

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **British Printing Industries Federation**

**09 June 2006**



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
- **learn**direct 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**

## **British Printing Industries Federation**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF) describes itself as 'the business support organisation dedicated to improving the efficiency and profitability of companies in the printing, packaging and graphic communications industry'. One of its three main activities is in providing publicly and commercially funded training and assessment within the printing industry.
2. Training covers pre-press, desktop publishing, machine printing, mechanised print finishing and binding, print administration, carton manufacture, hand binding and envelope manufacture. At the time of the inspection, just over 400 learners employed by companies throughout England were training in printing, machine print finishing or carton manufacturing. It is this group who were the subject of the inspection.
3. The organisation contracts with the Learning and Skills Council's National Contracts Service to deliver its publicly funded training. All learners are employed in the printing industry, and most training and assessment takes place in the workplace where learners work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs), and in many cases advanced apprenticeships, in their chosen specialism.
4. The BPIF has a head office in London, and six regional business centres, with 80 staff. Of these, 24 are currently employed to deliver and support training. The organisation's training function is administered from the centre at Coventry, while the training co-ordinators and most managers are home based.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

#### Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies, and more specifically in printing, is good. Overall, leadership and management are good. Quality improvement and equality of opportunity are satisfactory.
6. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The BPIF self-assessment report, which was published in March 2006, draws upon a good range of evidence. Staff are appropriately consulted in its development. The report provides good contextual information to support its judgements. Many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were supported by the inspection team, although inspectors noted some additional weaknesses. Inspectors graded printing, and leadership and management overall, higher than in the self-assessment report.
7. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** Good progress has been made since the reinspection in 2003 in improving the quality of the provision. Advanced apprenticeship success rates have improved recently, and most learners are now making good progress. The success rates for the small number of apprentices have not improved. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the delivery

and attainment of key skills. Quality assurance which was inadequate in 2003, is now satisfactory. The organisation at all levels appropriately recognises that further improvement is necessary, and is planning suitable actions to achieve this.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR BRITISH PRINTING INDUSTRIES FEDERATION:

- continue the improvement in learner success rates
- provide more challenge for learners at reviews
- continue to improve aspects of quality assurance
- improve the promotion of equality and diversity to learners and employers

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Printing</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	276	2	
NVQ training for adults	140	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. BPIF was reinspected in October 2003. At that time, all aspects were satisfactory, other than quality assurance which was inadequate. The organisation received a one-day quality monitoring inspection in March 2005. Both reports, together with information from the provider performance report, the latest BPIF self-assessment report and additional information provided by the organisation, were used to plan the inspection. Planning took into account the wide geographical spread of learners across England, with inspectors visiting workplaces in the Northeast, the Northwest, the Southeast and Midlands regions.

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	35
Number of learners interviewed	59
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of employers interviewed	18
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	30

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

9. **Most learners make good progress.** A few demonstrate outstanding progress and are well ahead of their planned completion dates. Learners are well on target with their NVQ work.

10. **Learners produce good standards of practical work.** Advanced apprentices meet production quality requirements and are often responsible for the operation of complex machines and small teams of operatives before the end of their apprenticeships.

11. **Learners are well motivated and some are particularly flexible and multi-skilled** to a degree beyond that of more experienced colleagues. They show good awareness of the world of work.

12. Overall achievement on the apprenticeship programmes is now satisfactory. Overall framework completions for the first 10 months of 2005-06 are just over 50 per cent. This is a significant improvement from 2003-04 when framework achievement were low at some 35 per cent. Success rates for the small number of apprentices remain poor.

13. The success rate for adults taking NVQs was good in 2004-05, with 72 per cent achieving the qualification.

### The quality of provision

14. **Learners receive particularly effective support from training co-ordinators.** Their visits to learners are regular and timely, flexibly recognising and meeting learner and workplace needs. There is often particularly good individual support to develop learners' knowledge and understanding. Significantly fewer learners now leave the programme early.

15. **The training meets the needs of the learners.** Programmes are well structured and fulfil employers and learners' needs. Learners value learning in the workplace.

16. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory and some is good. **On-the-job training is good.** Frequent and well-supported training from mentors and other colleagues takes place on the production floor.

17. The delivery of the technical certificate is generally satisfactory, but there are some instances of training co-ordinator sessions which are overly led. Most learners show good understanding of their learning, but some are not confident enough to explain the theory elements of their work.

