

The Quinn Centre

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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' 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:

- Health, Public Services and Care

Description of the provider

1. The Quinn Centre (the Quinn) is a training arm of a wider charitable organisation, the SCA group. The Quinn is an educational charity established in 2002 to deliver training in health and social care in Hampshire. During 2008/09 the Quinn has experienced an extensive programme of change. The Training Manager and Deputy Training Manager are new appointments. Previously located eight miles from the city, the Quinn now occupies a site in central Southampton.
2. The Quinn has had a Train to Gain contract with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning Skills Council since 2007. Currently there are 45 learners. This number is reducing due to the termination of the contract in 2009/10.
3. Employers select candidates for the national vocational qualifications (NVQ) programme. Employment rates are higher than national rates. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds at 18% is significantly higher than the 11% of the local population. Few learners have physical and/or sensory disabilities but a number have specific learning disabilities. Nine percent of learners are male.

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 area

Health, Public Services and Care	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates, both overall and timely, are high. Learners develop effective work-based skills and self-confidence. The quality of the provision in health and social care is good. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is thorough. Resources for learning are satisfactory. The Quinn is particularly flexible and responsive to meet the needs of learners. The centre works well with employers and is responsive to their business needs. Information, advice and guidance services are good. Individual support for the NVQ training is effective, though formal arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language are insufficiently established.
5. Leadership and management are good. Clear direction for the charity is provided by SCA board members and senior managers. Training is well structured and well-managed. Staff are experienced and well qualified. They prepare learners and employers well to understand the NVQ qualification and its demands. Communication is effective. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Reinforcement of understanding of equality and diversity is effective and staff and learners have good levels of knowledge. Action to promote social inclusion is effective. Arrangements for safeguarding and health and safety meet government and legal requirements.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. The Quinn has good capacity to improve. The Train to Gain programme is new provision and though a small part of the SCA operation, it is given high priority in the organisation's business plan. The NVQ training and assessment is well supported by the benefits of the parent organisation, particularly staff resource. The board members have a good balance of experience and skills and they set clear targets for senior managers. The board is proactive in its response to local industry needs and government targets for improvements in skills in the sector. Staff are highly committed and communications are effective.
7. Quality improvement is good. Quality assurance systems are newly established but actions to improve the quality of training during a period of change and uncertainty are having good impact. Success rates are very high. The Quinn's policies and procedures are appropriate to manage and monitor the quality of provision. They are evaluated and updated annually. Key aspects of training are audited by the quality assurance co-ordinator. Observations of training and peer observations are used increasingly to monitor standards and are having good impact. Informal consultation with employers and learners is effective. Quinn staff make a prompt response to any concerns they may have. The Quinn collects and analyses the views of learners and employers in questionnaires. However, it recognises through self-assessment that more robust and systematic evaluations of the quality of all aspects of provision are required. It recognises that its current use of information is insufficient and has invested in a new information management system.
8. The self-assessment process is good. It is increasingly inclusive of staff who understand the process and their role in the improvement action plan clearly. The self-assessment report is honest and highly self-critical. Inspectors agree with the strengths and areas of

improvement identified, but awarded a higher grade for the quality of provision. Managers frequently update the quality improvement action plan and it is used effectively as an improvement tool in staff quality meetings.

Key strengths

- Very high success rates
- Good training and assessment
- Flexible and responsive training and assessment to meet learners' needs
- Good management of training
- Effective partnership working to benefit learners
- Good action to increase social inclusion

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficiently focused progress reviews
- Insufficiently formalised information, advice and guidance
- Insufficient use of management information

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

9. Achievement and standards are good. Inspectors agreed with this judgement made in the Quinn self-assessment report. Success rates in 2008/09 are high at 100% for overall and timely completions at NVQ Level 3, and 93% overall with 61% timely completions at level 2. In 2007/08 the number of learners on programmes was small at only 7. Success rates were 100% overall and 86% for timely completion. Current learners on programme

are making good progress towards completion of the NVQ awards at level 2 and 3. Learners are clear about when they expect to achieve the award and about the progress they are making. Learner portfolios reviewed during inspection demonstrate that learners are on track to complete.

