

DV8 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:

- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. DV8 Training Ltd (DV8) is a privately owned company established in 1996 as an event promotions company specialising in promoting club events, tours and outdoor music festivals. In 1999, DV8 established the community record label Eastside Records and DV8 Training Ltd. Current provision includes Entry to Employment (E2E), a small 'alternative provision' programme for year 11 learners excluded from school, a digital women's club programme for female entrepreneurs and artists; and a 14-19 VMC creative and media diploma pilot. The E2E training is funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). At the time of the inspection there were 40 learners on the E2E programme.
2. E2E courses are offered in music production and business, music and event promotions and magazine journalism. Courses are run in partnership with Waltham Forest College.
3. The company is owned and managed by the managing director who is also a member of the training team. The managing director, general manager, quality manager, skills for life co-ordinator and work-placement manager are employed full time; and there are a further seven part-time specialist tutors.
4. Learners are recruited from a wide area across north London with a small number of learners travelling from South and West London. In 2006/07, 15% of all learners were from Waltham Forest. Almost 60% of learners in 2006/07 were males which reflect NEET figures where approximately 55% of NEET young people in Waltham Forest are male. In 2006/07 68% of all learners were from minority ethnic groups. In 2004, the proportion of school leavers in North London to achieve five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C for above was 47%, compared with the national average of 59%.

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: Outstanding: Grade 1

Sector subject area

Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement of personal, social and vocational skills is very good and progression rates have significantly improved. The programme is particularly successful in raising learners' ambitions and learners achieve high standards of work. The quality of provision is good and tutors combine high levels of vocational expertise in the creative industries with teaching skills to make learning motivating and enjoyable. DV8 is outstanding in meeting the needs and interest of students. The programme is innovative and reflects learners' interests in contemporary music culture. Engagement with employers within the media and music industry provides some good quality work-placements for those learners who are ready for work. Learners receive good guidance and support including literacy and numeracy.
6. Leadership and management are good and equality of opportunity is outstanding. The strategic direction of the company is well aligned to national and local priorities and DV8 makes a strong contribution to the 14-19 strategy for the area. The management of the E2E programme is good and performance management is effective. Some aspects of quality improvement are underdeveloped. Equality and diversity are well integrated with all aspects of the programme and there is a strong ethos of care and support for learners.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. DV8 has good capacity to improve. The company has made good progress since the previous inspection. It continues to invest in developing and increasing management capacity and good quality learning resources. Diversification of funding sources has brought greater financial stability and a range of partnership arrangements support DV8's contribution to training for the creative industries. DV8 is ambitious, responsive and has a stable staff with a strong commitment to the provision of E2E training. It continues to improve provision and progression rates.
8. The self-assessment process is thorough and generally accurate yet it is insufficiently evaluative. It does not make sufficient use of information such as the outcomes of observations of teaching and learning and the views of other stakeholders. Quality improvement plans are insufficiently rigorous and do not adequately identify success criteria and specific and measurable targets for improvement.

Key strengths

- Very good achievement of social and vocational skills
- Good strategies to raise learners' aspirations and ambitions
- Overall improving progression rates
- High standards of work

- Open and supportive leadership and management
- Strategic direction and close alignment with national and local priorities
- Good financial and resource management
- Provision of enjoyable learning

Key areas for improvement

- Progression rates
- Rigorous and evaluative aspects of self-assessment and action-planning
- Development of quality improvement arrangements

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

9. Achievement and standards are good. Learners' progression into employment, further education and training is good. The rate of positive outcomes has increased from 44% in 2005/06 to 62% in 2006/07. In the current year, 83% of learners have achieved their key objectives. There are an increasing number of opportunities to undertake accreditation including skills for life and vocational qualifications with some learners achieving qualifications at levels 2 and 3. There are good strategies to support retention and in particular DV8 has worked closely with the college to improve attendance on college courses.
10. The standard of learners' work is very good. Learners develop good social and life skills, become more articulate and learning improves their attitudes and behaviour. Learners demonstrate good levels of motivation, application, are enthusiastic and produce a professional standard magazine, marketing materials for music events and CDs of their compositions and performances. Learners enjoy their learning and give many examples of how learning at DV8 has changed their attitudes to education and gaining employment. Learners are involved in the organisation of events to celebrate their achievements.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning is good and lessons are thoroughly planned. Tutors make good use of an interesting range of resources to creatively engage learners who have histories of disaffection and poor behaviour. Projects are closely aligned to vocational interests. The strong professional expertise of tutors is highly valued by learners, energises their ambitions and helps them to think realistically about future employment within the creative industries. Assessment is effective, work is marked regularly and progress reviews are used well to set targets for improvement. Literacy and numeracy is effectively integrated with vocational lessons.
12. DV8's approach to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. DV8 provides an inclusive learning community, behaviour is well managed and learners feel safe. The E2E programme is innovative, in tune with learners' cultural interests and effectively designed to motivate learners and to produce current industry standard products. There is good engagement with employers within the media and music industry. Work-placements provide some learners with opportunities to develop further knowledge of industries relevant to their vocational interests. A varied programme of enrichment includes guest speakers, visits to the theatre, showcases and exhibitions.
13. The quality of guidance and support is good. Many learners face significant barriers to learning. Staff help them to resolve personal and social problems and self-assessment recognises the good provision of pastoral and academic support and effective links with a range of external agencies. The quality of information, advice and guidance provided is good. Many learning sessions are double staffed to ensure good individual support. Initial