18. Assessment is generally satisfactory. All learners have initial assessment and diagnostic testing that are used effectively. There are good arrangements at some employers for workplace assessment but, in others, there is an over-reliance on expert witnesses, who are not always qualified.

19. The involvement of workplace supervisors in the review process is mostly satisfactory, but a minority of supervisors are not involved at all. Their involvement is just seen as a signing-off process.

20. **In many reviews there is insufficient challenge for learners.** Reviews are frequently directed and led by training co-ordinators. Many do not extend opportunities for learning. Reviews place too much emphasis on completing documents.

### Leadership and management

21. **BPIF has good and well-established partnerships with a wide range of employers.** Many are prestigious companies with sophisticated equipment and very good working conditions.

22. **Leadership and management are good.** Strong leadership at BPIF is motivating and managing staff well to raise standards in training. Senior management have successfully restructured the organisation to improve the quality of provision.

23. **Board members monitor training performance closely.** They set challenging goals for further improving apprenticeship framework completion rates. The retention and achievement rates for advanced apprentices have improved.

24. **The management of change is effective,** combined with the awareness by staff at all levels that further improvements need to be made.

25. **The use of data to manage the provision has improved since the reinspection, and**



**is now good throughout the organisation.** Good systems are in place to identify and support learners who are at risk of leaving early.

**26. BPIF has good partnerships to promote and support learning.** The organisation's role as a trade association with the print industry has enabled it to build and maintain close links the employers to plan training. BPIF's strategic planning is clearly focused, and provides detailed industry background and direction for the training, and its role within the print industry.

**27. There has been a significant improvement in framework success rates in the past year.** At the reinspection in 2003, leadership and management and the area of learning were satisfactory. Both aspects are now good. Quality assurance was inadequate in 2003, but the management of quality improvement is now satisfactory.

**28. Systems for monitoring learners' performance are used well across the wide geographical area covered by BPIF.** Information managers respond quickly to present relevant current information.

**29. All sites apply rigorous health and safety procedures,** and assessors promote and reinforce health and safety well as part of the NVQ. Workplace sites are well organised and provide good and, in many cases, excellent working environments.

**30. Resources are deployed adequately for learners.** Learners have access to all the relevant resources needed to complete their programmes of training.

**31.** Communication is satisfactory in an organisation where most staff are home based. BPIF uses local, regional and national meetings to communicate and discuss operational matters at senior level and regionally. Procedures and directives are implemented well. Minutes of meetings are detailed and clear action is recorded.

**32.** BPIF has made satisfactory progress in making improvements since the reinspection in 2003. Success rates for advanced apprentices, initial assessment and the development of learners' key skills have all improved. Strengths identified in 2003 have largely been maintained.

**33.** The self-assessment report is clear and provides good contextual information to support its judgements. The report is suitably critical. Inspectors graded the area of learning, and leadership and management, higher than in the self-assessment report.

**34.** Quality improvement planning is satisfactory. The plan clearly identifies key operational actions to improve quality. Quality assurance policies and procedures are satisfactory.

**35.** Recruitment procedures are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and have good industry experience. They have a wide range of training and commercial experience. Appropriate targets are set for staff, and they are suitably monitored by managers.

**36.** Internal verification is adequate. Assessment is planned and carried out regularly and with sufficient frequency. Most external verifier reports are positive. There is good support for assessors who are now more confident in supporting the development of key

skills. Achievement of key skills by learners has improved.

**37. BPIF has made slow progress in a few areas of quality improvement.** Success rates in advanced apprenticeships have only significantly improved in the last year, and success rates remain poor for apprentices. The average length of time being taken by some learners to complete BPIF programmes is still too long. Actions planned following the 2003 reinspection are only now having a positive effect.

