

Brenikov Associates Ltd

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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:

- Retail and commercial enterprise

Description of the provider

1. Brenikov Associates Limited (BAL) is a private training provider based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. A commercial director and a quality manager support the company's managing director. A team of nine assessor/tutors works with learners on employer premises across the region. BAL also employs a numeracy Skills for Life tutor and a contract co-ordinator to manage the company's administration and data collection function.
2. BAL contracts with Tyne and Wear LSC for the provision of Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes. The company has delivered Train to Gain programmes since 2007. The apprenticeship programme has been running for eleven months. BAL also runs commercial training courses at its training centre as well as on employer premises. Government funding accounts for 86% of BAL's business. The company has not been inspected previously.
3. Currently 107 learners are following an apprenticeship programme and 42 are studying for an advanced apprenticeship qualification. On the Train to Gain programme 44 learners are studying for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and 10 are working towards an NVQ at level 3. Just over half of all learners are men. The proportion of learners from a minority ethnic group is 3.5%. No learners have declared a disability.
4. Learners follow programmes in food and drink service, multi-skilled hospitality, food processing and cooking, professional cookery and hospitality supervision. Assessors complete assessments in the workplace at times that suit learners' shift patterns. BAL delivers key skills training in the workplace and at its training centre. Learners work in bars, nightclubs, hotels and restaurants across the North East region.

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: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Retail and commercial enterprise	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The overall effectiveness of work-based learning and Train to Gain provision is also good. Achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management are good in work-based learning and Train to Gain provision. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. BAL has a good capacity to improve. Train to Gain success rates have improved steadily during the last two years and are now good. Learners on apprenticeship programmes are making good progress. They achieve challenging individual targets. One learner completed the full framework in just eight months. Four others completed the framework within eight months and are now awaiting certification. Reviews and assessment plans show that all current learners are making satisfactory or better progress. Most are ahead of targets.
7. BAL takes good actions to improve quality. Its observation of teaching and learning process is accurate and linked effectively to individual staff targets and to the appraisal process. BAL uses the observation process well to improve individual performance and to identify good practice. Staff share good practice and use each other's materials and practice to improve their performance. Teaching and learning are good and improving. The internal verification process is particularly effective. Internal verifiers contribute to improvements in assessment practice. The self-assessment process is good. BAL takes staff, learners' and employers' views into account. The self-assessment report accurately identified most of the strengths but not all of the areas for improvement in leadership and management.
8. BAL has appointed new staff and invested in accommodation and teaching and learning resources to meet the needs of a steadily expanding contract. Staff are appropriately qualified and very well experienced in the industry. The managing director is particularly well experienced and uses this experience well to support the team.
9. BAL has very good relationships with a wide range of employers in the sector. Quality assurance processes are satisfactory. However, BAL does not make sufficient use of data to set company-wide targets or to plan the development of its training programmes.

Key strengths:

- Good progress for all learners
- High success rates for Train to Gain learners
- Good and well planned teaching and learning
- Highly flexible response to learners' and employers' needs
- Particularly effective team working
- Clear focus on the development of the hospitality sector
- Good partnerships
- Good actions to improve provision

Key areas for improvement:

- Insufficient learning materials to support main vocational programme
- Insufficient development of Skills for Life
- Insufficient use of data for planning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are good, as acknowledged in the self-assessment report. All learners make good progress. Success rates on the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body (BIIAB) personal licence course are good at 97%. Success rates on all other short courses are also good. Learners on apprenticeship programmes have not yet completed their planned period of study and data on success rates is not yet available. However, they are making good progress and achieving challenging individual targets. One apprentice completed the full framework in just eight months. Seven apprentices have completed their studies and are awaiting certification for the full framework. Reviews and assessment plans show that current learners are making satisfactory or better progress. Most are ahead of targets. Many learners progress from a level 2 programme to level 3.
11. Success rates on the Train to Gain programme are good at 74% in 2007/08. Provisional in-year success rates for 2008/09 are also good at 82%. Success rates for women in 2007/08 were slightly higher than for men. BAL now provides additional help for men on Train to Gain programmes. The gender gap in success rates is already showing some evidence of narrowing.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

12. The quality of provision is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are also good. Tutors plan sessions well to ensure that coaching in the workplace supplements taught sessions in the centre. Learners benefit from experienced trainers who provide up-to-date industry knowledge and real life examples that support learning. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and use a range of teaching methods to engage learners. They interact well with learners and meet individual needs well. Tutors are appropriately qualified to teach and have particular expertise in hospitality. They have particular expertise in providing up-to-date and informative theory sessions that relate to the industry well. Tutors use multiple choice questioning and practical learning activities to check learners' attainment during the training sessions. Learners participate well in learning. They respond well to the interactive nature of the activities and the professional delivery.
13. BAL also provides workplace training in cellar management and financial control. Assessors work hard to resolve areas for improvement within the workplace. Individual coaching is good.

