

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Bassetlaw Training Agency  
Limited  
Date of visit: 25 March 2009

### Context

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in November 2007, at which Bassetlaw Training Agency Limited's (BTA) leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality improvement were found to be satisfactory. Provision in health, public services and care and in preparation for life and work were also satisfactory.

BTA receives government funding from Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council to provide apprenticeship programmes in health, public services and care, retail and commercial enterprise and business, administration and law. The company also offers an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme within the preparation for life and work sector subject area. A small number of learners are following Train to Gain programmes in early years and business administration. BTA subcontracts with North Nottinghamshire College for the provision of vocational programmes for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Government-funded training accounts for most of the company's business.

At the time of the previous inspection, BTA received European Social Fund money for the provision of vocational training for 14 to 16-year-olds from local secondary schools. Funding for this initiative has now come to an end. BTA has reduced its provision in retail and administration programmes.

What progress has BTA made to improve progression and achievement rates?	Reasonable progress
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At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors judged achievement and standards to be satisfactory overall. The achievement of additional work related qualifications was good. Success rates in early years provision were satisfactory. Progression rates and the achievement of literacy qualifications for E2E learners were also satisfactory. In 2006/07, 19% of E2E learners achieved a positive outcome compared with 10% the year before. The achievement trend in E2E programmes has continued to improve. In 2007/08, 69% of learners achieved a positive outcome. Of these, 31% progressed directly into open employment, 31% to an apprenticeship programme and 7% to further education. Eighty-three per cent of E2E learners gain a relevant work related qualification.

Achievement rates for literacy qualifications at level 1 are now good, having increased from 54% in 2007/08 to 83% so far in 2008/09. Achievement rates for numeracy qualifications increased significantly from 23% in 2007/08 to 47% in 2008/09 and are now satisfactory.

Apprenticeship success rates in health and social care and early years care and education improved slightly from 53% in 2006/07 to 56% in 2007/08. Key skills qualification success rates have also improved.

What progress has the provider made in improving the induction process for learners on Entry to Employment programmes?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, inspectors judged the induction process for E2E learners to be unclear. BTA has made reasonable progress in tackling this area for improvement. The company has designed new induction materials to ensure that they are more appropriate for learners with lower literacy and numeracy skills. Evaluation surveys carried out following group inductions show an increased level of learner satisfaction with the process. Observations of teaching and learning record good levels of learner involvement in the induction process.

What progress has BTA made in improving the personal and social development of learners?	Reasonable progress
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The development of learners' vocational skills and confidence in the work place on E2E programmes was judged to be good at the previous inspection. However, BTA did not provide enough training to improve learners' personal and social development outside of the workplace. BTA has made reasonable progress in tackling this weakness.

BTA has maintained the arrangements for the provision of relevant support in the workplace. Initial assessment of potential barriers to employment, including personal and social development issues, is accurately and sensitively completed. Tutors record targets for improvement on individual learning plans and discuss them with learners during reviews. Tutors provide effective individual support to improve learners' personal hygiene and behaviour. BTA has introduced a structured programme of well attended small group tutorials to improve skills in working with others and to develop learners' confidence. Learners are currently working with each other to arrange a group outing.

How much progress has the company made in improving the provision of numeracy support?	Significant progress
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At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors judged literacy support to be satisfactory, but numeracy support to be inadequate. Tutors did not sufficiently

relate numeracy support to learners' personal, social and work-placement contexts. BTA has made significant progress in improving numeracy support.

BTA has recruited additional staff to provide tutorial support for apprentices studying key skills in numeracy and for learners working towards numeracy qualifications in E2E programmes. Staff have received guidance from consultants and attended relevant training. BTA has made good links with a local further education college to ensure that staff attend regular update events. BTA no longer provides numeracy support separately from literacy. E2E learners receive literacy and numeracy support from the beginning of their programme. Tutors clearly relate the content of sessions to work related topics. Learners on work-placements are encouraged to bring paperwork and examples of work tasks to support sessions. Other learners are encouraged to consider the relevance of numeracy to day-to-day activities such as calculating shopping expenses and the affordability of travelling to work. Achievement rates for numeracy qualifications have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory.

How much progress has BTA made in developing supportive work-placements for learners?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, the use of a wide range of supportive work-placements to support learning was judged to be good on E2E programmes. BTA has made reasonable progress in further developing this area for E2E and care learners.

BTA has worked hard to provide learners with a wider range of work experiences than at the time of the last inspection. BTA has successfully increased the range and number of employers, including large retail companies and small engineering firms to provide a wide range of work-placements and employment opportunities for E2E learners.

BTA staff maintain good working relationships with health, social and childcare employers through regular site visits and telephone calls. The company uses a clear introductory pack to provide information about each programme which offers advice to employers about how they can contribute to learners' success. Learning and personal development objectives in individual learning plans are routinely reviewed with employers during formal reviews and are used to identify good opportunities for learning. Performance issues and behaviour are sensitively discussed and appropriate actions agreed to bring about improvement. In some cases, employers invite BTA staff to provide additional discrete literacy support in the workplace for learners with dyslexia. Learners develop a good range of relevant occupational skills. BTA routinely collects and acts upon feedback from employers to ensure that programmes meet their needs.

What progress has the company made to the self-assessment and action planning processes to bring about improvements to the provision?	Reasonable progress
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At the time of the previous inspection, the organisation's self-assessment process and report were judged to be satisfactory. BTA has made reasonable progress in further developing this process.

BTA produced a self-assessment report in May 2008, approximately six months after the previous inspection. It then produced an updated version in December 2008 to reflect the improvements made during that period. The judgements in the report are based on the feedback received from evaluations of programmes from learners, staff, employers, analysis of local market intelligence and the outcomes achieved by previous learners. Senior staff make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning based on the results of their observations of learning sessions.

Improvement plans are appropriately based on the judgements from earlier reports, inspections and evaluations by stakeholders. BTA has made improvements to employer information packs, learner induction programmes and arrangements for observations of key aspects of the provision. However, the current quality improvement plan does not contain sufficiently realistic, time-constrained and measurable targets.