

# Indigo Training Solutions Limited

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**Inspection number**

319650

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

## Description of the provider

1. Indigo Training Solutions Ltd (Indigo) was established in 2004. It operates from training centres in Stafford and Leek. Indigo has two owners, who are also the directors of the company, a general manager and a business development manager. These comprise the senior management team. Sixteen other members of staff, including trainers, assessors and administrators, are also responsible for providing the training programmes.
2. Indigo has contracts with Staffordshire LSC to provide apprenticeship programmes in business, administration and law, information and communications technology (ICT) and Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes for learners who are interested in employment or training in construction-related industries. Indigo is also the lead provider of a consortium to deliver a 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET) contract from September 2007 to July 2008. There are a few adult learners on a Train to Gain programme and 105 young learners on training programmes in E2E and business, administration and law. The ICT and Train to Gain provision were not included in this inspection. Indigo also offers workshops in practical construction skills and ICT for 14 to 16 year old school pupils, particularly those who are at risk of exclusion or who have already been excluded from schools. The company recruits most of its learners through Connexions, although some approach the company directly.
3. In 2006, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of education at grade C or above in Staffordshire was 53.2%, compared with the average for England of 58.5%. The unemployment rate for the area in 2006 was 3.5%, compared with 5.5% in England. The 2001 census states that minority ethnic groups in Staffordshire account for 2.4% of the population compared with 7.9% nationally.

## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>

## Sector subject areas

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Business, administration and law</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The quality of provision in business, administration and law is outstanding and in preparation for life and work, E2E is good. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes in business administration and customer service are very high, with very good development of workplace skills. Progression rates in E2E are very good and learners develop good personal, social and vocational skills.
5. Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessors and trainers provide very good individual coaching in the workplace on apprenticeship programmes. Trainers on E2E develop good relationships with learners and manage their behaviour well. Learners make good progress.
6. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is good. Indigo runs a number of different programmes for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and plans progression routes well. Links with employers and a wide range of partners are good.
7. Guidance and support are very good. Staff provide very good support for learners, many of whom have a range of multiple barriers to learning and make good use of external, specialist agencies for additional support as required. Literacy and numeracy support is good.
8. Leadership and management is good. The directors set a clear strategic direction and place a strong emphasis on quality improvement, with detailed quality improvement planning which they regularly monitor and update. Programme management is good, with good communication and very effective team working. Arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity and social inclusion are satisfactory.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

9. Indigo demonstrates good capacity to improve. The effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the previous inspection is good, with most weaknesses rectified and many becoming strengths. An example of this is the improvement in literacy and numeracy support, which is now a strength. Success and progression rates have greatly improved. Programme management is good and quality improvement planning and implementation are strong.
10. The self-assessment process is thorough and takes account of the views of all staff, learners and, to some extent, employers. Although the self-assessment report is comprehensive and detailed, it is at times too critical and underestimates many of the strengths in leadership and management, as well as the grades for the sector subject areas.

## Key strengths

- Very high success and progression rates
- Very good individual coaching on apprenticeship programmes
- Good teaching and learning on E2E
- Very good personal support
- Highly productive partnership working
- Good programme management

## Key areas for improvement

- Inadequate target-setting
- Insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are good overall. Success rates in business administration and customer service have significantly improved and were very high in 2006/07. The development of learners' workplace skills is very good. Learners greatly increase their levels of confidence and their abilities to handle the responsibilities of more challenging job roles. Progression rates on E2E were very good in 2006/07. Learners develop good personal, social and vocational skills and gain a satisfactory range of additional qualifications in literacy, numeracy and key skills. No significant differences in achievement exist between different groups of learners. Inspectors' judgements matched most of the strengths, areas for improvement and the grade in the self-assessment report.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

