

REINSPECTION REPORT

Cambridge City Council Employment Foundation Scheme Reinspection

10 March 2005



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. 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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Cambridge City Council Employment Foundation Scheme Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
About the reinspection	1
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	3

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	6
Equality of opportunity	7
Quality assurance	9

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Cambridge City Council Employment Foundation Scheme (EFS) was first established in 1983 with three trainers and an average of 10 learners each year. EFS now has a staff of 20, including the EFS manager, four team managers, 12 training staff and four administration and contracts management staff.
2. EFS has a contract with Cambridgeshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver Entry to Employment (E2E) training, and also provides Jobcentre Plus programmes. The current contract runs until March 2005 and a further extension is under review. Under this contract EFS offers programmes in land-based provision, construction, business administration, and information and communications technology (ICT) and foundation programmes including work experience, mentoring, training needs analysis and job preparation, and skills for life which is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. EFS is also a programme centre. Business administration, mentoring provision and parts of the full Gateway elements of the New Deal provision are subcontracted to local training providers. EFS has recently ended the subcontracting arrangements for ICT. The rest of the contract is delivered directly by EFS.
3. The reinspection reviewed standards in business administration and foundation programmes. ICT was not reinspected as there were no learners at the time of the reinspection.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	39
Number of staff interviewed	15
Number of subcontractors interviewed	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. The previous inspection judged the quality of provision in business administration, management and professional, and foundation programmes to be satisfactory, but that in ICT to be unsatisfactory. ESF's arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory but its leadership and management and quality assurance were unsatisfactory. The

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL EMPLOYMENT FOUNDATION SCHEME REINSPECTION

reinspection confirmed that the standards in business administration, management and professional, and in foundation programmes and equality of opportunity are being maintained. Leadership and management are now satisfactory, but the arrangements for quality assurance remain unsatisfactory. There were no learners in ICT and this was not reinspected.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

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

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for adults	3

Information & communications technology	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for adults	4

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Programme centres	3
Entry to Employment	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

5. **Retention rates on some foundation programmes are poor.** Only 18 per cent of clients who join skills for life courses and the programme centre complete their programme and achieve their goals. However, nearly 60 per cent of those on the E2E and business administration programmes stay on their programmes for the planned duration.

6. A satisfactory proportion of clients progress and achieve more than one ICT qualification in business administration programmes. At the time of the previous inspection, only 12 per cent of clients found jobs at the end of their programme. The rate has now increased to 24 per cent.

7. The percentage of skills for life clients who have passed national tests in literacy and numeracy has improved from 17 per cent to 40 per cent since the previous inspection. Thirty-two per cent of E2E learners have also passed the tests during this period, and a number of others are currently working towards these and other literacy and numeracy qualifications.

Quality of education and training

8. **Training and learning were good at the previous inspection and they are still a strength.** Tutors support their clients well, and the clients enjoy their learning and know how much they have achieved.

9. Tutors use **a good range of teaching and learning methods and resources** to effectively improve clients' and learners' literacy and numeracy skills. In one session, clients improved their spelling by using touch as a learning strategy. Clients and learners enjoy these sessions.

10. At the time of the previous inspection, learners and clients on business administration programmes were given **too little training in administrative skills**. This is still the case, although a schedule of workshops has been put in place to remedy this.

11. **Resources are good for literacy and numeracy programmes.** Classes are small and allow staff to give good individual support. Staff are well qualified and learning resources are well referenced for all levels of ability and effectively integrated into work contexts.

12. EFS has satisfactory ICT resources, and support is available for learners with particular difficulties and disabilities. However, it does not have sufficient resources for business administration, and some rooms are not big enough for the groups who use them.

13. The E2E programme has now been expanded. Youth workers have been appointed and there are external activities to support learners. However, these activities are not always integrated well with the programme.

14. Programme centre resources are satisfactory with a sufficient supply of magazines, newspapers and other journals to support learners.

15. At the previous inspection, the reviews of learners' and clients' work were unsatisfactory. These are now satisfactory and include short-term targets that are easy to understand. However, individual training plans for skills for life clients are not always updated after the review. The achievement of learners on E2E programmes is generally well recorded and clearly linked to their personal objectives. Targets for business administration learners focus too much on the achievement of ICT qualifications.

16. At the time of the previous inspection, EFS did not offer sufficient opportunities for work placements. This has improved and 55 per cent of E2E learners have now been offered work placements, although not all have been successful. Learners have a better awareness of the need to progress into employment at the end of their programme.

17. There is now an improved, and satisfactory, focus on work experience on the skills for life programme.

18. The previous inspection report identified that learners and clients were well supported. This support has been maintained. Staff give learners and clients **good pastoral support**. Two of the staff are trained counsellors.

