

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **The Employee Development Forum Limited**

**16 December 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## 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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## The Employee Development Forum Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Employee Development Forum Limited (The EDF) was founded in 1998 to provide a range of training and development programmes in Sussex. The company has its headquarters in Horsham and is owned and managed by its managing director. There are eight other team members, of whom six are associates of the company.

2. Learners are on engineering and manufacturing technologies learning programmes. All off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges. Apprenticeship training is funded through a contract with the Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The EDF had a subcontracting arrangement with a large national training provider, but this has now ceased. None of the learners from this subcontractor are included in this report, and the published data excludes them from previous years.

3. In July 2005, the unemployment rate in Sussex was 1.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.3 per cent. In Horsham the unemployment rate is 1 per cent and in some coastal areas of Sussex, such as Hastings and Eastbourne, the rate is 3 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively. Twenty-four per cent of the unemployed are aged under 25. Most schools in the area perform well above the national average and participation in work-based learning is low.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Engineering and manufacturing technologies programmes are good. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are good. Quality improvement is satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Staff and learners are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The managing director has overall responsibility for the report. Each member of staff is responsible for assessing an aspect of the provision and the findings are discussed at specific team meetings. Although the report is sufficiently thorough, some weaknesses identified in the previous inspection remain and were not identified through self-assessment.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Retention rates have risen steadily for the past few years. Achievement rates on level 2 apprenticeships are good. Key skills are introduced at the start of learners' programmes and success rates are improving. There are good examples of effective strategies for improvement in the recruitment and selection process and in health and safety. Many of the actions derived from the previous inspection report have been completed. The monitoring of individual learner progress is frequent and sets clear targets. Prompt and effective action is taken when problems are identified.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT FORUM LIMITED:

- improve retention and achievement rates
- continue to maintain the range and quality of provision
- improve assessment of and support for learners' additional needs
- further develop progression routes
- continue to develop quality assurance systems

## GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Engineering</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	22	2	
NVQ training for young people	2	2	
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	16	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Two inspectors spent four days at The EDF in December 2005. They visited learners at work and in college, and observed assessment. They also interviewed partners and staff and looked at learners' work. They visited the Camelia Botnar Foundation where The EDF provides assessment and key skills accreditation for apprentices.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	16
Number of staff interviewed	7
Number of employers interviewed	7
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	4
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

8. **Achievement rates for manufacturing apprentices are good.** Retention and achievement rates for advanced apprentices starting in 1999 and 2000 were high at over 85 per cent. The achievement rate for the small number of engineering apprentices is poor. Retention rates are good overall.

9. **Learners produce a high standard of work.** They produce a wide range of products and carry out a variety of tasks to a very high standard. Throughout the programmes learners develop a good understanding of the demands of the workplace.

10. **Most learners achieve additional qualifications beyond those required for the framework.** Many complete extra key skills and take college courses at a higher level than required.

### The quality of provision

11. **The EDF provides a very flexible range of programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers.** One programme has been specifically designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people employed by a charitable foundation. The EDF effectively matches learners to suitable vacancies with good employers where they can learn a wide range of manufacturing and production skills.

12. **Support for learners is good.** Learners receive both financial and practical assistance. Some have attended trips to industry exhibitions. Several companies make effective use of peer mentoring. All learners are provided with a range of support and coaching from The

EDF's and employers' staff.

13. There is insufficient planning and co-ordination of some aspects of the provision. Some learners at the end of their programme have not completed work on employees' rights and responsibilities. A number of employers do not know what learners do at college. In a few companies there is insufficient involvement of learners' supervisors in the reviews of progress.

14. **There is insufficient standardisation of assessment practices.** No meetings are held for assessors and internal verifiers to share good assessment practice. Internal verifiers do not regularly observe assessors. There is insufficient assessment of learners' competency by observation.

### **Leadership and management**

15. **The EDF makes good use of networks and partnerships.** It is closely involved with local and regional strategies to promote training in engineering and manufacturing. The EDF takes a leading role in many local consultative bodies. The good working relationships with colleges and employers are based on mutual respect and understanding.

16. **There is good development of opportunities to widen participation in learning.** Recruitment processes specifically identify and target under-represented groups. Frequent presentations to parents, learners, schools and stakeholders raise awareness and promote opportunities for young people. A young apprenticeship scheme is developing excellent work skills and opportunities for progression. The partnership with the charity enables disaffected learners to gain accreditation for the good skills they develop, and provides key skills support.

17. Staff meetings are used well to set clear action points. The EDF distributes information and guidance to learners and employers. Assessors visit learners frequently throughout their programme. Complaints and grievances are resolved promptly, efficiently and openly. A useful website contains a range of helpful reference materials.

18. The self-assessment process is consultative and inclusive. It is rigorous and detailed with a good range of supporting evidence. Individual members of staff take responsibility for sections of the report. Effective plans are developed and actions are regularly monitored and modified.

19. There are some effective strategies for improvement, particularly in the recruitment and selection process and in health and safety. Many of the actions derived from the previous inspection report have been completed. Audits of files and processes are thorough and regular.

20. **Quality assurance systems are insufficiently developed.** Although there is a comprehensive quality assurance manual, not all procedures are up to date. Gaps in quality assurance have not identified some of the weaknesses in the occupational area. Learner information is inconsistently recorded.



## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- particularly good use of networks and partnerships
- good use of information to support learning
- good development of opportunities to widen participation in learning

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient management of skills for life
- insufficiently developed quality assurance systems

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### *Strengths*

- good achievement of apprenticeships in manufacturing
- high standard of learners' work
- good achievement of additional qualifications
- very flexible range of programmes meeting learner and employer needs
- good support for learners

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning and co-ordination of some aspects of the provision
- insufficient recording of engineering learners' additional learning needs
- insufficient standardisation of assessment practice

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT FORUM LIMITED:**

- the support provided by staff - 'any problem can be raised and sorted out straight away'
- working in manufacturing - 'I love my job'
- 'getting paid to learn and gaining valuable experience'
- learning new skills

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT FORUM LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the amount of written work - 'there's too much'
- would like a manual for the whole programme
- the relevance of key skills to the workplace

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- particularly good use of networks and partnerships
- good use of information to support learning
- good development of opportunities to widen participation in learning

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient management of skills for life
- insufficiently developed quality assurance systems

21. The company makes particularly good use of networks and partnerships. Although The EDF is a small company, it is closely involved with local and regional strategies to promote engineering training. It takes a leading role in the Sussex council of training providers and the Engineering Alliance. It has strong and long-standing working relationships with employer networks, which it uses effectively to place apprentices in appropriate working environments. A clear and concise service level agreement with the employer defines responsibilities and expectations for all parties. Working relationships with colleges are productive. The EDF monitors learners' performance closely when they are on block release and works well with college managers to take swift action whenever issues arise. Arrangements for numeracy support at one college have been changed following intervention by The EDF. The EDF is the leading private provider in the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) consortium in partnership with three local colleges. It also works with one college on a young apprenticeship pilot scheme. Staff attend national meetings of the awarding bodies and the sector skills council. Partnerships with experienced and occupationally competent associates enable the provision of training, assessment, advice and guidance. Most are also practitioners with their own companies. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and make efficient use of their expertise. Management is open and collaborative with frequent informal discussion backed up by regular meetings. Clearly recorded minutes have precisely assigned actions that are followed up. Although staff are not permanently employed, they have an annual appraisal, based on self-assessment, to produce a development plan that includes appropriate training.

22. There is good use of information to support learning. A well-designed summary, listing every learner's status, forms the centre of a well-co-ordinated monitoring system. Data is managed well and easy to access. Staff have a clear understanding of each learner's programme and progress. Learners' files are regularly updated through frequent reviews throughout the programme. Each learner's programme is specifically designed to match their job role using information from screening and careful discussion with the employer. A good understanding of the sector and a long-standing relationship with employers contribute strongly to this process. The EDF has a strong ethos of service to the client. It uses detailed knowledge of the provision at local colleges to ensure its own provision meets learners' needs. Advice and guidance is available to learners through a wide range of mechanisms. The EDF website provides good information about the programmes and

has links to useful additional resources. Staff are highly responsive in supporting learners with visits, phone calls and e-mails. Communication with employers is good. They are well informed and involved in learning. The EDF provides helpful assistance and advice about employers' own training.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

