

# Eclipse Training Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 51673

**Name of lead inspector:** Simon Cutting HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 12 November 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Eclipse Training Ltd  
5 The Stables  
Knuston Home Farm  
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**Telephone number:** 01933 358 492

## Information about the provider

1. Eclipse Training Limited (Eclipse Training) was established in 1999 and is based in Knuston, Northamptonshire. This small company offers apprenticeships in business administration and customer service and advanced apprenticeships in business administration, customer service, management and team leading. Government funded training accounts for the vast majority of Eclipse Training’s business.
  
2. Eclipse Training has 44 learners and most are recruited from Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. All learners are employed, 15 are aged 16 to 18, 27% are men and 18% are from minority ethnic groups. Eclipse Training employs two staff, both work as trainers, assessors and verifiers. Freelance workers are used from time to time to undertake assessment and internal verification activities.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b> Apprenticeships	31 apprentices

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Business administration and Law	2

## Overall effectiveness

3. The overall effectiveness of Eclipse Training’s provision is good. Success rates are higher than national averages. Learners develop good vocational skills. They feel safe and are very aware of their personal safety. Learners make good progress. Learners’ work is of a high standard but they have insufficient access to their portfolio of evidence.
4. Assessment practice is good. Information technology is used well to support learning and improve communications. A small minority of learners cannot access Eclipse Training’s website whilst at work. Learners have insufficient access to suitable background knowledge resources in other formats. Eclipse Training makes good use of progress reviews to evaluate learners’ performance, however learning plans take insufficient account of opportunities to use relevant workplace training.
5. Eclipse Training has well established and excellent relations with employers and works flexibly to meet their needs. Employers highly valued their learners. Learners’ training programmes are well matched to their job role, but responsibilities for ensuring that the requirements of the apprenticeships are integrated into the work learners do are unclear. Eclipse Training places good emphasis on providing pastoral support to ensure learners can successfully

complete their learning programme, but provides insufficient support for a minority of learners with additional learning needs.

6. The provision is well managed. Communications are very good. Managers have a particularly good understanding of business performance. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. Eclipse Training checks carefully that employers take seriously their responsibilities for safeguarding learners and equality and diversity. Learner understanding of equality and diversity is reinforced well. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and rigorous. Eclipse Training responds well to address concerns raised through stakeholder feedback. Data is used effectively to monitor performance. The quality of a small number of processes is improved by using external advice. However, this does not extend to all key activities.

## Main findings

- Outcome for learners are good. Success rates are higher than national averages. Learners develop good vocational skills and improve their value to their employer and their productivity. Learners are safe and are very aware of their personal safety and security.
- Learners make good progress, with the majority achieving their qualification within their planned timescale. Different groups of learners succeed equally as well. A significant majority of learners gain full-time employment on completion of their apprenticeship.
- Assessment practice is good, and visits are managed flexibly. Assessors demonstrate excellent skills and knowledge of employers' business practices. Learners receive prompt feedback of assessment decisions. Action planning and target setting for improvements are good. Learners' work is of a high standard. However, learners do not have ready access to all of their portfolio of evidence.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy is insufficiently available. A small minority of learners are unclear of what they need to do to improve. Eclipse Training provides these learners with insufficient support and places too much reliance on them improving their literacy and numeracy skills through independently managed study.
- Individual learning plans are regularly up-dated. Learners' and employers' responsibilities for ensuring that the apprenticeship is well integrated into the work learners do are insufficiently clear. Progress reviews are very effective and employers are fully involved. Learners are well able to identify what they have learnt and gained from their learning programme.
- Information and communications technology is used very well to support learning. Learners benefit from the variety of ways they communicate with their assessors. They have access to a good range of resources on the company website, although alternative background knowledge resources are insufficiently available. A small minority of learners have insufficient access to the website.
- Eclipse Training has established long term and excellent relationships with its employers. Learners' apprenticeship programmes are well matched to their job

roles. Eclipse Training does not ensure that all relevant employer-based training contributes effectively to the apprenticeship programme. Many learners gain promotion and take on extra responsibilities after only a short time in work.

- Eclipse Training supports learners well with both personal and employment related issues. It works effectively with both learners and employers to ensure learners can successfully complete their learning programme. Learners and employers have access a good range of guidance and support materials from the company website.
- The provision is well managed. Business planning is effective. The staff work well together and use an effective range of complementary skills to manage the business. Communications are very good. Managers have a very good understanding of business performance. Eclipse Training has a clear strategy for developing resources to support learning using technology-based solutions.
- Arrangements to ensure apprentices are safe are good. Learners' personal safety and security is very effectively reinforced throughout their programme. Staff are appropriately trained and they are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. Eclipse Training makes good use of specialist support.
- Eclipse Training promotes equality and diversity well. It checks carefully to ensure employers effectively meet their responsibilities for equality and diversity. Learners' understanding is reinforced well through assessment and progress reviews. Eclipse Training has worked effectively to eliminate gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners.
- The self-assessment report is largely accurate and rigorous. Eclipse Training responds well to address concerns raised through stakeholder feedback. Data is used effectively to monitor performance. The quality of a small number of processes, including self assessment, is improved by using external advice. However, this does not extend to all key activities and processes.

### **What does Eclipse Training Ltd need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to consolidate the high success rates and good progress that learners make by ensuring that learners and employers understand clearly their responsibilities for planning a learning programme, which is well integrated into work activities.
- To improve the support for learners' literacy and numeracy skills by implementing effective initial and diagnostic assessments which are used to carefully plan each learner's programme of support.
- Maximise the full range of training opportunities to support the apprenticeship programme by improving the co-ordination of training provided by both employers and Eclipse Training.
- To support learners better so that they fully understand the background knowledge needed for their job by providing better access to vocationally relevant learning resources.

- To develop a more structured and thorough approach to quality improvement by using external advice to evaluate the quality of all key business processes and to identify and implement actions for quality improvement.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the help in finding a suitable place to work
- the help in developing and broadening learners' understanding of business skills and in gaining experience
- the enjoyable course which fits in well with work practices
- the ability of the trainers to effectively explain things which are relevant to both the qualification and work, and for making it easy to learn and achieve
- the access to learning through Eclipse Training's website
- the brilliant support throughout the course by very efficient, well organised and friendly staff
- being very well prepared for the next steps in learning and employment
- the help to improve confidence and the encouragement to succeed.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- better access to Eclipse Training's website so it can be used whilst at work
- more frequent communications and longer visits
- the qualification, which can be a bit boring at times.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- Eclipse Training's ability to effectively match learners to employers' needs
- the progress learners make in improving their confidence of working in an office environment and developing new skills, which are often more than expected
- the good and responsive support learners receive from their trainers and being effectively informed of the progress they make
- trainers who respond flexibly to business pressures, and always fitting in with work demands
- the very approachable and helpful staff, who are really friendly, easy to talk to and care about the business and learners
- the practical approach trainers take, using workplace evidence which they know well
- the very helpful website which is full of useful resources
- the very professional relationship trainers have with employers and learners.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- by ensuring employers are clear what learners are meant to do
- more frequent contact with learners.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

7. Eclipse Training has a good capacity to make and sustain improvement. Success rates have improved and are above national averages. There are no significant variation in the performance of different groups of learners. Learners make good progress. The provision is managed well and apprentices benefit from the many good aspects of the provision and highly committed staff. Data is used well to monitor performance and to support clear business planning processes. Inspectors confirmed that Eclipse Training is making good progress to achieve its business objectives. Stakeholder views, gathered to assure the quality of provision, and employer and learner feedback, gathered during workplace visits, is used effectively to address issues of immediate concern.
8. The 2008/09 self-assessment report is mostly accurate. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the strengths and areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report but they also found others. The report is sufficiently rigorous but in parts is too descriptive. Eclipse Training's self-assessment processes benefit from external advice. Since the last inspection Eclipse Training has maintained the majority of key strengths and successfully dealt with the majority of key weaknesses. It has made little progress on improving its' arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

9. Outcomes for learners are good. Learners enjoy their learning. Success rate are higher than national averages. Eclipse Training has made significant improvements over the last three years. Learners make good progress and the majority of learners achieve their qualification within the planned timescale. The declining progress of learners aged 25 and over has been reversed and is now above national averages.
10. Learners significantly improve their social and economic well-being. They are productive members of staff with many taking on greater responsibilities or gaining promotion. Learners are professional, confident and articulate. Their work is of a high standard, which results in significant business benefits for employers. A significant majority of learners stay on in full-time employment on completion of their apprenticeship.
11. Learners feel safe and have a very good knowledge of health and safety and personal security. They describe their knowledge very well through the context of their job. Eclipse Training ensures that learners' knowledge is reinforced regularly and provides learners and employers with a good range of support materials.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 2