19. Learners' and clients' induction into programmes is satisfactory, and health and safety and equal opportunities are appropriately covered to meet most learners' and clients' needs. However, the induction for business administration learners does not include sufficient health and safety information relating to computers.

Leadership and management

20. **EFS gives good support to staff**, keeping them well informed and effectively involving them in decision-making. Managers work with staff, regularly assessing their performance and supporting their development.

21. Health and safety was a strength at the previous inspection, and is now satisfactory. EFS has a good range of policies and procedures but does not have a comprehensive audit plan to ensure their implementation.

22. EFS has a **wide range of activities to support equality and diversity**. It works very effectively with its partners to reach learners and clients with particular difficulties, and to provide them with a range of support. Induction provides learners and clients with useful information and their understanding of equality and diversity has improved since the previous inspection. EFS has completed a good project with a large food retailer which

has helped clients with particular difficulties into work.

23. **EFS does not use data effectively to plan and develop programmes.** Electronic data is only just available and EFS does not have enough historical data to set targets for improvement.

24. EFS now has quality assurance arrangements for most training activities. These are being used, but have not been in place long enough to ensure the improvement of the learners' and clients' experience.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good support for staff
- good range of activities to promote equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of management information
- insufficiently established quality assurance system

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good support for staff
- good range of activities to promote equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of management information
- insufficiently established quality assurance system

25. EFS supports its staff well, developing their skills and keeping them well informed. The management style is open and consultative. Staff value their involvement in developments and decision-making, and understand what they need to do to contribute to improving learners' and clients' experience. Informal communications are good, teams are small, work well together and have a good understanding of individual learners' and clients' needs. Formal communications are satisfactory. The organisation has a range of meetings to meet its needs and staff meet every two weeks to discuss and review learners' and clients' progress. All meetings are minuted and include actions that are monitored. The recent consultation process on the proposed restructuring of the organisation has been managed sensitively, ensuring all staff are well informed and supported. EFS receives good support from the city council and effectively uses the council's infrastructure which includes a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. All staff have access to specialist support and training on generic issues such as health and safety, and equality and diversity. There is a sound and well-established annual appraisal system linked to personal and professional development. All staff have a personal development plan and they are encouraged to gain additional qualifications relevant to their job role.

26. Business planning is satisfactory. EFS is part of the economic development and tourism section of the city council and links its plans to the annual service plan of the city council through a comprehensive and well-established system. The business plan for 2004-05 contains clear goals and objectives which focus on raising the quality of the provision. However, EFS has been slow to achieve some of the targets in the post-inspection action plan, and some planned objectives such as the development of quality assurance processes and the implementation of the management information system have been only partly achieved.

27. Health and safety practices are satisfactory. EFS has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures but there is no audit schedule to monitor or evaluate their

implementation. Since the previous inspection, the management of health and safety has changed and responsibility for the day-to-day management is now devolved to department heads. Some routine procedures such as the risk assessment of training rooms have not been completed within the required timescales. EFS has introduced a comprehensive health and safety questionnaire that learners and clients complete during progress reviews to raise their awareness and develop their understanding.

28. Resources are satisfactory. Most training rooms used for direct provision are suitable and are well furnished and decorated. EFS has sufficient staff and they are generally well qualified, although there are not sufficient qualified assessors for the painting and decorating programme. Staff providing established programmes such as skills for life have developed good training materials. The equipment used in the business administration programme is good, but some of the rooms are too small for the size of the groups using them.

29. The management of subcontractors has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Subcontractors now have a service level agreement that details and clarifies their responsibilities. They confirm that communications have greatly improved. They now have a clear understanding of the requirements of their contract with EFS. Service level agreements include targets for recruitment, but not for retention rates or outcomes. EFS has just begun to carry out visits to monitor the quality of subcontractors' provision. The records of monitoring visits are detailed and EFS has taken action to rectify weaknesses. As a result of these visits, EFS has terminated the contract of one subcontractor that persistently failed to meet its action plan.

30. EFS does not make adequate use of its management information system. It has been slow to enter information into the system, although this has now been achieved for 2003-04. Management information from subcontractors has only recently been included on the system. EFS collects data on progression into jobs, and sets targets, but these are consistently underachieved. Reliable management information is not available for the period up to 2003-04, and no benchmarks or targets have been set for improvement over time. EFS does not have an accurate understanding of retention and achievement rates, and does not set targets for retention and achievement for internal or subcontracted provision.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

31. EFS has developed a good range of activities to promote equality and diversity. Trainers use carefully designed materials during learners' induction programmes which challenge their views and support the discussion of their attitudes and behaviours towards others. Learners are encouraged to explore and question their assumptions. Many learners remember these discussions and find them useful. EFS has developed a range of questions to use in learners' reviews to test and extend their knowledge and understanding of equality. Learners' responses to questions are checked and trainers are asked to follow up any issues that are identified. However, the correct answers to some questions are not clear and in some reviews the responses are not assessed and no action is identified. EFS has sensitively reviewed the use of these questions and has

identified their limitations, but has not yet developed or changed them.

