

Industry Development Services Limited

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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' quality monitoring or annual assessment 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:

- Building services

Description of the provider

1. Industry Development Services Limited (IDSL) is based in Tipton, in the Sandwell district of the West Midlands. It is the training arm of the CHN group of companies and specialises in training for the building services industry. CHN was acquired by E.ON in January 2008. IDSL contracts with the Black Country LSC for the delivery of apprenticeship training in gas engineering and plumbing. It also delivers training for 11 learners on a Train to Gain programme for the Black Country Training Group. Government funded provision accounts for 40% of IDSL's budget.
2. IDSL's parent company, CHN, employs 15 of the 17 apprentices on the programme and two are employed in local construction firms. Ten apprentices are following a programme in gas engineering and seven are training to be plumbers. During the programme, gas engineering learners attend off-the-job training for two days a week and plumbing apprentices for one week in every four. Progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks. All learners are White British males.
3. Sandwell is the fourteenth most deprived borough in England. The unemployment rate is 4.2% compared to the regional and national averages of 3.1% and 2.3% respectively. A quarter of residents have no qualification and only 30% have a qualification at Level 3 or above. The proportion of school leavers gaining five or more A*- C grades at GCSE in 2007 was 55% compared to a national average of 62%. Approximately 22% of residents belong to a minority ethnic group.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Building services	Good: Grade 2
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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. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and the provider's response to educational and social inclusion are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. IDSL has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve. Good success rates have been maintained for the last two years. Current learners are making good progress. However, the proportion of apprentices who completed their programme within the planned period of study declined considerably in 2006/07, though it remained above the national average. This issue was not identified in the IDSL self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan identifies some of the company's strengths and areas for improvement. However, many of the procedures to assure the quality of provision are new. There is no established scheme for monitoring the quality of training. Few staff understand how data can be effectively used to gauge the company's performance. Self-assessment is not fully developed. It is too early to judge the effect the change of company ownership may have on IDSL's provision.
6. IDSL produced its first self-assessment report in November 2007. The views of learners and staff were effectively used to support judgements about the quality of provision. The company did not make sufficient use of management information to reach judgements about the programme's effectiveness. The self-assessment report identified some of the strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors. However, significant judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management were not identified. Inspection grades for leadership and management and equality of opportunity matched those in the self-assessment. However, inspectors gave higher grades for achievement and standards and quality of provision.

Key strengths

- Good success rates
- Good development of skills in gas engineering and plumbing
- Good on- and off-the-job training
- Responsive and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of learners and employers

Key areas for improvement

- Declining proportion of learners who complete the programme within the planned period of study
- Ineffective arrangements for monitoring learners' progress towards framework completion
- Incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in 2005/06 and 2006/07 were good at 100% and 93% respectively. This is significantly above the national average of 62%. All the learners who joined the programme in 2007 are still in learning and making good progress.
8. Learners develop good skills in gas engineering and plumbing, which employers value. Learners who joined the programme relatively recent, develop useful skills very quickly. Many are given additional responsibilities as they become proficient and confident enough to work with minimal supervision. Inspectors observed a plumbing learner competently and professionally installing a bathroom. He had fabricated the copper pipe work and the plastic waste and was carefully testing the integrity of the system. His theoretical understanding of hot and cold water systems was good and he paid good attention to keeping the site clean and tidy. Learners develop good customer care skills. They deal professionally and courteously with a diverse range of customers. Learners are careful to protect customers' property when working in their homes. They have a good understanding of how to eliminate health and safety risks to themselves and to the customer when working on site.
9. Attendance and punctuality at the training centre are good. Teachers expect and receive high standards of practical and theory work. They effectively challenge inappropriate behaviour and poor performance.
10. The proportion of learners who complete the programme within the planned period of study declined from 100% in 2005/06 to 59% in 2006/07. Though still above the national average for the sector, this represents a significant decline in performance, which is only partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Managers have implemented several measures to rectify this decline, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. The overall quality of provision is good. This is partly recognised in the self-assessment report. On- and off-the-job training is good. Off-the-job training materials are carefully designed to meet learners' diverse needs. Class sizes are small and learners benefit from personal attention. Trainers integrate theoretical and practical exercises well. The training centre is well resourced with modern, industry-standard plumbing and heating appliances. Trainers are well qualified and experienced in gas engineering and plumbing. They are good role models for learners. On-the-job training is particularly effective in ensuring that learners

