

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms B Brown
General Manager Education and Training
Babcock International Group
Melford House, Oaklands Business Park
Armstrong Way
Bristol
BS37 5NA

Dear Ms Brown

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: numeracy – tackling the challenge of ensuring that young people and adults gain the numeracy skills they need for their careers and personal lives

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 and 20 July 2010 to look at your work in numeracy.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, learners and employers; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of learners' work and observation of three learning sessions.

Overall, Babcock International Group (Babcock Training) is good at tackling the challenge of ensuring that young people and adults gain the numeracy skills they need for their careers and personal lives.

Key findings

- Leaders and managers have focused successfully on improving the management of the numeracy provision. Vocational learning advisers are now directly responsible for developing learners' numeracy skills, which they link very effectively to their specialist vocational areas. Learners and their managers now have a good understanding of how well numeracy fits into the context of work.
- Babcock Training has developed resources for its numeracy provision very well. The vocational learning advisers receive well-structured training in teaching numeracy and specialist tutors provide good additional individual support. Staff make good use of an informative guidance pack on teaching key skills, as well as the good range of relevant learning activities and

materials in numeracy, which is easily accessible through Babcock Training's virtual learning environment. However, the feedback given to vocational learning advisers, after observations of their teaching and learning sessions, does not include sufficient specific guidance on how to improve their expertise in developing learners' numeracy skills.

- Babcock Training has thorough processes for assessing learners' additional development needs in numeracy. The vocational learning advisers use the results of initial assessments very effectively to agree each learning session with their learners. The coaching and learning activities focus well on the specific numeracy skills identified as areas for development for each learner.
- The teaching and learning sessions observed were good overall. In the more effective sessions, activities related well to learners' vocational areas. Learners were adept at using examples of activities they had carried out at work for their application of number projects. The vocational learning advisers used the projects well to build on previous learning and introduce new topics in relevant contexts. However, in the less effective sessions, learners completed worksheets and activities that were too general and did not relate well enough to their employment.
- Overall success rates for apprenticeship frameworks are high. Success rates for application of number and adult numeracy at level 1 increased significantly in 2008/09 and were well above national rates. Success rates for adult numeracy at level 2 have been consistently very good for the last three years, at around 95%. Pass rates for learners taking tests in application of number at level 1 are very high, but at level 2 these are much lower, at around 70%.
- Learners make good use of their newly acquired numeracy skills at work. In particular, they are able to interpret data more usefully and present these to their employers in well-prepared presentations or written reports. Learners also make good use of their numeracy skills in their personal lives or for additional activities in the community; for example in running a slimming club for residents in a care home or working out household bills where they had previously sought help from relatives.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing and improving the observation of teaching and learning process to ensure that the vocational learning advisers receive subject-specific feedback and guidance to help them improve their skills in providing numeracy support
- developing resources further to ensure that teaching and learning are set in the context of learners' workplace or industry, to help ensure that they view the subject as more relevant and beneficial.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop numeracy at Babcock Training.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Skills Funding Agency and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN

for your organisation. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers
Her Majesty's Inspector