

Building Crafts College

Inspection date

13 March 2009

Inspection number

330813

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	3
Effectiveness of provision.....	3
Capacity to improve	3
Key strengths	3
Key areas for improvement	3
Main findings.....	4
Achievement and standards	4
Quality of provision	4
Leadership and management	6
Equality of opportunity	6
What learners like.....	8
What learners think could improve	8
Learners' achievements	9

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' monitoring 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 crafts

Building Crafts College (BCC) recently gained a small LSC contract for the provision of apprenticeship training and for a Train to Gain programme. Inspectors sampled this provision but did not give it a separate grade.

BCC also delivers a number of community based employability programmes funded by East London Housing Association as well as advanced apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes for the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). This provision was outside the scope of the inspection.

Description of the Provider

1. The BCC was founded by the Worshipful Company of Carpenters in 1893. The company owns the college and its members constitute the college's governing body. BCC employs a director, deputy director and 18 full-time training and support staff.
2. BCC contracts with the LSC for the provision of training leading to awards in construction crafts. It also offers apprenticeship training and Train to Gain programmes. At the time of inspection, 113 learners were following the construction awards programmes, 15 were on the Train to Gain programme and 11 were studying for an apprenticeship. Government-funded provision represents about 30% of BCC's business. BCC also runs a schools programme locally and a number of school children attend the college for a construction taster programme.
3. In 2001, the college moved to new premises in Stratford, in the east London borough of Newham. The college has recently established a new workshop and classrooms on this site. Newham is ranked as the 11th most deprived borough in England and Wales and the fourth most deprived of the 33 London boroughs. It is ethnically very diverse. The unemployment rate is high at 43%.

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

Construction crafts	Good: Grade 2
---------------------	---------------

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity are all good. Training in construction crafts is also good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. BCC has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. The college has made significant improvements since the previous inspection, mainly in the year. It recently re-organised the management team and appointed a new director. BCC has expanded the provision and learner numbers are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Resources to support learning are good. BCC continues to work and develop partnerships to further the aims of the construction industry and to create new opportunities for learners. BCC's inspection grades for leadership and management and equality of opportunity have improved. The college has successfully tackled many of the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection. The director has recently implemented thorough quality improvement procedures and organised training in their use for all staff. These procedures are very effective in monitoring learner progress and in setting targets to improve the provision.
6. The self-assessment process is inclusive and incorporates contributions from all staff. The college uses feedback from employers, partners and learners in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report contains sufficient judgements, but also much descriptive text. Most of the grades in the self-assessment report matched those that inspectors gave.

Key strengths

- High standard of work in practical sessions
- Good teaching and learning
- Very effective strategy to meet employer and learner needs
- Good leadership to bring about change
- Good management of resources
- Very effective partnership working
- Very effective strategy to widen participation

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient arrangements to meet additional learning needs

- Insufficient use of management information to manage provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good, as recognised in the self-assessment. Learners produce a high standard of work in practical sessions. Some of it is outstanding. Learners enjoy their work, express themselves confidently and speak highly of their experiences at college. They develop very good practical craft skills that help them to achieve economic wellbeing. Learners' work meets the requirements of the qualification and the needs and expectations of their employers. Employers speak of well motivated and willing learners. A few learners take part in regional and national skills competitions. Learners' portfolios for craft awards and for the diplomas are good. Most contain a wide range of appropriate work. The better portfolios are supplemented with diary evidence of daily activities, good-quality work-based evidence and authenticated photographic evidence, witness testimonies and direct observation of competence on site.
8. Success rates on the construction awards programme in 2007/08 are good for the 19+ age group at 86% and satisfactory for the 16–18 age group at 63%. The number of learners in each age group is similar. Within the groups, some variation exists across the different levels. For example, success rates for learners aged 16–18 on level 2 programmes are poor. It is too early to judge the success rates for those on apprenticeship or Train to Gain programmes as these learners have not yet completed their planned programme of study.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. The quality of provision is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are also good. Since the previous inspection, the college has focused more closely on helping learners to learn effectively. Tutors carry out a learning styles survey of their groups at the start of the course. They use a wide range of teaching and learning styles to engage, stimulate and maintain learners' interest. Tutors have a good understanding of learner's abilities and backgrounds. The head of department observes tutors once a year and gives constructive verbal and written feedback. The head of department and the tutor then agree clear actions for improvement. BCC's lesson observation scheme is thorough and accurately identifies the quality of teaching and learning.
10. Tutors plan theory lessons well and take careful account of individual learners' needs. The better teaching moves at a lively pace and effectively engages learners. Most learners participate well and find the variety of learning activities stimulating. Tutors challenge learners appropriately and help to develop their skills and knowledge. They regularly check and reinforce learning during sessions.

In the less effective lessons, tutors do not set an appropriate pace for the learning activities and do not sufficiently check and reinforce learning.

