

INSPECTION REPORT

Dv8 Training Ltd

14 November 2003



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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** 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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

Dv8 Training Ltd

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Dv8 Training Ltd (Dv8) is a privately owned company established in 1996 as Dv8 Entertainments specialising in promoting entertainment events, tours and outdoor music festivals. In 1999, Dv8 established the community record label Eastside Records and Dv8 Training Ltd. The first training programme was music and events promotion, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as Life Skills provision. The training provision in magazine journalism and music production and promotion began in September 2002. Training takes place at Dv8's training centre, a local specialist information technology (IT) training centre and at the local college of further education. The training for 16 to 18 year old learners is funded by the local LSC and the training for the adult learners is funded by the Single Regeneration Budget through a local regeneration company.

2. The music and events promotion and magazine journalism courses are both accredited by the Open College Network and provided in partnership with the local college of further education. Dv8 provides the vocational training and the college provides support for personal and literacy and numeracy skills development and photography training. The music production and promotion course is provided solely by Dv8. There is a waiting list for some of the courses and Dv8 can only accept about 20 per cent of those who apply for the music production and promotion course.

3. The company is owned and managed by the managing director who is also a member of the training team. The managing director and the training manager are employed full time and there are a further six part-time specialist tutors. The training manager is responsible for the management and co-ordination of the magazine journalism and music production and promotion courses and the managing director is responsible for the management and co-ordination of the music and events promotion course and for the development and implementation of policies and procedures.

4. In July 2003, the unemployment rate in Waltham Forest was 4.4 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent nationally. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic groups in Waltham Forest is 35.5 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. In July 2003, the proportion of school leavers in Waltham Forest to achieve five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above was 42.6 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Foundation programmes

5. Dv8 provides Entry to Employment (E2E) courses in music production and promotion, music and events promotion and magazine journalism. The courses for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 last for six months. Each year, Dv8 runs one music and events promotion course for adults aged 18 to 25 which lasts for three months. These

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courses replace the previous Life Skills training. About half of the learners are referred to the courses by Connexions with the remainder recruited directly by Dv8 through magazine and radio advertising and the extensive use of posters and hand-delivered fliers. There are currently 47 learners in training, of whom 15 are music production and promotion learners and 15 are magazine journalism learners. One learner is on work experience with a commercial magazine publisher and the remaining 16 learners are music and events promotion learners aged 18 to 25. The courses run for three days each week.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	27
Number of staff interviews	30
Number of employer interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3
Number of partner/external agency interviews	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of work-based learning in foundation programmes is good. Dv8's leadership and management are satisfactory. Its approach to equality of opportunity and its quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Entry to Employment	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Learners produce a very good standard of work.** Music production and promotion learners develop effectively their songwriting and music sequencing skills by recording a series of songs, which are collected together on to a CD. Music and events promotion learners develop their experience and skills in events promotion by staging a live music night. Magazine journalism learners publish a well-produced magazine.

8. **Retention and achievement rates are good.** Learner numbers have increased from 10 in 2000-01 to 62 in 2002-03. During this period, retention rates have increased from 70 per cent to 74 per cent. Of those learners who completed their training programme, 87 per cent continued on to further education, work experience or employment. All learners who complete their course pass their qualification.

Quality of education and training

9. **All training staff are well qualified and occupationally experienced.** They are current professionals from the music or publishing industry with backgrounds in club promotion, working as a DJ, magazine editing, music songwriting and production, band management and record promotion.

10. **Learners on the magazine journalism course receive extensive, systematic support for the development of their literacy skills.** Learners fully understand publishing industry terminology and work through progressively challenging projects which lead to the completion of articles for inclusion in their magazine. Learners on the music and events promotion course develop appropriate literacy and numeracy skills through preparation for their event.

11. **The three training programmes are innovative and effectively designed.** The focus of all three programmes on a good quality end product or event helps learners to develop their individual personal and vocational skills. Learners develop their own key aims. These aims are broken down into targets. For many learners, however, these targets are not sufficiently specific or measurable.