**38. Aspects of the quality assurance of training are weak.** There are regular standardisation meetings, but there is no overview of internal verification activity to assure that all units are sampled over time. The frequency of feedback collection from learners is insufficient and the response rate from learners is low. The questionnaire has too many closed questions.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- strong leadership to raise standards
- good use of data to manage the provision
- good partnerships to promote and support learning

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in a few areas of quality improvement
- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Printing***

#### *Strengths*

- good progress
- good standards of practical work
- particularly effective support from training co-ordinators
- wide range of particularly good employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for many learners in reviews
- weak aspects of quality assurance

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT BRITISH PRINTING INDUSTRIES FEDERATION:**

- 'the different types of work that I'm given'
- good career prospects
- 'always feeling well supported, more than I could have wished for'
- on-site training which is relevant to the job
- 'working with people from other companies'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK BRITISH PRINTING INDUSTRIES FEDERATION COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'some of the written work doesn't always make sense'
- 'some of the training is like being back at school'
- 'sometimes things are too slow. I'll be retired before I finish this course'
- 'we often have to repeat work'
- too much self-teaching and online learning

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- strong leadership to raise standards
- good use of data to manage the provision
- good partnerships to promote and support learning

#### Weaknesses

- slow progress in a few areas of quality improvement
- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity

39. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership at BPIF is motivating and managing staff well to raise standards in training. Senior management have successfully restructured the organisation to improve the quality of provision. There has been a significant improvement in framework success rates in the past year. At the reinspection in 2003, leadership and management and the area of learning were satisfactory, but both aspects are now good. Quality assurance was inadequate in 2003, but the management of quality improvement is now satisfactory. Board members monitor training performance closely. They set challenging goals for further improving apprenticeship framework completion rates. Effective strategies are in place to reduce the number of early leavers. The retention and achievement of advanced apprentices has improved, and adults continue to achieve well on the NVQ programme. Leaders have placed an emphasis on recruiting and training new, skilled industry specialists as assessors and internal verifiers. There is effective management of change, combined with the awareness that further improvement needs to be made.

40. The use of data to manage the provision has improved since the reinspection, and is now good throughout the organisation. Well-designed reports which present a clear picture of the performance of all learners on BPIF programmes, are understood by staff at all levels. Good systems are in place to identify and support learners who are at risk of leaving early. Clear graphically presented data shows quickly and clearly how each programme is performing, what adjustments are being made to it, and gives early indications if programmes are failing. Systems for monitoring learners' performance are used well across the wide geographical area covered by BPIF. Managers have identified early leavers as a key threat to future business and have set clear targets for improvement. Information managers respond quickly to present relevant current information.

41. BPIF has good partnerships to promote and support learning. The organisation's role as a trade association with the print industry has enabled it to build and maintain close links with employers to plan training. Senior staff work closely with the sector skills council for print and have appropriate links with the industry's trade unions. The organisation has developed effective working relationships with employers who provide the time, space and opportunity for learners to carry out their training, and to develop skills and knowledge. The BPIF partnerships also include higher and further education colleges, although in the past few years the number of further education colleges offering

printing has considerably declined. The organisation supports learners beyond publicly funded training. Its 'young managers in print' organisation promotes the personal development of young people throughout the print industry. BPIF's strategic planning is clearly focused, and provides detailed industry background and direction for BPIF training, and its role within the print industry.

42. Success rates and progress towards the advanced apprenticeship framework have recently improved significantly. Framework and NVQ completions for the first nine months of 2005-06 are 53 per cent, matching the full year rate for 2004-05. Advanced apprenticeship success rates for the first nine months of 2005-06 were low at 35.4 per cent, but the progress of many current learners is good or excellent. By the time of the inspection, the success rate of advanced apprentices was over 50 per cent. Redundancies in one large company have negatively affected current success rates. Apprenticeship framework completions remain poor. The number of apprentices has declined steeply in the past three years as the industry has focused on advanced apprenticeships as its preferred level of training. The number of current apprentices is low. Achievement rates for adults are good.

43. All sites apply rigorous health and safety procedures and assessors promote and reinforce health and safety well as part of the NVQ. Workplace sites are well organised and provide good and, in many cases, excellent working environments. BPIF has a commitment to training, and has appropriate financial targets based on retention and achievement rates to improve training in the next few years. Resources are deployed adequately for learners. Learners have access to all the relevant resources needed to complete their programmes of training.

44. Communication is satisfactory, and is improving, in an organisation where most staff are home based. BPIF uses local, regional and national meetings to communicate and discuss operational matters at senior level and regionally. Useful cross-regional meetings take place to discuss regional variations, problems arising or areas of good practice. Good use is made of electronic communication. Procedures and directives are implemented well. Minutes of meetings are detailed and clear action is recorded.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

45. BPIF has a suitable policy for equality and diversity and this is set out in clear language in the logbook provided for all learners. The logbook also provides well-presented details of the organisation's complaints and appeals arrangements for learners. The organisation carries out an audit of new employer's equality of opportunity arrangements before learners begin training. Learners are well supported in their training by BPIF's staff and by their employers.

46. The use of data to inform the management and improvement of equality and diversity is sound. A suitable range of data is collected, and this is accurately and frequently presented to staff at all levels through well-designed reports. The analysis of learners' progress and achievement by region is effective, but very small numbers of learners outside the organisation's core learner group of White men makes further analysis of limited value.

47. The arrangements for managing complaints and comments are satisfactory. Learners are made aware of the routes available to them through the logbook which contains a

clear flowchart of the arrangements. These include a telephone helpline to the BPIF, freepost envelopes included in review packs, or contact through their training co-ordinator. Suitable reporting and monitoring documents are used appropriately. The number of recorded complaints has reduced significantly since 2004. There is timely action to deal with complaints, and BPIF's senior managers receive summary information on complaints and comments twice a year. Most learners understand how to complain or comment, and have confidence in the arrangements.

48. Support for learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. Appropriate initial assessment takes place using nationally recognised assessment methods. Many learners enter training with a good level of literacy and numeracy and very few learners are identified as needing additional support. The organisation has a suitable policy for the support of learners' additional needs, and recently there has been a significant improvement in the confidence and ability of trainers to support the development of key skills.

49. The promotion of training is satisfactory. All learners are in employment, and appropriate information is provided to employers and learners through publications and the BPIF website. The organisation uses its strong presence and good networking within the print industry to promote its training. It recognises its responsibility to increase the participation of non-traditional learners, but its actions to do this have so far proved ineffective. An equality and diversity champion was appointed from within the organisation in January 2006, but they had not, by the start of the inspection, received specific training in the role. The BPIF's 'Training News' publication, circulated throughout the printing industry, regularly contains features which promote the value of a diverse workforce, and articles on current legislation. While women form an appropriate proportion of the organisation's own staff profile, almost 98 per cent of BPIF's learners are White men, a feature reflected in the printing industry. By the time of the inspection, 83 learners had started training in 2005-06. Of these, nine are women, and only two learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. None of the learners have declared a disability.

50. There is insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity. Some initial information and testing of learners' perceptions as to what constitutes equality of opportunity is provided in the induction, but it is not always used with learners. Apprentices who complete the module are presented with exactly the same information when they take a unit of the technical certificate. A series of questions on a learner's workplace experience of equality are included in the review form, but these are largely used to test for difficulties, rather than as a training resource. Training for staff in equality is insufficiently focused. Elements of training have taken place, such as questions incorporated into an awareness-raising quiz held at BPIF's annual all-staff training event, and training in the use of open questioning. Some staff also report good individual support from the quality manager following the observation of training. The organisation has recognised, however, that specific training in equality and diversity is needed, and is planning to provide it at the next annual training event. Learners' knowledge of equality and diversity is often superficial. Inspectors noted an isolated example of inappropriately gendered comments from learners, and workplaces where the display of inappropriate images has not been challenged by BPIF's staff.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

51. BPIF has made satisfactory progress towards improvements since the reinspection in

2003. Success rates for advanced apprentices, initial assessment, the development of learners' key skills, learner progress and quality improvement arrangements have all improved. Strengths identified in 2003, including employer partnerships and engagement, the development of learners' skills and the resources for learning have been maintained.

52. BPIF's staff are appropriately involved in the development of the self-assessment report and most have ownership of its findings. The self-assessment report is clear and provides good contextual information to support its judgements. Many of the strengths and weaknesses identified were supported by the inspection team, although inspectors noted some additional weaknesses. The report is suitably critical. Inspectors graded the area of learning, and leadership and management, higher than in the self-assessment report. Quality improvement planning is satisfactory. The plan identifies key operational actions to improve quality. Quality assurance policies and procedures are satisfactory. Arrangements are well established and updated at regular and timely intervals. BPIF works to the procedures set out by a nationally recognised quality assurance organisation.

53. Recruitment procedures are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and have good industry experience. All training staff have appropriate commercial print, or print training backgrounds. They have a wide range of training and commercial experience. Appraisals and continual professional development are satisfactory. Staff find the arrangements useful when discussing their progress, and planning professional development. Appropriate targets are set for staff, and they are suitably monitored by managers. All staff have received some staff development in training and/or assessment. BPIF pays for new recruits to gain assessor qualifications where necessary.

