

Engineering Construction Training Ltd

Inspection date

31 July 2009

Inspection number

335368

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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:

- Construction, planning and the built environment

Description of the provider

1. Engineering Construction Training Ltd (ECT) is a specialised training provider within the engineering construction industry. It is a division of the Severfield Rowen Group plc and is located in a purpose-built training facility in Bolton.
2. ECT employs five full-time staff, led by the group training director, all of whom are qualified assessors and internal verifiers with the appropriate trade-related qualifications and industrial experience. ECT offers National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 in constructional steel work, site operations supporting engineering activities, and specialised plant and machinery operations. It also offers NVQs at level 3 in constructing capital plant steel structures – erecting, installing plant and systems – mechanical, maintaining plant and systems – mechanical, fabricating steel structures – plating, welding plate and moving loads.
3. ECT is also an accredited centre for other qualifications including mobile elevated working platform, manual handling, abrasive wheels, working at height, and harness inspection. Most of ECT's training is designed to service the training and assessment needs of employees across the Severfield Rowen group of companies. Learners work across the United Kingdom on many high profile and prestigious nationally important projects. ECT was awarded a Train to Gain contract in engineering construction qualifications with Greater Manchester LSC for the first time in April 2008, and has trained approximately 60 learners mainly at level 3. No learners are funded at a higher level and after initial assessment and induction most qualifications are gained through an assessment delivery plan.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Sector subject area

Construction, planning and the built environment	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The quality of provision and leadership and management are satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is inadequate.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. ECT has a satisfactory capacity to improve. This is the first inspection of ECT. In its first year of operation, ECT has taken steps to improve learners' overall and timely success rates, which are now outstanding, and its assessment practices. Although quality improvement arrangements are incomplete, ECT is addressing and monitoring some areas for improvement identified through self-assessment.
6. Self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall. The 2007/08 report is ECT's first self-assessment report. The report accurately reflects many aspects of the provision, but in some cases it focuses on processes rather than on the impact to learners and on quality improvement. ECT does not use management information and data extensively to support its judgements. Some of the strengths claimed in the report are no more than normal practice. Inspection findings matched some of the judgements in the report but further strengths and areas for improvement were identified. Inspection grades are generally lower than the grades in ECT's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- Very good success rates
- Good coaching to support assessment
- Particularly well-matched programmes that meet learners' and the sector's needs
- Very effective pastoral support
- Particularly effective and experienced assessors

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient understanding by learners of personal progress
- Insufficient information, advice and guidance
- Some weak aspects of quality improvement
- Poor monitoring of employers' equal opportunity arrangements

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. Achievement and standards are outstanding as identified in ECT's self-assessment report. ECT has two full years of success data from 2007 to 2009. Over this period, overall success rates have averaged 98%. No variations exist in success rates across different groups of learners. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is good. Timely success rates for the provision as a whole are good at 71% and improving.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners' assessment programmes are developed on an individual basis. ECT has developed a flexible and successful approach to supporting assessment. Its assessors work hard to make assessment and learning interesting and inclusive. When assessors identify that learners have gaps in knowledge and understanding they quickly respond with good coaching skills to support assessment. However, insufficient learning support materials are available for learners and assessors to use, and ECT has no clear arrangements to provide any structured training should this be required.
9. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and the engineering construction sector well, as identified in ECT's self-assessment report. ECT requires all learners to take an occupationally focused skill assessment to identify the most appropriate range of qualifications to meet their own and their employers' development needs. The range of qualifications available reflects the specialist nature of this sector. ECT offers qualifications that provide the skills recognition required within the industry. These qualifications allow employers to successfully secure work contracts and learners to work on significant engineering contracts including the Olympics venue and Heathrow's terminal 5.
10. Guidance and support are satisfactory. This was partially identified in ECT's self-assessment report. The strongest feature of these arrangements is the good personal pastoral support provided to learners by the assessor team. This support starts from the induction phase and is very effective in providing the momentum and motivation for learners to succeed at such high levels. Progress reviews are regular and frequent and assessors keep good records of learners' qualification progression. However, learners' own recognition, understanding and ownership of their personal levels of progression are poor. ECT assesses learners' literacy and numeracy support needs during their induction period, and no learners have yet been identified as requiring any additional support in these areas. ECT's arrangements to provide any specialist support should it be required are not yet fully established.

