

Sheffield Independent Film and Television Limited (SHIFT)

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		21–23 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of learners achieving their qualifications has risen significantly over the last three years and most learners make substantial progress from low starting points. The provider focuses on ensuring that learners achieve useful qualifications and many learners move on to higher-level courses or employment.
- Tutors have good knowledge of learners and understand what they need to achieve to be successful. They provide very good support, which helps learners develop the confidence to learn new skills.
- The use of technology in learning is creative and effective. Learners acquire new skills in the use of digital video cameras and video editing software.
- Tutors give good, regular oral feedback to learners to help them improve.
- The choice of vocational qualifications engages learners and the location provides many opportunities for networking and work experience.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Progression rates are not yet high enough. Retention rates, although improving, are still too low.
- Tutors use an insufficiently diverse range of teaching styles and activities to engage some learners fully.
- Some written feedback to learners lacks sufficient constructive criticism and advice on how to improve their written work.
- The targets set in reviews do not sufficiently reflect short-term goals to motivate learners or make their progress more measurable.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not sufficiently comprehensive.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve progression rates by continuing to address the reasons for low retention.
- Provide further training for tutors to equip them with a more diverse range of teaching styles and share best practice in how to combine them effectively.
- Develop a consistent and effective approach to the provision of constructive written feedback to help learners improve their written work and the standard of their portfolios.
- Ensure that staff set and monitor short-term learning goals with precise and achievable objectives during learners' monthly reviews.
- Ensure that quality improvement arrangements cover all aspects of the provision effectively, enabling managers and staff to identify and share best practice in order to maximise the benefits to learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- In 2011/12 the proportion of learners gaining qualifications increased and has increased further in 2012/13. Achievement on vocational courses, such as interactive media, photography, animation and music technology, is good. Learners follow highly individualised programmes and develop their skills quickly, showing increasing capacity to extend their basic skills and progress to higher-level qualifications when they are able.
- Many learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and begin their learning with no formal qualifications or with low-level qualifications. The majority of these learners attain their learning goals and meet the challenging personal, social and vocational targets set during initial assessment. A substantial minority makes very good progress and achieves intermediate-level qualifications.
- The achievement of the low number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic learners is also good. The achievement of White working-class boys, who make up the majority of the cohort, has improved significantly from a low base and is now good.
- The proportion of learners gaining qualifications in English, mathematics and functional skills increased significantly in 2011/12, in line with similar providers but below the national average. At the time of inspection results from functional skills tests were not available. However, internal provider data indicate further improvement in the current year.
- The developing use of social media and online surveys is beginning to increase the retention of learners, many of whom have a history of poor engagement with education and training. They have developed significantly during their studies with SHIFT. Some learners have a pattern of poor attendance. However, the involvement of parents, carers and case-workers in regular review sessions is used very effectively to enable these learners to return to learning, make progress and achieve their learning goals.
- Learners develop greater confidence and self-esteem as a result of their learning experiences. They improve their social and personal skills and benefit from a flexible learning and review programme that enables them to develop and demonstrate their readiness to move to further learning or employment. This growth and development is not yet captured effectively as evidence of progression to complement the formally assessed elements of Foundation Learning.
- Learners improve their understanding of their rights and responsibilities as learners, employees and citizens through thoughtfully selected and carefully focused enrichment activities. For example, learners worked alongside local business and community leaders to improve the quality of a community learning space as part of a community regeneration project.

- Learners produce work that demonstrates high levels of practical and technical skills, for example, in animation and graphic design. They talk confidently and enthusiastically about their work and are able to explain why the work they are doing is preparing them to progress to their chosen career either by moving directly into employment or to further education and training.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. This reflects the year-on-year increase in the proportion of learners achieving additional vocational qualifications and progressing to positive destinations including further education or training. Learners enjoy their lessons and show a positive attitude to learning.
- Tutors display a good understanding of learners' individual potential and often complex needs. They skilfully support and encourage learners, enabling them to stay focused on their individual projects and to complete them successfully. Staff provide good advice and guidance on progression opportunities. They encourage learners to believe in their abilities to progress to higher levels and this motivates them and raises their aspirations.
- Staff thoroughly plan activities and individual tasks to meet learners' needs. Learners demonstrate improving skills in many areas, such as sequencing in musical composition, animation, digital photography and storytelling. They develop good critical thinking skills and most are able to participate in debate and discussion. Learners in an employability session reflected particularly skilfully on the social usefulness of specific jobs that would be needed to allow human beings to survive in a fictional scenario of a Zombie attack. Learners recognise the importance and value of functional skills in planning for their progression and future employment.
- Group learning activities are not sufficiently developed and some tutors do not make good use of opportunities to develop learners' team-working and communication skills. In a session on writing effective CVs the teacher did not engage learners in group work. There was no clear briefing on the task or sharing of learning objectives. Learners refused to participate in activities to enhance these skills and swiftly returned to individual working on computers.
- Tutors use learning technology regularly and effectively to develop learners' ideas and increase their skills in using computer software. They make good use of media, and learners swiftly become confident in the use of digital video cameras and video editing software. Learners receive important guidance on the use and potential dangers of social networking sites as part of their employment skills. Sessions explore the changing practice in industry and technology. Music technology learners are fully supported technically by an experienced DJ and a range of specialist resources.
- The targets set in reviews do not sufficiently reflect short-term improvement objectives. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall and learners receive constructive oral feedback that indicates how they can improve. Written detailed feedback is less well developed and not all tutors identify or correct significant spelling and grammatical errors. This is reflected in the poor quality of some learners' work in portfolios and particularly in their written English.
- The many effective links with other agencies enhance opportunities for learners to extend their skills and to find jobs. Local media businesses provide good opportunities for some learners to take part in short-term work placements.
- Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. They engage in occasional lively group discussions on aspects of equality and diversity. Reviews consider some aspects of equality but records do not indicate how well these extend learners' understanding. Learners have a satisfactory awareness of safeguarding issues and make a good contribution to discussions to develop their own ground rules for acceptable behaviour.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The provider's board members and senior managers have an ambitious vision for the organisation and high expectations for learners' achievement. Actively encouraging learners to raise their aspirations is core to their approach. The deliberate location of SHIFT's premises within a building set up and funded to encourage the development of creative enterprises in Sheffield and set in the city's cultural industries quarter provides an excellent environment for learners to gain knowledge about career opportunities in media and creative industries. Board and staff members with local, national and international recognition in this sector expect learners to produce work of a high standard.
- Governance and the management of subcontracting are good. Board members take a very close interest in the provider's work and meet frequently to monitor performance and provide appropriate challenge to senior managers. The manager of the subcontractor also attends SHIFT board meetings. Both provider and subcontractor view their relationship very much as a partnership with complementary provision. The subcontractor appreciated the support given by SHIFT during a difficult period when it lost key managers and staff.
- Managers use observation of teaching and learning effectively as a performance-management tool and to identify staff training needs. They support staff development appropriately through both in-house and external courses. Managers' experience in undergoing post-graduate teacher training or acting as mentors on the programme has given them an improved understanding of what constitutes high-quality teaching and learning. They have well advanced plans to introduce peer observations in order for staff to share good practice and are actively seeking to engage a suitably qualified consultant to conduct observations more frequently in order to accelerate the rate of improvement in teaching and learning.
- Staff demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement through their actions. For example, teaching staff introduced immediate changes to their teaching practice following feedback from inspectors. However, the provider's quality improvement arrangements had not addressed some of the inconsistencies in assessment, feedback and reviews identified by inspectors.
- SHIFT makes good use of data and the views of its staff, board members, learners and their parents or carers, and stakeholders as well as input from the subcontractor to evaluate accurately the overall quality of the provision. The mid-year self-assessment report introduced to supplement the annual report demonstrates a good knowledge of the current quality of provision. The organisation's quality improvement plan shows a clear understanding of the changes necessary both for further improvement and to prepare for the introduction of the 'study programme' in the next academic year. The plan sets appropriate target dates for completion of actions and identifies those responsible for them.
- Managers have successfully planned curriculum and learning programmes which meet the needs of learners. The vocational focus on areas which excite learners from their target groups act as an effective vehicle to engage young people, many of whom have had poor previous educational experiences. Staff stress the importance of functional skills to learners' future career success effectively.
- Board members and managers use their wide personal and organisational networks and those of other staff members to explore work experience and employment opportunities for learners and to identify which of the needs of Sheffield's vibrant creative industries SHIFT's Foundation Learning programmes can meet. They are also seeking industry sponsors for award schemes to recognise individual talent and enhance the career prospects of aspirant practitioners in the sector including their own learners.
- Managers actively promote equality and diversity by setting recruitment targets to balance the enrolment of male and female learners and for the learner cohorts to reflect the ethnic diversity of the city. They monitor performance data to identify achievement gaps between groups of learners. However, the data do not differentiate sufficiently between groups; for

example, they only compare the achievement of White British learners with those from any other ethnic background or between male and female learners, but not routinely between male or female White British learners or between groups from any other ethnic background. Staff do not tolerate bullying or harassment and take particular care to support and protect learners who may have been bullied in the past.

- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Managers have rewritten the safeguarding policy and procedures to reflect the findings of a safeguarding audit they commissioned in 2012. Staff and board members undergo appropriate levels of training and are subjected to Criminal Records Bureau checks. Staff report suspected safeguarding incidents to the designated safeguarding officer who consults the safeguarding authority and records actions taken.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Sheffield Independent Film and Television Limited		
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Foundation Learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation Learning	2

Sheffield Independent Film and Television Limited

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 56
	Part-time: 0
Principal/CEO	Ms Bridget Kelly
Date of previous inspection	November 2009
Website address	bridget@shiftmedia.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	N/A
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Darnall Education Centre Associated Training Co-operative Ltd (DECAT)

Additional socio-economic information

Since the decline in manufacturing in Sheffield there has been considerable investment in the city and particularly in cultural industries. The percentage of the working-age population qualified to degree level or equivalent is significantly above the national average. However, the educational achievement in Sheffield schools is below the national average. Although below the national average, the percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds in Sheffield who are not in education, employment or training is higher than many comparable-sized cities in the country. The provider now occupies premises in the cultural-industries quarter of the city in a building shared by a variety of start-up and established cultural-industry enterprises.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Cliff Rose HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the chief executive officer as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the subject area listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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