12. The quality of provision is good overall. Individual coaching is very good on apprenticeship programmes and very effectively meets learners' individual learning needs. Learners have access to a good range of resources. Teaching, training and learning are good on E2E. Sessions are well planned and allow for different levels of activity for different learners' skills levels. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are effectively met through well resourced, discrete sessions, through activities which are carefully established into practical sessions and through optional one-to-one classes. Learners make good use of ICT resources.
13. Learners on E2E greatly benefit from good use of initial and diagnostic assessment and regular ongoing assessment. Target-setting is inadequate. Many learners are set too many overall learning goals, which are unrealistic for them to achieve during their time on E2E.
14. Indigo provides a good range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests. Indigo makes a good contribution to the *Every Child Matters* outcomes for children and young people, very effectively meeting learners' needs. It works closely with employers for the apprenticeship programmes and with local education advisers and secondary schools, to offer workshops in practical construction skills and ICT for 14 to 16 year old school pupils, who are at risk of exclusion or who have already been excluded from schools. It is also involved in a project in 2007/08 for young people who are NEET. Planned learning outcomes are currently behind target.
15. Guidance and support are very good. Staff are skilled at providing very good personal support for learners of all ages, many of whom have considerable barriers to learning. Indigo has a good emphasis on learners staying safe. Links with other external agencies that provide more specialist support are good. The self-assessment report identifies the very good support for all learners.

## Leadership and management

### Good: Grade 2

#### Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. Leadership and management is good. Senior managers set a clear strategic direction. A detailed business plan contains clearly identified short, medium and long term aims and key objectives. There is a strong emphasis on further developments in the apprenticeship programme and on national and regional developments in 14 to 16 provision, which is already well established at Indigo.
17. Partnership working is highly effective. Until 2007, one of the directors chaired the Staffordshire Providers' Association and remains an active member of the board. Relationships with local secondary schools are strong and well established. Links with employers are good.
18. Programme management is good. Communication with all staff is good and staff are well motivated and enthusiastic and receive good support from senior managers. Annual appraisals lead to clearly identified targets which managers monitor well. Team working is very effective, with a strong emphasis on peer support. The management of literacy and numeracy support is good, with good improvements since the previous inspection. Accommodation is satisfactory overall.
19. Quality improvement is very effective. Managers make good use of management information. Success and progression rates are improving and are very high. Good processes are in place for the observation of teaching and learning. An external evaluation of learners' and employers' views took place in 2006/07, through a project led by the Staffordshire Providers' Association. Indigo have commissioned further extensive external evaluations for 2007/08. Managers meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the quality improvement plan. Internal verification is well planned and effective. The self-assessment report is comprehensive, but underestimates the strengths of the organisation in leadership and management. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed in the self-assessment report.
20. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners receive very good individual support, which meets their individual learning needs well. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Although, appropriate equality of opportunity policies and procedures, which include bullying and harassment and safeguarding arrangements, are in place, the promotion of equality of opportunity is insufficient. Managers do not routinely monitor the implementation of equality of opportunity policies. Improvements in marketing materials to include positive images of under-representative groups of learners in construction, have only recently been introduced and to date only involve posters and not the materials given to potential learners. Planning to systematically cover equality of opportunity issues with all learners is insufficient. Indigo is currently working with Staffordshire Providers' Association on plans to implement a single equalities scheme for race, gender and disability.

## What learners like:

- The friendly and supportive staff
- The good training in practical construction skills
- The good facilities
- Working at his/her own pace
- 'No-one judges you here, you can be yourself'
- 'My assessor makes me feel special'
- 'I really like all the practical activities'
- 'I don't get confused here'
- 'They take bullying seriously here'
- 'Indigo? Brilliant!'

## What learners think could improve:

- The things to do at lunchtime
- The disruption by some of the younger learners at Leek

## Sector subject areas

### Preparation for life and work

#### Good: Grade 2

#### Context

21. The E2E programme has 72 learners enrolled; 51 attending at the Stafford centre and 21 at the Leek centre. Ninety-nine per cent of the learners are male, 5% are from minority ethnic groups and 31% declare a disability. Learners attend for four days a week, following a programme of practical workshops for trades linked to the construction industry (bricklaying, plastering, painting and decorating and carpentry), personal and social development and, where appropriate, receiving literacy and numeracy support. Learners also attend work experience. A total of six training staff and a recruitment officer deliver the programme. A general manager co-ordinates and manages the E2E programme.