11. Information, advice and guidance are poor. Learners are not made aware of any further progression opportunities. ECT and the employers rarely celebrate success or encourage further progress.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is effective in supporting the learning programme, and partnership working with employers is satisfactory. Workplace supervisors are involved in supporting their employees through their NVQ, and ECT uses these links to develop the programme and the experiences of learners and training staff effectively.
13. Resources are good. ECT has a well-resourced training room and good access to industry-relevant training materials. The range of work and resources available on site ensures that all learners have good opportunities to complete all aspects of their NVQ. Assessors are able to arrange for learners to move between job roles and the flexibility this provides contributes towards the high overall and timely success rates. However, no learning support materials are readily available to aid learners where assessors identify small gaps in their knowledge.
14. Assessors are particularly effective and experienced. They are appropriately qualified to carry out their assessment and verification duties. They have many years' experience from within the engineering construction industry, and this, together with their high levels of motivation and dedication to supporting learners, has had a clear impact on success rates and learners' and employers' satisfaction.
15. Arrangements for health and safety and risk assessments are satisfactory. All employers and off-site work places complete a thorough risk assessment. A director is responsible for ensuring health and safety compliance and continuing development. Routine and regular training takes place for all employees and regular meetings ensure that where development needs are identified these are met.
16. Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory. ECT has completed its first self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is not inclusive, and the report is insufficiently evaluative and overly descriptive. However, ECT provided an updated report during the inspection that was more evaluative and contributed to raising staff understanding of the process of continuous improvement.
17. Some aspects of quality improvement are weak. ECT has made some progress, for example in the improvement of learners' progress review documentation and individual learning plans. Assessment practices have been significantly improved, enabling more effective cross-referencing of evidence from the workplace against

qualification requirements. ECT has also taken action to improve timely success rates and introduced staff development plans. Recently, ECT has introduced learners' and employers' evaluation questionnaires, although these have yet to be collated and analysed. However, policies and procedures largely reflect a culture of compliance rather than improvement. ECT's use of management information and data is weak. Managers do not use or analyse data to inform quality improvement. Staff development is unstructured and focuses too much on assessment and verification rather than on wider topics such as safeguarding, equality and diversity, coaching and the delivery and assessment of Skills for Life.

18. Equality of opportunity is inadequate. The promotion of equality of opportunity within the main parent company and the subsidiary companies is satisfactory. Learners' inductions include training on equality and diversity, where assessors check their understanding and make them aware of their obligations. Assessors further promote equality and diversity to learners during each progress review, where they discuss different topics within the context of their work.
19. The monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements outside the main parent company is ineffective. ECT, through its service level agreement with employers, requires employers to adhere to current legislation and to promote equality and diversity at work. However, ECT does not monitor this section of the agreement and no risk assessment of equality and diversity arrangements takes place to inform action and development planning or risk assessment.
20. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff understand the procedures and are aware of their obligations in identifying the needs of vulnerable adults. ECT has identified safeguarding as a priority area and is receiving support from the main parent company's human resources department to further develop these arrangements.

What learners like:

- 'Staff are supportive and friendly'
- 'Assessors are really flexible'
- 'The NVQ assessments did not disrupt my work too much'
- 'Induction made me clearer about what lay ahead'

What learners think could improve:

- 'I would like some recognition of my success by my employer'
- 'It would be nice to meet my fellow learners again after induction'

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2007/08	overall	2	100%
		timely	0	0%
	2008/09	overall	52	96%
		timely	37	71%

Note:

* 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 provider before inspection