

Basingstoke ITEC

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like about Basingstoke ITEC	11
What learners think Basingstoke ITEC could improve	11
Sector subject areas.....	12
Health, public services and care	12
Information & communication technology	15
Business, administration & law	18
Learners' achievements	20

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:

- Health, public services and care
- Information & communication technology
- Business, administration & law

Description of the provider

1. Basingstoke ITEC is a division of Basingstoke Youth Action Trust Ltd and is a registered charity, established in 1985. Basingstoke ITEC's mission is to offer all young people, irrespective of their academic record or social issues, a chance to fulfil their potential. It offers training in veterinary nursing, business administration and customer services, information and communication technologies and dental nursing. Currently 43% of learners in information and communications technologies have additional learning or social needs. Veterinary nursing and dental nursing training are provided by two small subcontractors; MYF who provide veterinary nursing training and Southern Dental Trainers (SDT) who provide training for dental nurses. These two providers do not contract with the LSC and so are not subject to inspection in their own right. Veterinary nursing was not graded during this inspection.
2. Basingstoke ITEC has a training and administrative centre in Basingstoke and employs eight staff. It also provides some training at the subcontractor's premises. A board of directors includes non-salaried directors, a secretary and a chairperson.
3. Basingstoke ITEC funds its training through Hampshire and the Isle of Wight LSC.
4. The Basingstoke area has a minority ethnic representation of around 3% compared with around 13% for England as a whole. A relatively high proportion of the population is economically active.

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

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Information & communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration & law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of Basingstoke ITEC is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of education and training, and leadership and management is good. More specifically, teaching and learning, Basingstoke ITEC's approach to meeting the needs of participants and employers, and guidance and support are all good. The arrangements for equality of opportunity and social inclusion are also good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. Basingstoke ITEC has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. It has a particularly good record of responding to inspection findings and bringing about improvements. Prompt action has been taken to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of the learners. Quality assurance and improvement arrangements are effective and have a good impact. Basingstoke ITEC has extended its own quality assurance arrangements well to cover all aspects of subcontracted training. Action to improve success rates has been effective and successful. Basingstoke ITEC's arrangements for observing training sessions are satisfactory. However, there is no observation of on-the-job training or coaching offered in the workplace. Data is used well to evaluate performance. Since the previous inspection, the quality of training in business administration, customer service and ICT has improved from satisfactory to good. Leadership and management is also now good.
7. The self-assessment process is effective. All staff, including those from subcontractors are involved and feedback from learners and employers is used to support judgements. Data is used well to illustrate judgements about success rates. Both subcontractors contributed to the self-assessment report by writing their own reports. The final report is detailed, accurate and highly evaluative. Basingstoke ITEC uses it effectively for development planning. It closely matches inspectors' findings.

Key strengths

- High success rates
- Very good support for learners
- Good involvement of employers in planning training and assessment
- Good management of in-house provision and subcontractors
- Very effective promotion of equal opportunities

Key areas for improvement

- The insufficient target-setting for learners
- The development of business planning and its links with self-assessment

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

8. Achievement and standards are good. Since 2004/05, when success rates were below national averages, success rates overall have risen significantly. By 2005/06 most were in line with national averages. However, in 2006/07 success rates for advanced apprentices rose to 82% and to 85% for apprentices. These success rates are around 20% higher than national averages. Overall learners make at least the progress expected and achieve by their target date. However, in dental nursing although success rates are high, too many learners do not progress quickly enough. Judgements in the self-assessment report about learners' achievements are accurate.
9. The standard of learners work is good and they gain good skills in the workplace. The programme led pathway prepares learners well for employment in the ICT industry.
10. Learners enjoy their work and greatly value the new skills they gain. Particularly in ICT many learners overcome significant barriers to employment and make good progress in their chosen careers.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. Teaching and learning are good overall. Training sessions on the ICT programme led pathway are well prepared and effectively planned. SDT provides dental nurse training in the evenings only and this is not ideal for all learners, as it often follows a long day at work. Assessment practices are good and learners benefit from very frequent assessment visits. Assessors monitor learner's progress rigorously and learners at risk of leaving before completing their qualification are identified and given individual action plans. However, targets set during progress reviews are often too broad and it is not easy to measure learner's success in meeting them. Some learners become de-motivated and are unsure how to meet targets that are not specific or clear or are unachievable in the time allowed. Initial assessment and support for literacy, language and numeracy are at least satisfactory and particularly effective on the ICT programme led pathway.
12. Overall Basingstoke ITEC's approach to meeting the participants and employers needs is good. All apprentices are employed and many receive promotion during their training. Employers value the new skills developed by learners and are actively involved in the planning and delivery of learners' training. Basingstoke ITEC has worked hard to develop productive and strong links with employers who fully meet their responsibilities for training their apprentices. However, the targets set at self-assessment for engaging new business administration employers and recruiting learners have not been met.
13. Support and guidance for learners are good. Initial advice and guidance are at least satisfactory and learners are recruited onto appropriate programmes. During their training learners receive good support and staff pay very close attention to their welfare and

