

Milton Keynes Christian Foundation

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53392

Name of lead inspector: Nigel Fletcher HMI

Last day of inspection: 13 November 2009

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Foundation House
The Square
Aylesbury Street
Wolverton
MK12 5HX

Telephone number: 01908 312843

Information about the provider

1. Milton Keynes Christian Foundation (MKCF) is a registered charity that was established in 1985 by an association of local churches. It is based in Wolverton and serves the whole of Milton Keynes. It provides specialised training for local disadvantaged young people and families through community and regeneration projects, including training and development.
2. MKCF contracts with Thames Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide Entry to Employment (E2E) for young people. It also operates other foundation training programmes to address the learning needs of young people aged 14–25. These include: extended training for pupils excluded from school; a programme for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents; and programmes providing accommodation and training for up to 20 young people aged 17–25. MKCF develops the vocational skills of its learners through social enterprise projects in waste recycling, community cafés, centre management, community activities, urban food growing, parenting skills, construction, sustainability, and information technology.
3. Around 10% of MKCF's LSC-funded learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, 10% of the local young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), from whom MKCF mainly attracts its learners, are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Unemployment in the area in 2008 was 5%, compared with 5.7% nationally. Achievement of five or more GCSEs at grade C or above was three percentage points below the national average in 2008, and over five points when including English and mathematics.
4. MKCF is led by two directors and currently employs 23 full-time staff, eight part-time staff, and two apprentices. Two of the staff are managers, and 18 are involved with training. A board of trustees ('the board') oversees the activities of MKCF. The LSC contract accounts for around 30% of its total income.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
<p>Provision for young learners:</p> <p>Entry to Employment</p>	<p>27 learners</p>

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject areas	Grade
Preparation for life and work	3

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of MKCF's provision is satisfactory. Learners make satisfactory progress in transferring to employment or to further education or training. Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills. However, they make less progress in improving their numeracy skills.
6. MKCF has revised its programme of training into ten innovative and project-based social enterprises. These have been developed, supported by excellent partnerships with a broad range of organisations. The quality of the activities seen during inspection was good and the outcomes from the enterprises provide an outstanding contribution to the local and wider community. Support for learners is satisfactory. However, insufficient use is made by staff of available data to monitor learners' progress, and too few learners remain on their programme long enough to achieve their planned goals. Through its ethos of everyone 'having an essential value and inherent potential', MKCF ensures that the welfare and development of its learners are central to its day-to-day practices.
7. MKCF has effectively restructured the organisation and has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The self-assessment process and report are accurate and evaluative. However, procedures for monitoring the quality of provision are still

underdeveloped. MKCF promotes equality and diversity appropriately. Arrangements for the safeguarding of learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe on site and at their work placements. However, the board pays insufficient attention to safeguarding matters at its meetings. MKCF has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve outcomes for learners and the quality of provision.

Main findings

- MKCF maintains excellent links with a broad range of organisations and agencies, which benefit learners considerably in their learning and the development of their personal skills. Staff work well with employers to improve the provision in the social enterprises and to provide effective further work experience opportunities.
- Learners make an excellent contribution to the community, providing goods and services that enhance the quality of life of local people and contribute to the sustainability of diminishing resources.
- Learners make good progress in improving their economic and social well-being. Through the broad skill-based projects, learners develop good entrepreneurial and communication skills.
- The extent to which provision meets the needs and interests of learners is good. The creative and inventive social enterprise projects, together with a wide range of external work placements, provide opportunities for learners to gain experience of a broad variety of vocations.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners enjoy their lessons, and make good progress in developing practical skills and theoretical understanding. Learners and staff have good working relationships, and teachers use a wide variety of activities to maintain the interests of learners.
- Progression for learners into employment or further education is satisfactory. Through MKCF's ethos of 'releasing potential in individuals and communities', learners enjoy their programme and develop good personal and social skills. However, too many learners leave their programme early and fail to achieve their planned vocational qualifications.
- Learners receive satisfactory guidance and support. Pastoral support is good in some areas, but inconsistent across the organisation. Literacy support is good, enabling all learners who complete their programmes to achieve nationally recognised qualifications. However, too few learners achieve numeracy qualifications.
- MKCF has satisfactory procedures for evaluating its practices. Whilst the self-assessment process uses the views of learners, staff and employers well and accurately identifies MKCF's strengths and areas for improvement, the systems for monitoring quality are underdeveloped.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe and understand their responsibilities for maintaining a safe learning environment. However, the board of trustees does not pay sufficient attention to safeguarding

to ensure that board members are fully aware of MKCF's policies and procedures.