cover the full range of the NVQ by working with experienced engineers carrying out installation, servicing and maintenance work in different environments. Engineers provide a wide variety of activities for apprentices, who are actively involved in the design and planning of heating and plumbing systems. Learners' portfolios demonstrate competence well, with detailed records, photographs and written descriptions of work that they have completed. Assessors visit the workplace frequently to carry out assessments of learners' skills and competencies.

12. Arrangements for monitoring learners' progress towards framework completion are ineffective. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Records of learners' NVQ unit achievements are centrally maintained and regularly updated. However, these records are not linked with achievements in key skills or with progress towards achievement of the technical certificate. Until recently, learners did not begin their key skills training sufficiently early in the programme, nor were key skills effectively integrated with the NVQ. Current learners on the gas engineering apprenticeship have not yet begun their key skills training in information technology. Slow progress is not always identified in a timely way.
13. The extent to which programmes and courses meet learners' needs and interests is good. IDSL provides a responsive and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of learners and employers. The company remains true to its original mission to provide training for the building services industry and specifically, to meet the demand for plumbers registered with the national body regulating the installation of domestic heating systems. The company makes very effective use of feedback from employers to offer a good range of specialist short courses, such as in under-floor heating installation and industrial chlorination systems. The gas training centre has been reconfigured to offer a good range of industrial and commercial training and assessment to meet local demand. IDSL is the preferred training provider for a number of local employers in the construction industry. Learners benefit from the company's training programme after they have completed their apprenticeship. This training includes courses in domestic electrical safety, energy efficiency, water regulations and unvented hot water systems.
14. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance are also satisfactory. The selection process is demanding and rigorous. Literacy, numeracy and practical aptitude are thoroughly tested. Most learners on the programme have good skills in English and mathematics. Trainers provide good support for the few learners who have difficulties in literacy or numeracy. Most learners are exempt from key skills in communication and application of number.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. IDSL has a clear strategic plan, which staff understand. Staff are committed to the company's ethos of promoting good quality training for the building services industry. Internal communications are good and staff understand their roles and responsibilities.
16. Arrangements for staff training and development are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and experienced in building services. Assessors and internal verifiers are suitably qualified. The company provides financial help for staff to attend training and professional updating events. Staff are well supported.
17. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with bullying and harassment, complaints and discriminatory treatment. There are particularly detailed policies and guidelines for dealing with the health, safety and well-being of young people. Marketing and publicity materials contain positive images which challenge stereotypes. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Equality issues are appropriately covered during induction, but not sufficiently reinforced during progress reviews.
18. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Many quality assurance procedures are new. Some are informal. There are no formal procedures to quality assure the work of trainers. Though some observations of assessors have been carried out, there is insufficient emphasis on learning and attainment. Observations of learning are not graded or followed by action plans to help assessors improve their practice. Questionnaires are used to evaluate learners' experiences, although the outcomes from these are not fed back to learners and assessors. Management information data is poorly understood and not used sufficiently to monitor performance or to set improvement targets. The self-assessment process is not fully developed. Few of the judgements in the self-assessment report matched those made by inspectors.

What learners like:

- Variety of work — 'It's great in this job'
- 'The absolutely superb training'
- Teaching — 'It's the best I've ever had'
- 'The opportunity to study for additional qualifications'

What learners think could improve:

- Recreational facilities at the training centre

Annex A

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by Industry Development Services 2005/06 to 2006/07

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	06-07	overall	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
		timely	1	0	42	0	33
Apprenticeships	05-06	overall	11	100	60	100	55
		timely	11	100	32	100	29
	06-07	overall	30	97	67	93	62
		timely	37	59	46	59	42

* 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