12. **Staff provide good academic and pastoral support.** The ratio of staff to learners is very good, with two tutors working with about 15 learners in most sessions. On the music and events promotion and magazine journalism courses, learners receive in-class literacy and numeracy support from a member of the partner college's staff.

13. **There is insufficient teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills on the music production and promotion course.** During one section of the course, there is no specific work on the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Target-setting for literacy and numeracy skills development is an integral part of progress reviews. However, most target-setting is inadequate.

14. **Staff do not systematically use developmental feedback when commenting on learners' work or when monitoring their progress.** Not enough written feedback is given to learners to help them improve and progress.

15. Learners on the music and events promotion and magazine journalism courses can achieve each unit of their work at a range of levels, from entry level to a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 3 equivalent. However, **most staff and learners do not understand the criteria by which this qualitative assessment is carried out.** The grading of work is carried out at the end of the year by the managing director and a link tutor from the partner college.

Leadership and management

16. **Provision is managed effectively.** The development plan for 2003-06 demonstrates clear leadership and vision. Good use is made of Dv8's extensive network of professional industry links and existing business projects.

17. **Internal communications are good.** Effective daily communication takes place between the programme teams, the managing director and the training manager. Staffing issues, training sessions and specific support for individual learners are reviewed each day.

18. **Dv8 makes good use of its financial resources.** Each course culminates in the production of a professional standard project. The production of these products is central to Dv8's aim to give learners first-hand experience of the creative industries and to introduce them to working professionals.

19. **There is insufficient use of data for target-setting.** Although the self-assessment report is effective in highlighting some areas for improvement, the action plan does not set specific and measurable targets. There are no specific targets for improvement in retention and achievement rates, recruitment by ethnicity or for progression into employment.

20. Management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Learners on the accredited magazine journalism and music and events promotion courses work well to develop their literacy skills. Projects are well planned to provide appropriate vocational work for literacy development, and in-class support is provided by specialist staff from the partner college. Learners on the music production and promotion course receive insufficient support for their literacy and numeracy development in the first half of their course.

21. There is effective promotion of courses to under-represented groups. Community groups, community centres, Connexions services and youth offending teams are routinely contacted with details of the courses. Although 70 per cent of current learners are from minority ethnic groups, other minority groups are poorly represented.

22. **Some learners have a poor understanding of equality of opportunity,** while others

who have recently carried out project work that includes equality of opportunity and diversity issues, have a good understanding. There is not enough reinforcement of equal opportunities during progress reviews.

23. **There are good arrangements to improve provision.** At the end of each course there is a formal review by the tutors and managers. Specific areas for improvement are identified and appropriate action plans are set and monitored. Significant improvements to the courses have been implemented.

24. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report takes appropriate account of staff and learners' views through end-of-course evaluations and learner surveys. Inspectors agreed with most strengths and weaknesses identified in the report and found it to be sufficiently judgmental.

25. **There are incomplete quality assurance arrangements.** The recently produced staff handbook contains a range of documented procedures. However, there is insufficient clarity about the actions required following initial assessment, the use of learner progress reviews to provide continuous development for learners and the procedures for assessing learners' work and verifying assessment practices.

26. **Some aspects of the internal verification system are unsatisfactory.** Meetings are held with the assessors and programme development activities are carried out. The internal verifier completes a feedback report for each portfolio, which are subsequently reviewed by the assessors. However, the assessment and verification team does not fully understand who is responsible for the overall grading of learners' work.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective planning and management of provision
- good internal communications
- good use of financial resources
- effective promotion of courses to under-represented groups
- good arrangements to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data for target-setting
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- unsatisfactory internal verification

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work
- good retention and achievement rates
- very well-qualified and occupationally experienced staff
- good development of learners' literacy skills on the magazine journalism course
- effective and innovative programme design
- good pastoral and academic learner support

Weaknesses

- insufficient teaching of literacy and numeracy skills on music production and promotion course
- insufficient systematic developmental feedback given to learners
- poor understanding of qualitative assessment by staff and learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT DV8 TRAINING LTD:

