



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Quality and standards in education and training in Wales

A report on the quality of work-based learning programmes

in

Educ8 Limited

February 2009

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**



The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities (LAs);
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of the Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Introduction

Educ8 was inspected as part of a six-year (2004-2010) national programme of inspections. The purpose of the programme is to identify good features and shortcomings in order that the provider may improve the quality of education and training offered and raise the standards achieved by learners. Inspection is also designed to give learners more information about the quality of providers of work-based learning and the learning options available.

All inspections conducted under the arrangements apply the following principles:

- the use of a common inspection framework which is common to all sectors of education and training in Wales;
- an emphasis on the provider's evaluation of its work;
- the involvement of a provider nominee who works with the inspection team; and
- the inspection of a sample of provision.

The inspection took place from 02 February 2009 to 06 February 2009. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook the inspection. The team included additional inspectors.

The team was required to report on standards achieved by learners, the quality of education and training provided, the quality of leadership and management and to judge if the company provides value for money.

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000).

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). The table below shows the terms that Estyn uses and a broad idea of their meaning. The table is for guidance only.

Nearly all	with very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
A majority	over 60%
Half/around half	close to 50%
A minority	below 40%
Few	below 20%
Very few	less than 10%

Grade descriptors

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the company to prepare a written statement of the action that they propose to take to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Over the years, Educ8 has evolved as a specialist provider of training for the health and social care sector. In 2004, the company, which was once a subsidiary of a large residential care home organisation (CCA Residential Homes Ltd), became a training provider in its own right. Educ8 has expanded rapidly since then, including their recent acquisition of another work-based learning provider. Turnover has doubled within the last four years and the company has aspirations to increase this significantly by 2011 by delivering 50% of its business through Welsh Assembly Government funded programmes and 50% through the delivery of commercial training.
- 2 Educ8 currently delivers Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and the Modern Skills Diploma to work-based learners employed in a wide range of childcare and health and social care settings.

Types of inspection

- 3 Under the current inspection arrangements, there are three types of inspection available to Estyn for the inspection of providers of work-based learning. These are full, standard and short inspections.
- 4 The designation of a particular type of inspection is based on clear criteria that determine the level of risk presented by the provider. The criteria are set out in the Work-Based Learning Guidance Handbook on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). As a result of the application of these criteria, Estyn identified that Educ8 required a full inspection.
- 5 During a full inspection, inspectors evaluate and report on:
 - all seven key questions across the provider; and
 - all of the learning areas which have significant learner numbers. Educ8 Limited offers work-based learning programmes in only one area: Health, Public Services and Care with 248 learners in training at the time of the inspection.

The provider's priorities and targets

- 6 Managers have set a clear strategic direction for the company. They have worked effectively with staff to develop core values and expectations which reflect the ethos of the company and underpin all aspects of its work. Educ8 has a clear vision to:
"lead in the delivery of excellence and exceed expectations in all that we do".

Summary

Table of grades awarded

- 7 The inspection team judged the provider's work as follows:

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

- 8 The standards achieved in each of the learning areas inspected are as follows:

Learning area	Inspection grade
Health, Public Services and Care	2

Standards

- 9 Overall, standards achieved by learners are good. Many learners make good progress and attain their qualifications within agreed timescales. Most learners benefit from good employment experiences and supportive employers. They also benefit from regular support from their assessors and gain in confidence and self-esteem. Most learners have access to good resources and develop some independent learning skills.

The quality of education and training

- 10 The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. All assessors have extensive knowledge and experience of adult and childcare settings. They plan training, coaching and assessment sessions very well. All learners have a clear understanding of how to further improve their work. However, assessors do not always challenge more advanced learners enough and there are limited opportunities to learn in groups.

- 11 The range of learning experiences and progression opportunities available meet the needs of learners and a wide range of employers in the childcare and health and social care sector very well. Educ8 has established strong and effective partnerships with other work-based learning providers, Careers Wales and local secondary schools. The company promotes Welsh language and culture effectively and is a proactive member of the local community.
- 12 The quality of care, support and guidance for all learners is good. Assessors manage the support and progress of individual learners well, and work flexibly to meet with learners at times that fit in with their work patterns. The company has clear policies in place to support learners' health, safety and wellbeing. They promote race relations well and successfully attract learners from a wide range of backgrounds.