personal development. Learners on the programme led pathway can have a free breakfast on arrival at the training centre and staff make good use of opportunities to raise their awareness of healthy eating.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. Leadership and management is good. Managers, staff and subcontractors work together well to improve the quality of provision. Basingstoke ITEC has taken effective actions to improve success rates. It has a good range of well developed strategies to support learners judged to be at risk of leaving their programmes. Since the introduction of rigorous attendance monitoring attendance and punctuality have improved significantly on the programme led pathway. Basingstoke ITEC has established strong and beneficial relationships with its subcontractors providing good support and effective review and reporting arrangements. The management of staff performance is satisfactory. Budgeting and financial management are good enabling investment in new accommodation, staff training and resources.
15. Basingstoke ITEC makes good use of management information. Staff and subcontractors monitor progress against targets regularly. Managers use data well to monitor the recruitment and success rates of priority groups and to set challenging but realistic annual targets for success.
16. Internal and external communications are effective and continue to contribute well to raising standards. Basingstoke ITEC has good links with agencies such as Connexions and with other local training providers.
17. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The new premises are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. The training centre provides a supportive learning environment where diversity is valued. There is good promotion of equality and diversity at induction and during progress reviews, and learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The representation of learners from minority ethnic groups is good. The achievement of minority ethnic learners and those with additional learning needs is monitored. However, differences in the achievements of male and female ICT learners have not been analysed sufficiently to determine trends or to inform action planning. Although Basingstoke ITEC recognises the gender bias on many of its training programmes it has yet to devise strategies to help its employers recognise this or take action to remedy it.
18. The arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed at interview and the results are used appropriately. Literacy and numeracy support is integrated with centre-based ICT training. Employed learners are offered support in the workplace and at drop-in sessions at the training centre. However, take-up by learners is low. Measures to safeguard learners' health and safety are satisfactory at the training centre and at employers' premises. Staff receive appropriate security checks for working with young people.

19. Basingstoke ITEC has effective quality assurance and improvement arrangements. It has thorough systems in place to monitor and improve the provision offered by subcontractors, including annual performance reviews of their work. Self-assessment is used well as a tool for quality improvement. The observations of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, there is insufficient observation of on-the-job training and no agreed procedure for moderating the observations.
20. Basingstoke ITEC has made good progress since the previous inspection in setting targets for staff. However, business planning is not sufficiently well developed and is not integrated effectively with the organisation's development plan. The links between self-assessment and business planning are not strong enough and some business priorities, for example to halt the decline in recruitment onto business administration programmes, do not feature strongly enough.

What learners like:

- Support from assessors and employers - 'Assessors are really helpful and friendly and we meet with them regularly' – 'My employer really helps me to achieve'
- Good training opportunities in the workplace
- Small classes and great individual support
- How training is planned - 'Being able to work at my own pace'
- Help given to get jobs
- Being treated as an adult – 'I enjoy getting up in the morning and coming to ITEC'
- Opportunities to gain real experience

What learners think could improve:

- Length of assessor visits – 'longer assessor visits please!'
- 'There is nothing that could be improved!'

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

21. Basingstoke ITEC offers advanced apprenticeships in dental nursing through a subcontract with SDT, a specialist provider. SDT is based in Aldershot where it has offices and a training room for learners. SDT was established in 2002 although its current owner purchased the company in 2005. The current owner is also the tutor and an assessor. Learners work towards an NVQ at level 3 in oral healthcare as well as key skills in communications and application of number. All learners attend off-the-job training for one evening a week. Currently there is one intake of new learners each year and they are expected to complete the apprenticeship in two years. At the time of the inspection there were 24 learners working towards an advanced apprenticeship in oral healthcare. All learners are employed before applying to join the training programme. Dental nurses must hold the qualification to be registered as dental nurses with the General Dental Council.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Good assessment practice
- Very good support for learners
- Good management of learning programmes

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for some learners
- Some poor target-setting

Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards are good. For 2006/07 the success rates for the advanced apprenticeships in oral healthcare at 78%, was well above the national average. This represents a significant improvement on the previous two years when the success rate was below 40%. The pass rate for the independent assessment in May 2007 was exceptionally good at 96 %.

23. The standard of work in the learners' portfolios is very good. Learners take great care in the presentation of their portfolios, which include a good variety of evidence. They take responsibility for building their portfolios from an early stage in the course and take pride in their work. Learners develop good skills in the workplace and are valued employees.

24. Some learners make slow progress. In 2006/07, only 38% of learners completed their qualification by the date expected. Currently a few learners are still not making satisfactory progress there are still given the time they have been training.

Quality of provision

25. Teaching and learning are good. An effective induction programme includes detailed explanation about the content of the course and how to build a portfolio. Assessors provide very good support and learners start to build their portfolios quickly and efficiently. The on-and off-the-job training is very well co-ordinated. Dentists are very involved in the learning process; they are well informed about the off-the-job training and offer help with assignments and other course work. All learners work in well resourced dental practices and are able to gain experience of a wide range of dental treatments. The training room is well equipped with dental models and equipment. Learners appreciate the time taken by trainers in the off-the-job sessions to compare the different practices carried out in different types of surgeries.
26. Assessment practice is good. Learners are encouraged to contact their assessors frequently rather than waiting for visits or the next training session. Assessors visit learners almost on demand to offer support them or to complete an observation. In addition, learners are welcome to attend SDT's premises at any time to work on their portfolios or for help with revision for the independent assessment. Assessors complete detailed records of the assessment observations, which provide excellent evidence for learners' portfolios.
27. Although assessors and trainers review learners' progress regularly, there is some poor target-setting. Some targets set in reviews are too large and not easily achievable in the time allowed. This is de-motivating for learners and, in some cases, they do not attempt to meet the targets at all. SDT is aware of the need to improve target-setting and the targets set for the more recently recruited learners are generally better.
28. The course meets the needs and interests of learners and employers very well. SDT also offers postgraduate courses in such subjects as radiography and many of the learners progress to these once they have qualified as dental nurses.
29. Support and guidance are good. Trainers and assessors ensure that learners are kept well informed about additional qualifications they might take or courses they might progress on to once qualified. Initial advice and guidance and the care and support provided to promote learners' personal development are good. There is a strong focus on achievement and success.

Leadership and management

30. Leadership and management is good, both by SDT and by Basingstoke ITEC. SDT plans the learning programme in great detail and shares its plans openly with Basingstoke ITEC, the learners and the employers. SDT make sure that if learners cannot immediately join a course they make good use of the waiting time by completing short work related courses such as First Aid.
31. When learners are first recruited they usually begin by shadowing a qualified nurse in the surgery and then they gradually take on more of the role as they become more competent and confident. All these aspects of learning, including the on- and off-the-job training, are very well co-ordinated and communications between employers, SDT and Basingstoke ITEC are excellent. SDT meet regularly with Basingstoke ITEC to discuss such things as learner progress, data and quality improvement. The staff at SDT are well qualified and regularly take part in professional development and up-dating.