#### Strengths

- Very good progression
- Good skills development
- Good teaching, training and learning
- Good use of initial and diagnostic assessment
- Very good support for learners
- Good programme management

#### Areas for improvement

- Inadequate target-setting
- Insufficient development of the provision at the Leek centre

#### Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards are good overall. Progression for learners from E2E is very good, improving from 66% in 2005/06 to 74% in 2006/07. In the current contract year, over a period of six months, 13 out of 16 learners (81%) have completed their programme with a positive outcome. A high proportion of learners progress into employment. They gain a satisfactory range of additional qualifications in literacy, numeracy and key skills. Indigo's contribution to the *Every Child Matters* theme of achieving economic wellbeing is good. Although learners achieve a good range of challenging objectives, the figures for learners' full achievement of key learning objectives are low. This is because many learners currently have more targets set than it is realistically possible for them to achieve during their time on the E2E programme.

23. Learners develop good practical skills in construction and achieve good standards of computer skills in project work and in completing their daily learning records. They develop good personal and social skills and communicate with confidence and enthusiasm about their programmes.

## Quality of provision

24. Teaching, training and learning are good. Trainers develop a good rapport with learners and set clear boundaries for their behaviour, which learners respect. Sessions are well planned and allow for different levels of activity for different skill levels. Activities are often lively and interactive and linked to learners' prior experience and vocational learning needs. Trainers make good checks on learners' progress and understanding during sessions and implement health and safety standards well in practical sessions. Literacy and numeracy needs are effectively met through well resourced discrete sessions, where topics are set in a vocational context; through activities which are carefully established into practical sessions and through optional one-to-one classes. Learners make good use of ICT resources.
25. Learners greatly benefit from good use of initial and diagnostic assessment. A thorough interview involves recording learners' prior attainment, personal circumstances and additional learning and social needs. Literacy and numeracy levels are assessed and followed up by thorough diagnostic assessment, which informs work covered in taught sessions. In practical sessions, learners start with an innovative assessment of their prior skills. Photographic and written records clearly identify learners' starting points. Assessment is repeated regularly throughout the programmes.
26. Target-setting is inadequate. Many learners are set too many overall learning goals, which are unrealistic for them to achieve during their time on E2E. Some targets are imprecisely worded or difficult to measure and learning objectives for literacy and numeracy are often too general or relate exclusively to accreditation outcomes. In learning reviews, targets for skills to be acquired on work-placement are rarely documented.
27. The range of provision to meet learners' needs and interests is good. Timetables are flexible and responsive to learners' assessed needs. Most learners access a useful work-placement when they are ready.
28. Personal support for learners is very good. A high proportion of learners have a record of exclusion from school, offending behaviour, substance misuse or unstable family backgrounds. Indigo very effectively meets learners' individual needs. Each learner has a mentor, who provides intensive support for pastoral and additional learning needs. Staff also provide good practical support in the form of clothing, equipment, healthy food and financial advice. Indigo also refers learners to a wide range of agencies for specialist support, as appropriate.

## Leadership and management

29. Programme management is good. Managers are active in implementing improvements; since the previous inspection, literacy and numeracy assessment and support have significantly improved. Work-placements for learners from the Stafford centre are well managed, with good links to a range of employers who are well informed about learners' possible barriers to employment. Most staff are qualified and experienced or plan to take appropriate teaching qualifications.

30. The centre in Leek which opened in September 2007 and provides for 29% of the current learners, is insufficiently well developed. These learners are disadvantaged by restricted training facilities and fewer opportunities for work-placement. Some paperwork and systems used by the two centres are inconsistently applied.
31. Equality of opportunity is enhanced by the very good support for vulnerable learners. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall, although training and reviews do not sufficiently develop or reinforce this.
32. The self-assessment process involves all staff, who effectively contribute to the produced report. The self-assessment report is detailed and includes interesting case studies of learner progress. However, it is too critical and underestimates the strengths of the provision. Four of the strengths and one of the areas for improvement identified during the inspection, were not recognised in the self-assessment report. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than the company proposed in its self-assessment report.

