

Beckett Corporation Limited

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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' 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:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Description of the provider

1. Beckett Corporation Limited is a private hire transport company, based in Colliers Wood, London, and formed in 1999 by the two current directors. The partnership was incorporated in January 2001. Beckett Corporation, trading as Tina's cars, has expanded from its original role of a private hire transport company with the introduction of training programmes. Beckett Corporation has a director of training, a quality manager and five assessors of which two are internal verifiers. The company's 20 key staff manage and administrate the finance, training, personnel and garage operations of the company; 60 employees work as attendants; and another 100 work as self-employed taxi drivers. The company offers a range of services to the public including contract private hire for the disabled and vulnerable, self-drive van and wheelchair vehicles and training for drivers and attendants. Beckett Corporation works closely with a number of London boroughs in developing and maintaining a transport system for those who have difficulty in travelling on public services. Since October 2007, Beckett Corporation has received Train to Gain funding through the London South LSC for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2 in road passenger transport, and literacy and numeracy qualifications. Beckett Corporation also delivers privately funded training programmes in topographical skills and first aid. At the time of inspection: 190 learners were in training; a further 39 learners were awaiting external verification of their completed work; and no learners were working towards literacy and numeracy qualifications.

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

2. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of the provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity are all good. Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is also good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

3. Beckett Corporation demonstrates a good capacity to improve. In the last year the company has appointed a quality manager and more recently a director of training. The overall strategy for improving and developing the training programme is working effectively. Beckett Corporation has made good use of the views of learners and employers to plan and implement a range of improvement strategies. The company has a clear direction and commitment to expanding, developing and improving the provision.
4. The observation of teaching and learning is detailed and thorough and supports tutors to improve their learning techniques. Common issues identified during observation are discussed at the regular standardisation meeting and tutors are set individual targets to help them improve their teaching techniques.
5. Recent good developments to the programme include a range of additions and amendments to the training from which learners and employers clearly benefit. Off-the-job training is well planned and clearly structured, providing good opportunities for drivers and attendants to gain useful and relevant skills. Learners on the NVQ in passenger road transport achieve good success rates and are enthusiastic and motivated in their training.
6. The self-assessment report is Beckett Corporation's first, and the process has developed well. The report is critical and evaluative and clearly identifies the strengths and areas for improvement. The process is inclusive and uses input from all stakeholders. Staff clearly understand the self-assessment process and identify its importance in driving continuous improvement. The self-assessment report includes many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors. However, the provider only graded its overall effectiveness. The development plan, clearly based on the self-assessment report, is reviewed and monitored regularly to check the progress made in developing the provision.

Key strengths

- Good success rate for learners on the NVQ at Level 2 road passenger transport
- Good off-the-job training
- Well-planned training to meet the needs of learners and employers
- Clear strategic direction

- Good and recent quality improvement activities
- Successful approach to widening participation

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient assessment by observation
- Inadequate standard of accommodation
- Poor management information systems

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. The strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors are clearly described in the self-assessment report. The success rate for learners on NVQ passenger road transport programmes is good. Since August 2007, of the

325 learners who started on the programme: 22 left before completing their studies; and 264 successfully achieved their qualification, all by their planned end date. A further 39 learners are awaiting external verification before their certificates can be applied for. The retention rate is good at 93%. At the time of the inspection the current overall success rate of learners for 2007/08 is 81%.

8. Learners develop good workplace skills. These include good customer relations, promoting a good customer impression, increasing driver confidence by providing a quality service and the ability to handle customer requirements and problems effectively. All learners are very well motivated to succeed and are outstandingly enthusiastic about their learning programmes. Learners are particularly keen to obtain the appropriate driving NVQ as many have no other qualifications. Learners significantly grow in confidence and improve their social and communication skills. Well planned and presented portfolios of evidence meet the high standards required.
9. The 22 learners enrolled on the Level 2 literacy and numeracy basic skills course achieved a success rate of 36%. These learners did not receive a timely final assessment test. This was carried out retrospectively with a low rate of successful achievement of the award.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. Teaching and learning are good. Beckett Corporation identified most of the strengths and areas of improvement found by inspectors. Off-the-job training is good and relevant to the needs of the learners. Tutors draw on their own and learners' transport experience and use extensive up-to-date driving examples, which are particularly relevant and memorable. Tutors effectively adapt their approach to meet the different needs of the diverse learner groups. Resources are used to good effect especially with the good learner materials. The teaching notes, schemes of work, and lesson plans are very good. They are moderated, periodically evaluated and frequently updated. Most lessons have clear aims and well defined objectives. Tutors are particularly enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Tutors' directions are consistently clear and concise. Question and answer techniques are used to good effect to extend and reinforce learning.
11. Initial assessment is adequately undertaken. The findings are recorded on the individual learning plans but learners are not set individual short term targets. Learners are unable to measure their own rate of progress against clear milestones. Preferred learning styles of learners identified during induction are not used to any great extent.
12. Employers are exceptionally supportive. They are keen and well prepared for learners to have time off to attend off-the-job training at Beckett Corporation. These transport employers provide a wide range of good work experience and support. This enables learners to quickly meet the NVQ requirements.
13. There is insufficient assessment by observation. Beckett Corporation's assessors provide learners with one major assessment by observation. Where this is not possible an additional assessment is undertaken. This practice does not adequately allow for assessors to significantly measure performance over a period of time. However, observations are thorough and carried out well with comprehensive feedback to the learner. Other units are assessed by simulation. However, most of these simulated units are also assessed by

additional means for example by witness testimony. Internal verification arrangements, including the organisation of standardisation meetings, are satisfactory.