32. Basingstoke ITEC supports SDT very well to produce its self-assessment report. Inspectors broadly agreed with the report. Equality of opportunity is promoted well during learner reviews and as part of the NVQ and technical certificate. Learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Information & communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

33. Basingstoke ITEC offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in ICT. Learners work towards NVQs at level 2 and level 3 in ICT for users. At the time of the inspection there were 11 advanced apprentices and 16 apprentices. A large proportion of learners have additional social or learning support needs. Most learners are aged 16-18. There are four opportunities each year for new learners to join the programmes. The apprenticeships are offered through the programme led pathway and all learners complete an initial eight week off-the-job training programme before entering employment. The off-the-job training programme includes an induction and initial assessment. During this period learners complete the E-quals IT qualification as a technical certificate, and key skills at Level 2 in communication and application of number.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Good development of workplace skills
- Good care and support to promote personal development and learning
- Very effective promotion of equal opportunities

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of measurable targets during progress reviews

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for both apprentices and advanced apprentices are now high and above the national average. Success rates have improved consistently since 2003/04 when they were poor and well below the national average. For 2006/07 the success rate for apprentices is 84% and for advanced apprentices 67%. Current learners are making good progress. The development of workplace skills is good. Work-placements are of a high standard and offer significant opportunities for learners to develop their skills and knowledge. Learners enjoy their placements and are very motivated and enthusiastic about the apprenticeship. A high proportion of learners are offered permanent employment at their work-placement at end of the apprenticeship. The standard of learners' work is good. Recently there has been a significant reduction in unauthorised absence and lateness during the off-the-job training period, and attendance and punctuality are now good.

Quality of provision

35. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned by enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers. Teachers have detailed profiles of the learners that help them to plan lessons effectively. Less able learners receive good support and teachers plan for activities that will challenge the more able learners. Lessons contain a good mixture of different activities and learners are interested and enjoy the training. The preparation of learners for employment is good. It includes writing quality curriculum vitae and training on preparing for interviews. Learners' induction to the apprenticeship is good. There is good identification of additional needs, and good provision of learning support. A large proportion of the learners have additional learning needs and the development of their key skills is good. Specialist teachers work closely with the learners during the programme led pathway to develop these skills effectively before employment. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Assessors carry out regular reviews of learners' on-the-job training. However, target-setting is less well developed. Assessors agree action plans during progress reviews but measurable, time constrained targets are frequently not set. Too often targets are too broad and learners are not clear enough about what they must do to achieve them.
36. The range of programmes available to meet the needs of learners and employers is good. Learners who start on level 2 programmes have an opportunity to progress to an NVQ at level 3 in ICT, business administration or customer service. Employers are actively involved in the training programmes and there is good planning of training. Many employers have long standing relationships with Basingstoke ITEC and greatly value the help and support they receive from them.
37. Guidance and support are good overall. Initial advice and guidance and the care and support provided to promote learners' personal development are good. Staff are available to accompany learners to interviews or to their first day of employment. They make sure that learners are confident and have a good initial experience of their workplace. Staff take care to ensure learners present themselves well at interview. A small hardship fund is available to provide financial support to ensure that learners can present themselves well to employers. A breakfast club is available to encourage learners to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to ensure that they start their day with a suitable meal. There is a strong focus on achievement and success.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management is good. There are effective mechanisms to raise and develop learners' understanding of equality. These include an effective induction and good use of videos to portray bullying and harassment, including cyber bullying. Assessors make good use of reviews to promote equality of opportunity. Communication between staff is satisfactory and team meetings are regular and useful. There is a clear focus on raising success rates. The self-assessment process is good and the report is broadly accurate. Inspectors agreed with the strengths but the report failed to identify target-setting as an area for improvement.. The arrangements to share good practice are effective but largely informal. Lesson observations are carried out up to four times each year and are welcomed by staff. However, they are insufficiently evaluative and do not always result in clear actions for improvement. Training rooms are of sufficient size with sufficient space

between computers to allow learners to open workbooks adjacent to their machines. All computer rooms have up to date hardware and software. However, there are insufficient ceiling mounted data projectors and interactive whiteboards.

