

Devon and Cornwall Electrical Training

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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:

- Construction, planning and the built environment

Description of the provider

1. Devon and Cornwall Electrical Training (DCET) is a specialist training provider. It was established in 1995 by electrical contractors in the region to deliver advanced apprenticeships in the electrotechnical sector. DCET is a wholly owned subsidiary of BLDC Holdings Ltd.
2. Off-the-job training is provided at DCET's head office in Exeter, Devon and a satellite centre in Camborne, Cornwall. The company is led by the general manager who manages 16 staff. DCET is funded by Devon and Cornwall LSC to provide advanced apprenticeships for learners aged 16-24 and over 25. As part of its local intervention and development (LID), the LSC also funds DCET to deliver a national vocational qualification (NVQ) in electrical installation. The LSC funding represents approximately 80% of DCET's business.
3. All learners are employed by electrical contractors based in Devon and Cornwall. Some also carry out work in other parts of the country. Learners undertake the 42 months advanced apprenticeship in electrotechnical services with the career aim of qualifying as an installation electrician. At the time of the inspection, DCET has a total of 181 learners. Of these, 169 are on the advanced apprenticeship programme and 123 are aged 16 to 18. Twelve learners are aged 25 and over and are on the adult apprenticeship programme. Twelve learners are on the LID programme. Four of the learners are female. A total of 38 learners are based in Cornwall. The learners are employed by 83 companies.
4. In 2006, 47.7% of the working age population in Devon and Cornwall were qualified at or above the equivalent of a NVQ at level 3, compared with the national rate of 45.3%. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Devon and Cornwall is 1.1% and 1% respectively, compared with 9.1% nationally.

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: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of DCET's provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. DCET demonstrates good capacity to improve. Managers and staff have successfully implemented improvements since the previous inspection. Action planning for continuous improvement is generally thorough with a clear focus on improvement and related target-setting throughout the organisation. Staff have a good understanding of the targets set and their role in raising standards. They use their skills effectively to develop and maintain improvements. Arrangements for planning and monitoring of the provision for improvement are well linked. Although success rates have slightly declined in recent years these remain high. DCET has identified that some learners have made slow progress to complete their apprenticeship frameworks and has recently introduced measures to tackle this issue.
7. The effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvements since the previous inspection is good. Achievements and standards remain good. The quality of provision has improved and is now good. However, although some improvements have been made to its review process, DCET has not made sufficient improvement to the involvement of workplace supervisors and the planning of work-based learning. The previous weaknesses identified in leadership and management have been effectively resolved. DCET has very effectively maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection, particularly its support for learners, the range of additional qualifications they gain, its links with employers and learners' awareness of equality of opportunity.
8. Arrangements for quality assurance are detailed. DCET has well defined procedures that are used systematically. It carries out regular audits to monitor the effectiveness of quality assurance. Most programme processes are included within the procedures for quality monitoring. Reviews of the quality arrangements are thorough and effectively support the process of improvement. Managers are closely involved in the arrangements for quality and carefully monitor progress against the quality improvement plan. They promote and support continuous improvement effectively throughout the organisation.
9. The accuracy and reliability of the self-assessment report is satisfactory. The process is thorough and carried out annually. DCET makes effective use of data and feedback from learners and employers to help prepare its self-assessment. Staff are fully consulted and make an effective contribution to the process. The self-assessment report is detailed and covers all aspect of provision. It directly links to plans for quality improvement. Development plans for improvement set clear and measurable targets. However, the self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Inspectors' findings matched some of the self-assessed strengths but judged others to be no more than normal practice. It is less effective in identifying areas for improvement and over

estimates the grades awarded to each aspect of provision. Some parts of the report are too descriptive and do not include sufficient analysis to justify the strengths and areas for improvement identified.