The quality of leadership and management

- 13 The quality of leadership and strategic management is very good. At all levels, there is a strong emphasis on the delivery of high quality training and improving learner attainment. Senior managers have invested considerable time and energy into positioning the company to fully exploit commercial opportunities and to develop very good strategic partnerships.
- 14 Managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to improving outcomes and the quality of learners' experience. They place quality, evaluation and continuous improvement at the heart of all aspects of the business. Managers monitor and evaluate performance well. Year-on-year improvement in attainment rates indicates an increasingly effective quality and improvement system.
- 15 Overall, leaders and managers use resources well to make sure that Educ8 provides good value for money. The company has enough well-qualified and very experienced staff to support the effective delivery of its programmes. All learners work in childcare and health and social care settings which are of satisfactory or better quality. The provider's centre also offers good quality accommodation with a good-sized training room and reasonable wheelchair access.

Recommendations

- 16 In order to improve, Educ8 needs to:
- R1 increase the focus on learners' achievements to develop the richness and breadth of their learning experiences;
 - R2 make sure that all learners develop good independent learning skills and take ownership of their portfolios to prepare them fully for further learning;
 - R3 make better use of opportunities for learners to develop and maintain their Welsh language skills and enhance their employability;
 - R4 introduce personalised basic skills learning plans to provide greater clarity of learners' support needs;
 - R5 increase the capacity of assessors to support learners with basic skills needs;
 - R6 cost the quality development plan and make sure it includes consistently SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time-related) targets and clear success criteria; and
 - R7 provide learners and employers with clear feedback on their evaluations of the training provided and of the actions taken as a result.

Standards achieved by learners in Health, Public Services and Care

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Summary of provision in Health, Public Services and Care

	Foundation Modern Apprenticeship	Modern Apprenticeship	Modern Skills Diploma
Number of learners in training	102	93	53

- 17 The training frameworks for learners on the Foundation Modern Apprenticeship and Modern Apprenticeship programmes include key skills at the levels indicated in the table below.

Framework	Application of Number	Communication
Foundation Modern Apprenticeship	Level 1	Level 1
Modern Apprenticeship	Level 2	Level 2

Success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 18 Most learners achieve good standards in their written and oral work. Their written work is detailed and learners present their portfolios of evidence well.
- 19 At an early stage of their programme most learners on apprenticeship programmes work well towards gaining key skills qualifications and a technical certificate. This helps them to understand the importance of key skills to their work role and to extend their knowledge of important care principles. However, few learners complete wider key skills or core key skills at a higher level than those required by the framework.
- 20 Many learners are on target to achieve their qualification framework well within the time set out in their individual learning plans. A minority of learners have achieved the goals in their individual learning plans ahead of their expected end date. However, a similar number of learners progress more slowly and remain on programme beyond their expected end date.
- 21 Overall, learners' attainment of full qualification frameworks is very good. In the period from August 2007 to July 2008, 78% of all leavers achieved their full qualification framework or a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). In the period from August 2008 to January 2009, learners' attainment is also very good: 82% of leavers achieved their full qualification framework and 6% gained an NVQ.

Progress in learning

- 22 Nearly all learners progress well in their workplaces and develop high levels of occupational knowledge and skills. All learners have a good understanding of the core principles which are important in all care professions and apply their learning to

care practice well. Many learners, particularly those on the Modern Skills Diploma, develop good research skills. Most learners use a good range of learning resources to help them complete their work.

- 23 All learners benefit from good guidance and support from their assessors. Most learners also benefit from the good support provided by their employers which helps them to develop their skills and understanding of care practice. Nearly all learners know how well they are progressing. Most learners contribute effectively to their reviews and assessments and when setting their own targets with assessors. Where necessary, learners benefit from additional support provided by their assessors. This helps them to make good progress in work and to achieve their qualifications.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

