

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr A Harmer  
Chief Executive  
East London Advanced Technology Training  
260-264 Kingsland Road  
London  
E8 4DG

Dear Mr Harmer

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: the role of employers in work-related education and training

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation during my visit on 10 November 2009. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit to East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT) provided valuable information which will contribute to our national survey of good practice in the role that employers play in work-related education and training. Published reports are likely to list the names of contributing organisations but individual contributors will not be identified in the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and learners and a review of a range of documents and data. I also scrutinised the example of good practice provided; information and communication technology (ICT) learners undertaking website commissions for employers as part of their learning.

I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice seen and to identify some areas for development. I outline the main findings below.

The main strengths

- Overall success rates on the intermediate level courses are high and in 2007/08 were 93% for the standard course and 85% for the enhanced course; both are well above national rates. The retention rate is also high, at around 90%. Most of the current learners have progressed from the foundation level to the intermediate course. A higher level course is starting at the beginning of 2010.

- The strategy to involve intermediate web-design learners in completing web-design projects commissioned by local employers is very effective. Employers specify, brief, review and sign off a web project entirely in line with normal professional practice. The website commission is a fundamental and challenging component of learners' 15-week course. The outcome is mutually beneficial to learners and employers.
- The web-design project very successfully aligns course content, including theory and practical learning, with commercial needs and practice. Learners gain very good experience and understanding of working on and completing a practical web project using industry standard equipment and design software. The completed website is included in learners' portfolios and can be used to help gain independent commissions, employment or a college place. On completion of the project, employers receive a fully functioning website tailored to their specifications. In the process, employers gain very useful practical experience of how to specify and manage projects which meet their business requirements.
- Learners are selected for the course through well-structured tests. The tests are searching and identify potential learners' aptitude, experience and understanding of the basics of graphic web design and related software skills. ELATT actively selects prospective web commissions which are most likely to be within the learners' expected capabilities at this level.
- Learners are organised effectively into small multidisciplinary teams to work on the project. Their respective skills and interests are complementary, and reflect the spread of skills needed in projects of this kind.
- ELATT works very closely with employers to provide a structured environment for the commissioning process. Its briefing and initial project-development process for employers is clear and managed very well. Employers are provided with a very useful checklist and set of questions which they use to specify what they want their website to look like and what it should do. Employers undertake a thorough face-to-face initial briefing of learners on their requirements, visit the studio to review learners' progress and sign off the project on completion.
- ELATT manages employers' expectations very well. It makes it very clear to employers that the content and functionality of the website will be consistent with the expected skills of intermediate web designers, and no more. Consequently, current briefings and specifications from employers are structured and realistic; in the past, a few employer specifications were too vague as employers did not always appreciate the limits of the service being provided. Employers are now required to sign up to a set of very clear terms and conditions which set out precisely what they can, and cannot, expect from the web project.

#### The main areas for improvement

- Some of the websites that have been created in the past now have limited functionality, and are not always sufficiently good examples for inclusion in a learner's portfolio. Having completed their course, the original designers

are not always available to maintain or update the sites. A few of the sites contain some typographical errors.

- Learners' individual learning plans do not add value to their experience or their development of learning. Individual target-setting is poor. Learning plans are primarily used only as a basic record of learners' broad aims and experience.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop provision. If there are any points you wish to discuss, please contact me. We gather information on the impact of our visits. To this end, you may be contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire to complete six to 12 months after the visit. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website and will be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Nick Crombie  
Her Majesty's Inspector