23. The development of opportunities to widen participation in learning is good. A partnership with the Camelia Botnar Foundation provides disadvantaged and disaffected learners with the opportunity to accredit their skills in manufacturing. These learners also benefit from a key skills specialist on site employed by The EDF. One of these learners recently won two regional awards for his work. The EDF actively promotes engineering apprenticeships to a wide range of groups. Its recruitment adviser has good experience of working with schools and carries out regular visits. Presentations about the provision are carried out in schools and careers conventions across Sussex. Apprentices accompany the recruitment adviser to some venues. For example, a female apprentice visited her old school to help encourage other girls into engineering. A new strategy focuses particularly on schools in less affluent areas. The EDF offers aptitude testing close to home for interested pupils so that they are not discouraged by having to travel to a test centre. A helpful and informative new leaflet for pupils and parents explains the test and how the programme can benefit young people. A small and highly successful young apprenticeship scheme is developing excellent skills in school children through a partnership with Sussex Downs College. The EDF is leading an initiative to provide a clearing house for engineering apprentices in the region through the Sussex Council of Training Providers. Two CoVE bids, in association with local colleges, have passed the initial stages of acceptance. These will generate a diverse variety of new opportunities to develop engineering skills both regionally and nationally. One of The EDF's roles in this process is to ensure that recruitment to these programmes is fully inclusive.

24. The equality of opportunity policy is clear and concise with references to the most relevant legislation. It emphasises strongly the duty of care of an employer and the implications of non-compliance. Its language is too complex for some learners, but the induction process and the review process ensure that the policy is fully explained and understood. There are systematic and effective procedures to check that employers understand their responsibilities. Before The EDF signs up an employer, a rigorous and thorough health and safety audit is carried out, as well as quality assurance of the employer's equality of opportunity procedures and the suitability of the opportunity offered. The EDF offers employers assistance and advice if they do not have equality of opportunity policies. However, if there is any doubt about suitability, the work placement is not pursued. Employers that take on apprentices sign a thorough and detailed service level agreement including a commitment to safeguard health and safety and a clear definition of rights and responsibilities. Any issues raised by learners during progress reviews are clearly recorded and followed up with employers. All learners are given good support and encouragement to enhance their qualifications and many exceed the requirements of their framework. One employer has an effective apprentice forum that meets regularly to openly debate issues with The EDF and the workplace supervisor.

25. The EDF promotes equality of opportunity in its marketing materials. A periodic newsletter has features celebrating achievement and raising awareness of health and safety and employment law. In 2004, The EDF commissioned training on equality of opportunity legislation. All employers and learners were invited and a number attended alongside The

EDF's staff. Another session is planned for spring 2006.

26. There are effective policies to deal with complaints, bullying and harassment. Issues are tackled promptly with clear and open discussion of outcomes. Learners are fully informed and consulted about actions and approaches to remedy the situation. The EDF acts as an effective advocate and intermediary for learners. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is generally good. However, some are not aware of the appeals procedure.

27. Information about applicants and learners is regularly analysed by demographic groups. There are few minority ethnic or female learners. However, the analysis is used in self-assessment and planning, particularly in targeting recruitment campaigns. Analysis has identified the need for additional support at one partner and this is now in place.

28. Management of skills for life is insufficient. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. This weakness was identified in the previous self-assessment report. Manufacturing learners at the Camelia Botnar Foundation are individually supported by a specialist. However, recruitment screening for engineers is not adequate. It measures learners' aptitude and numeracy skills to some extent but there is no diagnosis of literacy needs. Learners receive some support but this is not recorded or managed. Some learners experience delays in identifying and dealing with numeracy and literacy support needs.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

29. The self-assessment process is rigorous and detailed. Individual members of staff take responsibility for sections of the report. Effective plans are developed and actions are regularly monitored and modified. Key performance indicators for the business and for individuals are set and monitored in team and individual meetings. Although all staff are employed as independent contractors they have an annual review and appraisal to identify their development needs. Staff training is planned to support business development and learners' needs. Feedback from learners and employers is regularly analysed and contributes to the self-assessment process. Thorough analysis of feedback is communicated through a newsletter. Prompt action is taken when issues are identified either individually or generically. There are good examples of effective strategies for improvement in the recruitment and selection process and in health and safety. Many of the actions derived from the previous inspection report have been completed. Audits of files and processes are thorough and regular. Checklists for these have been recently revised to improve their coverage.

30. The EDF regularly attends awarding body and LSC meetings to share and develop good practice. Presentations for Connexions staff and information to school careers advisers on engineering programmes have improved the quality of advice and guidance available to young people in the region. The EDF is collaborating in two CoVE bids which have recently received outline approval. These have a remit to spread good practice locally and nationally and to provide good-quality progression routes for learners.