Business, administration & law

Good: Grade 2

Context

39. Basingstoke ITEC offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in business administration and customer service. At the time of the inspection there were eight advanced apprentices in business administration and 11 in customer service. There were only two apprentices, one in business administration and one in customer service. Many of the advanced apprentices have already achieved an NVQ at level 2 in ICT before progressing to the advanced apprenticeship. Most learners are aged over 19. All learners are employed, mainly with small local employers, and receive most of their training in the workplace.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Good progress by current learners
- Good employer involvement in the planning and delivery of training
- Very good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective strategies to halt the decline in recruitment

Achievement and standards

40. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates for advanced apprenticeships have improved dramatically since 2004/05 when only 14% of learners achieved the full apprenticeship. In 2006/07, 91% were successful. In 2006/07, 82% of apprentices achieved the full qualification. This represented a small improvement on 2004/5 and a significant improvement on 2005/06 when the success rate had fallen to 47%. The fall in that year was a result of four customer service apprentices leaving the programme when they were made redundant. The percentage of learners successfully completing their programmes by their planned target date has also increased significantly since 2004/05. Learners who are currently on programme are well on target to complete their qualifications by the intended date. Learners develop good workplace skills, enjoy their studies and are seen as valued employees by their employers. Some have been promoted and many are being given significant responsibilities in their jobs.

Quality of provision

41. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most training takes place in the workplace but learners also have the opportunity to attend the Basingstoke training centre for help with their key skills. The training is carefully designed to meet the individual needs of the learner as well as the requirements of the NVQ. Employers adjust the learner's job role to ensure that they receive the necessary experience to complete their qualification. Learners and their employers have a clear understanding of what the apprenticeship involves and what the learner needs to do to complete the qualification. Assessment takes place regularly and frequently. Assessors plan carefully and fully explore learners' work schedules to identify possible assessment opportunities. During their regular visits to the workplace, assessors agree clear targets with the learner for work to be done, and evidence to be produced, before the next visit. Additional literacy or numeracy support is offered to learners in the workplace, although few learners have additional learning needs.
42. Programmes meet the needs of learners well and there are strong links with employers. Communication between Basingstoke ITEC and employers is good. Employers are strongly involved in the planning and delivery of training. They recognise its value, not only to the learner, but also to their own business. Insufficient employer involvement was a weakness at the previous inspection and Basingstoke ITEC has worked hard to not only resolve this but to make it a strength.
43. The guidance and support offered to learners are good. Basingstoke ITEC staff are friendly and approachable and learners can contact them easily. Most employers are anxious for their learners to achieve and pleased for them when they do. Staff display a good knowledge of, and genuine concern for, the learners. There is a strong focus on achievement and success. Assessors make regular visits to the workplace and usually see their learners at least every three weeks. Learners value the support and advice that they receive.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management is good. Weaknesses identified during previous inspections have been remedied successfully, although some of these improvements are very recent. Basingstoke ITEC has made good progress in raising standards and success rates have improved. Successful strategies have also been introduced to monitor and reduce the number of learners who leave the programmes early. However, the number of learners joining business administration apprenticeships has fallen significantly and this was recognised as a concern in the self-assessment reports for both 2005/06 and 2006/07. Despite this, numbers are still falling and strategies to remedy this situation have not proved successful. A marketing plan has been put into action but as yet there has been no impact from these new activities. Overall, the self-assessment report was evaluative and identified the key strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors. Learners have a very good understanding of equal opportunities. Assessors develop this through useful discussion with learners at each assessment visit.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning programmes** managed by the provider 2005 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners *	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	Provider framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	41	27	48	15	34
		timely	48	10	31	6	22
	05/06	overall	41	46	53	41	44
		timely	31	16	34	10	28
	06/07	overall	28	82	64	82	56
		timely	32	63	41	63	35
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	33	58	51	52	39
		timely	35	31	29	26	22
	05/06	overall	48	63	58	60	52
		timely	49	45	38	43	34
	06/07	overall	65	85	65	85	60
		timely	70	73	45	73	42

Note 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006/07 had yet to be fully validated'

- * 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 and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'
- *** Adult training (long courses) includes Train to Gain provision, but not 'skills for life'