- the professional competence of the tutors
- 'the whole experience of writing my own songs'
- learning about a subject they really enjoy
- the personal and career development support
- the practical, hands-on learning
- the tasks they have to complete throughout the course
- 'that the tutors make sure we all get on with each other'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK DV8 TRAINING LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the structure of the course
- the length of the course
- the reliability of the recording studio central computer
- the reliability of the IT suite computers
- the pitching of the level of careers advice
- the amount of support to help some learners communicate their ideas
- the classroom management skills of some tutors

KEY CHALLENGES FOR DV8 TRAINING LTD:

- increase the structured teaching of literacy, numeracy and language skills on the music production and promotion course
- improve the arrangements to monitor equal opportunities
- improve assessment practice and internal verification
- provide learners with formal systematic developmental advice
- complete the development and implementation of quality assurance arrangements

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- effective planning and management of provision
- good internal communications
- good use of financial resources
- effective promotion of courses to under-represented groups
- good arrangements to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data for target-setting
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- unsatisfactory internal verification

27. Provision is managed and planned effectively. Developed from one music and events promotion course in 2000, provision now comprises three courses covering a wider area of the creative industries. The focus of all three courses continues to be the recruitment of learners with poor prior attainment or additional social needs. Two of the courses are accredited with the appropriate awarding body and the third is due to be accredited in 2004. The development plan for 2003-06 demonstrates clear leadership and vision. The plan shows how Dv8 will effectively build on its strengths, and proposes appropriate strategies to overcome weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Good use is made of Dv8's extensive network of professional industry links and existing business projects to support learners and raise their aspirations and progression opportunities. Learners benefit from a professional environment, training and support from industry professionals and appropriate work placements. Detailed yearly planning cycles for management, staff and learners outline timetables for programme delivery, progress reviews, assessment deadlines, evaluation and key events. However, recent agreements between the local college training partner are not being monitored to assess compliance with the agreements and there is insufficient clarity about roles and responsibilities for assessment practice. Good use is made of LSC training to support the strategic planning and implementation of the new E2E initiatives. The managing director and training manager work with other training providers in their area to share good practice.

28. Internal communications are good. Effective daily communication takes place between the programme teams, the managing director and the training manager to ensure the smooth running of the training provision. Staffing issues, training sessions and specific support for individual learners are reviewed each day. The training manager

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thoroughly monitors learner attendance and takes appropriate action where needed. Course team meetings are an effective forum for discussing improvements to the training provision. All staff are effectively involved in pre-programme planning, delivery and post-programme review.

29. Dv8 makes good use of its financial resources. Each course culminates in the production of a professional standard project, including the pressing of 1,000 CDs, the printing of 4,000 magazines and the production of a music event for 400 paying guests. The production of these products is central to Dv8's aim to inspire learners by giving them first-hand experience of the creative industries and by introducing them to working professionals. Learners are very involved in leading and managing the projects that form part of the learners' final assessment portfolio. Profits are used for future projects. Good support is given to learners on the music events programme. They manage an events budget and are required to raise matched funding and sponsorship to support their projects. Financial systems are thorough and effective and appropriate records are kept.

30. Staff development and appraisal arrangements are satisfactory. Staff development for part-time freelance specialist staff has recently been identified as a priority in the self-assessment report. Satisfactory arrangements to support the implementation of a training and appraisal system are now in place. All staff are currently scheduled to attend a range of courses provided by the LSC for work-based learning providers. All staff are contracted to complete a teaching qualification within the next three years. An allowance for expenses to attend training is written into staff contracts.

31. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Learners on the accredited magazine journalism and music and events promotion courses work well to develop their literacy skills. Projects are well planned to provide appropriate vocational opportunities for literacy development, and in-class support is provided by specialist staff from the partner college. The development of learners' numeracy skills on the music and events promotion course is also good and based around industry needs. Learners on the music production and promotion course, however, receive insufficient support for their literacy and numeracy development in the first half of their course and there is insufficient development of numeracy skills on the magazine journalism course.

