East London Advanced Technology Training

Inspection date   24 April 2009

Inspection number   334063

Contents

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:

■ Information and communications technology
■ Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT) is a charity founded in 1984 to provide training in Information Technology, particularly for unemployed adults. ELATT now also offers English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision and, in partnership with other providers, some Train to Gain qualifications. Its main premises are in Hackney with regular classes, particularly for ESOL, being run at smaller premises in Tower Hamlets. Classes are also delivered in community and partners' venues. ELATT is predominantly funded by the London East LSC, the London Development Agency (LDA) and London Councils co-financed with European Social Fund (ESF). Almost all of ELATT's work is supported by public funding.

2. ELATT currently has 28 staff working across two curriculum teams. In 2007/08 there were 290 on ESOL courses and around 350 learners on ICT courses, of whom 152 also undertook additional skills for life learning aims.

3. In Hackney and Tower Hamlets unemployment is relatively high compared with the rest of London, the great majority of employers are small or medium sized enterprises. The area has a high percentage of people for whom English is not a first language; 46% of Tower Hamlets residents and 39% of Hackney residents are from minority ethnic communities. Tower Hamlets is judged to be the third most deprived local authority in England.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	**Good: Grade 2**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Capacity to improve	**Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2**

Achievement and standards	**Good: Grade 2**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Quality of provision	**Good: Grade 2**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Leadership and management	**Good: Grade 2**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity	**Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2**

Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**

Preparation for fife and work	**Good: Grade 2**

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of ELATT's provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity are all good. ESOL provision in the Preparation for Life and Work sector subject area is good; provision is satisfactory in the ICT area. Programmes on offer meet the needs of learners and the community particularly well. Success rates are good overall, though some aspects of formal teaching are only satisfactory.

Capacity to improve
Good: Grade 2

5. ELATT's capacity to improve is good and its self-assessment process is good. A very thorough self-assessment process involves all staff in both gathering evidence and identifying areas for improvement. Learners' views are collected through evaluation forms and a series of learner events. Data are very well used for analysis. The resulting self-assessment report is detailed, with clearly set out evidence helping to support judgements which concentrate on the learner. The report is constructively self-critical, and inspectors agreed with nearly all aspects. The report leads to a detailed quality improvement plan, which then continues to be developed and reviewed throughout the year. Staff are well aware of the plan and actively fulfil their role in implementing it and other improvement initiatives.

6. Achievements and standards have had an underlying trend of improvement over the past two years in most courses. In the few areas that still need to improve regular attempts are made to isolate the problems and deal with them. ELATT has successfully dealt with the main weaknesses identified at the previous inspection; notably an over emphasis on lecturing rather than teaching, weak use of data and underdeveloped quality assurance systems. Links with the LSC are good, and there have been a number of quality improvement initiatives funded by the LSC.

Key strengths

- Good success rates on most ICT courses
- Good support and guidance for learners
- Strong leadership and helpful partnerships to meet community needs
- Particularly effective quality improvement processes

Key areas for improvement

- Teaching in ICT
- Insufficient employer engagement

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

7. Achievements and standards are good overall. Success rates on most ICT courses are
    good. ESOL success rates are satisfactory. In both areas learners work well in their classes
    and, with very supportive tutors, achieve good standards in their work. No significant
    differences exist in overall outcomes for different groups of learners. There were problems
    in 2007/08 with appropriate recruitment onto skills for life Train to Gain courses, leading
    to high early withdrawal rates. The current courses are better managed though it is too
    early to reach a judgement on outcomes. The in-year success rates and timely rates for the
    ICT Train to Gain programme are very good. The overall rate for short courses, most
    ELATT's provision, is good. Although ELATT's 2006/07 rates are shown as lower than
    overall national averages, specific programmes on the revised 2007/08 programme are
    generally good when compared with their relevant national averages. These achievements
    and standards are accurately recognised in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

8. The quality of provision at ELATT is good. Teaching and learning is satisfactory.
    Learners are on appropriate courses and are keen to achieve. The standard of teaching is
    better in the ESOL provision than in the ICT area, but in ICT learners have appropriate
    resources, guidance and support to enable them to succeed.

9. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. ELATT has accessed a range of
    funding which enables them to offer courses in convenient locations, covering appropriate
    subjects and at a variety of levels. Good work is done with partner groups to encourage
    learners from a variety of backgrounds to access relevant training. Learners are improving
    skills that will enhance their employability prospects, which is the main aim of most
    learners.

10. Learners have good support and guidance. Those with additional needs in literacy and
    numeracy are clearly identified and additional support is effectively provided, either
    through discrete courses or through well established provision within other programmes.
    ELATT offers learners advice and guidance on a range of matters that can impact on their
    life and learning, ranging from finance to lifestyle, and learners make good use of this
    support.

11. The self-assessment process identifies all these strengths and areas for improvement and it puts particular emphasis on the standard of teaching, grading this area lower than inspectors.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

12. Leadership and management are good. ELATT's trustees provide very good direction and support. They have particularly relevant experience and work effectively through a well structured system of meetings and direct support to the chief executive and senior managers. They played an important part in restructuring the organisation to make it more efficient, and to improve financial security. Plans for change are realistic, well structured, and properly feature the learners and their needs.

13. Good quality processes are very well established at all levels of ELATT's work and lead to regular improvements for learners. The detailed self-assessment report has clearly evidenced judgements. The associated quality improvement plan is a routine part of ELATT's work. Observations of teaching and learning are very well managed with a good focus on development. They are beginning to bring about the changes that ELATT wants. Data availability and use by all staff has improved significantly over the past two years. Individual ideas from staff and learners are encouraged and lead to changes in such things as individual learning plans or learners' diaries. A significant restructuring in 2008 improved ELATT's financial standing, and reduced management overheads while successfully enhancing the role and impact of those directly involved with learning. However, during the challenging period of restructuring some quality processes, such as observations of teaching and learning, were not as consistently applied as they should have been.

14. ELATT has a particularly flexible and helpful approach to meeting community needs. Managers successfully access a wide range of funding, enabling them to offer some kind of training to most categories of potential learners in the area. Curriculum managers have adopted a flexible approach to the provision, grouping funding streams where appropriate to ensure the viability of courses and giving learners the opportunity to learn within diverse groups.

15. Personal development of staff is good. Professional development is generally satisfactory, though in some cases the acquisition of teaching qualifications is slow, however an impressive culture exists of helping staff develop personally. Nearly half the staff were learners at ELATT, with most gaining useful experience as volunteers, then being competitively selected for full-time posts. Support to staff from managers and peers is very good. In-house training successfully mixes national requirements and local needs. The annual appraisal system, and the observations of teaching and learning, are well regarded by all staff as a means of identifying and actioning areas for improvements.

16. Equality of opportunity is good. The wide range of funding allows ELATT to offer courses to many learners who might otherwise find it difficult to access learning. The strong support learners receive encourages those with potential barriers to learning to stay on courses and succeed. Staff make new learners comfortable, partially because of the range of community languages they can offer. ELATT encourages good mutual support amongst learners, which helps both those receiving support and those offering support more aware of each others problems and challenges. Equality of opportunity and diversity are well covered in induction. In ESOL courses diverse cultures are used to help illustrate routine work. In ICT courses there is reasonable teaching of equality within level 1 courses, but little in the higher and more technical courses. Staff are well aware of their responsibilities, and most actively promote equality through their own actions. In one case a learner who was HIV positive could have been prevented from undertaking a hardware course because of the risk of cuts in shared practical work. The tutor decided that, instead of using the normal static earthing wrist bands, all learners on this course would use static prevention gloves. This gave a barrier in case of cuts which allowed the HIV learner to proceed. The other learners accepted that this was just a normal alternative, ensuring the learner in question was not laid open to potential discrimination. Analysis of performance by various groups of learners is carried out in some detail. Results do not show any significant problems, however, where there are concerns, such as the performance of white males on some technical courses, actions have been taken to try and improve the situation. ELATT meets appropriate legislative requirements, though continuing building work at their main premises has meant alternative arrangements have had to be made for those with limited mobility as the lift is out of action.

17. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff show a very good understanding of their responsibilities and the role of the appointed person. Communication between staff and with learners is satisfactory. The availability and use of resources is satisfactory, most rooms and equipment on the main site provide a good learning environment. In other places the convenience of location is sometimes offset by older and less impressive accommodation.

18. The initial introduction of the Train to Gain programmes was inadequate, starting in 2007/08 with classroom based activities for skills for life and, to a lesser degree ICT. The time commitment required was not clearly explained to employers and many learners were withdrawn from courses. Some learners, signed up for additional skills for life courses, did not show the necessary commitment for this learning and withdrew. These prompt withdrawals did not impact on success rates but were an unsatisfactory aspect of the provision. The approach to, and management of, Train to Gain has improved significantly, continuing enforced changes in managers means that there are problems in consistently maintaining improvements

19. The level of employer engagement is unsatisfactory. ELATT recognises in its self-assessment that it needs to improve the way it works with employers. There are deficiencies in getting appropriate work experience, work-placements and involving employers with Train to Gain.

What learners like:

- 'They provide just what I need to get from a low to high skill job'
- Good teachers - 'some of the tutors really make an effort to go beyond the basics and make things clearer, more interesting and add in extra useful items'
- 'You're made to feel part of a family – that boosts your confidence'
- 'Squeezing a long course into 14 weeks – then I can look for a job'
- Improved confidence - 'I've learnt how to ask questions and get information'
- Easy to get to – local classes
- 'My language has improved, now I can speak to and advise customers'
- 'Respect for people is good'

What learners think could improve:

- 'Improve their advertising so others can take advantage of the courses'
- 'The three month ESOL course is too short, not enough help for all learners'
- 'Less wait to get on a course'
- Making the teaching more individualised

Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

20. ELATT provides a range of ICT courses at levels 1 and 2 through the FE programme, and a level 2 course under Train to Gain. Most of the training is at ELATT's main premises, although some Train to Gain is carried out at employers' premises. Of the 230 learners enrolled on 23 FE programmes during 2007/08, 59% were male and 87% from a minority ethnic community. 113 learners enrolled on Train to Gain programmes. At the time of the inspection there were 176 learners enrolled on FE programmes and 49 on Train to Gain programmes. There are seven tutors, three of whom are full-time, a curriculum manager, for whom this is not the only curriculum area, and a curriculum co-ordinator.

Strengths

- Good success rates on Train to Gain and almost all FE courses
- Good involvement of learners in all sessions
- Good range of support for learners' additional needs

Areas for improvement

- Unsatisfactory success rates on IT Practitioners courses
- Insufficient good or better teaching

Achievement and standards

21. Achievement and standards are good. The success rate on Train to Gain programmes was an outstanding 2007/08 at 100%, albeit for just five learners. After eight months of the current year, success rates are still 97% for the 62 learners who have completed the programme. On FE programmes success rates for all courses have risen from 69% for level 1 and 62% for level 2 in 2006/07, to 82% and 73% respectively in 2007/08, higher than the national average in both cases. The only under-performing area is the challenging level 2 ICT Practitioners course, with an unsatisfactory success rate of 41% in 2007/08; the national average is around 53%. The standard of learners' work varies from satisfactory to good. A good number of learners progress from level 1 to level 2 courses and into employment.

22. The success rates on optional skills for life qualifications, achieved as an established part of some ICT courses, are satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy level 1 and 2 rates averaged around 80% in 2007/08, slightly below the national averages. Attendance is satisfactory at 85% in the current year. The way in which unauthorised absences are followed up is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

23. Overall the quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners contribute very well to learning sessions. They respond enthusiastically to regular tutors' questions and frequently ask perceptive questions of the tutor. They also respond well to other learners' contributions and make insightful comments. They apply themselves particularly well to a good variety of tasks set. However, insufficient teaching is good or better. Learning sessions are frequently uninspiring, do not always start promptly and latecomers are often not appropriately dealt with. While tutors use questions frequently to involve learners, they do not always use them in the most appropriate ways. In the better sessions, tutors offer a wide range of activities, with opportunities to develop skills for life as part of the task. Assessment and verification procedures fully meet awarding bodies' requirements.

24. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Managers carry out appropriate market research and are aware of the value, in terms of potential employability, of such things as web development programmes. Plans are well advanced to increase the range of professional qualifications offered. Most employers and employees have their needs met by the Train to Gain programmes, but in a few cases learners' individual needs on Train to Gain are identified and recorded but the same curriculum is delivered to all.

25. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners make good use of the wide range of support offered. Learners' literacy and numeracy levels are assessed during induction and where a need is revealed the learner receives specialist individual and group support, with the option to take nationally recognised qualifications. Learners requiring extra practice at ICT tasks use ELATT's computers in a general area, and are supported informally by tutors while doing so. Learners on office skills programmes receive specialist employability support. Learners receive appropriate information, advice and guidance before starting their learning programmes.

Leadership and management

26. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications between team members are frequent and effective. Regular, well recorded, formal meetings are properly supplemented by informal communications and emails. Good practice is satisfactorily shared and is enhanced by a well used system on the computer network.

27. Managers analyse data well on a regular basis. They are aware of relative performance of ethnic and gender groups on all courses and have taken some corrective actions where problems have been revealed by this analysis.

28. Quality improvement processes are effective. All staff are consulted as part of the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is largely accurate, inspection confirming most grades and many of the identified strengths and areas for improvement. The process for observation of teaching and learning is sound. Reports contain good quality evidence which supports the grade awarded. Managers are improving their support to tutors to raise standards, but have been slow to ensure that all tutors, particularly those on Train to Gain, have appropriate teaching qualifications although most have appropriate vocational qualifications.

29. Resources are satisfactory. ICT hardware and software are mostly up-to-date and of industry standard and data projectors or interactive whiteboards are used appropriately. Furniture is satisfactory, although working space around computers is limited in some rooms. Rooms have separate tables which tutors use effectively to allow learners to complete tasks away from their computers. However, the facilities at an outreach centre, used for one learning session, are barely adequate. Learning materials are clear and well produced.

30. ELATT deals with its responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and diversity well and clear attention is given to these issues at induction. Tutors take opportunities to reinforce the promotion of equality and diversity as they arise during courses. Learners comment that they are treated with respect by all staff and other learners.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

31. Most ESOL courses take place at ELATT's main and subsidiary centres, however, some classes are held at community venues including a Somali Centre and the London Mosque. Some classes are for women only or for refugees and asylum seekers to enable them to integrate into the community. In 2007/08 around 290 learners enrolled on ESOL courses; of these 42% were male and 73% were from minority ethnic groups. Currently the programme is delivered mainly at entry level to level 1. Enrolments take place four times a year. Most learners attend classes for three hours, twice a week for 12 weeks, but in community classes attendance is for three hours each week. All courses are accredited. Learners work to gain a full or partial national qualification through portfolio building. A speaking and listening exam is also offered twice a year. On-line tests are available for higher level learners. Two full-time and four part-time staff deliver the ESOL programme. ELATT gains funding from a variety of sources for its ESOL programmes and classes often have a mix of learners who have different reasons for being on the courses, but all need to improve their English. A Train to Gain programme has been recently introduced but it is too early to report on outcomes.

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly good support to meet the needs of learners
- Good management of programmes

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient work opportunities for ESOL learners

Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are satisfactory. Success rates on level 1 courses have improved from 68% to 82% between 2006/07 and 2007/08. In the same period level 2 success rates have fallen slightly from a very good 90% to a satisfactory 76%. In programmes not directly in the scope of the inspection many of the outcomes are good.

