

Learning Innovations Training Team Ltd

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. Learning Innovations Training Team (Learning Innovations) is a private training company, based in Leeds in West Yorkshire. It was previously known as Leeds IT Training Legal Ltd. Its office is just inside Leeds city centre. The building it occupies is due for demolition in the next 12 to 18 months as part of a redevelopment programme for Leeds city centre. It will need to find new premises within this timescale.
2. Learning Innovations provides apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training in business administration and customer service. The training is funded by West Yorkshire LSC. In customer service, 23 learners are taking an advanced apprenticeship and 21 taking an apprenticeship. In business administration, 21 learners are taking an advanced apprenticeship and 45 are taking an apprenticeship. All learners are employed. They work in a wide range of local businesses including solicitors' offices and the accounts departments and administration departments of firms involved in construction, horticulture and other local industries. Most learners are based in Leeds, with some in Bradford and a few in smaller towns in West Yorkshire such as Keighley and Ilkley. Almost all training, coaching and assessment takes place in the workplace. Learners only rarely visit Learning Innovations' offices.
3. During 2005-06, Learning Innovations also provided Train to Gain training. It is now part of a consortium of Train to Gain providers but has no Train to Gain learners at the present time. It does not currently provide any privately-funded training.
4. Learning Innovations employs eight members of staff. It is led by a managing director who is supported by a quality improvement manager, a lead internal verifier and delivery team leader, an office manager, a law tutor, a work-based learning assessor and promotions co-ordinator, a resources manager and a sales and recruitment manager.
5. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from black minority ethnic communities is 11% in Leeds and 24% in Bradford. In 2005-6, 52% of young people in Leeds and 48% of young people in Bradford achieved the equivalent of five GCSEs at grade A* to C by age 16, compared with 57% in England as a whole.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of Learning Innovations' provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. Provision in business administration and customer service, and arrangements for equality of opportunity are also good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. Learning Innovations has demonstrated that its capacity to improve is good. Since it was last inspected in November 2003, all inspection grades have improved from satisfactory to good. Overall success rates have improved significantly and are now good. Most of the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection have been resolved and some have been transformed into strengths. The quality improvement system is now highly effective. Learning Innovations' progress was first noted during its quality monitoring visit in December 2004. Its progress is steady, continuous and well planned. It makes good use of feedback from learners, employers and staff. It provides learners with good encouragement to manage their own learning and to take full responsibility for setting their own learning and assessment targets. The quality of Learning Innovations' training continues to be a strength, and staff and managers work well as a team to provide effective support for learners.
8. Learning Innovations' self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. It fully involves all its staff in making judgements about the quality of its provision and it has good arrangements to collect and assess the views of both learners and employers. The draft report is discussed fully and openly at staff meetings and moderated in line with consensus views before it is submitted to the LSC. It covers all aspects of the *Common Inspection Framework*. It is clear and well written. Learning Innovations judges the strengths, weaknesses and grading of its provision accurately.

Key strengths

- Good overall success rates
- Good training in workplace skills
- Strong motivation for learners to succeed
- Very effective team working and communication
- Highly effective quality improvement system
- Good promotion of equal opportunities

Key areas for improvement

- Some learners' insufficient understanding of the requirements of their apprenticeship frameworks
- Insufficient monitoring of trends in learner performance

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

9. Learning Innovations now achieves good overall success rates. They have improved significantly from 31% in 2003-04 to 56% in 2004-05 and to 65% in 2005-06. This strongly improving trend is continuing in the current year. To date in 2007-08, of 43 learners who have left their training programmes, 31 have successfully achieved the full apprenticeship qualification. Pass rates for the key skills and technical certificate aspects of the apprenticeship programmes are excellent. In the current year, learners have taken 101 key skills or technical certificate tests and the first time pass rate is 100%. There is good progression from apprenticeship programmes to advanced apprenticeship programmes, with just over a quarter of learners who complete an apprenticeship promptly moving up to an advanced apprenticeship. About one in four learners also achieve a valuable additional qualification in law, which Learning Innovations devised following consultation with learners and employers in the legal sector.
10. Timely success rates are also on an upward trend, although the improvements have been less marked than for the overall success rates. Most current learners are making good progress and are at least keeping pace with the targets and objectives in their individual learning plans. They gain good, practical office skills and significantly increased self-confidence from their training programmes. Some employers have linked their internal promotion and pay progression schemes to Learning Innovations' training, and learners in these firms often gain more responsible jobs or better pay when they complete their training programmes or achieve milestones towards them.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. Learning Innovations provides good training in workplace skills. Where it has several learners with one employer, it delivers a good range of training workshops on their premises. These workshops provide clear and relevant training in business and customer service skills such as writing business letters, communication and assertiveness in dealing with employers and customers. These sessions are particularly well integrated with the needs of employers and the learners concerned. They are lively, interactive and well paced. Tutors make good use of simple handouts and written tasks to reinforce learning. For learners who are unable to attend these sessions, Learning Innovations delivers the content through supportive one-to-one coaching sessions, adapting the exercises and style of delivery accordingly. It also provides good coaching for the key skills and technical certificate aspects of learners' apprenticeship frameworks, usually on a one-to-one basis. It encourages both learners and their employers to gain maximum benefit from the training by choosing optional national vocational

qualification (NVQ) units which extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding, rather than simply accrediting existing skills. It works closely with employers to adjust both learners' job roles and the choice of units as learners' interests evolve.