- 24 All learners work and communicate well with their employers, work colleagues and clients. Most learners are enthusiastic and well motivated to complete their programme. The majority of learners meet regularly with their assessors and use email to communicate frequently with them. Learners work hard to achieve their qualification, even when their working hours and shift patterns make it difficult to study.
- 25 All learners are professional in their attitudes and approach to work. They keep appointments and are punctual. Many learners come into work on their days off to meet with assessors. Learners on level 4 health and social care programmes make good use of workshops to explore important issues with other professionals and to extend their understanding. However, many learners particularly those at levels 3 and 4, have not yet developed fully their independent learning skills. Although many learners make good use of resources such as textbooks, handouts and web-links, few learners identify sources of information or references in the assignment work they produce. Many learners do not always take full ownership of the development of their portfolio by contributing creatively to its content or organising the layout of materials.
- 26 All learners have good relationships with their assessors. This helps to increase their confidence, personally and professionally. As a result, many learners broaden their understanding of important care principles and progress well in their workplaces.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 27 The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. All assessors have extensive knowledge, skills and experience of adult and childcare settings which they use well to promote learners' confidence and stimulate them to achieve. All assessors have good supportive relationships with learners and their employers which helps them to plan training effectively.
- 28 Childcare and health and social care learners receive good one-to-one coaching and assessment in the workplace. However, there are not enough opportunities available for learners following the childcare route to work in groups. Employers provide a good range of off-the-job training which assessors use well in planning and reinforcing statutory requirements, such as the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- 29 Most assessors skilfully adapt their coaching and assessment practice to match individual learning styles and meet individual needs, but assessors do not always challenge more advanced learners enough. Educ8 makes good provision for learners who choose to undertake their training through the medium of Welsh.
- 30 All assessors engage and motivate learners through very well-planned and organised assessment sessions. They make good use of learners' practical work experiences to illustrate key learning points and to secure assessment evidence. All learners benefit from coaching which enables them to consider alternative ways of providing care and support for their service users. For example, when seeking the most effective method of communication for a person recovering from a stroke or helping those with dementia adjust to their loss of memory by encouraging them to keep a simple diary.
- 31 All assessors challenge learners' current levels of knowledge and understanding well. They make sure learners understand what they have to do and how they can improve their work further. Assessors visit learners monthly in their workplaces and provide them with consistently good support.
- 32 Individual learning plans do not contain information on learners' basic skills needs, This is recorded on learners' initial assessment record. Assessors and learners use individual learning plans well to accurately record learners' progress and reflect changes in their circumstances. Most assessors record the outcomes of reviews very thoroughly but few encourage learners to undertake this task themselves. Assessors also use a very effective tracking document 'the model of delivery' to clearly illustrate progress to learners and employers.
- 33 Educ8 promotes learning effectively on key issues such as safeguarding, Welsh culture and sustainability through their 'topic of the month' initiative. This approach enables learners and employers to address these topics well and to enjoy talking to assessors about their personal views. Assessors also use this approach effectively to address important aspects of equality and diversity.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 34 Educ8 offers learners a good range of education and training opportunities in Health, Public Services and Care. These include programmes in health and social care and childcare learning and development at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4. All learners have good opportunities for progression through these qualifications and a few learners have gained promotion at work as a result of their participation in these programmes. Overall, managers make sure that training is well planned and well structured to meet learners' individual needs.
- 35 The provider has well-established and productive working partnerships with a very wide range of local employers. They also have a very good understanding of employers' requirements through working with the Social Care in Partnership Network, the National Training Federation Wales and through effective working partnerships with a wide range of employers. Educ8 responds very well to the needs of individual employers. As a result, the training on offer now extends beyond the provision inspected as the company also offers commercial courses tailored to meet the specific needs of employers in areas such as information technology and management.

Educ8 staff work closely with other training providers, Careers Wales and local secondary schools to provide good access to education and training. The company is an active member of the Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly 14-19 Local Learning Area Networks, and leads in the delivery of health and social care and childcare induction programmes to many school pupils in these areas. Pupils explore care values and the skills and qualities that are essential for those employed in the care sector. Educ8 is the only work-based learning provider in each network to offer vocational care packages to schools within the partnership. They deliver these introductory programmes in Welsh to pupils attending Welsh-medium schools and have also developed good quality learning materials in Welsh which are available to all partners in the network. The company also organises pupil visits to local care establishments and arranges for guest speakers from the health care sector to visit schools.

- 36 Educ8 is a pro-active member of the local community. The company sponsors the local under 14s rugby team and gives a financial donation to the local golf club. The Chief Executive is currently in discussion with both clubs to determine how the company can provide further support through, for example, delivering free training and awareness raising events to promote healthy living. In partnership with Caerphilly Business Forum, Educ8 sponsored the annual award for the Young Business of the Year 2008. In addition, the company actively supports community organisations and services to improve their facilities and resources. For example, by organising and facilitating the development of a children's garden for a local playgroup.

