



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
The Appleby Trust

The Print Room

Report of an Inspection in
November 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

The Appleby Trust is a charitable organisation, limited by guarantee, and is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide The Print Room European Social Fund (ESF) project. The Print Room is one of four social enterprises operated by the wider Appleby Trust. The main aim of the project is to create a pathway to employment for young people, aged 16+ years of age, from the Southern Health and Social Trust (SHSCT) area all of whom have a confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The Print Room produces bespoke greeting cards and personalised framed prints and it operates as a training environment for the participants to develop their computing, design, personal, social and employability skills. They also have access to one-to-one mentoring and external work-experience placements and are assigned a support worker for the duration of the programme.

The Print Room project operates out of a headquarter office in Armagh. It is managed by a project officer and supported by a full time graphic designer, a design support worker and a support worker, who has also acts as a job coach when needed. At the time of the inspection, 17 participants^[1] were registered on the project and seven of them (41%) were in suitable work-experience placements. The participants attend for a minimum of five hours up to maximum of 25 hours each week, which may include one or two days in a work-experience placement where applicable. The participants can remain on the programme for a maximum of two years but they are encouraged and supported to exit the programme earlier if they are assessed as work ready.

2. Views of participants

The inspection team met with a sample of The Print Room participants individually and in a small focus group meeting. All of the participants reported that they enjoyed the activities offered and most had gained new knowledge of computer and design packages. They all reported positively on their overall engagement in the project, felt well supported, valued the structure of the programme formed new friendships, and had an appropriate level of awareness of their progression pathways.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all participants, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for participants;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

^[1] All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter at the time of the inspection.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

Whilst there is no accredited training offered on the programme, participants are developing good standards of work and can demonstrate new computing skills in digital photo editing and publishing through the Print Room's varied card design and print activities. The small sample of employers interviewed report that participants are well prepared for the placements and in one example noted that they were developing well new transferable ICT skills in the use of industry standard email and quality management software products.

The Appleby Trust works effectively with the SHSCT to support recruitment to the project, and as a result it is ahead of its three year target of 45 participants with 46 participants recruited to date. The retention rate on the project was outstanding in the first two years of the programme, at 100%, and is very good at 75% to date. It is also a strength of the programme that the majority (62%) of participants completing their programme progressed into further education or training and a significant minority (16%) progressed into supported employment.

The project promoter and project staff recognise the importance of work-experience placements in developing the participants' wider employability skills and all placements are well matched to the participants' needs and interests. Out of the ten participants not currently in a placement, five of them are ready to progress into a placement and the remaining five are new participants that are still developing the necessary work-readiness skills.

The majority of the participants interviewed in-house and in their work-experience placements reported a noticeable improvement in their confidence levels and their communication skills as a result of their participation on the programme. The small sample of parents interviewed also commented on the improvements in the overall personal and social skills development, felt well informed about progress and valued the high levels of support for both the participants and themselves. Whilst the project promoter has improved the processes for recording the distance travelled in personal, social and work skills, the outcome tool could be simplified and the outcomes presented more visually to demonstrate more clearly the positive progression made and/or to identify any further areas for development.

6. Quality of provision

The participants have access to an appropriate curriculum offer consisting of graphic design tasks which they use to produce cards to customer orders. Where applicable, the participants have the opportunity to complete a virtual marketing plan and select popular projects to sell. This training is provided by the graphic designer and the tasks are monitored by the design support worker. Depending on their needs, the participants also have the opportunity to complete unaccredited units in personal development and employability skills. This training is delivered by the job coach, either in-house or on the job, and includes units on communication, personal appearance, turn taking and wider employability skills to enable progression into a work-experience placement or employment. The job coach also provides training on career exploration, CV preparation and interview techniques to prepare the participant for a work-experience placement. In addition, they provide on the job training and mentoring to help the participants sustain the placement, whilst also providing support to the participant's family and employer.

