

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **The Laird Foundation Reinspection**

**13 May 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## THE LAIRD FOUNDATION REINSPECTION

### 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.

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## **The Laird Foundation Reinspection**

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Laird Foundation is based in Birkenhead. It is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Partners from public and private sectors, together with local community groups formed the company in February 1998. The Laird Foundation offers training and education facilities for people entering engineering, manufacturing, marine and technology related industries on Merseyside. The facilities include industrial standard workshops, classrooms, information technology (IT) suites, craft design and technology workshops, offices and an operational dry dock which opened in November 2002 and was refurbished during 2004. Since the previous inspection there have been several staffing changes with a new chief executive and a reorganisation and redefining of job roles.

2. The Laird Foundation contracts with the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for government-funded work-based learning. It is a lead provider for Entry to Employment (E2E), holds two workforce development contracts to support employer engagement and has provisional Centre of Vocational Excellence status for marine engineering. The company was accredited with the Investors in People standard in 2002. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

3. The Laird Foundation provides training for 104 learners in mechanical engineering and fabrication and welding. There are 23 advanced apprentices in fabrication and welding and 12 in mechanical engineering. There are 43 apprentices in fabrication and welding and 26 in mechanical engineering. All learners take an initial assessment test and attend an interview along with further key skills tests to identify additional learning needs.

4. Most basic craft training is carried out in The Laird Foundation's training centre in Birkenhead where assessment of practical skills, technical certificates and key skills is carried out. Assessment is carried out in the workplace by a dedicated team of workplace assessors. Initial training takes place over a minimum period of 12 weeks, after which learners move into employment and return to the centre on day release to cover key skills and academic requirements for the framework. Learners who are not employed or do not have a work placement stay in the centre working through the national vocational qualification (NVQ) until suitable employment with training or a work placement is found. These learners work on projects which provide evidence for NVQ assessments. On-the-job assessment is carried out in the workplace by a team of assessors, who also carry out progress reviews every 10 to 12 weeks.

5. The Laird Foundation provides opportunities for school pupils and some year 10, 11

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and 12 pupils to work towards vocational general certificates of secondary education in engineering and key skills. Others have programmes relating to NVQ units, or other nationally recognised qualifications. This gives them an introduction to engineering and is used to progress suitable pupils into apprenticeships. Since September 2004, The Laird Foundation has been running a pilot young apprenticeship programme which includes work placements for 24 year 10 pupils.

### Foundation programmes

6. The Laird Foundation has held a contract on behalf of a consortium of six partners for the delivery of E2E since August 2003. There are 144 learners currently on programme within the partnership. The E2E programme aims to prepare young people who are not yet ready to enter employment, further education or training. The programme must include the three core strands of personal and social development, literacy, numeracy and language, and vocational skills. Each provider in the partnership is responsible for recruitment, initial assessment, induction and programme delivery. Most of the learners are referred by Connexions. A member of staff, originally on secondment at the previous inspection, is now employed as foundation programme manager to co-ordinate the E2E partnership across all providers. The Laird Foundation is responsible for the management, co-ordination and monitoring of the provision and for assuring its quality.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| Number of inspectors                               | 4  |
| Number of inspection days                          | 20 |
| Number of learners interviewed                     | 87 |
| Number of staff interviewed                        | 54 |
| Number of employers interviewed                    | 10 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 15 |
| Number of visits                                   | 15 |

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. At the previous inspection, leadership and management were unsatisfactory, as were the arrangements for quality assurance. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. The training in engineering, technology and manufacturing and the foundation programmes was unsatisfactory. At the end of the inspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

## GRADES

### Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Leadership and management</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Contributory grades:             |          |
| Equality of opportunity          | 3        |
| Quality assurance                | 4        |

|                                                    |          |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Contributory grades:                               |          |
| Apprenticeships for young people                   | 4        |

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Foundation programmes</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Contributory grades:         |          |
| Entry to Employment          | 4        |

### Grades awarded at reinspection

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

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Leadership and management</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Contributory grades:             |          |
| Equality of opportunity          | 2        |
| Quality assurance                | 2        |

|                                                    |          |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Contributory grades:                               |          |
| Apprenticeships for young people                   | 2        |

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Foundation programmes</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Contributory grades:         |          |
| Entry to Employment          | 3        |

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

**8. Retention and achievement rates in engineering and on the E2E programmes have improved significantly.** Many learners on engineering programmes remain in learning, and for E2E the number is satisfactory. The previous inspection identified that learners make slow progress towards completion of the engineering framework, but since then, 31 frameworks out of a possible 36 have been completed. Progression for E2E learners has increased from 33 per cent to 44 per cent since the previous inspection, but progression across the partnership varies and ranges from zero to 59 per cent. In engineering and E2E programmes overall progress for current learners is satisfactory.