31. Quality assurance systems are insufficiently developed. The quality assurance adviser has only recently been employed. There is a comprehensive set of procedures, but some are out of date. Some procedures are not always applied effectively. The basic skills weakness, identified in the previous inspection, is still evident. Information about learners is

used effectively to ensure the programme matches learners' needs and to monitor their progress. However, it is inconsistently recorded and reported. Some reports are not analysed accurately. For example, achievement rates are compared with the number of learners who started, but not against their previous qualification aim. Gaps in quality assurance have not identified some weaknesses. Although there are regular audits of the college subcontracts, some issues have not been formally identified. The subcontractor audit is focused on processes, but not on the quality of learning. The quality assurance adviser visits classes to assess the standard of teaching. However, the visits are short and records are not sufficiently detailed. There is no systematic check on the planning of learning. The EDF does not receive information from the college's own observation processes. College and The EDF's self-assessment processes are not shared, nor is the feedback that each analyses from learners. However, progress reviews are regular and frequent throughout learners' programmes, including periods of block release, so individual progress is monitored rigorously. Issues of poor performance by learners or the college are dealt with effectively. For example, The EDF supported one learner by persuading the college to extend a deadline for an assignment.

32. The self-assessment process is effective and incorporates staff ideas and suggestions. Plans have clear business objectives with well-defined responsibilities and outcomes. Inspectors agreed with the grades in the self-assessment report. However, they judged some of the strengths to be no more than normal practice and identified additional weaknesses.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Engineering</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	22	2
NVQ training for young people	2	2
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	16	2

33. Currently, there are 40 learners, of whom 24 are on engineering apprenticeship programmes, 16 are on manufacturing apprenticeship programmes, and two are on national vocational qualification (NVQ) only programmes in engineering. There are 14 manufacturing apprentices, employed by a local charitable foundation and working towards performing manufacturing operations qualifications, and two manufacturing advanced apprentices, employed by large national company and working towards qualifications in business improvement techniques. In engineering, there are 18 advanced apprentices, four apprentices and two NVQ learners employed by a variety of small local companies and locally based national engineering and manufacturing companies. They are working towards a variety of qualifications in engineering production, engineering maintenance, mechanical manufacturing and technical services. Most training takes place at work and learners attend one of three local colleges for teaching in background knowledge for the NVQ and a relevant technical certificate. The EDF provides assessment for the NVQ and key skills at work for most learners. The EDF's assessors visit learners regularly either at work or during their block-release period at college.

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of apprenticeships in manufacturing
- high standard of learners' work
- good achievement of additional qualifications
- very flexible range of programmes meeting learner and employer needs
- good support for learners

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning and co-ordination of some aspects of the provision
- insufficient recording of engineering learners' additional learning needs
- insufficient standardisation of assessment practice

### Achievement and standards

34. Achievement rates for manufacturing apprentices are good. In 2002-03 approximately two-thirds of apprentices completed their frameworks. Only one of the apprentices who started in 2003-04 left early. Four have already achieved their qualification and the other four have nearly completed their framework. Retention of learners who started on all

programmes since August 2004 is good. Only one has left early with the rest still in learning and making good progress. Retention and achievement rates on the advanced apprenticeship programmes were high at over 85 per cent in 1999-2000 and 2000-01. However, in the three years between 2001 and 2004, the number of advanced apprentices recruited was low and almost half have left the programme early. Those who remain are making good progress. The achievement rate for the five foundation apprentices in engineering who started before 2003 was poor. None completed the framework, although several completed their NVQ.

35. The standard of learners' work is high. Learners produce a wide range of products, or carry out a variety of tasks, to a very high standard. They start on simple jobs and tasks and progress to more complex operations and products. As they progress, they develop a wide range of skills to a good industrial and commercial standard. Throughout the programmes learners develop a good understanding of the demands of the workplace and confidence in various roles. One learner won two awards in 2005, as young craftsman of the year, at a national show, and young apprentice of the year.

36. Many learners achieve additional qualifications beyond those required for the framework. Manufacturing apprentices usually do all five key skills when only two are required for the apprenticeship framework. Many learners complete key skills at a higher level than that required. Many learners attend college to gain additional qualifications to improve their skills and increase their range of knowledge. College courses are often at a higher level than that required for the framework. Several employers provide in-house training and externally accredited courses such as health and safety and manual handling. However, these additional qualifications are not recorded in learners' individual learning plans.

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

Advanced apprenticeships	LSC funded work-based learning															
	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-00			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		6		10		5		1	100	7	100	8	100		
Retained*	0		0		0		1		0	0	6	86	7	88		
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0		0	0	6	86	7	88		
Still in learning	6		6		5		3		0	0	0	0	0	0		

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



LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		8		9		5	100	1	100	2	100				
Retained*	0		0		5		4	80	0	0	2	100				
Successfully completed	0		0		4		2	40	0	0	0	0				
Still in learning	7		7		4		0	0	0	0	0	0				

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	16		7	100	23	100										
Retained*	7		5	71	13	57										
Successfully completed	3		5	71	12	52										
Still in learning	2		0	0	0	0										

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

## The quality of provision

37. The EDF provides a very flexible range of programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers. A wide range of NVQs within the frameworks is selected through effective work with employers to match the provision to their own needs and the technical certificate requirements. Each learner has an individually negotiated programme to match their job role. For example, the manufacturing apprenticeship programme in industrial applications has been specifically designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people employed by a charitable foundation, through residential training and work experience in blacksmithing and woodwork.

38. Support for learners is good and includes a range of support and coaching from The EDF's staff, experienced machine operators, workplace supervisors and managers. Manufacturing learners have weekly meetings with a key skills support specialist. At one company, learners have formed an apprentice forum to discuss and review the programme with their training manager and an assessor from The EDF. The EDF's staff visit learners regularly and review their progress every four to six weeks. Learners are set clear targets stating what they need to achieve for the next visit. Manufacturing apprentices have weekly individual meetings with a key skills tutor. Several companies make effective use of peer mentoring. Employers provide learners with a wide range of appropriate tasks to carry out or products to make to improve their skills. Many employers adjust learners' work schedules so that they have time to study. Employers support learners to extend their studies and offer additional travel allowances so that they can attend those colleges that offer relevant courses. Employers provide personal protective equipment. Workplace supervisors help learners collect evidence. Some learners have attended trips to industry exhibitions. For example, one group of learners went to Barcelona to learn more about architectural wrought ironwork. Workplace supervisors provide good support to learners at work and The EDF's assessors provide on-site training where appropriate. A few employers

are aware of the need to develop a more structured on-the-job training programme.

39. Employers provide a good variety of learning environments and include small specialist manufacturing companies and divisions of large multi-nationals. Some employers encourage learners to take additional courses to gain additional skills. A number of employers have well-planned and well-structured on-the-job training programmes and move learners around different jobs and departments to develop and improve their skills.

40. Inspectors were not able to observe any off-the-job training in colleges. This is monitored regularly by The EDF. Effective action by The EDF to take over some unsuccessful college key skills provision has enabled a few learners to progress. However, this has delayed the completion of this part of the framework.

41. There is insufficient planning and co-ordination of some aspects of the provision. Several learners who are nearing the end of their programme have not yet completed their work on employee rights and responsibilities. Some employers do not effectively co-ordinate learners' training to help them practise what they learn at college. They have a poor understanding of what learners are doing at college and of when they will learn specific topics. While employers are always represented at progress reviews, in a few companies there is insufficient involvement of learners' workplace supervisors. Some employers conduct their own reviews of learners' progress and these are not routinely shared with The EDF.

42. Insufficient recording of engineering learners' additional learning needs takes place. Manufacturing learners are recruited by their employer and are very carefully monitored and supported on every aspect of their development. The EDF carries out selection tests and an interview with potential engineering learners before matching them to suitable employers. However, although The EDF and employers are aware that some learners need additional support with some aspects of their programme, these additional learning needs are not recorded on their individual learning plans. Those who need additional support receive some assistance, but this is not always delivered at the most appropriate point in their programme.

### **Leadership and management**

43. Good links are established with employers and communications are generally effective. The EDF respond well to employers' and learners' requests for information and support. Learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and this is reinforced during progress reviews.

44. There is insufficient standardisation of assessment practices. The newly appointed quality assurance manager is planning to carry out standardisation meetings with staff. Regular and thorough sampling of learners' portfolios meets the verification requirements of the awarding body. Meetings discuss each learner's progress and audits of paperwork are thorough and are followed up. However, the meetings do not allow assessors and internal verifiers to share good assessment practice. Internal verifiers do not observe assessors regularly to give feedback on their assessment practices. There is insufficient assessment of learners' competency by observation. Some learners do not know when or how they will be assessed. Some learners are not aware of the appeal procedures.