54. Internal verification is adequate. Assessment is planned and carried out regularly and with sufficient frequency. Most learners are making good progress. Internal verifiers sample final portfolios sufficiently although they are insufficiently sampled during the programme. Most external verifier reports are positive. All assessors and internal verifiers have standardisation meetings, although these are infrequent. There is good support for assessors who are appropriately observed by internal verifiers or by the quality manager. Assessors find the process useful and receive sufficient feedback. Assessors and verifiers have also been suitably trained to support the development of learners' key skills. Assessors are now more confident in this aspect of learning. Achievement of key skills has improved.

55. BPIF has made slow progress in a few areas of quality improvement. There is now clear evidence that the success of advanced apprentices has improved. However, this improvement has only been made in the last year and success rates remain poor for the small number of apprentices. The average length of time being taken by some learners to complete BPIF programmes is still too long.

56. Most planned actions in the 2006 quality improvement plan relate to the reinspection of 2003. The action plan covers a broad range of activity and shows the amount of work that has been needed to improve the quality of provision. Much of that activity is only now having a positive effect.

57. Feedback from learners is insufficient. Learner surveys are detailed, but have been reduced in frequency in the past two years. The information they provide is not current. BPIF recognises this weakness and plans to increase the frequency of surveys to learners

BRITISH PRINTING INDUSTRIES FEDERATION

and employers.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Printing</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	276	2
NVQ training for adults	140	2

58. There are 416 learners in printing. Two hundred and thirty-nine of them are working towards an advanced apprenticeship and 37 are working towards an apprenticeship. Most learners are on machine printing and print finishing training programmes. A small number are on pre-press and print administration programmes. There are 140 adults on NVQ programmes.

59. Learners are employed in a wide variety of specialist printing companies throughout England. These range from large national companies producing high volume full colour weekly magazines, to smaller printers producing particularly good limited edition work for galleries, universities and museums. A few learners attend college for their technical studies. However, very few colleges now support such specialist work. Many learners attend the BPIF Print Academy for technical certificate studies, or BPIF's training co-ordinators visit them in their companies. A BPIF training co-ordinator visits each learner every four to six weeks to monitor their progress and to assess their competence, learning and range of skills.

### **Printing**

#### *Strengths*

- good progress
- good standards of practical work
- particularly effective support from training co-ordinators
- wide range of particularly good employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for many learners in reviews
- weak aspects of quality assurance

### **Achievement and standards**

60. Most learners make good progress. A few demonstrate outstanding progress and are well ahead of their planned completion dates. Some technical certificates and key skills are being completed much earlier than expected. In a few cases, planned end dates have been brought forward by almost a year. Learners are well on target with their NVQ work.

61. Learners produce good standards of practical work. They quickly become valued

employees and produce work to high standards in many different aspects of printing. Advanced apprentices meet production quality requirements and are often responsible for the operation of complex machines and small teams of operatives before the end of their apprenticeships. They become valued members of printing teams. Learners are well motivated and develop a variety of skills using up-to-date equipment and machinery. Some are particularly flexible and multi-skilled to a degree beyond that of more experienced colleagues. In addition to gaining qualifications, learners increase their confidence when working with clients. They show good awareness of the world of work. One employer noted the improvement in production output and quality achieved by a group of adult learners on the programme.

62. Overall, achievement for apprentices is now satisfactory. Success rates and levels of completion for advanced apprentices and/or NVQ learners have very recently improved. In 2003-04, only 35 per cent of advanced apprentices completed the framework and this has now increased to over 50 per cent. The gap between the numbers of learners completing NVQs and apprenticeship frameworks is closing, but there is still a difference in these rates. The pass rate on the NVQ for adults was good in 2005 at 73 per cent. NVQ pass rates for 2005-06 are incomplete, but there is good progress towards matching those in 2005.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	244	61	57	35	46
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	84	56	57	38	45
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	24	69	48	21	32
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	13	43	52	14	41
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
Adult training (long courses)	2003-04	overall	85	79		0	
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	118	72		0	
		timely	*	*	*	*	*

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

\* indicates unreliable data.