- 37 More than 20% of learners on programme between March 2008 and January 2009 took advantage of training opportunities in addition to those required for their apprenticeship frameworks. These include courses such as awareness of dementia, pediatric first aid and first aid at work.
- 38 Educ8 promotes Welsh language and culture effectively and has detailed plans and targets to further improve its bilingual service. The company offers all learners the opportunity to undertake their training and assessment through the medium of Welsh and all childcare assessors are able to deliver training in Welsh. However, there is very little take-up of these opportunities.
- 39 Welsh-speaking assessors regularly communicate with learners and undertake their reviews in Welsh. However, they often miss opportunities to help learners to maintain and improve their Welsh language skills and to enhance their employability. The provider has a good range of bilingual resources available for learners' use.
- 40 All learners discuss sustainability issues as part of the 'topic of the month' in their reviews with assessors. The company actively promotes sustainability with staff and learners and has identified a 'champion' to promote and develop Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship across all programmes.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 41 Educ8 plans and manages the care, guidance and support of its learners to a good standard. All assessors support the progress of their learners well and work flexibly to meet their individual needs. Assessors plan visits carefully to fit in with learners' work patterns. Many learners are encouraged to contact their assessor outside of pre-arranged meeting times if they need extra support.

Most employers take an active part in the enrolment of learners on to programmes. They complete a particularly effective 'confidential reference' to support a learner's application for training. This process also helps employers to become fully aware of the provider's expectations and standards.

- 42 Well-planned induction programmes meet learners' needs and the specific requirements of the health and social and childcare routes very well. Educ8 provides all learners with clear information on a CD-ROM about their work-based programme and important issues such as equal opportunities, appeals and complaints and health and safety. The provider also gives learners useful information and contacts on counselling and specialist educational services such as help with dyslexia and welfare support.
- 43 All assessors effectively monitor learners' attendance, punctuality and attitudes. This helps them to identify any issues at an early stage and to provide learners with the necessary support.
- 44 Educ8 has developed a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to support all aspects of its business. These include policies to support learners' health, safety

and wellbeing. The company pays very good attention to health and safety and makes thorough checks of premises before taking on learners in the workplace. Nearly all learners have a good understanding of health and safety issues within their workplace.

- 45 The company also has relevant policies in place for the protection of children and vulnerable young adults. All staff working with children and vulnerable adults have undergone enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks.
- 46 Learners with identified additional support needs undertake an effective formal diagnostic assessment which identifies their specific learning needs and helps the provider to plan and manage suitable support. However, the provider has not yet introduced personalised basic skills learning plans to provide greater clarity and focus on specific support needs.
- 47 The provider effectively raises learners' awareness of gender imbalances in the care sector. They effectively promote gender and age equality and use publicity materials that provide non-stereotypical images. The provider also successfully challenges learners' stereotypical career choices in care where black and ethnic minority applications are particularly encouraged.
- 48 The provider promotes good race relations across all areas of activity. It is successful in attracting learners from a wide range of backgrounds locally and regionally, including learners from Swansea and Cardiff. Educ8 recognises and respects diversity and makes reasonable adjustments to the training of disabled learners to make sure they are not disadvantaged.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 49 Overall, the quality of leadership and strategic management is very good. Educ8 has a clear vision to achieve excellence and has developed core values and expectations which underpin all aspects of its work. At all levels, there is a strong emphasis on the delivery of high quality training and improving learner attainment.

Educ8 has an ambitious three-year business plan in place to develop and grow its provision and address Welsh Assembly Government priorities, such as the transformation agenda for efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness in education and training. Senior managers have invested considerable time and energy into positioning the company to fully exploit commercial opportunities and to address challenges in the external environment in which it operates. Currently, the company generates approximately 20% of its revenue through the delivery of commercial training and is on target to increase this substantially before the end of their financial year in October 2009. Educ8's recent acquisition of another work-based learning provider is an important element of its strategy to grow capacity, increase provision of commercially-funded learning opportunities and to become less reliant on Welsh Assembly Government funding.