12. Assessment practices are good, with thorough professional discussions. Technology is used very effectively to capture workplace evidence. Learners and assessors have a good rapport and work well together to ensure each assessment visit is used effectively. Assessors have excellent experience and knowledge of the businesses in which learners work and are appropriately qualified trainers, assessors and verifiers. Following assessment, learners receive immediate feedback and confirmation of their competence. Outstanding areas for development are discussed thoroughly and actions for improvement are well planned. Learners demonstrate good professionalism in their approach to work and their learning programme. They produce work to a high standard. However, learners do not have ready access to all of their portfolio of evidence.
13. Initial and diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy is insufficiently available. A small minority of learners are unclear of what they need to do to improve. Eclipse Training provides insufficient support and places too much reliance on learners' improving their literacy and numeracy skills by undertaking independently managed study using external resources.
14. Individual learning plans are regularly up-dated however, they are insufficiently structured. Learners' and employers' responsibilities for ensuring apprenticeships are well integrated into the work learners do are insufficiently clear. They place too much reliance on trainers deciding what they should do next.
15. Learners, employers and trainers work very well together to ensure learners have a learning programme that is well matched to the learners' job role. The vast majority of employers provide extremely good quality training opportunities for their employees. Eclipse Training make insufficient use of this training to support apprentices achieve their qualification.
16. Eclipse Training monitors learners' progress very well. Employers are very effectively involved in learners' progress reviews. Learners are able to describe very well the impact their learning is having on the development of their skills and knowledge and how this is improving their work.
17. Information communications technology is used very well to support learners and employers. The company website contains very useful information and guidance and is up-dated regularly, especially when legislation changes. Learners use technology well in their jobs and find the various methods of communication with Eclipse Training very useful. However, a small minority of learners use technology less well and are not progressing as fast as others. Background knowledge resources, to support learning, are insufficiently available in different formats.
18. Eclipse Training meets the interests and needs of learners and their employers very well. Apprenticeships are offered from level 2 to level 4. In 2009/10, the

provider has successfully recruited more 16-18 year olds into apprenticeships with many employers offering jobs to young people for the first time.

19. Learners are well matched to their place of work and are highly regarded by their employers. Eclipse Training has worked with the vast majority of employers for many years. Relations are very good and Eclipse Training is responsive to employers' work pressures.
20. Eclipse Training places great emphasis on providing pastoral support. It supports learners well with both personal and employment related issues. Eclipse Training works effectively with both learners and employers to ensure learners can successfully complete their learning programme. It provides learners and employers with a good range of guidance and support materials on the company website.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

21. Eclipse Training manages its apprentice programmes well. Highly committed staff work very well together and bring an effective range of complimentary skills to manage the business. The business plan sets out well what Eclipse Training plans to achieve. Management reports are used effectively to monitor and evaluate business performance. Eclipse Training's actions to support the business plan are clear and it has made good progress towards achievement of its' objectives. Eclipse Training's strategy to develop resources to support learning, using information and communications technology solutions, is clear and this is used very well to improve communications with learners/employers.
22. Eclipse Training's arrangements to ensure learners are safe are good. It uses external advice effectively to provide specialist advice and guidance and, if necessary, support for learners. Eclipse Training engages well with employers to ensure learners are safe in the workplace. Learners feel safe and have a very good knowledge of health and safety and personal security. This is very effectively reinforced throughout their apprenticeship programme. Eclipse Training provides a good range of materials to support both learners and employers. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and are appropriately qualified in health and safety and have received recent training in child protection. All staff have received an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check and records are held centrally.
23. Eclipse Training's promotion of equality and diversity is good. It has effective arrangements to check that employers take their responsibilities for equality and diversity seriously. Where necessary, employers receive up-to-date guidance on recent changes in legislation and can access the company website for guidance on equality and diversity policies and grievance, bullying and harassment procedures. Equality and diversity is introduced appropriately during induction and is reinforced well through assessment and progress reviews. Eclipse Training uses data regularly to analyse recruitment, retention

and achievement trends of different groups of learners and has effectively eliminated gaps in performance.

24. Learners' and employers' views are regularly taken into account to evaluate the quality of the provision. Eclipse Training responds quickly to address issues of immediate concern. Learners and employers evaluate the providers performance at each visit and complete a survey each autumn. Stakeholder feedback is used appropriately to support business decision making and promote improvements. Learners and employers are encouraged effectively to use internet based techniques, including Facebook, Twitter and blogs to provide feedback.
25. Quality assurance arrangements are good, as are the self-assessment processes. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and rigorous, but in parts is too descriptive. Data analysis of performance is used effectively to identify areas for improvement and good progress has been made to address them. It uses external advice well to support self assessment. However inspectors identified a small number of areas for improvement in key processes that are not subject to this support. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory.
26. Eclipse Training makes good use of its resources to secure value for money. Apprenticeship success rates are above national averages and learners make good progress. Information and communications technology is used very well to support learning. Assessment practices are good. A significant majority of learners are promoted or take on greater responsibilities and stay on in full-time employment on completion of their apprenticeship. Eclipse Training's financial health is outstanding.

## **Information about the inspection**

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's commercial director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency, the previous inspection report and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, including assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Eclipse Training Ltd**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Leamer responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	44	44
Part-time learners	0	0
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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