

Birmingham Electrical Training

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 50713

Name of lead inspector: Cliff Rose HMI

Last day of inspection: 11 December 2009

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 34 Brearley St,
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Information about the provider

1. Birmingham Electrical Training (BET) was established in 1991 as a training organisation to help young people gain access to the electrical industry. It operates mainly in the West Midlands. It is now a private limited company. The offices and training centre are in Hockley. BET delivers advanced apprenticeship programmes including adult apprenticeships in electrical installation funded by Birmingham and Solihull LSC.
2. The parent company and commercial arm of the group, Birmingham Commercial Training (BCT) has a training centre in Broad Street which provides soft skills, IT and Health and Safety Training. It also offers short electrical courses and up-skilling to employees of link employers.
3. The BET general manager and the contracts manager are responsible to the board of directors for the day to day management of the company. A programme/training manager manages a team of four tutors and another team of five training officers/assessors. There are two administrators in the centre. The company also employs a part time training support officer and shares a business development manager with BCT.
4. At the time of the inspection 234 learners were working towards an advanced apprenticeship in electrical installation. Of these 13 were adult apprentices and 148 were aged 16-18. Two learners were female and 28 were from minority ethnic communities.
5. Unemployment in Birmingham in 2008/09 was 11.2% compared to 6.2% in Great Britain. Those with no qualification in Birmingham accounted for 20.7% of the population compared with 16% in the West Midlands and 12.4% nationally

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	349 apprentices

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	2
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Building and construction	3

Overall effectiveness

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory and the provider has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve the provision. The provision in building and construction is satisfactory. Learners achieve their qualifications well and in an increasingly timely manner. They produce high quality work in their portfolios, in workshops and in the work place. The teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. Learners receive good support from BET's staff. Learners feel safe and follow safe working practices. Learners' and employers' completion of a new format logbook is slow. The provider does not have sufficiently systematic arrangements in place to monitor or improve all aspects of the programmes. BET does not fully use the information it has available to check that all learner groups are equally successful or to take action to close any identified gaps in performance between them

Main findings

- Learners progress well towards their learning goals. Framework completion is high and timely achievements are improving and are now high. They develop satisfactory or better skills. Learners worked at a good pace on site, demonstrated good skills to industry standards.

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- Support for apprentices through the review process is good. The training officers provide high levels of pastoral support and the review process enables apprentices to determine what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve through timely advice and guidance.
 - Learners understand their rights and responsibilities at work and the need to be both qualified and skilled to ensure their economic well being. Apprentices are given high levels of responsibility on site. Their skills and knowledge are valued by employers and they are undertaking complex tasks that include liaison with customers and scheduling of work.
 - Assessment is fair and reliable and the apprentices are clear on what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Assessors make effective use of a range of evidence in accrediting learner competence.
 - The off-site training is satisfactory; however, the training in the block release programme can be a little rushed. Training is not always matched to learner requirements in preparing them for assessment. Key skills are delivered well through an integrated trade specific project and completed in the first year.
 - The range of provision is satisfactory and meets employer and learner needs. The availability of assessment is satisfactory for apprentices working all over the country; however this is enabled by the willingness and hard work of the training officers, whose workloads are high.
 - Learners feel safe. They follow safe working practices on-site and at the provider's premises. The provider conducts site safety reviews during the formal review process which inform the learners' review. The provider's premises are satisfactorily secure. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of health and well-being issues and these are effectively covered at review.
 - Leadership and management are satisfactory. Resources are satisfactorily deployed; however, the training officers have high workloads. They are required to work across a very wide geographic area and the continued quality of learner support is currently dependant on their flexibility.
 - The formal review process enables learners to understand what they need to do to improve. However, the completion of logbooks is slow. Learners are often not clear on the requirements for recording evidence in the workplace, sometimes missing the opportunity to gather valuable evidence that accredits their skills.
 - Quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. Quality assurance policies adequately detail most procedures; however systematic observation of teaching and learning is still under development and there is no system of observation of other aspects such as the review process.
 - BET does not use data sufficiently systematically to identify any differences in performance or levels of satisfaction between different groups of learners. The number of female learners and learners from minority ethnic communities is currently small and the provider has sufficient data to indicate that there is no difference in performance. Other groupings are not considered and survey data is not analysed by sub group.

What does Birmingham Electrical Training need to do to improve further?