### The quality of provision

63. Learners receive particularly effective support from training co-ordinators. Their visits to learners are regular and timely. Most learners work complex shift patterns and some are dispersed throughout the country. Training co-ordinators are very flexible in recognising and meeting these needs. Where learners need specific support, such as help with passing key skills tests or with dyslexia, this is sensitively given. In one instance, excellent training co-ordinator advice and support helped a learner overcome a

challenging problem at work where production pressures were slowing his progress. Training co-ordinators work well with employers to support learners in the workplace. There is often particularly good individual support to develop learners' knowledge and understanding. Significantly fewer learners now leave the programme early. They are very supportive of each other in the workplace.

64. The training meets the needs of the learners. Programmes are well structured and fulfil employers and learners' needs. Learners find the programme clear to follow and there is some good development of distance learning materials. Learners value learning in the workplace.

65. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory and some is good. On-the-job training is good. Frequent and well-supported training from mentors and other colleagues takes place on the production floor. The BPIF Print Academy's delivery of the technical certificate is generally satisfactory, but there are some instances of training co-ordinator sessions which are overly led. There is good development of standardised, detailed and informative training materials, although some is too reliant on text and contains too few illustrations. Block attendance at Leeds College is effective and much valued by learners. Most learners show good understanding of their learning, but some are not confident enough to explain the theory elements of their work.

66. Assessment is generally satisfactory. All learners have initial assessment and diagnostic testing that are used effectively to set priorities for programme and support arrangements. At some employers, there are good arrangements for workplace assessment by qualified workplace assessors. However, in others there is an over-reliance on expert witnesses, who are not always qualified.

67. In many reviews there is insufficient challenge for learners. Reviews are frequently directed by training co-ordinators. Many do not extend opportunities for learning and place too much emphasis on completing documents. Training co-ordinators check that activities have been completed, and clear, new targets are set for learners. However, training co-ordinators do not systematically question learners in depth about their knowledge of the activity. Some learners are bored by the pace of their progress and feel that they could complete the course much faster. The involvement of supervisors in the review process is mostly satisfactory, but a minority of supervisors are not involved at all. Their involvement is just seen as a signing-off process.

### **Leadership and management**

68. BPIF has good and well-established partnerships with a wide range of employers. Many are prestigious companies with sophisticated equipment and very good working conditions. They set high standards and recruit well-qualified learners. Good opportunities for career progression are available for many learners. Employers and the BPIF place a very high emphasis on health and safety. Some larger companies provide good incentives to succeed, such as an excellent salary increase and valuable prizes on achievement of the qualification. Some learners have achieved prestigious national awards for their work. Most employers value and promote training well and some enrich the learners' experience through additional training and visits to other print companies and international exhibitions.

69. Communication is satisfactory. Remote managers and training co-ordinators

effectively use e-mail and much informal communication. Regular meetings include training opportunities. Managers support training co-ordinators well. They monitor retention, progress and completion regularly. Staff have a systematic and well-structured appraisal which includes a range of development opportunities.

70. Staff are appropriately qualified and most have up-to-date experience of different aspects of the printing industry. Most staff manage demanding workloads and wide geographic spread of work satisfactorily. However, some have insufficient flexibility in their schedules to manage unexpected events. For example, changes to shift patterns sometimes affect the ability to meet assessment and review targets. The self-assessment report is thorough and broadly accurate. Staff are consulted about the content.

71. The management of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The promotion of learning is adequate, and there are suitable arrangements to manage complaints and assessment appeals. Learners feel well supported by BPIF during their training. An appropriate equality of opportunity policy is in place. However, learners' understanding of equality in the workplace is not sufficiently reinforced. Reviews include questions about being treated fairly at work, but do not probe or extend understanding. Equality of opportunity information in the learners' log book is very basic. Training co-ordinators have not had enough training on equality.

72. Aspects of quality assurance are weak. The regular standardisation meetings across regions help to share good practice, but there is little indication that portfolios are systematically examined. The two-year internal verification plan records units sampled on an individual visit basis, but there is no overview of internal verification activity to assure that all units are sampled over time. Interim and summative internal verification is planned, but in practice the emphasis is on summative internal verification. It is not clear whether a significant number of internal verification target dates were met.

73. The frequency of feedback collection from learners is insufficient and the response rate from learners is low. The questionnaire has too many closed questions. Survey information is analysed in detail but it is not clear how it is used to improve provision. BPIF has carried out learner interviews in the past, but this no longer takes place.