32. There is insufficient use of data for target-setting. While the self-assessment report is effective in highlighting some areas for improvement, the action plan does not set specific and measurable targets for these improvements. There are no specific targets for improvement in retention and achievement rates, recruitment by ethnicity or for progression into employment. Many targets arising from meetings are also insufficiently specific to enable effective monitoring and review.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. Dv8 targets specific recruitment activity at postcode areas in the northeast of London that have poor rates of participation in education and high rates of disaffection. Approximately 70 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Information is

held of community groups, community centres, Connexions services and youth offending teams. These groups are routinely contacted with details of the courses. In the 12 months before inspection, magazines, posters and approximately 20,000 fliers were distributed to these groups and to prospective learners in popular youth orientated venues. There is also extensive advertising on non-traditional radio stations aimed at their target group of learners. Some of the promotional materials highlight the availability of a translation service for speakers of 10 languages other than English. Dv8 has been highly successful in attracting learners from some minority ethnic groups, but others are under-represented. Insufficient work has been done to overcome gender stereotypical issues within the creative industry sector. The waiting list for the provision currently has a potential of approximately 100 learners, mainly for the music production course. All learning venues used by Dv8 are fully accessible to learners with restricted mobility.

34. The equality of opportunity policy has been recently reviewed. The main policy relates to the staff of the company, with a separate statement written specifically for learners. The policy includes statements about bullying and harassment but does not reflect recent changes in legislation. It also does not detail who is responsible for the policy or when it should be reviewed.

35. Some learners do not fully understand equality of opportunity, while others who have recently carried out project work that includes equality of opportunity and diversity issues, have a good understanding. At the start of their course, all learners are encouraged to set social boundaries and rules. There is not enough reinforcement of equal opportunities during progress reviews. However, complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively through the weekly review process.

36. Dv8 monitors the participation and achievement rates of its learners by gender and ethnicity. However, monitoring of equal opportunities is poor. Data are not used to influence recruitment policies to attract a broader range of under-represented groups from the local area. There is no analysis or comparison of the ethnicity of applicants to that of those who enrol on the courses. Dv8 has recently established an equality of opportunity review group. This group has established priorities for the development of its approach to equality of opportunity, but at the time of inspection the effectiveness of the proposed actions could not be judged. There is insufficient equal opportunities training for staff. However, following a recent review of staff training, there are plans to provide this. All learners receive equal opportunities training at induction, but some do not remember it. Additional equal opportunities training is also given to learners on two of the courses.

37. Dv8 has formal agreements in place for the two employers that offer work placements. Staff from these employers also teach on the training programmes. While the agreement includes compliance requirements to Dv8 procedures, these procedures are not sufficiently monitored.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

38. There are good arrangements to improve provision. In the 12 months before inspection, two new courses have been introduced and extensively reviewed. At the end of each course there is a formal review by the tutors and managers. Specific areas for improvement are identified and appropriate action plans for improvement are set and monitored. Significant improvements have been implemented, such as extension of course duration, improvement in retention rates, development of course content and the move to a more appropriate external learning centre. Course leaders and managers effectively monitor data for retention, achievement, early leavers and the destinations of those who complete their learning programmes.

39. Each learner completes two survey questionnaires during their learning programme. The questionnaires are analysed and evaluated and effective action is taken to improve training provision. This includes improvements to the information and communications technology facilities, the classroom facilities provided by a learning partner, the careers information file and increased marketing initiatives to improve the availability of work placements.

40. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The report takes appropriate account of the views of staff and learners through end-of-course evaluations and learner surveys. Inspectors agreed with most strengths and weaknesses identified in the report and found the report to be sufficiently judgmental.

41. There are incomplete arrangements for assuring the quality and consistency of the training provision. The recently produced staff handbook contains a range of documented procedures including health and safety and equal opportunities, and covers some aspects of the learning process. However, there is insufficient clarity about the actions required following initial assessment, the use of progress reviews to provide continuous development for learners, and the procedures for assessing learners' work and verifying assessment practices. Some staff have not had effective training on the contents of the handbook. The policies that have been devised are not dated, do not contain the names of nominated responsible officers and have no review process. Dv8's formal teaching observation procedures have only recently been introduced and only two of the seven staff have been formally observed. However, all four of the local college staff who work on the courses have been formally observed through the college's system. A process for auditing compliance to procedures has recently been introduced to identify areas for staff development. However, this does not cover all procedures involved in the learning process.