assessment is effective and provides valuable diagnosis of learners' individual literacy and numeracy needs.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

14. Leadership and management are good. DV8 has a strong strategic direction well aligned to national and local priorities. It is entrepreneurial and managers have taken good steps to diversify funding to provide a stable financial environment for future development. A range of partnerships with other providers, employers and lead organisations in the creative industries enhance the experience of learners. DV8 is making a significant contribution to the 14-19 strategy for the area including the development of innovative models of delivering diplomas in the creative industries. Employer responsiveness is developing and productive relationships with an increasing number of high profile employers has resulted in better assessment and training of learners to ensure work readiness.
15. Since the previous inspection, DV8 has invested in developing its management resources and successfully managed a period of change including the formalisation of systems to improve the quality of provision. Leadership is ambitious and management at all levels is open, responsive and supportive. The management team has a good range of skills and expertise. Communication between managers and staff are effective.
16. The management of the E2E programme is effective. Data is accurate and is used well to manage performance, to ensure accountability and to meet key targets. However, there is no summary data for attendance. The company makes good use of its financial resources to improve the learning experience including the provision of enrichment activities. The training environment is good although there is currently little social space for learners. Staff are involved in the development of innovative resources for learning including the design and introduction of the online learner portfolio that allows learners to individualise and create their own online portal.
17. Self-assessment accurately identifies improvements in arrangements for staff development and appraisal. There is a good focus on supporting staff to gain teaching qualifications to enhance their professional expertise and all tutors are currently engaged, or have completed a range of teacher training programmes. The new appraisal scheme sets appropriate performance targets to improve progression rates and the learners' experience, and includes honest and helpful peer reviews. Currently there are no formal arrangements to support the performance of the managing director.
18. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. DV8 has a strong inclusive ethos characterised by high levels of trust and mutual respect. This is particularly impressive amongst learners who experience significant and often multiple barriers to participation. Learners are encouraged to play an active part in DV8 and learner involvement strategies include the development of a learner executive board. Equality and diversity are integrated appropriately into the programme and induction and progress reviews include activities to help learners understand equality and diversity. DV8's monitoring of equal opportunities

has improved since the previous inspection, including assessment of the performance of different groups of learners. Further work is underway to ensure that employers understand their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and protection issues. The development of a range of projects widens participation of disadvantaged groups in the community. DV8 has made a good response to Every Child Matters which is integrated with the key learning processes. The integration of skills for life has significantly improved since the previous inspection and staff have a good understanding of the role of literacy and numeracy within teaching and learning and in relation to work readiness.

19. Some aspects of quality improvements are underdeveloped. The observation of teaching and learning, including the use of external observations, is improving and includes observation of all the key learning processes. Many processes have been strengthened since the previous inspection including the internal verification system. Targets, success criteria and action planning are not sufficiently precise and the outcomes of quality improvement activities are not used sufficiently to inform more challenging target-setting. The recently appointed quality manager recognises the need to further strengthen quality improvement.

What learners like:

- Feeling respected and valued
- Being treated like an adult
- Inspired to learn
- Encouraged to think laterally
- Tutors spice up the learning
- Helping learners to mature and become more responsible
- Staff are laid back, supportive but also strict when its necessary
- Staff make me feel professional

What learners think could improve:

- Provide longer courses
- Integration of new learners without repeating work for existing learners

Sector subject areas

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

20. There are 40 learners on the E2E programme. The programme includes three vocational course options in music production and business, music industry and multimedia and magazine journalism. Courses last 19 weeks and learners can gain accreditation for vocational training at Entry 3, Levels 1, 2 and 3. External qualifications are also available in literacy and numeracy. Most learners are referred to DV8 by Connexions. Some learners are directly recruited.