- MKCF has satisfactory arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity. It ensures that learners have equal opportunities to achieve their potential irrespective of their gender or background. However, it does not systematically monitor the progress and achievements of the different groups of learners.
- MKCF provides satisfactory value for money. Accommodation and practical resources are of a good standard. Staff are appropriately trained and have good opportunities for continual professional development.
- Insufficient use is made of available management information for staff to accurately monitor the progress and retention of learners.

What does MKCF need to do to improve further?

- Ensure meetings of the board of trustees place a more detailed emphasis on discussing the safeguarding of learners so that MKCF maintains a safe and secure environment for learners.
- Improve systems to monitor the quality of provision to ensure that improvement processes are applied thoroughly and consistently across the organisation.
- Make better use of management information so that staff can monitor and improve the progress, retention and achievement of learners more effectively.
- Improve the consistency of support for learners to ensure that more stay on their programme and achieve their goals within the planned timescale.
- Improve the level of support in numeracy to enable learners to develop additional numeracy skills and to gain the agreed qualifications.

Summary of the views of learners as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- being respected and learning to show respect to others
- contributing to the projects and feeling they are making a difference to the community
- gaining confidence in themselves and in being at work
- improving their chances of getting employment or enrolling on a college course
- bringing out skills they did not know they had
- feeling safe at MKCF and at the projects
- being able to trust staff and be confident that they will help them learn
- the friendly, small organisation in which they can learn with few distractions.

What learners would like to see improved:

- nothing identified.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the improvements that MKCF makes to its learners' lives and future prospects
- the rapid improvement seen in the learners' confidence and self-esteem
- the values that MKCF demonstrates and promotes in its learners
- the way that learners, supported by MKCF, respond well to the highly professional service required by some employers
- the very good working relationships that MKCF has with employers
- the very positive responsiveness of MKCF to the views and comments of employers
- the effect of the social enterprises in developing entrepreneurial skills in learners.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the information they receive about learners before they start at their work placements.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. MKCF has demonstrated satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The majority of weaknesses identified have been addressed. MKCF has fully implemented the E2E procedures and completely redeveloped its learning programmes. The overall progression rate has improved year on year and is now satisfactory. This improvement was sustained in 2008/09 whilst local and national employment rates declined. Learners' personal and employability skills, and self-confidence, have improved considerably.
9. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The report is evaluative and accurate. MKCF is fully aware of its strengths; the identified areas for improvement correctly reflect the inspection findings. However, systems for monitoring the quality of provision are still being developed. Detailed management information is now available, but is not used sufficiently by staff to monitor the progress of learners. MKCF has recently restructured its management team and appointed a new manager to drive forward development of procedures and improvements in quality.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Progression of learners into employment or further training has improved steadily since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. In 2008/09, 59% of learners progressed to positive outcomes. Of these, 59% progressed to further education.
11. Most learners who complete the programme make good progress in developing their personal, social and entrepreneurial skills. For example, learners in a session at 'Amazing Waste' were learning how to reprocess waste oil into bio-fuel. They understood the principles behind the process, and worked well together, using appropriate tools and observing safe working practices. However, achievement of planned qualifications is low, and too many learners leave the programme before succeeding in their objectives.
12. Learners enjoy their programmes, and make an excellent contribution to the local and wider community through the social enterprises. Learners are treated as adults and encouraged to respect each other and their environment. They work safely, with good levels of concentration and teamwork. Standards of learners' work are good and learners gain an effective range of employability skills. For example, one learner has recently been offered work experience at a very prestigious local brasserie. Although learners' communication skills improve considerably, too few learners make sufficient progress in developing their numeracy skills.

13. Progression rates and the levels of success in the acquisition of vocational, personal and functional skills across different groups of learners, including ethnicity and gender, are essentially the same.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