### Quality of education and training

**9. In E2E there are effective links with external organisations** to provide support for learners and for planned visits off site to extend the learning. A network of agencies such as Connexions and youth offending teams has continued to be developed. Learners achieve good practical skills. **In engineering there are good opportunities to develop learners' skills through additional training** such as coded welding, computer-aided design and extra safety courses. Some learners go abroad on a European-funded project. However, some opportunities to use The Laird Foundation resources to enhance the learners' experience are not taken. The standard of work in learners' portfolios varies, but is satisfactory overall.

**10. There are very good resources at The Laird Foundation for engineering learners.** A dry dock facility and heavy duty plate forming and cutting equipment provide a unique opportunity to develop skills in the ship building industry. The training rooms are also good, but several are under-used.

11. Training is satisfactory on the E2E and engineering programmes. Some lessons are slow in pace and are not challenging for individual learners. Targeted questioning is not always used effectively. All three strands of E2E and some additional qualifications are now satisfactorily delivered across all six partners. Insufficient staff are qualified to deliver E2E training.

**12. Use of the E2E Passport remains weak by some partners.** At the previous inspection it was identified that the assessment of learners' progress in engineering was not well communicated to them, but they now have a good understanding of their qualifications. Learners are given a thorough induction into health and safety after recruitment and this is reinforced throughout the training. Safety awards to celebrate safe working practices are evident on many of the sites.



## Leadership and management

13. **Curriculum management of E2E and engineering is good.** A new E2E delivery model was introduced in November 2004 to cover all partners. Increased amounts of staff training have taken place and staff are encouraged to gain teaching qualifications. Training is well managed. Assessments, progress reviews and internal verification are effectively planned and monitored. Communications have improved. The database now provides an accurate record of the learners' progress and the information is used for monitoring purposes.

14. The identification and support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs has improved and is now satisfactory.

15. **Quality assurance arrangements have strengthened considerably** since the previous inspection. Good policies and procedures are now effectively monitored and emphasis is placed on ensuring continuous improvement.

16. **Feedback from learners and employers is well used** to influence improvements to the training provision. Learner data is very well used by The Laird Foundation for programme management. Since the previous inspection, retention and achievement data is analysed to form action plans. Realistic and meaningful targets are now set.

17. **The Laird Foundation effectively promotes equality of opportunity.** Since the previous inspection, a new equality and diversity group has produced some good new initiatives. Learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity topics including harassment in the workplace and bullying. Access for learners with restricted mobility is satisfactory in the training centre, but not in some of the partner premises. The self-assessment report reflects the findings of the inspection team. All staff and many learners and employers have contributed to the report through questionnaires.

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

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- good operational management
- well-developed links and communications with external agencies
- good initiatives and actions to improve the quality of training
- good use of targets to monitor and improve training provision
- effective promotion of equality of opportunity

### Weaknesses

- poor access for learners with restricted mobility in some premises

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### **Strengths**

- few early leavers
- good development of learners' skills
- very good resources
- well-managed training

### **Weaknesses**

- some insufficiently challenging lessons

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- effective links with external agencies to provide support for learners
- good management of the E2E provision

### **Weaknesses**

- weak use of the E2E Passport by some providers
- insufficient qualified staff

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

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

#### **Strengths**

- good operational management
- well-developed links and communications with external agencies
- good initiatives and actions to improve the quality of training
- good use of targets to monitor and improve training provision
- effective promotion of equality of opportunity

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor access for learners with restricted mobility in some premises

18. The operational management of all training activity is now good. Training is well planned, structured and recorded and focuses on learners, which enables them to make good progress. When planning training, particular attention is paid to meeting the specific needs of individual learners. Their progress and welfare are given the highest priority and great attention is paid to ensuring that the service is excellent. Work with E2E learners who have been unemployed for many years is managed and organised particularly well and there is a very structured approach to eventual unsupported employment. Health and safety is given serious consideration to protect the health and well-being of learners and staff. The management of subcontractors has improved significantly since the previous inspection. More frequent and effective monitoring and communication takes place as well as structured two-weekly meetings of all partners, managers and supervisors.

19. As stated in the self-assessment report, internal communications are very effective. There is frequent and constructive informal communication within the company at all levels and regular frequent formal management and staff meetings. All formal meetings are minuted and have action points. Staff are well informed of developments and they are encouraged to contribute to improvements, initiatives and to share good practice. The company business plan includes objectives and targets that are clearly communicated to staff. Information is also made available to staff through the company newsletter, notice boards, the effective use of e-mail and a very well-developed intranet. There is a well-recorded and applied staff induction, appraisal and development system and this is highlighted in the self-assessment report. The induction covers general procedures and information, in addition to the requirements of the specific job role. Formal staff appraisals take place on an annual basis and these are very effective in analysing staff performance and in identifying individual training and development

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needs. Less formal reviews of staff help identify areas of concern at an early stage. Staff take ownership of personal action and development plans to monitor their progress. They also agree realistic and achievable targets for improving personal effectiveness with their managers. The Laird Foundation has a good commitment towards staff development and builds a culture of personal improvement and development. Staff are supported through appropriate in-house training or by providing financial assistance or time for employees to attend external courses.

20. The Laird Foundation has an effective and easily accessible management information system. This is used to manage all aspects of the training provision and staff performance. Good, detailed reports are produced on demand to analyse a wide range of information related to recruitment, learner progress and achievement, employer details and equal opportunities. The system is updated on a regular basis and is evaluated and further developed as part of an ongoing process.

21. There are very well-developed links and communications with a range of external agencies that benefit learners. Communication and contact with employers is frequent and employers appreciate the support and responsiveness of the staff from The Laird Foundation. The establishment of an employers' newsletter and employers' forum are useful additions to ensure further contact with employers. Close working with local industry allows The Laird Foundation to meet employers' additional learning needs for their workforce in addition the LSC contract. There are good links with local schools to develop the 14-16 and 16 plus vocational initiatives that allow pupils to access training at The Laird Foundation centre. The Laird Foundation works closely and effectively with Connexions to inform, recruit and support learners through their training. In addition, there are good links and working relationships with a wide range of support agencies such as social services, youth offending teams, and organisations linked to homelessness and other personal welfare issues.

22. The Laird Foundation manages its resources efficiently. The financial manager sets and monitors a realistic overall budget for the company. Staff are enthusiastic, experienced and display good levels of competence. Staffing levels are appropriate for the number of learners. Learning accommodation and resources used to support training at The Laird Foundation centre are very good, but several training rooms are under-used.

23. The approach to the identification and support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs has improved and is now satisfactory. All learners have their literacy, numeracy and language skills assessed, and where necessary, appropriate support is provided to enable learners to cope with the training programme and job role.

24. Retention and achievement rates in engineering and on the E2E programmes is improving. Strategies and targets have been put in place to improve retention and to increase the learners' progress towards achievement of the qualification. These strategies include the restructure of staffing and operational organisation, the appointment of new staff to support learners, closer monitoring and audit of review documents and greater focus on ensuring learners make continual progress towards

completing the requirements of their qualification. Since the previous inspection, there are very good improvements in the number of learners staying on the training programmes and learners are making better progress towards completing their qualification. At the conclusion of the reinspection this progress has increased the number of overall framework completions and more positive outcomes for E2E learners.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

25. The Laird Foundation effectively promotes equality of opportunity. Since the previous inspection, The Laird Foundation has produced a new clear, up-to-date strategy and policies and procedures covering all aspects of equality of opportunity. This information is displayed on notice boards, in a newly revised booklet and is available on the intranet for all learners and staff. A new equality and diversity group has been meeting since November 2004, working on some good new initiatives. An anti-bullying campaign has recently been launched, tied in with national and local initiatives. Learners and staff in the centre and partner organisations wear wristbands to support the initiative. Since the previous inspection, all staff have had updated training in equality and some have had good useful updates on particular topics such as the use of non-discriminatory language in training sessions. Equality of opportunity is covered well at induction. Learners take part in interesting activities which are linked to local resources to explore equality of opportunity. For instance, one group visited the maritime museum to look at the history of slavery and its links and legacy for the local area. Understanding of equality of opportunity is checked during reviews and some sessions using random questions. Useful questions have been devised and produced on a key ring device which is used effectively to explore equality of opportunity topics. Learners have a good understanding of equality topics, including harassment in the workplace and bullying.