14. Accommodation is inadequate for the number of learners attending off-the-job training. Both training rooms are too crowded and one room is only partly screened from a corridor. The provider has recognised the accommodation problems and has plans for redeveloping part of the building for new training accommodation.
15. The range and suitability of provision are good. The well-planned training clearly meets the needs of the learners and the requirements of local transport employers. Beckett Corporation effectively markets the provision to drivers, their attendants and locally well known firms who are strongly committed to training and to developing the skills of their employees. Employers significantly benefit from the increased skills of the drivers especially with improving customer service. They also recognise the learners' improved understanding of equal opportunities developed during the training. Learners benefit from a satisfactory standard of information, advice and guidance in the initial stages of their courses. They also receive comprehensive information on other locally run courses.
16. Support for learners is satisfactory. Most support is undertaken within the classes and focuses on help and coaching leading to the good development of skills. Personal support is satisfactory. As all the tutors also teach and provide support in language, literacy and numeracy, additional brief instruction can be given during off-the-job training. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. The provider is particularly sensitive and supportive to the large number of minority ethnic learners. In addition to any basic skills requirement the provider has allocated a room for prayer meetings, and has clearly recognised the special dietary requirements in the provision of lunches. Beckett Corporation is especially sensitive to learners' needs during Ramadan and the celebration of Eid. Reviews are undertaken at the completion of off-the-job training and periodically thereafter. Reviews focus on the progress made and work outstanding.
17. The self-assessment report is accurate, evaluative and describes many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

18. Leadership and management are good. Beckett Corporation managers have a clear strategic direction for the company. A well-presented three-year strategic plan outlines the company's mission, an analysis of its current position, future developments and a series of planned targets. The company is committed to expanding training opportunities and supporting cab and taxi companies by offering an integrated service in training and transport, providing drivers and attendants with safe driving techniques and care provision. Recent expansion has doubled the number of new learners starting their programme each week. Well advanced plans to increase the provision further are in place.
19. Beckett Corporation is very effective in establishing a network of employers in the local and wider community who are responsive to the needs of their employees and clearly interested in the vocational and personal development of their drivers and attendants. Local authorities have an expectation that cab drivers and attendants are qualified to a

suitable level in driving safety, customer service and the care of vulnerable children and adults. The qualification offered by Beckett Corporation clearly meets the employers' requirements and learner numbers are expanding rapidly.

20. Recent quality improvement activities have been good. In the last year Beckett Corporation has appointed a quality manager. Learner feedback collected each week and analysed every month, and employer feedback, collected weekly, provide much useful information to managers. The analysis of feedback has been instrumental in the installation of air conditioning to the building, changes to teaching strategies with the inclusion of discussion activities and the introduction of a more practical NVQ unit that better meets the learners' needs. The regular observation of teaching and learning is thorough and provides an accurate assessment of classroom activities that compares well with inspection findings. Discussion of common issues identified during lesson observations takes place at the regular standardisation meetings and staff are set individual targets for improvement. Standardisation meetings provide a good forum for the discussion of assessor performance and developments to the provision.
21. The self-assessment report is satisfactory and includes the views of all stakeholders. The report is evaluative and accurate and inspectors agree with many of the strengths and areas for improvement described in the report. However, the provider has only graded the overall effectiveness of the provision. The development plan clearly linked to the self-assessment report is used well to review and monitor the progress of actions taken to improve the provision.
22. The adequacy and suitability of staff are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and their experience is relevant to the subjects taught. However, a formal appraisal system and procedures have yet to be introduced.
23. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Appropriate enhanced criminal record bureau vetting checks for staff have taken place and training for wheelchair and restraint systems has been completed for most staff. However, not all have completed equality of opportunity training.
24. Management information systems and the accuracy of data are poor. Beckett Corporation has recognised this with the appointment of three new data input and quality monitoring staff. Understanding and interpretation of learner performance data is improving. Difficulties in registering NVQ learners has led to an incomplete picture of the overall success of the provision. Currently 39 learners are awaiting external verification of their portfolios and this provides incomplete learner performance data for 2007/08.
25. Beckett Corporation conducts senior management and standardisation meetings. However, much of the information discussed at senior level is concerned with contract compliance and the operational requirements of the transport business. There is no dedicated meeting in which managers can discuss and identify issues and actions to develop the requirements of the training programmes.
26. Equality of opportunity is good. Beckett Corporation has a good approach to widen participation to traditionally under-represented groups. Approximately 40% of learners are women with 72% of learners from minority ethnic groups. The aim of the provider to expand the provision and to widen participation is well understood and clearly implemented by all staff. The training programme is responsive to the needs of local businesses, accessible to learners and clearly meets the needs of the local community. The

courses are successful in developing vocational and coping skills to support learners in their work as drivers and attendants in transporting vulnerable children and adults. During classroom sessions, tutors regularly reinforce and promote equality of opportunity and discuss with learners the strategies required in dealing with vulnerable passengers. Access to the training venue is difficult for learners with restricted mobility. However, well advanced plans to develop the facilities are in place.

What learners like:

- The quality of the teaching
- The relevance of the learning to my work
- 'Gaining qualifications – I have none'
- Improved driving knowledge
- Improved communication for customer care

What learners think could improve:

- Better knowledge of progress in learning
- Accommodation for teaching
- More toilets