12. Learning Innovations provides strong motivation for its learners to succeed in both learning and work. It encourages them to take full responsibility for their individual learning plans, set themselves meaningful targets for progress and manage their own learning and career aspirations in a professional manner. Assessors listen actively to learners' short, medium and long term goals, provide sound advice on how to achieve them and challenge learners whose aims are either too soft or potentially over ambitious. Learners quickly take full responsibility for their learning and demonstrate good professional skills. As at the previous inspection, Learning Innovations provides good opportunities for learners to celebrate their successes. For example, it issues certificates to learners who complete different stages of their courses, runs valued learner of the month and learner of the year awards and pays a £100 bonus to all learners who achieve a full apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship qualification. Learning Innovations encourages the learners who have completed their training programmes to act as on-site mentors to newer learners. It provides them with good additional training to fulfil this role. The mentors themselves gain valuable experience from supporting other learners as well as providing a useful service to their workplace colleagues.
13. Learning Innovations also provides learners with effective and impartial information and advice about other learning opportunities and how they may use these to enrich their own training programmes. Similarly, it provides confidential and discreet advice to learners who may be considering career changes. It provides them with good information packs about sources of support for their general well-being. This information ranges from dealing with difficulties caused by drug abuse to support for teenage mothers or mothers-to-be.
14. There are satisfactory arrangements to identify and support learners who need additional help with literacy, numeracy and language. It assesses potential needs effectively during learners' induction and provides one-to-one coaching where needed.
15. Some learners have an insufficient understanding of the full requirements of their apprenticeship frameworks. Some are unsure if they need to take technical certificate or key skill tests. Others confuse the optional training and qualifications which Learning Innovations offers with the core requirements of their main qualification.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Good: Grade 2

16. Learning Innovations' staff work together as a very effective team to deliver good quality learning. Managers hold regular team meetings, with a clear agenda, open discussion and well defined, relevant action points. All staff handle their responsibilities very professionally and clearly understand how these relate to the responsibilities of their colleagues and how each team member contributes to learners' experiences. They make effective use of email, mobile telephones and text messages to communicate amongst themselves and with learners and employers. Learners particularly appreciate Learning Innovations' widespread use of text messaging to keep them up to date and confirm appointments. Learning Innovations has a very positive and open approach to learning from its new employees. It takes note of their first impressions and learns well from the fresh perspectives that newcomers bring.
17. Learning Innovations has highly effective arrangements for quality improvement. When it was inspected in November 2003, some aspects of quality improvement were weak. Since then, it has made significant improvements. Its assurance and improvement procedures concentrate strongly on learners. It uses a well defined and effective hierarchy for identifying activities which are core to the learners experience, those which enable learner related activities and those which are concerned only with internal administration or compliance. It gives clear priority to assessing the effectiveness of the core activities and implementing improvements on an ongoing, incremental basis. It fully involves all staff in improvements both before and during their implementation. Its quality improvement cycle is well managed so that major changes are developed and introduced during relatively quiet periods of the year. It makes very effective use of feedback from both learners and employers. It gathers information using a good combination of focus groups and written questionnaires.
18. Learning Innovations has good arrangements to promote equality of opportunity. New learners complete a well designed and comprehensive self-study pack during their first few weeks. This covers a good range of equality and diversity related issues, including information about relevant legislation, employment rights and responsibilities and the dangers of stereotyping people according to their gender, ethnicity, age or level of disability. Learners find the study pack lively, interesting and relevant to their workplaces. Assessors thoroughly check learners' understanding through written tasks and discussion. They reinforce this with further discussion during assessment and training visits and progress reviews.
19. Learning Innovations has a clear set of equal opportunities policies and procedures which it applies appropriately to both staff and learners. It has also developed useful additional guidance for learners which describes how these policies apply at key stages of the learning process.

20. The ethnicity profile of Learning Innovations learners fully matches that of the local area from which they are recruited. The proportion of males on Learning Innovations courses is rising in line with national averages for business administration and customer service. It currently stands at 27%.
21. Learning Innovations has satisfactory arrangements for internal verification. Learners' work is sampled according to a clear plan, and assessors receive appropriate feedback on their performance.
22. Learning Innovations has satisfactory arrangements for strategic and operational planning. Its three year development plan and related documents are firmly based on the LSC's standard requirements. However, Learning Innovations has not yet given sufficient priority to finding new accommodation. Pending demolition, its current building is not being maintained above minimum standards. Some parts of the infrastructure are deteriorating. For example the lift has been taken out of service and access for people with impaired mobility is difficult.
23. Learning Innovations does not sufficiently monitor trends in the performance of groups of learners over time. It makes too little use of performance data to understand the full impact of its actions on groups of learners, or to identify clearly where problems may remain. It has been using an incorrect definition of timely success which has led to some overly optimistic projections about its performance.

What learners like:

- The helpful and friendly staff
- The good explanations they receive about what to do
- The help they get from mentors
- The training workshops
- The confidential advice they get about their career options
- Strong motivation when they need it
- Being assessed by observation
- Being able to set their own monthly targets and gather their own evidence

What learners think could improve:

- The training workshops (they want more)
- Number of repeated questions about their background knowledge (they want less)
- Their meetings with assessors (they want more and longer)
- More time available to work on their NVQs in the workplace
- More flexibility in the timing of their meetings with assessors

Annex

Learners' achievements

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate	National NVQ rate	Provider/college framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	23	43%	48%	9%	31%
		timely	22	32%	30%	0%	19%
	04-05	overall	8	50%	48%	50%	34%
		timely	8	25%	31%	25%	21%
	05-06	overall	6	67%	54%	67%	44%
		timely	5	20%	34%	20%	27%
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	40	65%	47%	58%	32%
		timely	42	31%	24%	24%	16%
	04-05	overall	49	59%	50%	57%	38%
		timely	45	27%	29%	27%	22%
	05-06	overall	62	68%	58%	65%	53%
		timely	68	47%	38%	44%	33%