- 50 All managers play a proactive role in developing very good strategic partnerships. The company works well in close alliance with three local work-based learning providers to share resources and promote their collective services to 14-19 Learning Pathways in South Wales. In Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taff, Educ8 offers a good quality induction programme in Welsh and English to a large number of learners involved in 14-19 Local Area Networks. The company also supports teachers in the schools involved to ensure that this new initiative is cost effective and sustainable.
- 51 The Chief Executive, Operations Director and Regional Sales Manager provide strong and effective leadership and promote a culture of quality improvement within a strong community ethos. Educ8 has reviewed and restructured job roles and responsibilities as the company has grown and increased its commercial activities. All managers and staff work very well together to support one another. Senior managers monitor and provide good support for managers who are settling well into their relatively new roles.
- 52 Communication across the company is good and there is an open and honest culture where staff feel valued. There is a good schedule of regular meetings which allows staff at different levels to contribute to planning, share views and challenge one another. Each group has clear terms of reference which clearly sets out their focus. Minutes of meetings are well documented and identify action points for individuals and teams within specified timescales. The company uses quarterly staff information days effectively to update all staff about performance and new developments.

- 53 Educ8 has very good systems in place to monitor and improve the performance of individual assessors, teams and the company as a whole. All staff undertake annual formal appraisal with their line manager. This process is effective in agreeing realistic but challenging personal targets which contribute to business objectives. All staff benefit from quarterly supervision meetings which give them an opportunity to discuss their personal progress and training needs. Overall, over the last 18 months, these measures have had a significant impact on holding staff accountable for their performance and making sure that they use their time efficiently and effectively.
- 54 The Chief Executive, Operations Director and Regional Sales use monthly board meetings effectively to address key areas of the business and to review the company wide performance. They also use quarterly strategic reviews well to monitor progress against business objectives and to identify changes to the external environment which may impact on the company. Senior managers make sure that staff implement key decisions quickly.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 55 All managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to improving outcomes and the quality of learners' experience. They place quality, evaluation and continuous improvement at the heart of all aspects of the business. In July 2008, managers established a comprehensive and effective quality improvement and effectiveness framework that feeds into all business processes
- 56 The provider monitors and evaluates performance well. Year-on-year improvement in attainment rates indicates an increasingly effective quality and improvement system. All managers and staff know about their individual and overall company performance. Staff and managers make good use of an effective management tool (the 'balanced scorecard') to monitor performance and the quality of work weekly and monthly. Information from monthly standardisation meetings, staff appraisals and ongoing professional development of staff also contributes to the overall quality improvement process.
- 57 Managers make a very good effort to involve all staff in the annual self-assessment process which results in managers preparing a team self-assessment report and quality development plan. The Head of Quality uses these well to produce an overall company report. A particularly good feature of the self-assessment process is the involvement of individuals from other local learning providers in observing staff and gathering feedback from employers.
- 58 Managers make good use of staff information days to inform and discuss quality matters such as the outcomes of the annual self-assessment process, evaluative feedback from learners and employers and the annual staff survey results. Managers also inform staff of changes and actions needed in response.
- 59 The self-assessment report provided for inspectors before the inspection is comprehensive, informative and detailed but it is often too descriptive and focuses on processes rather than on outcomes and evaluation. At the beginning of the

inspection, the provider issued inspectors with an updated version in a much more useful format. This document makes it easier to identify judgements, evaluative findings and supporting evidence.