- Complete and implement the quality improvement arrangements to cover all aspects of the provision to better inform management and drive forward further improvements.
- Improve the quality of teaching in theory sessions. More account needs to be taken of individual needs and more activities should be developed in order to accommodate the different pace of learning.
- Introduce more systematic and detailed analysis of data and adapt surveys and other feedback channels in order to more readily identify and address any inequalities in the provision or actions needed to satisfy the particular needs of any group of learners
- Ensure training officers and learners have a clear understanding of the effective use of new logbooks to record and cross-reference NVQ evidence.
- Closely monitor and evaluate the formal review process to ensure that there is consistent implementation by all training officers.
- Improve the collation and monitoring of learner achievement information to enable managers to track achievement in all aspects of the framework and see how different groups and the provider as a whole is progressing.
- Share more information with employers on the NVQ details and the topics learners are covering in their off the job training.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the support they get from training officers and tutors
- the revision sessions before the exams
- the teaching and learning
- the way the course prepares them to be electricians
- the tutors' good communication skills
- the way the programme meets their needs
- the fact that the tutors are all former electricians
- the fair assessments
- the workshop sessions

What learners would like to see improved:

- better guidance on recording evidence in the logbook
- a reduction in the amount of copying they have to do from the power point presentations in lessons
- the cleanliness of the toilets
- more revision handouts
- less use of power point in teaching sessions
- better access to drinking water
- more help for those who are struggling
- better communications from the training officers
- better canteen facilities
- more use of actual materials to support teaching points
- more new equipment for the workshops

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good standard of communication and support
- the learners' standard of work
- the relationship they have with the provider
- the way the provider meets their training needs
- the high standards set by the college
- the feedback received from the provider
- the links between on and off the job training
- the high standard of health and safety instilled in the learners

What employers would like to see improved:

- clearer explanation of what is required to complete the log books
- more frequent visits
- more information on learners' progress
- more information on the training being provided BET

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 3

7. BET has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve. There have been steady year on year improvements in its overall success rate to the point that it is now good. The rise in the timely success rate is more marked. It has risen from a very low level to satisfactory over the last three years. The self assessment process is well established and the most recent draft report is largely accurate and has been written in line with the new common inspection framework, which became effective on 01 September 2009. BET has recently introduced some new initiatives to further improve the provision; however it is too early to judge their full impact. Quality improvement arrangements are incomplete and do not allow the organisation to systematically monitor all aspects of the programme in order to ensure consistent application of its procedures or to identify further areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners Grade 2

8. Success rates are good in Electrical Installation. In 2008/09, the overall success rate was 78.2% (13% above the national average for construction). Similarly timely success rates are well above the national average at 63.6% having risen from 0% two years previously. Key skills are completed early in the programme and contextualised to the electrical industry to help maintain relevance and motivate learners. The standard of learners work is good.
9. Learners understand the need to be both qualified and skilled to ensure their economic well being and that qualifications increase their employability. Apprentices are given high levels of responsibility on site. Their skills and knowledge are valued by employers and they are undertaking high level complex tasks that include complex liaison with customers and scheduling of work. Learners are confident at work taking responsibility for complex aspects of installation and testing. This improves their confidence and helps to develop valuable employability skills. BET works well with its network of employers to help seek employment for learners made redundant.
10. Learners feel safe in their work and at the training centre. Health and safety is given good coverage during progress reviews. Comprehensive risk-assessments are carried out and staff and learners are well aware of which equipment can or cannot be used. The provider conducts site safety checks during each progress review. Learners participate well in this describing site safety procedures and methods of working. Access to the training centre is controlled by electronic swipe cards and learners report a safe environment. Appropriate personal protective equipment is worn in the workshops and on site.
11. There is no provision for drinking water in the centre although bottles water is permitted in classrooms. There is also a lack of healthy food options in the

social area with vending machines for confectionery being the only source of food on the site. Learners were, however, well aware of the importance of their health and well being.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