10. The standard of work in lessons and portfolios is at least satisfactory and some is good. Learners make clear and effective links between theory and practice and demonstrate a growing confidence in their ability to work competently. Learners undertaking the accelerated assessment route complete a highly detailed skills assessment at the start of training, and match their current skills to the NVQ standards. These learners produce good reflective accounts of their practice endorsed by expert witness statements from their employers. Learners have a good understanding of how equality and diversity issues relate to their workplace and the care of service users. The Quinn analyses the performance of learners of different backgrounds broadly, but it is too early to interpret any meaningful trends.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good overall, with good assessment processes. Training and assessment are effective and well planned. Each learner has a detailed training plan and programmes effectively meet organisational and individual requirements. Off the job training is good. Detailed schemes of work and lesson plans include a good range of interactive learning activities with particularly effective group discussions that build on learner knowledge and understanding from their workplace. Aspects such as equality and diversity and safeguarding of vulnerable adults are effectively included in training sessions and learners are able to make clear comparisons between their client's rights and their own rights as carers and employees. Learners have access to a good range of resources during training sessions to support their learning. All learners receive NVQ text-books and laptops and printers are available for their research. Staff negotiate assessment plans with learners. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that learners have a good understanding of what they have to do to achieve each unit.
12. Training and assessment is particularly flexible and responsive to meet the full range of learner and employer needs. Support for learners is effective. Schemes of work are adapted and training is provided in a range of venues, such as in the workplace, training centre or other care homes. Trainer assessors seek feedback and evaluate their training sessions carefully. They identify ongoing improvements and adaptations they can make to meet learners' needs. Assessors plan assessments to fit in with learners shift patterns and the needs of employers and the client groups. Employers offer good support and frequently provide expert witness statements, particularly for those learners on the experienced employer route programme. The Quinn provides additional training to ensure that employers produce good quality statements. Many homes have good access to resources and managers act as mentors in the absence of assessors.
13. Induction is effective and includes a vocationally relevant initial assessment of literacy and numeracy, a vocational skills assessment, and an introduction to the NVQ. The process prepares learners effectively for the NVQ and provides motivation for learners who may have been out of formal education and training for some time.

14. Progress reviews are insufficiently focused and employers are not always involved. Assessors undertake progress reviews as part of the assessment planning and review process. Some progress reviews lack a clear format and do not evaluate progress sufficiently clearly against the individual learning plan. Employers have good informal links with assessors and the Quinn Centre and where learners are making slow progress a shared approach is often agreed. Assessors do not record systematically the advice and guidance offered at each stage in the programme. The Quinn has recently introduced employer feedback forms with one major employer and plan to extend this across the provision.
15. There is effective guidance and support for learners. Learners gain benefit from informal advice and guidance from the vocational assessors. Learners complete a comprehensive vocational skills assessment during induction that is used effectively by assessors to identify the most suitable optional units. Most learners are clear about the next steps and assessors have a good knowledge of progression to the next level of NVQ or to promotion within the care sector. Assessors frequently remind learners of the initial literacy and numeracy support and advice available.
16. However, formal support for learners' additional needs is insufficient. Learners are given the results of initial assessment but very few take up the additional support offered through other education providers. Assessors do take effective action to adapt the assessment methods in order to support the learner in achieving the NVQ. For example where learners have English as a second language, assessors record evidence and use professional discussion as an alternative to written reflections on practice. This is an area of improvement identified by The Quinn in self-assessment and staff are pursuing options to work closely with partner providers.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

17. Leadership and management are good. Partnership working is effective and benefits learners. This is recognised as a key strength in the Quinn self-assessment report. The Quinn works effectively with other care organisations, colleges and local councils to gain resources to support good quality training for learners. It works closely with partners to give high priority to improving the quality of care services in the county and beyond, providing employment and training opportunities for learners.
18. Engagement with employers is good. Communication is effective and employers appreciate the responsiveness and flexibility shown by staff. A good proportion of employers following qualifications up to level four choose to train with the Quinn.
19. Management of training and assessment is good. The self-assessment report agrees with this judgement. Managers and other staff are clear as to their individual roles and responsibilities and how these impact upon learners. Internal communications are good with regular team meetings including reviews of previously agreed action points. Learner and employer feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the training programme. Employers and learners appreciate the ease and frequency of contact. Assessors are well supported through effective internal verification.

