find jobs for its clients. There has been an improvement in job achievement. For clients on the New Deal 25+ and

work-based learning for adults' programmes, there has been a significant increase in the number of learners achieving jobs in 2002-03. Over 40 per cent of clients complete their training programme successfully. This is good progress for clients who start the training programme with poor prior academic achievement or education. For example, English language skills are developed to a standard which allows clients to look for and obtain work, and contribute more effectively to their own communities.

22. The teaching on ESOL programmes for pre-entry and entry level clients is good. This is a strength which is not recorded in the self-assessment report. A thorough and detailed scheme of work links particularly effectively with the basic skills core curriculum. Thorough planning takes account of individual learning needs. A wide range of good practical activities keep clients interested. Reinforcement of grammatical structures and vocabulary by tutors is very effective. Tutors check clients' understanding through individual questioning and attending to individuals' needs. Literacy activities are good at helping clients transfer the language studied in the training room to real life situations. For example, one learning session on vocabulary and language structure was related to the completion of an absence form for an employer. The atmosphere in the training room provided a safe environment where clients were able to ask tutors and peers for help. At the end of the learning session, clients illustrated their understanding of language structure and vocabulary by discussing types of ill health through pictures and matching phrases. Clients completed the activity with confidence.

23. Tutors make good use of good learning materials which link well to the national basic skills core curriculum in teaching literacy and numeracy and ESOL. There is a wide range of new visual aids, practical activities, games, and audiocassettes providing clients with an up-to-date learning environment. Learning materials take account of current social gender roles and diversity in society. In one learning session, a tutor effectively used learning materials on discrimination to link with the core curriculum. This helps clients' to deal with discrimination in society and challenge their environment. Training room walls are full of colourful and interesting artwork completed by clients. Clients have opportunities to display their own classwork if they feel it appropriate.

24. There is very effective use of multi-lingual language skills among staff and clients. Tutors support clients to use their bilingual skills to improve English literacy and oral communication. Clients use their bilingual skills to support peers at entry levels of English language. For example, in an entry level 2 learning session, literacy activities are carried out to show clients the differences between an application form and a curriculum vitae. Clients translate vocabulary into their own language. During the learning session, more advanced clients help the entry-level clients increase their understanding.

25. Although teaching in basic skills learning sessions is satisfactory for groups with a range of attainment and education, insufficient account is taken of clients' individual learning needs. Tutors provide only one level of learning activities and materials. Clients with entry level 2 and 3 English language skills complete learning activities early but pre-entry and entry level 1 clients struggle to understand the learning materials. Teachers



provide help and support so these clients can complete their work successfully, but those who finish their learning activities early are having to wait for the tutor to conclude their work with pre-entry and entry level 1 clients.

26. A weakness which the self-assessment report did not acknowledge is that the induction packs use language which is too difficult for many clients with pre-entry level English language skills. The languages used for induction packs are English, Urdu and Hindi. Many clients with pre-entry level English language skills do not have the literacy skills to understand these languages, particularly at the level used in the packs. Many pre-entry level clients come from communities where these languages are not common or if they do, are not literate in that language. Clients are requested to read the contents of the pack at home with help from their family members. Many do not have their family in this country or do not have anyone who is able to interpret the language used in the packs.

27. Clients' progress reviews are inadequate. Progress reviews take place every four weeks and grade attendance, effort, attainment and punctuality on a scale of one to three. There are no criteria for these grades. There is lack of short-term targets. The few targets which are set are too general to measure clients' progress. The language used is often too complex for those clients with difficulties with language. Clients do not receive a copy of their progress review paperwork. Clients' progress in learning sessions is not satisfactorily monitored. Neither teachers nor clients document the progress made during learning sessions. The clients maintain a good record of their work in well-organised files and displays in the classrooms.

28. Clients can additionally study for an internally accredited certificate in basic computer skills. Progress on this training programme is not recorded on clients' individual learning plans. There is no link between this training and the clients' main training programme.

#### Good Practice

*During a learning session, a client raised a concern relating to the management of recycling in Birmingham. The teacher used this to encourage discussions, to build confidence and practice language skills.*