26. Data on under-represented groups is collected and analysed. There are some good initiatives to widen participation, such as a project in which The Laird Foundation is taking part to increase the number of women in engineering, and there is a small increase in the number of women learners. The Laird Foundation also organises engineering awareness days in girls' schools in the area. A recent marketing campaign targeted learners from the Chinese community and materials have been produced in suitable languages. It is too early to see the impact of many of these initiatives. Access for learners with restricted mobility is poor in some of the partner premises but is satisfactory at The Laird Foundation centre. Some partners' training rooms are located up stairs and there are no plans to improve access at present. Resources for learners with visual or hearing impairment are available when needed.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 2**

27. Good initiatives and actions are in place to improve the quality of training. Quality assurance arrangements have strengthened considerably since the previous inspection and are now good. The Laird Foundation has comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures covering all aspects of company management and training activities. They are clearly written and are communicated to all staff. The monitoring of the quality of provision is good, as is the emphasis on ensuring continuous improvement. Effective systems are in place to ensure procedures are followed and that concerns are identified

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at an early stage and promptly resolved.

28. Staff are frequently observed in the delivery of training, assessment and the review. Detailed and useful feedback is given to staff on the quality of their work and where appropriate, development actions take place to deal with concerns. Training sessions for staff have included particular issues such as the use of language in training sessions. The monitoring of subcontractors is now much more effective. This involves observation of teaching, interviews with learners and detailed and thorough auditing of documents. Improvements in the quality of reviews and training sessions have been made. However, a few of these initiatives are very recent and it is too soon to see the full impact of them on the learners.

29. There is good use of feedback to influence improvements to the training provision. Learner feedback is gathered throughout the training programme. The responses are collated, analysed and actioned in order to improve the quality of provision for groups of learners and for individual requirements. In addition a learners' forum meets monthly to ensure that opinions and suggestions are put forward for consideration. Frequent surveys of employers take place to obtain feedback on how the provision can be improved. Responses are followed up by meetings, and appropriate actions are implemented. A recently established employers' forum is well attended. Staff are encouraged through surveys, meetings and reviews to contribute suggestions to improve the quality of provision and to share good practice across the organisation.

30. Targets are well used to monitor and improve training provision. Learner data is very well used to satisfy contractual requirements and to keep management informed. Since the previous inspection, data is being used to influence and improve the performance of the organisation and to form action plans to raise the standard of provision. Key performance indicators are now being used effectively. These include realistic targets for learners' progress, to allow for concerns to be identified and dealt with at an early stage.

31. The self-assessment procedures are now more detailed and thorough. Self-assessment has become part of an ongoing quality process. Analysis of all aspects of the training programme has improved the provision. The latest self-assessment report was produced in May 2005 for the final reinspection visit. Most staff involved in the management and delivery of training contributed to this process. The report and accompanying development plan highlighted many of the weaknesses and improvements which were identified at the reinspection.

32. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment planning and implementation is well organised and the recording procedures are thorough. Internal verification systems and practices are satisfactory. These involve effective sampling, observation and recording strategies that are standard across the occupational areas.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

### Grade 2

| Programmes inspected             | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Apprenticeships for young people | 104                | 2                  |

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

#### Strengths

- few early leavers
- good development of learners' skills
- very good resources
- well-managed training

#### Weaknesses

- some insufficiently challenging lessons

#### Achievement and standards

33. Few advanced apprentices leave the programme early. Between 2003 and 2005, all advanced apprentices have remained in learning. Staying on rates for apprentices are satisfactory. For the same period, 79 per cent of apprentices are still in learning. In 2003-04, 62 per cent remained in learning and in 2004-05, 92 per cent are still in learning. Thirty-five of these learners are employed and seven are on job trials with local employers.

34. The previous inspection identified that learners make slow progress towards completion of apprenticeship frameworks. Since then, 31 learners have completed the framework. Of these, 13 are advanced apprentices and 18 are apprentices. The achievement rate for the period between 2001 and 2005 is 23 per cent.

35. Overall, learner progress is satisfactory. Current learners are achieving NVQs and technical certificates as part of their framework. All learners take an NVQ in performing engineering operations at level 2, and so far, 55 per cent of this year's learners have achieved this qualification in the planned 25-week period. Key skills achievement is satisfactory. For example, 90 per cent of learners have passed level 2 key skills tests.

### **Quality of education and training**

36. Good opportunities are provided to develop learners' skills. The previous inspection identified that learners develop good practical skills for work and this is still the case.

Learners are given opportunities for skills training beyond the requirement of their frameworks. For example, welding and fabrication apprentices gain coded welding certificates to British standards. Some learners benefit from additional health and safety courses for slinging and scaffolding. The Laird Foundation sends groups of learners abroad on a European-funded project which gives them a unique opportunity to develop their social skills and work as part of a team. Learners achieve good practical skills in the centre and in the workplace. Some employers are supportive and sponsor learners on day release to take higher national qualifications at a local college. However, some opportunities to use the Laird Foundation's resources to enhance the learners' experience are not taken. Learners appreciate the support given to them by The Laird Foundation and their employers.

37. The standard of work in learners' portfolios varies from very good to poor, but is satisfactory overall. Opportunities to include engineering drawings and other relevant company documents are not always taken and some learners do not make use of photographic evidence.

38. There are very good resources at The Laird Foundation and this is identified in the self-assessment report. Modern, spacious training rooms are equipped with the latest IT equipment and are available to learners. For example, interactive white boards are used to deliver training in computer-aided design. There is a dry dock facility and heavy duty plate forming and cutting equipment, which enables learners to gain experience in skills that are unique to the ship building industry. A good range and quantity of industry standard welding and cutting equipment is used in the delivery of training.

39. Learners demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of key skills and how they fit into the framework. Key skills are an integral part of the NVQ and this is considered when planning jobs. Learners are encouraged to gather evidence for their NVQ units at an early stage. Portfolio documents are designed with key skills in mind and further development is planned in this area.

40. The previous inspection identified that assessment of learners' progress is not well communicated to them. However, measures which have been implemented since the previous inspection have improved this situation and learners are now fully aware of their progress. Learners understand the requirements of the framework and monitor and record their own progress.

41. Learners are allocated a work-based learning co-ordinator who is responsible for carrying out progress reviews, assessments and observations in the workplace. Reviews take place every 10-12 weeks and they are comprehensive and well recorded. Learners are set specific, measurable, realistic and time-related targets. Employers are involved in the review process and are kept informed of learners' progress.



42. Learners are given a thorough induction into health and safety after recruitment and this is reinforced throughout the training. They understand the need for personal protective equipment and use it when necessary. Health and safety instruction is given at all stages of off-the-job training. Employers pay good attention to health and safety, and safety awards celebrating safe working practices are displayed at many of the sites.

43. The different needs of learners are not always catered for. The delivery of skills training and technical training are satisfactory overall. Learning styles are analysed early in the programme, but the findings are not used routinely in lessons. In the poorer lessons, planning does not take into account the different rates at which learners work. Learners who complete tasks ahead of others are not challenged and have to wait for others to finish. Tutors use a variety of teaching methods to engage the learners.

### **Leadership and management**

44. Training is well managed. Assessments, progress reviews and internal verification are effectively planned and monitored. The previous inspection identified inadequate planning of the learning programmes but training is now well planned. A chart is published each month to identify the responsibilities of all teaching staff. There is a detailed timetable of their teaching and verification duties. This is held in the learning centre where it can be viewed by staff and learners. The monitoring of learners' progress is effective. Communication has improved and the database provides an accurate record of learners' progress. Data which is needed to update the system is gathered at progress reviews. Targets for overall framework completion are set and reviewed at management meetings. There is good communication within The Laird Foundation and with employers. The Laird Foundation hosts events where employers can celebrate learners' achievements with their families and staff. Employers appreciate the enthusiasm of the staff and the well-organised approach to training and support for learners.

45. The self-assessment report reflects the findings of the inspection team and employers have contributed to it through questionnaires. Staff development is satisfactory. All staff have an annual performance appraisal and are given the opportunity for development training. The previous inspection identified weaknesses in the quality assurance of internal verification and assessment but these concerns have been resolved. Satisfactory standards are now in place and are operating effectively.

**Foundation programmes**

**Grade 3**

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Entry to Employment  | 144                | 3                  |

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

**Strengths**

- effective links with external agencies to provide support for learners
- good management of the E2E provision

**Weaknesses**

- weak use of the E2E Passport by some providers
- insufficient qualified staff

**Achievement and standards**

46. Progression from the E2E programme is satisfactory. At the previous inspection, progression from E2E to work-based learning, further education or employment was low at 33 per cent. For the period between August 2004 and May 2005 this has increased to 44 per cent. Forty per cent of these positive outcomes are into employment, 15 per cent into employment with training, 9 per cent into further education and 36 per cent into work-based learning. However, progression across the partnership varies between zero to 59 per cent. Retention is also satisfactory with an average retention rate for the same period of 77 per cent, with a variation of 61 per cent to 85 per cent for current partners. The average length of stay on programme is 22 weeks. At the time of the previous inspection there were no achievements for literacy, numeracy or key skills, but since May 2004, 42 learners have achieved the communication key skill at level 1 and 31 have achieved application of number at level 1. Fifty three per cent of learners have achieved their learning aims as stated in their E2E Passport. The standard of learners' work is also satisfactory. In one particularly good lesson, learners who were preparing route cards for an expedition as part of their Duke of Edinburgh bronze award were able to identify grid references, recognise features on a map and calculate directions, distances and time taken.