33. Attendance on ESOL classes is satisfactory. The average attendance since September is 70%. Attendance on some induction courses during inspection week was poor. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners on induction courses gain confidence to express themselves clearly and to ask and answer questions. They extend their vocabulary well. Most learners are keen to learn and join in with activities well.

Quality of provision

34. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Most classes are well planned and have clear aims and objectives. In the best classes groups are well managed

and tutors challenge learners well. A variety of interesting activities are used which help learners get to know each other. Learners work in pairs and introduce their partner to the whole group. The tutors encourage a friendly and fun atmosphere. A system of observation of teaching and learning by ELATT suggests standards are a mix of good and satisfactory. Where necessary actions have been taken as a result of the provider observations and aspects of teaching have improved.

35. Good use is made of computers by tutors. For instance, a presentation on equal opportunities using computers and maps is relevant and interesting for learners who identify and discuss which country they have come from. Computer based learning programmes are available, though their use does not seem to be an integral part of courses. Most tutors make good use of local materials and good quality worksheets and flash-cards, however some worksheets are poorly copied.

36. Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory and are used to draw up an individual learning plan. Most individual learning plans have appropriate targets for learners and progress is regularly reviewed. The newly developed system is generally working well. Most individual learning plans are used effectively with a learner journal and traffic light system to chart progress.

37. Courses meet the needs and interests of learners well. The service provides a wide range of provision to meet the needs of hard-to-reach groups. Learners enjoy interesting trips out to local events, including an alternative fashion show, and to local museums and markets. Learners contribute to the Real London guides which celebrate local culture. However, insufficient work opportunities exist for ESOL learners, particularly at entry level where learners have restricted language skills. Employer engagement is limited. Not enough opportunities are available for paid or voluntary work with local employers. This is recognised in the self-assessment report as an area for improvement. On some courses in 2007/08 there was limited progression to employment, for instance only 12% of 'Fast Monitor to Work' learners progressed to work, although a satisfactory 50% progressed to further education and training.

38. Support for learners is particularly good. Induction is thorough and it helps new learners to get to know the centre and find out about their course. A well produced and interesting induction pack is used which is suitable for ESOL learners. Tutors provide extra tutorial sessions for learners to improve their work skills and provide advice for learners to progress to higher level courses. Language support is given to learners by staff who speak a number of community languages.

Leadership and management

39. Management of programmes is good. Good partnership arrangements enable learners to study near to home. Strong links have been made with local groups to successfully target particular groups. At one centre there is an ESOL class for Somali men with mental health issues. Also a class for Bengali women has been set up in partnership with the London Muslim Centre.

40. The management is responsive in gaining new funding to put on new courses. A successful example is the Learning to Integrate course which provides ESOL for refugees and asylum seekers.

41. The self-assessment report is clear with good involvement of staff. The associated quality improvement plan is extremely detailed and is used regularly to effect improvements. Good use is made of data and reports are produced promptly and direct improvements. Equality and diversity are promoted well during induction and many of the ESOL materials used in class display positive images.

42. Communication between staff is satisfactory. Good use is made of email. Regular meetings take place for staff to share curriculum issues and good practice. ESOL staff are well qualified and sufficient opportunities exist to attend staff development activities.

Learners' achievements

Learners' achievements in FE funded, accredited provision offered by ACL providers

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 (combined) and level 2 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age.

2006/07 to **2007/08**, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			
		Starts – Transfers	ACL Provider Rate	National Rate	*Diff*
1 long	06/07	44	57	71	-14
	07/08*	1	100	N/A	
2 long	06/07	13	23	69	-46
	07/08*			N/A	
Short**	06/07	245	73	83	-10
	07/08*	342	76	N/A	

*   ACL provider data not validated (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software).
**   Courses over five weeks long.

Success rates on **work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes** managed by ELATT **2006/07** to **2008/09**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall		
		timely		
	2007/08	overall	5	100%
		timely	5	100%
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	62	97%
		timely	71	85%

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.
**   NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider before inspection.

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk