

Sutton and District Training Limited

Inspection date

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Inspection number

318273

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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:

- Preparation for life and work

Provision for 14-16 year old learners, provided as part of an arrangement with local schools, was not inspected.

Description of the provider

1. Sutton and District Training Limited (SDT) was established in 1999, and provides life skills and pre-employment training for learners through an E2E contract. The company also has contracts with local schools to provide vocational tasters for pre-16 learners. E2E programmes are usually 22 weeks in duration, on a roll-on and roll-off basis. Currently 48 learners are on programmes funded by the London South Learning and Skills Council (LSC).
2. SDT has three directors, who take equal responsibility for the management of the company. In addition, SDT employs 11 full-time and five part-time members of staff, at two teaching centres in Rose Hill and Sutton and at an administrative office in the area.
3. E2E courses include all aspects of personal effectiveness, jobsearch, basic IT, literacy, numeracy, team-building and a range of vocational taster options.
4. SDT is situated between the London boroughs of Merton and Sutton, both of which contain highly affluent areas, as well as areas of deprivation. Most current learners come from Merton and Sutton but the company is now attracting increasing numbers of learners from Croydon and the wider Surrey area.
5. Currently 77% of SDT's learners are white and 23% are from the black and minority ethnic community. The local areas of Merton, Sutton and Croydon have an average of 26% black and minority ethnic residents. Unemployment in Merton is 8.5% and 4.1% in Sutton, compared with 5.5% nationally. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above in the London south area was 52%, compared with 47.9% nationally

Summary of grades awarded

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

Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. Provision in preparation for life and work, on E2E programmes is also good. Equality of opportunity is good. The arrangements to meet learners' literacy and numeracy needs are generally good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. SDT has demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve. Since it was last inspected, retention and progression rates have remained good, attendance rates have risen to outstanding. The company has very good arrangements in place to gather and act upon learner feedback. Managers respond rapidly to most opportunities to improve, and staff share a culture of continuous improvement. The overall arrangements for quality improvement are good. A clear cycle of activity governs review and planning for quality assurance and improvement. All actions are closely related to outcomes and benefits for learners. Staff development is carefully managed, and good measures are in place to secure workforce development training.
8. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive, with all staff contributing directly to planning and review activities. The understanding of self-assessment by staff is very good. The views of partner organisations such as local schools' and colleges' are taken into account during self-assessment activity. Very good measures are in place to gather learner feedback, including summary evaluation of every taught session. Outcomes of learner evaluations are thoroughly analysed and provide a useful assessment of the provision, which managers act upon in a timely fashion.
9. The self-assessment report is generally well written and clear, but some sections are overly descriptive. Inspectors agreed with all of the grades given in the report. Good links exist between the self-assessment report and development plan, and in previous years, the provider has successfully tackled most identified areas of weakness. In a small number of instances, however, the development plan lacks detail about the ways that areas for improvement will be tackled. Monitoring arrangements to assess progress in all areas of company operation are good.

Key strengths

- Good attendance, retention, achievement and progression
- Good support
- Good teaching and learning
- Effective use of resources
- Good range of work taster programmes
- Good leadership
- Very flexible and responsive provision

- Good monitoring of learners' progress and experience
- Good promotion of equality and diversity

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient work placements
- Insufficiently evaluative self-assessment report
- Insufficiently detailed development plan

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Progression, achievement and retention of learners are good. Over the past three years, progression rates for the E2E programme have been 53% in 2004/05, 59% in 2005/06, 57% in 2006/07 and 62% in the first six months of 2007/08. The achieved objectives rate is good and currently running at 62%. Retention rates rose to 82% for 2006/07, increasing by three percentage points in 2005/06. Attendance is outstanding, with a 90% rate achieved in 2007/08. The provider appropriately evaluates the progress and performance trends of different groups of learners by gender and ethnicity. To date no significant variations are evident between such groups.
11. Many learners enter the programme with few or no qualifications and are assessed at entry level. Over the average of twenty weeks on programme, learners' achievement of additional qualifications is good, with most achieving at least two qualifications, whether certificated in-house or externally accredited at level 1. Learners readily engage in the work tasting programmes, particularly in health and beauty and construction trades. Learners are successful in learning new technical skills in IT, beauty, construction, mechanics as well as effectively re-engaging with literacy and numeracy. Standards of work are good with some good development noted.
12. Learners' social skills are positively developed through meeting as a group and participating in social events. Learners' enjoy the programme, demonstrate high levels of engagement during sessions, and maintain very good punctuality. Learners develop good levels of self-awareness and confidence and are appreciative of the commitment and support of provider staff.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning is good. Staff to learner ratios are appropriate and well qualified tutors prepare effective learning sessions. All staff are careful to include established health and safety and equality of opportunity learning as part of learners' training. Sessions are interactive and engaging and learners appreciate the quality of delivery.
14. Resources are used very effectively. Resources are both practical and relevant and positively support learners' understanding as well as practical skills. The company has made very careful use of space in training centres to create a flexible, challenging but welcoming space for learning. For example, with careful use of resources in health and beauty sessions, a business salon environment has been created to underpin the quality of professional teaching. For motor-cycle mechanics sessions, the provider has invested in three new bikes, on which learners may develop up-to-date skills and knowledge. Learners receive good and effective support from staff in using resources.
15. SDT takes good steps to meet the needs and interests of learners. Nine options are available ranging from plumbing, electrics, motor-cycle mechanics, through to fitness

training and health and beauty. All learners benefit from in-house certification, which has helped them gain places on college courses.