Key strengths

- Good success rates
- Good development of skills
- Good support for learners
- Particularly good understanding of health and safety by learners
- Good partnership working with employers
- Particularly effective use of information systems to manage training
- Good awareness of equality of opportunity by learners

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in the review process
- Insufficient initial assessment for some learners
- Insufficient monitoring of progress and success for different groups

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates for learners are high. In 2004/05 the apprenticeship framework achievement rate was 83%. However, this reduced slightly to 80% in 2005/06 and 78% in 2006/07. Success rates are higher for learners aged 19 and over. Timely completion rates have declined from 71% in 2004/05 to 66% in 2005/06 and 53% in 2006/07. DCET has identified the slow progress made by some learners in its self-assessment report and improvement plans. Current learners are making good progress towards completion. Learners have a good understanding of the requirements of their programme and their progress. Retention of learners is good. Most learners are retained on the programme and complete their apprenticeship framework. Learner attendance rates are high.
11. Achievement of additional qualifications is very good. All learners work towards a wide range of additional qualifications, including first-aid courses, health and safety qualifications, inspecting and testing electrical installations, wiring regulations and vocationally specific training. These qualifications are above the requirements for the advanced apprenticeship framework and particularly relevant to learners' work.
12. Learners develop good vocational and personal skills and knowledge. The standard of their work is high. Learners are self-motivated and confident in their abilities, and their employers value their skills and knowledge. They are given progressively more responsibility and autonomy within their employment.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Off-the-job theory sessions are good. Tutors set realistic tasks that develop learners' knowledge and understanding of their practical work. Tutors test learners' knowledge well. They emphasise the importance of health and safety throughout their learning sessions. Classroom and theory resources are good. The practical training area at the main centre is satisfactory. On-the-job training is generally satisfactory, but is insufficiently planned or co-ordinated. This was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
14. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners' prior qualifications and achievements are appropriately identified through the initial assessment process. Assessors visit learners for on-site reviews at least twice a year. Their direct observation of learners during these visits is satisfactory, as is their assessment of work-based records collected by learners in their diaries. These also provide satisfactory assessment of off-the-job development. However, some entries and evidence are not signed.
15. Initial assessment is insufficiently thorough for some learners. It does not identify those learners who need help with their key skills in communications at a sufficiently early stage in their training. Their individual learning plans do not record the additional support some learners need to achieve the qualification. DCET has identified this in its

self-assessment report and plans are in place to improve the initial assessment process. Arrangements for systematically recording the additional support provided for learners are recent. DCET has recently introduced the delivery of key skills in the first year of the programme.

16. Involvement of workplace supervisors in the review process is insufficient. Training officers agree targets with individual learners, but the process does not always involve the learner's workplace supervisor. Some supervisors do not have sufficient knowledge of the NVQ and the on-the-job activities that learners need to complete for their awards. Employers receive prompt copies of the individual learning plan and reviews. However, they do not receive details of the NVQ units or the on-the-job activities that learners need to cover in their training. Training agreements between individual learners and their employers refer only to the individual learning plan.
17. Programmes meet learners' needs and interests well. They are well designed to match learners' aspirations and potential. Overall, work-placements are good and learners benefit from the experience they gain from work activities. Employers' needs are met particularly effectively. The programme meets external requirements very effectively and is responsive to the needs of the local electrotechnical industry. Learners enjoy and achieve a wide range of additional qualifications. They increase the range of jobs they can do and improve and enhance their employability. These additional qualifications also enrich learners' overall experience.
18. Support for learners is good. DCET training officers are in frequent contact with learners and provide good support for training, learning and assessment. Learners receive useful advice, information and guidance throughout their training programme. Learners receive good support from their lecturers, assessors and training officer. They are confident that they may contact their training officer at any time if they have any concerns or support needs. Assessors give good support and guidance to learners on how to complete their diaries and gather appropriate evidence for their NVQ. Learners value the toolkit provided by DCET, which they can add to as they progress through their training.
19. Learners have a particularly good understanding of health and safety, giving high priority to health and safety matters and practicing safe working. They fully understand risk assessment and routinely incorporate it into their practical work.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. Leadership and management are good. Partnership working with employers is good. DCET works closely with employers. For example, employers are promptly informed of any issues relating to learners' attendance and punctuality. They make good use of the good support that DCET provides to apprentices. DCET's good links with employers help potential apprentices to find a suitable work-placement. DCET works successfully in partnership with employers to promote learning. Issues that affect

learners' progress are tackled promptly and supportively through DCET working closely with the learner's employer.