12. Classroom teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff use proprietary learning materials and slides to structure lessons. Whilst the materials are detailed and useful resources, teachers tend to be over-reliant on them. This leads to a lack of group or individual activity and insufficient attention to individual learners' needs. Many learners fail theory examinations and have to retake them, some several times. Practical sessions are good with most classes double-staffed. All classrooms are equipped with ILT equipment. Although this is sometimes used well it is more often under exploited and serves as little other than a projection device.
13. On-the-job training is satisfactory. Employers are aware of the need to provide a range of activities for their learners and most learners cover the range needed to complete their NVQ. BET arranges for learners to move between employers if necessary to cover the range. Many employers do not know enough about the NVQ or what their learners do in off-the-job training sessions.
14. Assessment in the workplace is satisfactory. Assessors make effective use of a range of evidence to demonstrate learners' competence. Completion of the log book in the new format however is slow. Learners are often not clear on the requirement to record evidence in the workplace, sometimes missing the opportunity to gather valuable evidence.
15. Learner knowledge of the framework requirements is good and learners are clear on their achievements so far and what they have to do to complete. Target setting in reviews is also good with measurable goals set for the next review. Staff track framework progress in individual portfolios and assessors monitor achievement of targets. However no central record of individual or group progress is kept and managers cannot easily gauge how the learners as a whole are progressing. Trends in slow progress or difficulties with particular aspects of the framework are subsequently difficult to identify.
16. The needs of employers and learners are met well. BET has recently offered a day release option to complement its well established block release programme and is monitoring the progress of those on each programme. All learners are employed at the outset of the programme. BET works with its substantial network of employers to gain re-employment for these learners who subsequently become unemployed. Within electrical installation, the range of provision is in the pattern of delivery and the age groups engaged; 16-18, 19+ and 25+. Learners do not receive enough information about further qualifications or progression when they finish their framework.

17. There are no formal partnerships. The provider works with schools in order to promote its services. It has had some success in attracting female learners onto its courses, but there are still too few. Work with the local LSC and local learning partnerships are also satisfactory. The general manager is a director in the local work based learning provider network. The provider is not currently engaged in the 14-19 reform programmes.
18. Applicants receive good guidance and support and the recruitment and initial assessment process is thorough. On-line application is available. Learners attend test sessions and interviews with occupationally competent staff in order to help them make informed choices. On completion of the apprenticeship however, learners do not receive enough information on how they can further progress their learning.
19. Pastoral and welfare support for learners is good. Personal issues, which may restrict progress, are competently dealt with and good support is given when negotiating with employers or seeking employment elsewhere if made redundant.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

20. BET responds well to national and local priorities and needs. The provider retains its original aim to facilitate access to the electrical industry in the Birmingham area. Provision responds to LLSC and SSC analysis and identified local needs. Strategic direction from directors is clear.
21. The collection of learner and employer views is good. Annual surveys inform self assessment. Learners are interviewed after each observation of teaching and learning and also following observations of assessments. BET has plans to have a learner representative from each block release group, but these are yet to be implemented. Self assessment is well established. Learner, employer and staff views are incorporated and appropriate actions to address identified areas for improvement taken in accordance with the associated quality improvement plan (QIP). Progress against the QIP is monitored quarterly. The provider uses aggregated data effectively to monitor progress and success and to benchmark against other providers.
22. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. BET pays good attention to health and safety with comprehensive policies and observation of safe working practices. Health and safety is further reinforced at review by both assessments and discussion around a bank of relevant questions. The provider has sought specialist advice on safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. It has a designated safeguarding officer and a deputy. Staff have received safeguarding training. All staff are subjected to enhanced CRB checks and a central register is maintained. The provider plans to renew the CRB checks every three years.

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23. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. It is satisfactorily covered at induction and reinforced at review through discussions based on a bank of open questions. Equality and diversity policies are very comprehensive and cover all relevant legislation and definitions. They demonstrate the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity, however the policies are not available in a succinct version for the ready use of staff or learners. Learners are aware of the procedure for reporting bullying, discrimination or harassment. Such instances are satisfactorily dealt with and appropriate actions taken. Records are kept in the individual learner files but no central log is kept. The provider has adopted a number of initiatives to attract more female learners and learners from minority ethnic communities. These include targeting inner city and all girl schools and the use of role models. It does not set increased recruitment targets for these groups or systematically use data analysis to identify or monitor any difference in progress or completion by any groups of learners. Some staff have not received training on equality and diversity for a number of years. The provider recognises this and has training planned and scheduled for early 2010. The standard lesson plan includes a section effectively reminding teaching staff to avoid discriminatory language and the use of stereotypes in any examples used.
24. Quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. Quality assurance policies adequately detail most procedures and are annually reviewed. However they lack sufficiently systematic audit procedures. Systematic observation of teaching and learning is still under development and there is no system of observation of other aspects such as the review process. Observations of teaching and learning have been frequent and although effective in eliminating inadequate sessions they have not resulted in a good teaching and learning grade profile. There is no systematic moderation of observations. The provider has recently introduced observations of assessment in addition to internal verification but it is too early to judge their impact

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's general manager, 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) or other funding bodies, 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 learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the one subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Birmingham Electrical Training

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	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	234	234
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	0	
Quality of provision	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
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>	0	
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

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