42. Some aspects of the internal verification system are unsatisfactory. Meetings are held with the assessors and programme development activities are carried out. The internal verifier completes a feedback report for each portfolio. These reports are subsequently reviewed by the assessors. However, the assessment and verification team does not fully understand who is responsible for the overall grading of learners' work. The process for grading learner attainment at entry level and NVQ at level 1, 2 or 3 is carried out at the end of the course when portfolios are complete and there is no ongoing internal verification of learners' work during the course. Many learners do not

receive appropriate feedback on the standard of their work in relation to the possible levels of attainment. The internal verification process has not identified these weaknesses.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Foundation programmes

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Entry to Employment	47	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good standard of learners' work
- good retention and achievement rates
- very well-qualified and occupationally experienced staff
- good development of learners' literacy skills on the magazine journalism course
- effective and innovative programme design
- good pastoral and academic learner support

Weaknesses

- insufficient teaching of literacy and numeracy skills on music production and promotion course
- insufficient systematic developmental feedback given to learners
- poor understanding of qualitative assessment by staff and learners

Achievement and standards

43. The standard of work produced by learners is very good. Learners on each of the three courses work towards the production of a professional piece of work. Music production and promotion learners develop effectively their songwriting and music sequencing skills by recording a series of songs, which are collected together on to a CD. Following the production of the CD, the learners develop their understanding of music promotion by developing marketing and distribution strategies. Learners' personal and social skills are developed effectively through working with other learners on their songs, communicating with professional session musicians, using the telephone and preparing for interviews with record companies. The standard of some of the singing and rapping is particularly good.

44. Music and events promotion learners work towards group and personal objectives. The aim of the course is to develop learners' experience and skills in events promotion by staging a live music night for 400 people featuring a line-up of local DJs in a local night club. Learners develop effectively their literacy and numeracy skills by learning how to write press releases, develop sponsorship packages and secure sponsorship money, approach venues and artists, write and distribute fliers, budget and use the telephone effectively. All learners also complete a personal project including all aspects

of the group activity for their own imaginary or real event. Both pieces of work count towards learners' final qualification. Learners demonstrate very good levels of determination to succeed and previous events have been very successful.

45. Retention and achievement rates are good. Learner numbers have increased from 10 in 2000-01 to 62 in 2002-03. During this period, retention rates have increased from 70 per cent to 74 per cent. Of those learners who completed their training programme, 87 per cent continued on to further education, work experience or employment. The further education to which learners progressed in 2002-03 includes level 2 courses in construction and graphic design; level 3 courses in popular music, music business, performing arts, foundation art and design, media; and advanced supplementary levels. Two learners progressed to university to study law and English and social anthropology. All learners who complete their course pass their qualification.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	48		62		20		10									
Progression ¹	0		46	74	14	70	7	70									
Achieved objectives ²	0		46	74	14	70	7	70									
Still in learning	45		0	0	0	0	0	0									

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

Quality of education and training

46. All training staff are current professionals from the music or publishing industry with backgrounds in club promotion, working as a DJ, magazine editing, music songwriting and production, band management and record promotion. They provide excellent role models for the learners. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups is similar to the local population and learner group. Learners have good working relationships with staff and benefit greatly from their current knowledge and expertise and their contacts within the creative industries.

47. Learners on the magazine journalism course receive extensive, systematic support for the development of their literacy skills. They fully understand publishing industry terminology and work through progressively challenging projects which lead to the completion of articles for inclusion in their final magazine. Articles are carefully edited by tutors and can be redrafted many times by the learners. On the music and events promotion course the college support tutor introduces new areas of work, such as

writing press releases, with staged exercises to develop learners' skills. Learners keep a daily journal that is effective in promoting continuous literacy development. The tutor regularly corrects spelling and monitors content. Learners develop a glossary of words which are new to them. The integration of number work into the music and events promotion course is good. The use of budgeting exercises and games and the focus on calculations to determine profit and loss, break even, number of ticket sales needed and budget comparison exercises are effective in providing learners with experience of the sort of number work they are most likely to encounter in their work environment.