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14. Assessment is satisfactory. Tutors plan assessment well. Assessment is fair and carried out regularly. However, some assessment records are not sufficiently specific or judgemental.
 15. Resources for teaching food hygiene, health and safety and licensing courses are satisfactory. BAL has insufficient learning materials to support the learners' main vocational programme. It is still developing supplementary learning material to support the main hospitality programmes, particularly in food preparation. Some learners have insufficient access to materials to develop hospitality-related skills, such as understanding why they should use specific types of meat for particular dishes. Employers do not always give them this information and BAL does not have sufficient learning materials to support the teaching of food preparation.
 16. BAL is highly flexible in its response to meeting learners' and employers' needs. Assessors are flexible in planning visits. They meet assessment needs on demand and regularly carry out assessment during unsociable hours. Courses are very relevant and meet learners' and employers' needs. Learners complete skill scans and assessors use the results very effectively to provide appropriate hospitality-related advice and guidance for the level of programme.
 17. BAL works with a wide range of public houses, nightclubs, bars and restaurants across the North East region. Employers are enthusiastic about the training and about how well it meets their specific needs. Employers recognise the impact of training which enhances the quality of service and raises health and safety standards in their companies.
 18. Assessors use employer materials effectively to design bespoke training to meet organisational requirements. For example, assessors use employer accounts for financial training of managers. This then reinforces key skills training, enabling learners to understand numeracy within the context of their own bar or restaurant.
 19. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance are also satisfactory. Tutors provide good individual advice and guidance for learners to help them make their career choices and to progress through the hospitality programmes. However, learners do not have sufficient access to wider careers advice. Learners, especially those who have been employed in the sector for many years, have insufficient access to advice and guidance for longer-term planning. BAL is aware of this issue and a member of staff is working towards a qualification in guidance. BAL is also working towards gaining external accreditation in information, advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. Leadership and management are good, as identified in the self-assessment report.

21. Team working is particularly effective. The management style at BAL is open and supportive of the team. Managers actively promote staff development opportunities. Team members are enthusiastic and have high aspirations for learners. The managing director has very good knowledge and experience of the hospitality industry. BAL only recruits staff who have a wide range of experience and knowledge of the sector. Staff share their expertise well. They support and complement each other's skills. The team understands the needs of the sector and is able to respond to any requests or problems very quickly.

22. BAL has a clear focus on the development needs of the hospitality sector. The company has worked with a wide range of employers for many years. Its reputation with partners and employers is good. BAL leads on many pilot activities that shape developments within the sector. For example, it takes a lead role in many BIIAB initiatives in the sector. BAL is a member of the British Institute of Innkeeping National Council, helping to set national priorities in the sector. Employers value BAL's input in sector initiatives highly as their staff gain qualifications that match the needs of their business well.

23. Partnerships are good. BAL has many partnerships with large restaurant and public house chains as well as with independent outlets. Employers are enthusiastic about the benefits to their business through the direct training and the advice BAL provides on changes in the hospitality sector. BAL is also part of a work-based learning consortium. Through this consortium, it is part of a peer review initiative to quality assure the self-assessment process. It benefits from up-to-date advice from a range of providers. BAL links well with partners to guide learners to appropriate progression opportunities.

24. Actions to improve the provision are good. The observation process supports improvements in individual performance effectively. It links well to individual reviews and appraisal. Internal verification systems are good. Standardisation meetings are effective in sharing good practice. Staff resources have been strengthened to meet the need of learners. Staff are well qualified and experienced.

25. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Equality and diversity training is covered during induction and in the Employment Rights and Responsibilities course. Learners are starting to produce some good work on equality and diversity in key skills portfolios. BAL has some materials translated into Bengali, and has been successful in past initiatives in recruiting from the Asian community. However,

although it is trying to repeat this success, recent recruitment from minority ethnic groups has not been significant. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are satisfactory. Arrangements for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Safeguarding procedures are clear and comprehensive. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of their responsibilities. The provider makes appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. BAL monitors equality and diversity data adequately. However, it is just starting to look at the relative progress made by different groups of learners. For instance, it recently found that men were not progressing as quickly as women on some programmes. It put in extra support and men's progress has now improved to match that of women. BAL is not yet using data to monitor the progress of learners from minority ethnic groups or of those who are receiving learning support. Premises are of good quality. However, people with restricted mobility can only use the ground floor.

26. Skills for Life are insufficiently developed across provision. BAL has no Skills for Life action plan. It does not have a literacy specialist. Planning of learning between Skills for Life provision and the vocational programme is tenuous. The individual learning plans of Skills for Life learners consist mainly of references to the adult curriculum rather than meaningful targets for learners.
27. BAL makes insufficient use of data for planning and development. It collects and uses data satisfactorily for contract compliance. It is able to manually analyse the performance of learners compared with targets, as the number of learners is relatively small. However, the management information system does not regularly collect this information. BAL does not use data sufficiently to set of individual performance targets in appraisal or development plans. It does not use data to assess the quality of support, to allocate resources, or to develop action plans.

What learners like:

- 'The staff are very helpful, you can go to them with any problems'
- 'I had no confidence at first but now I really feel I have the opportunity to do anything!'
- 'You're treated like an adult'
- 'The fact that they come out to the workplace any time, day or night'
- The professional approach and that they know what they are talking about
- The courses are interesting and relevant to work
- The good advice on careers in the hospitality industry
- The good speed of progress through the courses

What learners think could improve:

- More advice on wider careers
- 'Advertise the numeracy more to other people. I have friends who'd love to do it!'
- 'I don't like the early starts to training courses!'

Learners' achievements

Success rate on work-based learning Train to Gain programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain Retail and Commercial	2006/07	overall	1	50%
		timely	0	0
	2007/08	overall	42	74%
		timely	42	74%
	2008/09 (5 months)	overall	14	82%
		timely	14	82%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Skills for Life qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection