

On Site Bristol

Inspection date

3 October 2008

Inspection number

321481

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like	12
What learners think could improve.....	12
Learners' achievements	13

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. On Site Bristol (OSB) was launched by Bristol City Council in 1997, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, Construction Skills, City of Bristol College and the local LSC. It operates in an area where the unemployment rate is 4.4%, compared with the national average of 2.5%.
2. A total of 183 learners are on programme. This number accounts for the 93 apprentices and the 90 advanced apprentices. Of these; 52 learners are on electrical installation, 82 are on plumbing and 49 are on construction craft programmes. All apprentices are employed and work for a range of local commercial and domestic contractors. OSB recruits the learners, and carries out progress reviews. Learners attend off-the-job training at a local further education college. Assessment and internal verification are carried out by college staff, except for plumbing for which OSB subcontracts with an independent assessor.
3. OSB is funded by a variety of sources, predominantly the West of England LSC, City of Bristol College and from developers via Bristol City Council. The eight full-time and two part-time staff at OSB are employed by Bristol City Council, who act as an accountable body and provide human resources, payroll, and other support services.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject areas

Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
---	----------------------

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards and the quality of provision are good as are leadership and management and equality of opportunity are also good, as is provision in construction, planning and the built environment. Learners are well supported and gain useful skills from good practical training in the workplace. Relationships with partners are excellent and provision meets the needs of learners and employers.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. OSB has demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve. After an unsuccessful reinspection a range of well managed changes have taken place, which are now firmly established into OSB's routine work. Thorough quality assurance checks lead to a continual cycle of improvement. Qualification success rates have improved year on year. Timely success rates are low but, in most cases, are improving. Key inspection grades, which were all unsatisfactory, apart from equality of opportunity, are now good.
6. The self-assessment process is well managed and supports improvement planning. Staff are fully involved, and good use is made of learner and employer views. The 2007 self-assessment report was satisfactory, and supported the production of a reasonable development plan, which has since been revised and is now more detailed. The 2008 report, which is nearing completion; is well-researched and well-presented. Data is used effectively and includes information from the quality assurance checks. Key strengths and areas for improvement are now accurately identified. Overall the draft self-assessment report matches inspection findings well. Development planning, from this year's self-assessment, is yet to be completed.

Key strengths

- Very good overall apprenticeship success rates
- Good development of learners' practical skills
- Effective match of provision to learners' and employers' needs
- Particularly good support for learners from project officers
- Strong strategic direction to attract priority groups of learners
- Very effective quality assurance and improvement activities
- Excellent links with other providers, employers, and other organisations
- Effective management of change

Key areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates
- Insufficient evaluation of the success of specific groups of learners

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Overall success rates for learners are good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Since the previous inspection success rates have improved each year. Framework success rates for all learners in 2006/07 were 74%, 14 percentage points above the national average. Success rates for apprentices were 89%, significantly above the national average of 61%, while those for advanced apprentices, at 58%, were at the national average. Overall timely success rates have improved considerably, but are still just below the national average, particularly in electrical installation. OSB's data shows that success rates continue to improve in 2007/08. All learners are currently making good progress towards achieving their full framework, and some electrical learners are ahead of programme. Pass rates for key skills are very good. In 2007/08, all learners have gained some key skills and most learners have gained all.
8. Learners develop good practical skills. Employers provide good opportunities for learners to develop and progress their skills across a range of domestic and commercial work. The standard of learners work is high. Tasks allocated to learners are appropriate to their level and they are engaged in practical skills appropriate to their ability. Some learners, although supervised from a distance, have good opportunities to work independently. Learners develop a good sense of achievement and confidence upon being able to complete specific tasks for the first time. One advanced apprentice had just completed a complex hip-roof, another had built a wall in Flemish bond; other learners on building services have worked on prestigious commercial developments. Learners take pride in tasks that they have completed, and feel valued by their employers. Progression opportunities for learners are good. In 2007/08 77% of learners progressed from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship programmes.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. The quality of provision is good. Most learners demonstrate a good understanding of their materials and working processes, and their application in the workplace. The coordination of on-and off-the-job training, in which employers are kept well informed about learner progress and what learners need to do as part of their training, is very effective. Project officers have good relationships with employers and ensure learners are appropriately engaged in a wide range of tasks.
10. Assessment is satisfactory and well documented. Assessors plan on-site assessment to ensure that it meets the awarding body criteria, and is appropriate to the tasks being carried out in the workplace. Good use is made of photographic evidence with reports signed off by work-based recorders. All assessors are appropriately qualified and provide learners with good feedback. Communication between the college and OSB staff about learner progress is good. Internal verification is satisfactory.

11. The quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG) is good. An effective process is in place, for ensuring that learners are placed on the right programme to meet their individual needs and those of the employer. All learners have a detailed induction at OSB, plus a workplace induction with their employer covering health and safety. An effective training agreement between the learner, employer and OSB, clearly sets out the responsibilities of each party. Employers demonstrate a well developed understanding of qualifications and tasks that learners need to complete. These are discussed at progress reviews, and employers are expected to provide learners with appropriate assessment opportunities. Where an employer cannot fulfil the full range of work to meet the qualification, OSB will make a short-term transfer of the learner to another employer enabling the learner to gain the experience and assessment opportunities.
12. Promotion and monitoring of health and safety is satisfactory. It is introduced at induction and reinforced in off-site training and the workplace. It is covered adequately during learner progress reviews, but questioning is not always sufficiently in-depth to improve learners' understanding.
13. Learners value the support they receive from OSB project officers. In addition to the progress reviews, learners have free access to OSB staff when they attend off-the-job training. Learner attendance and retention are good. Learners receive frequent progress reviews at the start of their programme, then every 10 weeks thereafter. Monitoring of their progress is good. Employers take an active part in the review and support their learners. Targets are set and monitored by project officers and followed up at the next review. Records of discussions are detailed, and valued by employers.
14. OSB holds an award ceremony each year to celebrate learner success. Recently an OSB learner won the regional Skill Build competition, and another did particularly well at the Guild of Bricklayers competition. Some employers also reward learners through 'Best Apprentice' competitions.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Management of change since the previous inspection has been very effective, and leadership and management are now good. Managers set key objectives to improve learner performance, and ensure that the appropriate changes are made. OSB has developed excellent relationships with a range of local organisations to ensure that it can achieve its mission. It has particularly effective partnerships with other organisations, such as housing associations, to create new training and employment opportunities. When a local training provider ceased trading OSB took on 22 plumbing learners, enabling them to continue their training, and employed an assessor to manage their assessment.
16. OSB also works well with other providers that are in competition for trainees and placements. It has gained their respect, and the respect of employers who have adapted their own processes in light of the good practice of OSB. For example, the relationship with the college that provides nearly all of the off-the-job training has been very clearly specified through a detailed service level agreement. Constructive meetings take place

between the two providers at senior and middle management level, with concerns thoroughly debated, and solutions clearly identified. OSB staff are welcomed as regular visitors to the college, although they do not routinely visit classes to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, or to see how their learners are performing.

17. In the past project officers were allocated to a group of mixed apprentices, they now have responsibility for a specific trade and are key to learner support. Learners, employers and staff consider this to be a great improvement, with increased continuity and a better understanding of the learners' environment. The changes of responsibilities, and other aspects of staff's work, are supported by good professional development. Day to day management of staff has improved, and all staff are enthusiastic about the improvements that have been made at OSB, and about their delivery of a quality service.
18. OSB has strong commitment to quality improvement and has a particularly effective quality assurance and improvement procedure. Detailed management information about the performance of project officers and individual learners is used to manage the activities of the organisation effectively. Staff and managers make good use of the comprehensive and up-to-date computer-based quality manual to guide their work. The process includes regular reviews of 22 aspects of their work, with their quality graded against carefully defined criteria. These grades, plus information from other sources, form the basis of quarterly quality reports, which are used well by managers and staff to develop appropriate actions to improve provision. However, in some activities such as observations of reviews; the overall evaluation of the checking of learners' personal qualities and attitudes is insufficient. Nevertheless, target-setting and monitoring is thorough and overall success rates have continued to improve.
19. OSB has a strong strategic focus through the partnership board to attract priority groups of learners into construction trades. This is helped by OSB's representation on a number of strategic and community groups, and by well publicised aims that are clearly understood by staff and outside agencies. A dedicated outreach officer works closely with schools and local communities in specified areas of Bristol to attract more females and black and minority ethnic (BME) learners, and learners from local areas of deprivation. Just over 50% of the learners enrolled at the start of the 2008/09 year were from the City Council area, with 20% from areas previously classified as neighbourhood renewal areas, and 23% from other priority areas. These are close to the challenging targets OSB has been set. In addition, the numbers of females and learners from BME backgrounds applying for, and being accepted onto programmes, has significantly increased, although the actual numbers still remain low as a proportion of all learners.
20. Equality of opportunity is good. The emphasis on priority groups provides good opportunities for many learners who may have experienced difficulties in getting onto worthwhile training. The clear, learner-orientated equality and diversity materials and policies and procedures, introduced after the previous inspection, are now well established into normal work. Discussion of equality and diversity matters are a routine part of progress reviews, and staff and learners are assisted in their discussion by clear guidelines and reference materials. However, in some cases the questioning is often restricted and does not challenge the learner, or check their understanding of how the issues may relate to the workplace. Policies and procedures meet current legislative requirements, and are followed by staff and learners. The role of employers in ensuring appropriate equality of opportunity is well reinforced during initial visits, and during the progress reviews. OSB

carries out a full analysis of recruitment and retention for females and BME learners, but evaluation of achievements and standards for these, or the larger group of learners from disadvantaged areas is insufficient. Three of the five OSB project officers are females; they are good role models in the male dominated construction environment. The identification and support for those with additional learning or literacy and numeracy needs is carried out satisfactorily by the college.

21. Health, safety and risk assessment arrangements are thorough and fully support the well-being and safety of apprentices. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The employer, the city council, maintains an up-to-date record of Criminal Records Bureau checks, and all staff have been trained in safeguarding.

What learners like:

- 'Learning new practical things'
- 'Enjoying my work; I don't wake up thinking I don't want to go to work'
- 'Mix of work and training'
- 'Feeling good about doing a good job'
- 'They stick to their word'
- 'They do more than enough – they check that you're alright and they keep reminding you what needs to be done'
- 'Help out with pay and funding of materials and tools'
- 'Same person comes to see you, and they know who you are'
- 'Staff very friendly'

What learners think could improve:

- 'More people to visit you on site'
- 'More contact from the college assessor'
- 'Changing documentation; if it had been in place from the start I could have finished sooner'

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider/college **2004 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	1	0	48	0	34
		timely	2	0	31	0	22
	05/06	overall	7	71	53	14	44
		timely	14	36	34	14	27
	06/07	overall	24	71	64	58	58
		timely	26	31	43	27	37
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	7	71	51	29	39
		timely	11	55	29	18	22
	05/06	overall	43	67	58	67	52
		timely	57	32	38	32	34
	06/07	overall	27	89	65	89	61
		timely	26	50	47	50	44

* 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

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)