21. Particularly effective use is made of information systems to manage the training programme. DCET has recently developed a thorough management information system. This is used effectively to plan and monitor learners' progress. All progress reviews, assessments and the internal verification process are planned and monitored in detail. The system is routinely updated. Learners' progress is closely monitored on a continuous basis and accurately recorded. Data reports are generally used effectively to monitor performance and inform planning, which is satisfactory. Plans and targets are effectively communicated within the organisation.
22. Resources are generally good. Since the previous inspection DCET has made significant improvements to its training resources. A dedicated practical training area at the main site has been opened and a new satellite site in Cornwall is well established. Staff are appropriately qualified and new teaching staff undertake relevant qualifications to gain qualified status. Staff have access to a good range of training and development and are well supported by DCET. Performance reviews are thorough and staff are set well defined objectives that are monitored effectively.
23. Managers provide a clear direction for continuous improvement. Quality assurance arrangements are detailed and carried out systematically. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. The links to quality improvement are generally effective. An observation system for teaching and learning has recently been introduced. The observers have received training and their observations are well recorded. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the system. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. Regular meetings between assessors and internal verifiers are used effectively for standardisation and to share good practice. However, there are no systematic arrangements for the quality monitoring of learners' progress reviews.
24. DCET makes regular and informative reports to its supervisory board. The board carries out its responsibilities effectively and fully supports DCET's development.
25. Learners have a good awareness of equality and opportunity. They have a sound understanding of their responsibilities and rights. Their knowledge of issues such as bullying and harassment is good. DCET uses a wide range of relevant materials to provide equality information and stimulate discussion. Learners are familiar with DCET's and their own employer's policies for equality of opportunity. Their understanding of equality matters are reinforced effectively during progress reviews.
26. Promotion of equality of opportunity is generally satisfactory. DCET has taken effective action to widen participation and has successfully recruited female learners. Learners from ethnic minorities have previously been recruited, although none are currently on the programme. There are effective links with external organisations, including schools and local networks, to widen participation. The equality and diversity policy is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. Staff have a clear understanding of the policy. Outcomes for *Every Child Matters* are satisfactory. DCET's programme arrangements are inclusive. Where necessary, DCET has arrangements at both its' centres to make reasonable adjustments for learners with restricted mobility.

27. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. DCET has adequate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, with clear lines of responsibility identified. Vetting of staff working with children is appropriately managed. All staff have received detailed training and information on safeguarding.

28. Monitoring of progress and success for different groups such as age, gender and those receiving additional support is insufficient. Although DCET uses management information effectively to monitor other aspects of the programme, no systematic collation and analysis of the relevant data takes place. Some monitoring is carried out on the performance of different class and year groups. However, this does not sufficiently aid the promotion of equality of opportunity or help learners achieve.

What learners like:

- ‘The respect I get from colleagues’
- ‘The responsiveness to our suggestions’
- Individual tuition
- Mathematics learning sessions
- ‘Staff are very helpful and supportive’
- ‘The training and my employer are brilliant’
- ‘The contribution to travelling expenses is really helpful’
- Industry experience of staff

What learners think could improve:

- Time available for practical work in the college
- Use of video during learning sessions to aid teaching - too much

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider 2004 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	65	86%	52%	83%	39%
		timely	59	73%	31%	71%	22%
	05-06	overall	49	80%	58%	80%	50%
		timely	50	66%	37%	66%	32%
	06-07	overall	68	78%	65%	78%	60%
		timely	64	53%	46%	53%	42%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'