Strengths

- Very good standard of learners' work
- Very good teaching and learning
- Very effective programme design
- High levels of professional expertise to promote learning

Areas for improvement

- Progression rates
- Insufficiently evaluative process for self-assessment

Achievement and standards

21. Learners produce very good work. They work well on their personal projects work and in groups. On the journalism course, learners work as a team to negotiate and assign specific roles within an 'editorial team' and subsequently produce a glossy professional standard magazine. They take responsibility for different roles on the magazine including roles as editors, feature writers and photographers. They work within a real life context and are expected to meet real production deadlines. They are responsible for arranging interviews, organising photographic shoots and all the tasks associated with producing a magazine. Learners have interviewed well known celebrities from the music and TV industries for the magazine. On the music events programme, learners work on a project to produce a music event for a local venue. They design posters for the events and are involved in all aspects of events management. Learners use industry standard software and equipment to produce CDs of music they compose and perform as a group.

22. The progression rate improved in 2006/07 to 62% and is a significant improvement on the previous year rate of 44%. Some learners achieve qualifications at Level 3. Rates for retention and achievement of key objectives are slowly improving and during the current year 83% of learners achieved their key objectives. Learners have clear career and life goals as a result of their learning. They develop good social skills and learning impacts in a very positive way on their attitude and behaviour towards others and towards authority figures.

Quality of provision

23. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Sessions are very well planned and incorporate a range of activities to stimulate learning and to produce 'products' such as CDs of their compositions. Role-play is used very effectively during sessions to enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills required for specific job roles within the industry relevant to their personal projects. During sessions learners work on tasks that are real rather than simulated. For example during an events management session, learners worked as a team to finalise arrangements for an event at a local theatre and to consider priorities for promoters, the venue and artists involved in the event. On the journalism course, learners work hard to meet real production deadlines for a magazine. Guest speakers are invited to sessions and talk to learners about their role in the creative industry.
24. Progress reviews are regular and effective in reviewing learners' progress. Assessment is thorough and learners receive regular and detailed feedback about their learning. A standard assessment feedback sheet is used by tutors to inform learners about their progress and to highlight what they need to do to improve the standard of their work or achieve accreditation at a higher level.
25. Literacy and numeracy teaching is very effectively incorporated into teaching on the vocational courses. The skills for life manager has worked well with tutors to develop sessions, tools and exercises that integrate literacy and numeracy into relevant parts of the programme. Tutors also incorporate literacy and numeracy skills development into their sessions. For example, on the journalism course, the tutor begins each session with a half hour quiet reading slot to encourage learners to develop their reading skills, expand their vocabulary and mentally prepare for their project work.
26. The E2E programme is very well designed to offer vocational training that meets learners' interests and needs. The programme also meets local and national priorities and is particularly effective in recruiting and engaging young people from hard to reach groups. The strategy of using projects and a final 'product' to keep learners motivated and engaged is very effective. Induction is used effectively to stimulate learning. For example on the journalism course, learners visit a newspaper production factory and learn to develop pages for a magazine. Courses are designed to reflect industry standards and practice. Software and equipment used on the courses meet industry standards. There is good engagement with employers within the media and music industry and some of these offer work-placements to learners. Work-placements provide learners with an opportunity to develop their knowledge of the industries relevant to their vocational projects. Feedback from employers about learners work on placements is very positive.
27. Learners receive good individual support from their tutors. They have a good, productive relationship with their tutors and feel respected. Many learners have received help with personal and social problems. An internal personal adviser offers pastoral support and uses external agencies to provide specialist help. Support tutors are assigned to most sessions and offer learners good individual support. Initial assessment is effective and identifies learners who need additional help with their literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management

28. Management is good. There is good communication and regular meetings to review overall progress of learners. The strategy to recruit tutors with high levels of expertise is very effective. All tutors are part time and work in industries relevant to the courses they teach. They are experts in their field and are good role models for the young people they teach. Their professional success contributes to raising learners' aspirations. All the tutors, including tutors based at the college, are practitioners in the creative industry. The training managers at DV8 are involved in the recruitment process for college based tutors who teach on the E2E programme.
29. The self-assessment process is generally accurate but insufficiently evaluative. Course reviews are used to inform self-assessment but are insufficiently self-critical. Minutes of course review meetings are used to list action points but there is no clear link between the course review meetings and specific issues relating to the quality of teaching and learning, learning support and other key areas covered in the self-assessment report.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by the provider **2005/06** to **2007/08**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005/06	79	57%	43%
2006/07	115	58%	62%
2007/08 (6 months)	59	83%	

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