16. Guidance and support for learners is good. Learners trust and respect provider staff and have access to them out of hours if needed. Many learners return to visit the provider after they have moved into further training or employment to receive continued support and guidance. Learners recognise the progress they are making and are aware of their own development needs. During inspection, learners made particular reference to the good levels of care, consideration and support provided.
17. Induction, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. The induction programme is well planned, holistic, and tailored to individual needs. Initial assessment is satisfactory and includes electronic assessment to provide guidance on skills level and development needs of learners. Individual learning plans are satisfactory and mostly well maintained, although a few plans were insufficiently detailed to drive improvements in learners' progress.
18. Progress reviews are satisfactory. They are held every four weeks with many opportunities for additional reviews sessions. Staff ensure detailed recording of progress by learners at session level is carried out. This is effectively used to inform progress reviews and contribute to the planning of individual learning.
19. Insufficient work placements are provided for learners. Currently there is only one work placement, which is proceeding well for both employer and learner. The provider has worked hard to overcome reluctance amongst local employers to offer placements but has had limited success.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

20. Reinforcement of equality of opportunity and health and safety is good. Equality of opportunity is well integrated with programme planning. It is actively and positively promoted in teaching sessions. In one health and beauty session, learners were asked to consider how they might have to adjust service delivery to respond to client needs depending on ethnicity or culture. Learners were confident in their responses and saw this as part of good customer service. Learners understand that equality of opportunity is part of the world of work. Health and safety are appropriately considered from the outset at induction, reviews and teaching sessions.
21. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Appropriate measures are in place to vet staff, and the provider has clear policies and procedures in place to manage disciplinary, grievance, anti-bullying, safeguarding, and equality and diversity matters.
22. The provider has particularly well trained staff with appropriate qualifications to deliver teaching, learning and support. Continued professional development is a central strategy

of the company. Progress on workforce development to meet recent legislative requirements is good.

23. Overall, the provision of information, advice and guidance at SDT is good. Learners receive useful information from staff about progression and employment opportunities. A range of contacts have been built up with local employers, training and education providers, from which learners derive clear benefits. These contacts and partnerships have led to placements for learners on college courses that they had previously been unable to secure.
24. The company benefits from good leadership. Staff are well informed about company direction and strategy, and play a full part in decision making. The three company directors are very knowledgeable about local, regional and national training initiatives, and take effective steps to ensure the company remains in a good position to meet skill needs. Clear plans are in place for developing company operations and maintaining the quality of existing provision. The directors play a full part in company operations, and two directors teach vocational taster courses. Directors prepare breakfast for learners at the company training centre, and all are well known to the learners.
25. Very flexible and responsive provision enables learners to gain a good range of skills and opportunities for personal development. Provision is changed very swiftly in response to learners' comments and evaluations, or to meet identified skills shortages or needs. The company has taken good account of progression routes available through further training at local colleges and has tailored vocational courses accordingly. Directors have evaluated the popularity and success of the various taster options very carefully, and have discontinued or developed new programmes as appropriate. Before introducing new courses, care is taken to ensure adequate resources are in place to provide reasonable and realistic working environments. The training centre and project centre have been carefully developed to maximise learners' opportunity to move smoothly between vocational areas.
26. Good monitoring of learners' progress and experience allows staff and managers to provide targeted support swiftly where necessary. Arrangements to monitor and support learners' literacy, numeracy or language needs are satisfactory. The arrangements for learners to evaluate the quality of training are particularly thorough and effective. Every session is evaluated, and the outcomes are analysed by managers by cohort and vocational area to effectively improve quality. Staff and managers explore outcomes to share good practice and deal with any weaknesses in provision. Learners respond very positively to the close monitoring of their views, and are able to discuss ways that the provision has been improved as a result. At all training venues there are good progress monitoring charts in use. These are updated by staff and learners together, and are helpful in maintaining progress and standards of work. Centres also feature prominent celebrations of learners' achievements, as well as records of visits and trips undertaken by learners.

What learners like:

- Being treated like adults
- 'The staff make the boring bits interesting – they make numeracy quite fun'
- 'The staff really understand us'
- 'The staff have done the journey too'
- The clear rules
- 'This place is great'

What learners think could improve:

- The range of available trades
- The number of staff

Annex

Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by the provider **2005 to 2008**.

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005-06	102	77	59
2006-07	74	54	57
2007-08	92	62	62

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period