48. The three learning programmes are innovative and effectively designed to meet the needs of the learners. The focus of all three programmes on a good quality end product or event helps to keep learners motivated and committed to the development of their personal and vocational skills. Learners receive a comprehensive induction over a period of four weeks, which includes an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills and their individual learning styles. At the end of this period, tutors summarise the information which has been collected to date and discuss its accuracy and sufficiency with the learners. Actions and targets are agreed to help overcome any highlighted issues or to develop in weak areas. Learners also develop key aims for themselves for while they are on their course and for future progression. These aims are broken down into targets. For a small number of learners these targets are specific and measurable. This new system has yet to complete a full cycle of monitoring and review. The induction period also includes memorable discussions about equality of opportunity and harassment and unfair treatment in the training and employment environments. However, some learners who have been highlighted as needing additional support have not received it. Some learners achieve a very good score on the low-level initial assessment test. In these instances, there are no challenging targets set to further develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills.

49. Learners are provided with good academic and pastoral support from staff. The ratio of staff to learners is very good, with two tutors working with about 15 learners in most sessions. On the music and events promotion and magazine journalism courses, learners also receive in-class literacy, numeracy and language support from a member of the partner college's staff. Learners can contact their tutors on their mobile telephones at any time and a call-back system has been arranged so that they can make contact with their tutors without using their own mobile telephone credit. Dv8 has effective links with a range of external agencies to help learners cope with a range of social issues.

50. The Dv8 learning centre and local specialist IT training centre are both well equipped. Learners have access to a sufficient number of computers with access to the internet and a range of specialist software including music sequencing and graphic design packages. Training rooms are also equipped with white boards, flip charts, telephones and televisions with video players. There is a professional standard recording suite with control and live rooms, though some equipment is not adequate.

51. Target-setting for literacy, numeracy and language skills development is an integral part of learners' progress reviews. In some instances, these are completed well with specific and measurable desired outcomes. However, in most cases progress reviews are

poor and learners are not set adequate targets with achievement dates.

52. Three learning sessions were observed and graded as very good, good and unsatisfactory. The better lessons were well planned providing appropriate and challenging tasks to individuals within groups of mixed ability. Learners' overall achievement is good, and in the good and very good lessons learners gained new skills and understanding. Tutors used questioning and coaching techniques well to develop learners' understanding. In the weaker lesson there was insufficient clarity about the learning objectives of the session, no change of pace or approach and not enough learning took place. Attendance and punctuality were unsatisfactory overall at 64 per cent.

53. There is insufficient teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills on the music production and promotion course. The course is structured in two sections with over half of the work focusing on songwriting and the production of music tracks for the group's CD. During this section of the course, there is no specific work on the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. One music production learner with specific and well-documented additional learning needs has not received any structured assistance with the development of literacy and numeracy skills. There are plans to cover some of this work on the second phase of the course that concentrates on music promotion.

54. Staff do not systematically use developmental feedback when commenting on learners' work or when monitoring their progress. There is a strong emphasis on acknowledging the achievements of learners, and in some cases comprehensive notes are made in learners' files about their progress and attainment. Not enough written feedback is given to learners to help them improve and progress.

55. Learners on the music and events promotion and magazine journalism courses can achieve each unit of their work at a range of levels, from entry level to NVQ at level 3 equivalent. However, most staff and learners do not understand the criteria by which this qualitative assessment is carried out. The grading of work is carried out at the end of the year by the managing director and a link tutor from the partner college.

Leadership and management

56. The courses are designed effectively to meet the learners' needs and are well managed. The good internal communications ensure that day-to-day operational issues and individual support needs are managed effectively. Learners benefit from the continuous improvements in the provision.