- 60 The provider's quality development is reasonably detailed and managers monitor and update it regularly. However, the resources needed to implement the plan are too vague and, as a result, managers are unable to cost the plan accurately. Targets are not always SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time-related) and managers have not identified clear success criteria.
- 61 External verifier quality reports are largely positive and managers make good effort to respond to any shortcomings identified. The company also makes good use of questionnaires and other mechanisms to gather evaluative feedback from employers and learners. However, there is no formal process in place to give learners and employers clear feedback on their evaluations and actions taken as a result.
- 62 The grades awarded by the inspection team and those in the self-assessment report are the same for five key questions. The team awarded two key questions a grade higher than those in the self-assessment report.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 63 Educ8 has enough well-qualified and experienced staff to support the effective delivery of its Health, Public Services and Care programmes. The company undertakes careful forward planning to ensure that staff deployment is efficient and effective and that there is a good ratio of assessors to learners. Currently, about a quarter of staff speak Welsh.
- 64 All training staff have detailed up-to-date job descriptions and a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. New staff take part in a comprehensive four-week induction and mentoring programme. They benefit from opportunities to shadow other members of staff and to understand fully how their work role fits into the company as a whole. Line managers regularly review the progress of new staff and give them valuable feedback on their performance.
- 65 Educ8, which retained its Investors in People award in June 2008, has a strong commitment to training and developing its staff to enable them to carry out their job roles effectively. Managers use annual appraisals and quarterly supervision meetings well to identify ongoing individual and team training needs.
- 66 All training staff benefit from opportunities to take part in a wide range of well-planned training and development activities, including opportunities to undertake teacher training. They also maintain a comprehensive up-to-date continuous professional development file in which they record all training activities undertaken and update their curriculum vitae.
- 67 Managers have developed an overall costed training plan in response to identified staff training needs and business objectives. They also monitor the progress of planned training effectively. The company recognises that it needs to increase the capacity of its assessors to support learners with basic skills needs.

- 68 Educ8 invests well in resources for learners and assessors. Managers pay good attention to usage and suitability when looking at value for money. The company purchases good quality portfolios for learners that encourage them to present their work well.
- 69 All assessors have laptops with wireless internet connections, access to the company website, intranet and extranet together with mobile phones. Most assessors make good use of these resources. Learners have access to resources from 'SMART screen' which complement the provider's extranet facility. Many learners have access to information and communications technology (ICT) at home or in their workplace.
- 70 Assessors also provide paper-based resources for learners who do not have access to ICT or who prefer to have them in this format. These include good quality handouts which promote the Welsh Assembly Government's crosscutting themes, such as sustainability. The provider also holds a useful range of reference materials, but most assessors do not do enough to promote their availability to learners.
- 71 All learners work in childcare and health and social care settings which are of satisfactory or better quality. The provider's centre also offers good quality accommodation with a good-sized training room and reasonable wheelchair access.
- 72 Educ8 pays good attention to the safety of learners and assessors at the centre and in workplaces. Assessors vet placements before learners start their programme. The provider has devised an additional vetting record to cover placements where clients have challenging behaviour. Managers take care when matching assessors to workplaces. The health and safety manager and assessors are suitably qualified and supported by training to carry out their roles. The manager responsible for this area carries out regular quality assurance checks and gives assessors graded feedback on the quality of their completed documentation.
- 73 Overall, Educ8 provides good value for money.

Provider's response to the report findings

Educ8 is pleased with the findings of the inspection team and the grades awarded for our inspection in February 2009.

We would like to thank the lead inspector and inspection team for their professionalism and thoroughness during the inspection, providing Educ8 with an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to improving the quality of learning to all our learners.

We would particularly like to thank our staff for all their hard work, dedication and total commitment to Educ8 during the past few years and express how extremely proud we are of all their efforts and professionalism. The grades awarded during the inspection clearly demonstrate the high level of expertise within Educ8 and the quality of learning that we currently deliver.

We would also like to thank our partners for their support, in particular during the inspection process, and look forward to further developing our partnerships and relationships in the future.

The inspection has been a fundamental milestone for Educ8 on our journey to fulfil our vision to be 'passionate about learning and committed to excellence'.

We are totally committed to addressing the recommendations made by the inspection team and to continue to improve the quality of learning that Educ8 provides. These recommendations will form part of our self assessment process and will be implemented through our Quality Development Plan.

We recognise that there will be significant challenges and opportunities during the forthcoming years and look forward to being a key partner in transforming and improving the quality of education and learning in Wales.

Appendix 1

The evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors:

- visited a sample of learners working in childcare and health and social care settings;
- held meetings with Educ8 managers and staff; and
- held meetings with key partners.

The inspection team also considered:

- a selection of learners' individual learning plans; and
- data and documentation provided both before and during the inspection.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Una Connolly	Reporting Inspector
Catrin Rees	Deputy Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Currie	Team Inspector
Janice Thomas	Team Inspector
Dan Grant	Additional Inspector
Patricia Land	Additional Inspector
Steve Nelson	Additional Inspector
Grant Santos	Provider Nominee
Bernard O'Reilly	MHMI - Moderator