32. EFS works very effectively with partners to promote equality and widen participation. This was identified as a strength at the previous inspection. Through these partnerships, EFS recruits clients who are homeless or who have alcohol, drug or mental health problems. EFS also has effective networks for referral, job progression and personal support with a wide range of agencies. These include counselling and advice services, organisations working with the homeless, a community theatre and a local training consortium which supports unemployed and disadvantaged people in Cambridgeshire. EFS developed a training programme with a large food retailer to offer opportunities for employment to learners with learning disabilities and mental health problems. The programme was designed to meet individual learners' needs and to improve their employability skills. Of the seven learners who completed the programme, six went into a job with the company and one is taking part in a supported work-placement.

33. Equality and diversity is promoted well within the centre. Learners, clients and tutors have developed and regularly update a range of noticeboards which celebrate different activities and interests. Many learners and clients are aware of the content of the boards, and they are also used to identify and celebrate a 'learner of the month'. Many learners and clients have a broad understanding of equality and diversity, which was not the case at the previous inspection. They feel safe and understand the need to respect others.

34. The city council has a range of appropriate equal opportunities policies and procedures, and EFS has a comprehensive equality statement which includes procedures for incidents of harassment and bullying. However, some of the references to legislation are out of date and there is no mention of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001). All subcontractors are required to have an equal opportunities policy, and ESF now monitors how these are implemented. This was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. The three-year development plan includes clear objectives for the promotion of equality, and actions to be taken by the equality and diversity committee. This committee does not, however, meet regularly and ESF does not have a formal mechanism to monitor and review its progress in equality and diversity. All staff take generic training provided by the city council, but there is no planned training to raise awareness or update staff in the training department or to improve the promotion of equality and diversity in training programmes.

35. EFS has just begun to collect data on clients' and learners' gender, ethnicity, age and disabilities. No targets for recruitment have been set so far and EFS has not analysed the performance of different groups. EFS is beginning to set targets based on this data but has not yet used them to plan or monitor the provision.

36. EFS has developed new promotional materials which are clearly written and welcoming and which include images of female learners in non-traditional occupations such as painting and decorating, and horticulture. However, the materials do not include an equal opportunities statement. They are not immediately available in other formats but arrangements exist within the authority to produce them if they are needed.

37. Learners with restricted mobility are able to access the ground floor of the provider's premises and a lift is currently being installed to enable access to the first floor rooms.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

38. At the time of the previous inspection, quality assurance procedures were judged to be inadequate. EFS has made progress in developing a quality assurance system, but it remains insufficiently established. Since the previous inspection, EFS has developed and updated the quality assurance manual and this is now much more detailed. Staff involvement is good and teams have been set up from all departments to develop and monitor different aspects of the procedures. Most key training processes are included. Many procedures have only just been put in place, and so far have had little effect on the learners' experience. Internal verification is not sufficiently linked to other quality assurance processes and EFS does not have regular and formal procedures to monitor the quality of training. Training materials and handouts are not covered by the quality assurance system. They are checked by departmental managers but there is no mechanism to ensure their quality and consistency across the organisation. EFS does not have an audit or monitoring plan for the quality assurance system as a whole.

39. A group of experienced staff has been identified and trained to carry out observations, and a satisfactory programme has just begun. Most training staff have been observed once and the first observations have been moderated. It is too soon to judge their effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Managers have just begun to observe the review process, and also plan to observe induction in the future.

40. The monitoring of subcontractors has improved since the previous inspection. All have had initial monitoring visits and EFS has produced detailed reports. As a result of this, EFS has ceased to contract with one subcontractor who was judged not to be performing satisfactorily.

41. EFS has a satisfactory self-assessment procedure. Staff are involved in its development and are aware of its conclusions. However the process is not yet an established part of the quality assurance cycle. The current self-assessment report is only the second produced by EFS. The judgements broadly reflect those of inspectors, identifying similar strengths and weaknesses. The views of all staff, including some of the subcontractors' staff, were gathered through a proprietary questionnaire and the results fed into the report. Some learners have also completed the questionnaire. Subcontractors' learners have not been asked for any written feedback, but the quality co-ordinator now gathers some views during the recently established monitoring visits.

42. The post-inspection action plan did not include strengths or plan for their development. The reinspection found that some of the strengths in the areas of learning had not been maintained. EFS was slow to rectify some weaknesses and the planned action to deal with one weakness was not completed.