11. Tutors give very good practical demonstrations and provide good individual support for learners during sessions. Tutors manage workshops well and promote good housekeeping to provide a safe work environment. Tutors design practical training tasks well and set interesting, challenging and realistic tasks for learners to complete.
12. Tutors carry out good assessment and reviews of learners' progress. Assessment is regular and linked to learners' individual assessment plans in practical activities. Progress reviews are carried out at least three times a year. Tutors set specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound targets. Monitoring of learner progress is particularly effective. Course teams discuss the progress of individual learners and act promptly on any concerns. Teams also carefully monitor learners' progress on the recently introduced key skills programme. Assessor visits to employer sites are productive.
13. Internal verification across the college is satisfactory. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified in the new structure. Internal verifiers have appropriate and manageable case loads. Sampling plans and schedules ensure coverage of all programmes and assessors. However, feedback to assessors and the involvement of candidates is sometimes limited. Written support is not always given to help assessors improve their practice.
14. BCC has a very effective strategy to meet employer and learners' needs. College tutors use differentiated learning approaches to meet individual needs of learners in classroom and workshop sessions. In furniture crafts, tutors used an innovative approach to help a learner start his own business. The college rents out space to him in the corner of the workshop, allowing other learners to work alongside him. College managers and staff have a good understanding of the five key aspects of Every Child Matters. They use checklists and course files well to record coverage of the key aspects. The college works well with schools to engage pupils aged 14–16. In stonemasonry, work placements for full-time learners are effectively planned. Placements are available across the country and in Paris. This enhances the learning experience and provides learners with specialist practical experience. However, there is no college-wide strategy to ensure all learners benefit from similar opportunities. Employers, local community groups and other partners regard the college as highly responsive.
15. Support and guidance for learners overall are good. Tutors assess learners at the start of the programme to identify their literacy and numeracy skills. For those learners that receive it, the quality of additional learning support is good. Information, advice and guidance arrangements are satisfactory. BCC has established a strong health and safety culture across the organisation and it is emphasised in all aspects of programme delivery.

16. Arrangements to meet learners' additional learning needs are insufficient. BCC has been slow in providing support for some learners identified as needing help. At the time of inspection, a small group of learners were still waiting to receive literacy, numeracy or specialist support.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

17. Leadership and management are good, as acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The management team provides good leadership to bring about change. The BCC committee demonstrates a high degree of commitment to the college and visits it regularly. Committee members are very aware of the changing landscape of the construction industry and they have developed good strategies to expand the college to meet future needs and priorities. The college appointed a new director in January 2008 who has established a new management structure which includes senior tutors to act as team leaders. He works closely with the BCC committee and the senior management team to ensure that all staff have clearly defined roles and a good understanding of the college's business.

18. BCC's management of resources is good. The college has opened a new teaching block next to the main workshops which includes well equipped and designed teaching rooms and additional workshop space for fine carpentry. The workshops contain equipment which is of very good quality and maintained to a very high standard. BCC recently secured some extra funding to purchase additional wood machining equipment at a significant discount. Staff are well qualified. All are suitably experienced in their trade. BCC has a comprehensive staff appraisal system which clearly identifies continuing professional development needs and actively encourages staff to maintain and extend their professional skills. Staff share their training experiences during team meetings.

19. BCC has very effective partnership working arrangements. It is active in forging partnerships with employers to create employment opportunities for learners. Three apprentices are funded through the London Youth Trust and are employed by the Historic Royal Palaces at the Tower of London. They work with the contractors responsible for the construction work on the site. Plans are well developed to extend this work to other local learners. BCC runs programmes with local schools and housing associations to promote careers in the construction industry and to recruit new learners.

20. Equality of opportunity is good. BCC has a very effective strategy to widen participation. It has implemented strategies to recruit more women and members of minority ethnic groups, currently under-represented on the college's programmes. These strategies have been generally successful in ensuring that the college's learners reflect the community that it serves. BCC's marketing and publicity materials effectively promote diversity. All learners cover equality of

opportunity issues at induction and these are reinforced during learning sessions where appropriate. All staff attend an annual equality and diversity training event, which is supplemented by other training sessions during the year. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities and how it affects them in the workplace. Staff and learners understand the complaints, grievances and appeals procedures. BCC's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The college has a designated safeguarding officer and all staff have been appropriately vetted.

21. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the self-assessment report broadly accurate, though it contains too much descriptive text. The judgements in the report are generally similar to those that inspectors made. Inspectors gave similar grades for most aspects of provision as those in the self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan is satisfactory, but lacks sufficient detail for action points to be monitored adequately. However each course team has completed a detailed quality improvement plan for each course.
22. BCC makes insufficient use of management information to manage the provision. The previous inspection identified quality improvement as an area for improvement however, BCC has been slow to implement changes in its quality systems. The director has now put into place rigorous management information procedures to monitor all aspects of delivery and has arranged for staff training in their use. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

What learners like:

- 'Practical work in the workshops'
- 'Relaxed approach from tutors'
- 'The course has given me confidence to tackle more jobs at work'
- 'Tutor really helped me to settle into the group as a late starter'
- 'Tutor fantastic and helpful'
- 'I didn't get far at school but college is great'
- 'Brilliant tutors and love being here'
- 'The tutor who helps me with my English and work'
- 'Look forward to coming to college'
- 'Good laugh and everyone gets on well together'
- 'I got my first ever certificate from the college'

What learners think could improve:

- 'Having to do key skills when I have GCSE's'
- 'Waiting for other class mates to catch up in the classroom'
- 'Opportunity to use the computers more'
- 'Canteen is expensive'
- 'Canteen could do with being open later'
- 'Newer books in the library'

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on mainstream qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age.

2004 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
Construction	04/05	8	63	68	-5	33	88	78	10
	05/06	21	62	72	-10	51	63	80	-17
	06/07	25	80	75	5	83	80	80	0
	07/08	65	63	N/A		78	86	N/A	
NVQ	04/05	24	46	62	-16	89	52	62	-10
	05/06	24	67	68	-1	56	70	68	2
	06/07	16	50	71	-21	44	32	71	-39
	07/08	4	75	N/A		11	46	N/A	

* College data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)