There is a clear induction process and effective transition arrangements which enable potential participants to visit The Print Room, meet staff and participants, see and sample the work taking place and receive a tour in order to minimise any additional transition anxiety. The referral information is well documented and informs the production of an appropriate personal training plan. Whilst these plans are sufficiently detailed, and include relevant risk assessments, they would benefit by highlighting each participant's preferred progression goal and progression date to keep a sufficient focus on progression and the time-bound nature of the programme. Progress in the development of the participants' social and work skills is assessed on entry and at regular periods throughout the programme; whilst the results are documented clearly in the personal folders and reviewed regularly the process could be simplified. The project staff also complete an appropriate daily log of each participant's progress.

The quality of the small sample of one-to-one mentoring and learning and development sessions observed was mostly good. In all of the sessions observed, there was clear and tailored planning relating to the participants' key barriers, evidence of progression and learning, and mutually respectful relationships between participants and staff. To improve the provision further, the sessions would benefit from clear objectives which are reviewed and greater opportunities for the participants to provide feedback on their tasks, and planning for more supported stretch and challenge.

The processes for care and welfare are impacting positively on the development of the participants' personal, social and employability needs. The project promoter liaises effectively with a range of external support agencies to signpost participants for additional support as required. There is also a dedicated lunch room, which includes wall displays on appropriate discussion topics, where participants can meet and develop their social skills. The 'trainee of the month and overall trainee' awards and associated photos, shared in the newsletters, are a valuable way of celebrating success and introducing an appropriate competitive aspect to the provision. The bi-monthly steering group meetings between the staff and the participants provide a good way of encouraging participants to provide feedback on the provision. For those participants reluctant to provide verbal feedback, a suggestions box is also available on site.

7. Leadership and management

There is a clear strategic vision for The Print Room and the management committee and project team meet regularly to ensure the programme is on track to achieve its performance targets and to discuss any support or training needs. The overall quality of the training environment is good and it is appropriately resourced with high quality equipment, for example computerised card cutting equipment, a digital printer and scanner and drawing tablets, to allow the participants opportunities to gain new and transferable skills.

Whilst there is a basic management information system which tracks registrations and progression data, the project promoter has recognised the need to further develop its information system to enable a wider and more effective use of data to demonstrate better the trends and patterns, particularly in the progression outcomes, and to continue to promote improvement in the provision.

The project promoter has a strong working relationship with its main referral agent, the SHSCT, and has met its overall recruitment target for the project. There are also effective partnerships with a range of external agencies and organisations to source and signpost, where required, additional support for the participants. In addition, there is a well-established list of employers to provide good quality and highly supportive work-experience placements which are matched well to the participants' needs and aspirations. All of the employers interviewed reported on the clear lines of communication, frequent visits and overall high levels of support provided by the support worker. The project promoter has devised a very useful 'about me' leaflet for the employers on each of the participants' key support needs and aspirations.

Whilst the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes have been developed, there is a need to make more effective use of the project's performance data, specifically in relation to recruitment, retention and progression, to better inform the evaluations in the self-evaluation report. The processes for quality assuring the provision of the activities also need to be strengthened to identify better the key strengths and areas for development. In order to continue to promote improvement across the provision, the project promoter also needs to produce a separate quality improvement plan with measurable actions.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding participants reflect the guidance from the Department.

9. Overall effectiveness

The Appleby Trust's Print Room project demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. There are areas for improvement that the project promoter has demonstrated the capacity to address which include the need to:

- formalise, refine and embed the quality assurance processes in order to promote consistency and improvement across the provision; and
- produce a separate quality improvement plan for this project with more consistent use of measurable and specific actions to continue to promote improvement in the provision.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
The Print Room ESF project 2015/2016	22	85%
The Print Room ESF project 2016/2017	12	120%
The Print Room ESF project 2017/2018	12	133%

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

One ETI inspector and one associate assessor observed 13 participants in a range of settings including a one-to-one mentoring session, a learning and development session, a focus group and five work-experience placements. Discussions were held with the project officer, the graphic designer, the design support worker, the support worker/job coach, three parents, and two employers. The management information systems, including the tracking and monitoring systems, samples of the participants' work and personal training plans, and the team's planning documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on Outcomes for learners, Quality of Provision and on Leadership and Management.

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project promoter:

The project promoter has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.
The project promoter demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.
The project promoter needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the project promoter's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The project promoter needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the project promoter's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments measured over the full duration of their programme.
Achievement	The percentage of participants who completed their targeted individual outcomes.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who achieved positive progression.

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