

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Kingshurst Training
Date of visit: 26 March 2008

Context

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in May 2007, at which Kingshurst Training's overall effectiveness, capacity to improve and achievement and standards were inadequate. The quality of the provision was judged to be satisfactory. Leadership and management were inadequate and equality of opportunity was satisfactory. The sector subject area for early years and playwork was judged to be inadequate.

Kingshurst Training is the work-based learning division of City Technology College, Kingshurst, Solihull. It offers work-based learning for young people in early years and playwork and an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme. It also delivers Train to Gain programmes in early years and playwork, although this is mainly for teaching assistants. Kingshurst Training works with two local schools and other agencies to deliver training in early years and playwork for pupils aged 14 to 16 and a KS4 E2E programme for other local schools. Most learners are directly recruited from local schools apart from those on E2E programmes, who are recruited through referrals from Connexions.

At the time of the monitoring visit, Kingshurst Training had a total of 134 learners on government-funded programmes. There were 44 advanced apprenticeships and 53 apprentices on childcare programmes and 20 learners following an E2E programme. A further 17 learners were undertaking a teaching assistant qualification on Train To Gain. About a third of the early years and playwork learners are employed by Seesaws Day Nursery, to which Kingshurst Training subcontracts the training and assessment of these learners.

Achievement and standards

How effectively has the provider improved achievement rates across all programmes?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, achievements and standards were judged to be inadequate. Overall success rate for apprentices on the childcare programme has improved in 2006/07. Overall success rates increased from 32% in 2004/05 to 66%

in 2006/07, which is 7% above the national average. Timely success rates have increased from 0% in 2004/05 to 44% in 2006/07, which is just below the national average for this sector subject area.

Learners' attendance on the E2E programme has improved from 79% in 2005/06 to 86% in 2006/07. The success rate for key skills remains high at over 80% for these learners. Progression rates have improved from 30% in 2005/06 to 40% in 2006/07, although the proportion of learners who achieve their planned objectives has decreased from 51% in 2005/06 to 47% in 2006/07.

The overall success rates for advanced apprentices on childcare programmes have improved from 22% in 2004/05 to 45% in 2006/07, although this is still 5% lower than the national average. Learners have continued to make slow progress. Kingshurst Training has recently implemented changes to its initial assessment practice but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this development.

Target-setting

How effectively has the provider improved the quality of target-setting?	Insufficient progress
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At the previous inspection, target-setting was identified as a weakness. Kingshurst Training has made insufficient progress on improving the quality of medium and long term target-setting.

Improvements have been made to learners' progress review documentation which now includes short, medium and long term targets. In addition, targets are set for each aspect of the framework. However, the quality of target-setting varies considerably between assessors and remains an area for improvement.

Assessment planning has improved. However, the intended outcomes of assessment remain insufficiently clear. Target-setting based on the results of initial assessment is weak. Results do not inform specific targets for additional learning support. Some learners appear to be on inappropriate frameworks based upon the results of initial assessment.

Management information system

What actions have been taken to improve the use of the management information system?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, the use of management information was identified as a weakness. Kingshurst Training has made reasonable progress in ensuring that management information is used effectively to monitor learners' performance.

A centralised learner monitoring system has now been introduced. Each element of the framework is weighted and monitored accordingly. The system accurately indicates the percentage completion for individual learners and shows their overall progress. Managers use the information system well to monitor assessors' performance. Learners' individual learning plans are now linked to the information system. At the monthly assessor meetings, learners' progress is updated and learners identified at being risk are offered satisfactory levels of support.

However, assessors do not yet have access to the electronic reports and only a limited number of staff have received training on the new system. Staff are not yet fully aware of the full range of reports the new system can offer. The E2E monitoring system remains limited in its use.

Quality improvement

What actions have been taken to ensure that the quality improvement arrangements are having a positive impact upon learner performance?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, quality improvement was recognised as a weakness. Kingshurst Training has made reasonable progress in remedying this. Kingshurst Training has fully reviewed its quality assurance arrangements and introduced new, more detailed, quality procedures. Staff have received updated training and are mostly aware of the changes. The new arrangements cover effectively all aspects of the learning process.

Feedback from employers and learners is now used more effectively to deliver improvements to training. The frequency of observation of key training processes has been increased and has resulted in clearly defined improvement action plans for staff. Senior staff meet regularly with employers to review training and identify areas for improvement. Monthly quality meetings ensure that key elements of learners' training are reviewed and that improvement action plans are monitored. The outcomes of these meetings are appropriately reviewed at the senior managers' meetings.

Self-assessment process

What improvements have been made to the rigour of the self-assessment report?	Insufficient progress
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At the previous inspection, Kingshurst Training's self-assessment report was judged to be insufficiently critical. The self-assessment process continues to involve staff, employers and learners adequately, however, the report is evaluative and some of the strengths highlighted represent normal practice. Data has not been used effectively to make the appropriate judgements about achievement and standards.

The quality improvement plan does not contain specific actions and timelines for all the identified strengths and areas for improvement.

Equality of opportunity

What actions have been carried out to increase the learner understanding on equality of opportunity and diversity issues?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, learners had an insufficient understanding of equality of opportunity. Kingshurst Training has made reasonable progress in raising learners' understanding.

Kingshurst Training has designed a series of activities aimed at increasing learners' knowledge of equality and diversity, particularly within the childcare sector. Learners now undertake a number of training sessions and complete project activities on equality of opportunity matters. They also receive useful feedback from their assessors on how their understanding has improved. The E2E programme now contains better reference to equality and diversity. Learners concentrate on diversity in employment and job-seeking, however, Kingshurst Training has not yet extended these developments to the advanced apprenticeship programmes.