**Quality of education and training**

47. There are effective links with external organisations to provide support for learners, and this was recognised at the previous inspection. A network of personal support agencies has continued to be developed to enable all partners to provide support for learners throughout the programme. For example, links with Connexions are particularly strong for careers guidance, and the youth offending team assists with team building and

anger management. Other agencies concerned with housing and counselling help learners with accommodation problems and provide support in dealing with abuse, bereavement or lack of confidence. Learners regularly visit outside attractions or benefit from guest speakers. They also visit a well-resourced outdoor pursuits centre for team building and problem solving activities.

48. Training is satisfactory on the E2E programmes. Staff have good working relationships with learners and are particularly attentive to their needs. Lesson plans are detailed, but do not always state objectives or indicate how learning outcomes are to be achieved. Theory lessons focus on activities and include regular checks of learning. Monitoring of progress is a feature of most classes, although targeted questioning to involve quieter learners is not always used effectively. Some lessons are slow in pace and are not challenging. Learning materials are well produced and at an appropriate level. In the better classes, activities are linked to appropriate key skills. For example, in one sport class, learners recorded their own fitness levels as the basis for an application of number lesson when the information would be collated and produced in graph and chart form. Learners are interested and motivated in lessons and use their time effectively.

49. At the previous inspection there was insufficient development of the literacy and numeracy and vocational strands of the programme. However, the planning and delivery of the E2E curriculum is now satisfactory and meets the needs of learners. All three strands of E2E are now delivered across all six partners. A number of additional qualifications, such as first aid, health and safety and a basic computer course, are also offered. However, there is still insufficient opportunity to follow accredited vocational qualifications and some learners have not been able to access work experience in their chosen vocational area.

50. Support for learners is satisfactory. Most of the partners are located in small supportive environments where learners clearly feel secure. Learners report that staff are friendly, helpful and supportive. There is also good peer support and no examples of anti-social behaviour among learners. Inappropriate language is usually challenged and one partner has a 'badging' system to try to discourage such behaviour. However, a few learners have been on programme with some partners for a long time and these learners are unclear as to what the short- or long-term future holds for them.

51. The use of the E2E Passport is weak by some providers. At the previous inspection the planning of individual learning programmes and the quality of progress reviews were weaknesses. Although there has been significant progress in this area, the use of the E2E Passport is still weak. In a few cases, initial assessment summaries are incomplete, yet key objectives have been identified. In other learner records, key objectives are not sufficiently tailored to individual needs. Target-setting remains too general in some reviews and a few learners do not fully understand the purpose of the activity plan.

52. Insufficient numbers of staff are qualified to deliver E2E training. Some staff have attended training to support teaching and learning and to improve the standard and consistency of the E2E Passport. In particular, staff have been encouraged to work

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towards teaching qualifications. However, 15 of the 27 staff across the partnership still do not have a recognised teaching qualification.

### **Leadership and management**

53. Curriculum management for the E2E programme is good. A new E2E delivery model was introduced in November 2004 to cover all partners. This identifies clear lines of communication and specific quality assurance schedules. Shortcomings in the provision and in terms of monitoring partners have been recognised and a variety of remedial measures are being taken. External support and guidance from appropriate sources has been used to assist in this process. Much of the staff training is made available to E2E partners to share good practice and improve consistency. Observations of teaching and learning are now routine and the process has been standardised by external observation. Since the previous inspection, the self-assessment report has improved and it now reflects the strengths and weaknesses which were identified at reinspection. Learners' views are noted and improvements are made, such as the introduction of vending machines, a better clock in the canteen and more external activities.

54. Equality of opportunity is well promoted and understood by learners. Learners can recall the equality and diversity training at induction. They are regularly questioned at reviews and demonstrate an awareness of rights and responsibilities. The management of accommodation and resources is satisfactory across the partnership. Classrooms are comfortable and are often enhanced by a variety of wall displays. IT facilities are available to support learning. The Laird Foundation is particularly well resourced in terms of its vocational training areas and discrete areas for the delivery of literacy, numeracy and key skills. These are spacious, well-laid out and have ample computers and interactive whiteboards.