## **Business, administration and law**

### **Outstanding: Grade 1**

#### **Context**

33. Ten apprentices and 13 advanced apprentices are on business, administration programmes and eight apprentices and two advanced apprentices on customer service programmes. Of these, 82% are female. All learners are employed, in small, medium and large enterprises. All assessment and learning takes place in the workplace. Assessors and internal verifiers have industry backgrounds and appropriate qualifications.

#### **Strengths**

- Very high success rates
- Very good development of workplace skills
- Good progression
- Very good individual coaching
- Very effective programme management

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient learner involvement with the electronic portfolio system

#### **Achievement and standards**

34. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates for apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship frameworks have improved and were very high in 2006/07, at 86% for advanced apprentices and 83% for apprentices. Many learners complete their frameworks well ahead of the targeted completion date. The early introduction of key skills and technical certificates support framework achievements very well. The standard of learners' work is excellent. Learners greatly extend their knowledge and abilities. Indigo make an outstanding contribution to the *Every Child Matters* theme of enjoying and achieving. Learners really enjoy their programmes and are highly motivated.
35. The development of workplace skills is very good. Learners greatly increase their levels of confidence and their ability to handle the responsibilities of more challenging job roles.
36. Progression rates are good, with all current advanced apprentices having progressed from their Level 2 apprenticeship. Learners also progress very well in their job roles and careers.

#### **Quality of provision**

37. The quality of provision is outstanding overall. Assessor/trainers provide very good individual coaching in the workplace to meet learners' specific development needs in knowledge, understanding, technical skills and key skills. Learners also have access to a

very good range of resources and make good use of specialist websites. Learners' induction is very effective, with an assessment of current abilities and work experiences guiding the choice of optional units, which are closely matched to job roles. Changes are made to the original choices when job roles change, to ensure that units are achievable and also support effective job performance. Learners are able to progress at their own pace, while being encouraged to meet challenging targets, which they do very well.

38. Learner involvement with the electronic portfolio system is insufficient. They do not take sufficient responsibility for the building of the portfolio. Some learners are unaware of the full content and potential of the electronic system and are unable to identify their progress accurately.
39. The range of provision to meet learners' needs and interests is good. A relationship of mutual respect exists between assessors and learners, with learners taking the lead in making decisions about how their programme will progress. Assessor visits are frequent and increased wherever there is a need for additional support.
40. Support for learners is very good. Where learners require additional support, good specialist help is available. Indigo is supportive of employers keeping them fully updated on their staff's progress.

### **Leadership and management**

41. Leadership and management is very effective. The experienced, well qualified staff work very effectively as a team and communication is very good. Assessors support each other very well and assist with any difficult decisions. Management information is used well to monitor learners' progress and very effective strategies are in place to identify and take action with learners at risk of leaving early, or who are showing signs of failing to complete by the targeted end date. Internal verification is well planned and flexible in meeting the needs of learners. Staff appraisal takes place annually, with clear targets and development needs identified. Staff implement quality improvement very well, with good monitoring and updating of the quality improvement plan.
42. Learner understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory however, discussions with learners at reviews on equality of opportunity issues are insufficient.
43. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process and are actively involved in quality improvement on an ongoing basis. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have all improved and some are now strengths. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and detailed, although it underestimates the strengths of the provision and does not identify areas for improvement. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by **Indigo Training Solutions Ltd 2004 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05-06	overall	3	67%	59%	67%	50%
		timely	3	67%	44%	67%	37%
	06-07	overall	7	86%	70%	86%	66%
		timely	7	86%	56%	86%	53%
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	1	N/a	56%	N/a	46%
		timely	2	50%	35%	50%	29%
	05-06	overall	24	71%	62%	71%	57%
		timely	23	57%	44%	57%	41%
	06-07	overall	36	83%	69%	83%	66%
		timely	36	83%	54%	83%	52%

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by **Indigo Training Solutions Ltd 2005 to 2008**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005/06	58	7%	66%
2006/07	53	28%	74%
2007/08 (6 months)	16	19%	81%

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

\* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

\*\* Progression is measured in terms of learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period