14. The quality of the activities for learning is good. Learners have good working relationships with, and a high regard for, their teachers and value the feedback they receive on their work. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. They are skilled at reinforcing prior learning through the use of directed questioning, and at encouraging teamwork to which all learners contribute according to their abilities. However, sometimes more voluble learners are allowed to dominate activities, to the frustration of others. Interesting activities link learning to everyday events and integrate the development of social and economic skills well. In most lessons, varied activities are appropriate to the needs of individual learners, although they are not always shown on lesson plans.
15. Provision meets learners' needs well. MKCF has developed excellent links with organisations such as the local council, community groups, businesses and schools. These links enable it to generate a broad range of social enterprises, and to support learners' welfare needs. Learners participate in a variety of interesting real-life working environments where their actions can make a difference to the success of the project. Potential learning opportunities are well exploited, with learners being encouraged to contribute to the design and development of initiatives wherever possible. The various enterprises operate in a mutually beneficial fashion. For example, the recycling project provided timber for a picket fence for the urban farm, which, in turn, grows produce for use in the cafés run by the 'Think Food' team. This helps learners understand the interdependence of their own work and that of other learners.
16. Initial advice and guidance have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Initial assessment of learners' specific needs is comprehensive, covering all aspects of the learners' prior experience and achievements. However, induction relies heavily on paper-based resources that are a barrier for learners with limited reading skills. Progress reviews are carried out regularly, but to an inconsistent standard. Although there is a good emphasis on recording learners' personal and social development, too little attention is paid to their academic progress and what they need to do next to be able to complete their programme on time. Target-setting for learners lacks consistency. Whilst specific short-term targets are set during some reviews, in others targets are more general.
17. Support for learners is satisfactory but varies across the organisation. Literacy support is good and enables learners who complete their programme to achieve a qualification. Learning takes place effectively within the vocational context. However, too few learners achieve numeracy qualifications and, where learners

are at different skills levels, activities are insufficiently challenging for many of them. MKCF has recognised this and is making good progress in integrating numeracy learning into the vocational activities. However, this is yet to show an impact on achievements.

18. MKCF employs a qualified psychologist to support learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, but too few learners know of her presence. The provider has very good links with external welfare agencies and health professionals who provide effective information and advice to learners.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

19. MKCF has clear strategies to promote learning and development. It continues to take advantage of opportunities to diversify and adapt to changes in the sector. MKCF manages its resources well and provides satisfactory value for money. Communication with staff and partners is good. The company has recently introduced various changes for improvement, including the implementation of the social enterprises and restructuring the management team. These are already showing impact on improving learners' progress. Staff are adequately qualified or are working towards relevant qualifications. Staff development needs are supported where appropriate. MKCF has acquired many facilities and resources that are invaluable for good vocational learning. These include an urban farm, a van and equipment for creating bio-fuel. However, there are some classrooms where the quality of worksheets and handouts is no more than satisfactory and where there is a lack of interactive learning technology.
20. The board of trustees fulfils its statutory duties. However, whilst it provides very good challenge and support to the directors in aspects such as financial management, human resource management and health and safety, it pays less attention to ensuring that learners make appropriate progress.
21. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. All staff that may come into contact with learners have Criminal Records Bureau checks and are provided with relevant training. MKCF maintains strong links with other agencies to safeguard learners and ensure that work placements provide a safe environment. Internet safety is reinforced. However, the board does not pay sufficient attention to safeguarding policies in its meetings to ensure that all required procedures continue to remain in place.
22. Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are satisfactory. MKCF has established a good reputation in helping disadvantaged young people into learning and employment. The provider has a strong ethos of recognising value and potential in all young people, and promotes this effectively to its learners, to partner organisations, and to the local community. Many learners with poor previous experiences of education develop high aspirations and gain a range of useful skills and qualifications. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with bullying and harassment, complaints and discrimination. Learners have a

satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights, and particularly their responsibilities. They are fully aware of what to do if they experience or witness poor treatment of themselves or others. Equality matters are appropriately covered during induction.

23. Staff continually emphasise the values of the organisation and promote amongst learners an understanding of the needs of others from different cultural or social groups. MKCF's staffing profile reflects the diversity of the learners which it serves. There is little difference between the successes of learner groups from different ethnic backgrounds and between outcomes for male and female learners. However, MKCF does not systematically analyse the progress and success of different groups of learners. Marketing materials effectively promote participation by under-represented groups.
24. Self-assessment is satisfactory and is informed by learner evaluation and feedback from staff and employers. Strengths and areas for improvement identified in the recent self-assessment report accurately agree with inspection findings. The actions derived from these are beginning to have an impact, although it is too early to evaluate them fully. Systems to monitor quality are insufficiently thorough. Records of lesson observations are detailed and accurate, but do not contain sufficient actions for improvement. Although accurate management information is available, it is not used sufficiently by staff to monitor learners' progress and prevent too many learners from leaving their programme early.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by one of the provider's directors, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Milton Keynes Christian Foundation

Learning types: 14–16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16–18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	32		32		
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	3		3		
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3		3		
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1				
Quality of provision	2		2		
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
Leadership and management	3		3		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009