20. Action to improve the quality of training is effective. Good systems for quality assurance are now in place but it is too early to judge their impact. The quality assurance officer reviews all key aspects of the learners' experience. Staff observe training and supervision sessions and action points are shared with staff. Details are included in annual appraisals. Learners evaluate all training sessions attended. Staff respond promptly to any issues raised by learners and employers and these actions are discussed to share good practice in staff meetings.
21. Resources are satisfactory overall. Staff are experienced and well-qualified. The Quinn is supporting a number of staff undertaking teacher training courses. Staff development is effective. The organisation training plan includes mandatory training for safeguarding vulnerable adults, health and safety and equality of opportunity. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Learners working at level 3 are able to give good examples of supporting staff in identifying and reporting their concerns in potentially abusive situations.
22. The use of management information is insufficient. The self-assessment report recognises the lack of routinely collected data on learner destinations is an area for improvement. Close records are held of learners' progress through the qualification, but the tracking system does not yet monitor and analyse the progress of different groups of learners. The Quinn collects learners' views following every session. Staff respond promptly to resolve issues and uses this information to inform self-assessment judgements. However, learners' views are not analysed systematically for improvement planning purposes. Feedback from employers and partners is beginning to be collected more widely for self-assessment and quality improvement purposes. The Quinn has recently purchased a new system to improve the use of management of information.
23. The Quinn's arrangements for formal literacy, numeracy and language support are inadequate. The Quinn has not yet developed a Skills for Life strategy. However, initial assessment is effective, using a vocationally relevant assessment tool. Trainers and assessors give appropriate individual support in frequent visits. Laptops and portable printers are provided to support learning. Learners who speak English as a second language and need more support with written work attend adult education courses provided by a preferred partner or a local education provider. However, the Quinn is not informed systematically about the learners' progress on literacy and numeracy in reviews.
24. Equality of opportunity is good. Inspectors agreed with this judgement in the organisation's self-assessment report. The Quinn meets its obligations under the relevant legislation. Board members and managers have good focus on promoting equal opportunities and addressing the needs of underrepresented groups. Staff training for equality and diversity is mandatory and effective. The Quinn supports employers in improving their policies and practices where appropriate.
25. Policies on equal opportunities, anti-harassment and other relevant issues are comprehensive with appropriate procedures. These are evaluated and updated annually. Learners receive these policies during their induction and these are explained thoroughly. They understand grievance and complaints procedures clearly and know the procedures to follow if they are treated unfairly or if they have concerns about their employment.

26. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Learners are able to articulate their understanding of the importance of equality and diversity to their client groups. Trainers develop good training materials for equality and diversity. Equality and diversity are an integral part of session planning and the observation process. Training is effective in preparing learners to apply the information they gain to their own and to clients' understanding of rights and responsibilities. Reinforcement of equality and diversity in individual and group discussions is effective. Staff reinforce awareness of equality and diversity effectively with employers in workplace visits.
27. Good action is taken to promote social inclusion. A strong culture of equality of opportunity is integral to all activities of the wider organisation. The Quinn is committed to improving the lives and levels of care provided for the most vulnerable. Its premises are frequently in areas of high level of deprivation and the Quinn offers training opportunities to employees and volunteers who have few or no qualifications. The Quinn provides a warm welcome for learners who are often resistant to formal training. Initial assessment and support for learners with particular needs are good. Trainer assessors give good individual support to these learners who often have low levels of confidence in written work. They are motivated and with help complete their portfolios to a good standard. They progress in their employment and progress into further qualifications. They enjoy their training. Staff work well in teams and have good focus on individual support needs.

What learners like:

- Learning every day in the workplace is interesting and informative
- Good explanations by assessors in frequent visits
- Increased understanding and re-assurance about the job role
- The personal and flexible approach
- Opportunity to learn – stops you being complacent
- Gaining a qualification
- “The NVQ has given me confidence to be the best care worker I can be”
- High level of support – learners can phone or e-mail trainer assessors any time

What learners think could improve:

- More contact with the Quinn Centre to give feedback on how things are going
- Simplify the jargon

Annex

Learners' achievements

Select appropriate grade tables from the LSD data table formats Template

No data table as only one full year available