

Nova Training

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53682

Name of lead inspector: Harmesh Manghra HMI

Last day of inspection: 16 April 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Nova Training (Nova), based in Willenhall in the Black Country has been providing publicly funded learning since 1992. It is part of Staff Select Limited, a company limited by guarantee. Nova operates from Dudley, Brownhills, Willenhall and Wednesbury in the Black Country and Telford in Shropshire. In response to the government initiative of the January guarantee of a place on education, training or learning for learners aged 16 to 18, the company has opened three new centres in Low Hill, Darlaston and Oldbury. A senior management team of five support the managing director, which includes the operational director, commercial director, operations manager, staff development manager and quality manager. Nova employs 78 staff to provide learning across all sites. The numbers of staff and learners have doubled since the previous inspection.
2. Nova has had contracts with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Black Country and Shropshire for the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme and for apprenticeships in motor vehicle engineering. LSC contracts amount to 42% of the income of the company. Some 21% of its work is to provide vocational training tasters on Headstart programme from 60 schools in the Black Country and Shropshire for learners aged 14 to 16. Under subcontract arrangements with the Black Country Training Consortium, Nova provides learning for disengaged learners aged 16 to 18 under the Kickstart Life programme and Train to Gain. This constitutes 10% of its work. The provision for Train to Gain has already been inspected.
3. The proportion of people with a minority ethnic heritage in the West Midlands is 25%, compared with 9% in England (2001 census data). Unemployment rates are higher in the West Midlands than nationally. According to the LSC data, in January 2010, the numbers of learners aged 16 to 18 not in education, employment and training (NEET) in the local authorities in which Nova operates is 2648. Nova recruits approximately 9% of NEET learners.
4. Of all the Nova learners, 77% are male and 15% from minority ethnic groups. Some 29% of the learners have declared a learning difficulty or disability. During the inspection week, Nova had 73 learners on Train to Gain in business administration, customer services and motor vehicle and 27 on Kickstart Life, 25 apprentices and 248 E2E learners. Inspectors used evidence from the apprenticeship programme to inform judgements in outcomes and leadership and management.
5. Nova Training also provides Train to Gain and Kickstart Life training on behalf of:
 - Black Country Training Group

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Young learner provision: Entry to Employment Kickstart Life Headstart	460 learners 116 learners 643 learners
Employer responsive provision: Apprenticeship Train to Gain	40 learners 152 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Area	Grade
Employability Training	2

Overall effectiveness

6. The overall effectiveness of Nova Training is good. Young learners aged 16 to 19 who have been out of education, employment and training; Nova quickly engage into training. They enjoy the learning environment and the individual attention they are given. They develop good levels of self-confidence and literacy, numeracy, computer and job-related skills. Most of them achieve at least one nationally accredited qualification. Most learners progress into education, employment and training. Apprentices on motor vehicle programmes also achieve high levels of qualifications. Younger learners aged 14 to 16, become highly interested in trades such as construction and motor vehicle and they see the clear relevance of learning to their future prospects.
7. The quality of teaching, training and learning is good. It is fun and challenging. Nova promotes the health and safety of learners very effectively and learners say they feel extremely safe. The range of programmes is excellent and meets the needs of learners and their future employers. Support for learners on pastoral matters is outstanding. Although staff work very closely with the learners they have not been very effective at removing main barriers to progress for a minority of learners.
8. Leadership and management of the training, including arrangements for safeguarding and protecting learners, are outstanding. The managers set high

standards and encourage all learners to achieve them. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All learners achieve equally and there are no significant gaps in the performance of different groups of learners. Nova celebrates the achievement of learners very effectively in centres and in the local community.

Main findings

- The outcomes for learners are good, including progression rates into education, employment and training. Most of the current learners have been offered a place on college courses to start in September. Learners develop good levels of social and vocational skills. Success rates for apprentices are now good and most achieve their qualification satisfactorily within the allocated time.
- High proportions of learners achieve one or more level 1 qualification. Learners develop a good range of literacy, trade and personal skills. Learners aged 14 to 16 on the Headstart programme gain good knowledge and appreciation of skills required for working life. Due to substantial improvements in the learners' behaviour, enthusiasm and motivation, they re-engage into learning at school.
- Learners feel extremely safe. They make well-informed decisions about their health and well-being after gaining comprehensive knowledge about the benefits and dangers of various drugs and life style choices. Learner celebration of success is excellent.
- The quality of training is good. Learners receive good practical and theoretical training in construction and motor vehicle trades at the Nova training centres. The well-planned lessons make creative and highly effective use of information communication technology. Assessment is satisfactory; tutors do not encourage learners to collect valuable evidence from their work experience and community activities.
- Progress reviews are frequent; however, these are not sufficiently thorough in the identification and recording of key personal objectives and barriers to progress. It is difficult to follow the extensive paperwork to see if the removal of barriers and the meeting of objectives are taking place.
- Nova has outstanding partnerships with several local authorities, colleges, schools and voluntary sector partners. Working collaboratively, it has swiftly located the provision in several of the most deprived wards of Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Learners are fully engaged in productive activities to improve their skills and chances of gaining employment. This is contributing to the sustainable development of the local communities.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners and parents/carers receive very clear information about training and learning opportunities. Good numbers of learners have re-engaged into learning after persistent efforts by Nova staff.
- Nova leaders and managers have established a supportive and positive culture to set and meet challenging targets. Nova has continued to raise levels of learners' achievement and progression. Nova influences and plays a prominent

role in local and national policy initiatives to engage learners into education, employment and training.

- The use of management information is highly effective at operational level. Nova uses a broad range of data for monitoring purposes. Through careful analysis, Nova measures the provision against many performance criteria. However, it does not make full use of the wide-ranging management information to set individual objectives and improve outcomes for example, early leavers.
- Nova is outstanding at engagement of learners and partners to support improvement and develop the provision. Learners are regularly and fully involved in recruiting the tutors as well as evaluating teaching sessions. Much of the improvements to the design and provision of training are a result of learners' feedback.
- Safeguarding arrangements are excellent and exceed government requirements. Vetting of all staff is thorough and they have received training up to a level 3 in safeguarding learners. Risk assessment for all activities and venues is comprehensive. Learners receive training to safeguard their own interests. Health and safety arrangements are thorough.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Nova has developed its provision in the wards where the participation and achievement levels are particularly low and learners are at risk of exclusion from schools. Learners develop thorough understanding of their responsibilities and rights and become better-informed citizens.

What does Nova need to do improve further?

- Improve the removal of the main barriers to learners' progress by setting further specific targets in learning plans and following up reviews by more focussed interventions. In addition, set challenging and realistic targets for learners in their individual learning plans to improve their personal skills such as behaviour or attendance while supporting them to become more mature.
- Improve the outcomes and provision for learners, particularly early leavers by increasing the analysis of the wide range of management information.
- Make better use of learners' experience in the workplace and community projects through collecting the evidence and presenting it in their portfolios to use as an evidence of their achievement.

Summary of the views of learners as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- very good practical training and broad range of training opportunities
- excellent quality teaching, training and assessment
- superb support and supportive tutors
- opportunities to gain formal qualifications and study subjects that they need

- very relaxed and adult learning environment
- learning and teaching often better than at schools
- the incentives to learn; such as bonuses.

What learners would like to see improved:

- heating in the training room in one centre
- no other improvements suggested.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers/partners like:

- superb quality of training
- the fantastic experience for the learners
- consistently good record of achievement for learners
- excellent communication and the speed of response to requests
- excellent service they receive.

What employers would like to see improved:

- Nova's capacity to recruit more learners.

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