



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
The Orchardville Society

Ignite

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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EXCELLENCE



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1. Context

The Orchardville Society (Orchardville) is a registered charity and is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Ignite European Social Fund (ESF) project. The main aims of the project are to prepare young people and adults with learning disabilities and/ or autism to progress into employment and greater independence and to overcome their barriers to learning.

The project is managed by the head of employment and skills and the head of supported training and marketing, supported by the project co-ordinator and skills officer and a team of employment officers and job coaches. The project is overseen by a board of directors (Project Supervisory Board) that is reported to quarterly on the project's performance and outcomes.

At the time of the inspection, 135 participants¹ were registered on the Ignite project. The programme is delivered in five stages to the participants who attend engagement, preparation for work training, supported training work-experience placement and employment support; including job search, interview preparation, job club and work trials. The participants are provided with an individualised learning programme to support them in developing their work-readiness and employability skills through accessing a range of employment support services, social enterprise activities and mostly accredited provision. Their individualised learning programme aims to provide them with access to a range of accredited and relevant level one employability and personal development qualifications. The participants attend on a varied programme of weekly and monthly sessions; including healthy eating, personal money management, internet safety and preparation for work. They undertake occupational qualifications up to level 2, delivered at the local further education college in customer service, child care learning development and horticulture. Of the 260 participants who engaged in the project to date, 237 participants (91%) are in a suitable work-experience placement.

2. Views of participants

The inspection team met with a sample of participants, individually and in small groups, as well as visits to three workplaces, the business centre and the social enterprise hub. The participants interviewed were highly positive about their experiences on the project and the range of support they received from staff. They commented on the high quality support provided by the project staff. All of the participants reported positively about their participation on the project and stated that the support and guidance provided had significantly improved their levels of confidence and self-esteem, supporting them extensively to gain work-readiness and employability skills.

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.

¹All 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	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Very good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

Orchardville has developed effective relationships with appropriate referral agencies to support recruitment from the target group over the last three years. Whilst recruitment has been slow in year three at 32% of the target set, the project promoter is currently on track to meet its overall recruitment target with 260 participants recruited against a target of 306 (85%) to date.

The participants are mostly achieving very good standards of work. In the small sample of learning and development sessions observed they develop relevant critical thinking and problem solving skills to an appropriate standard. They are making very good progress in their learning and development and gaining good employability and occupational skills, which are valued by employers. Most (80%) of the participants who complete their programme achieve their targeted qualifications. With increasing confidence, the participants can apply their employability and occupational skills and knowledge to complete workplace tasks and social enterprise projects. In the workplace, the participants are able to undertake worthwhile and meaningful roles within their placements and cope well with their allocated responsibilities. The participants are able to undertake a variety of routine activities and are developing their skills to complete more complex work-related tasks. Employers report that the participants are demonstrating very good standards of work within their work roles.

The participants are developing an appropriate range of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In the sessions observed, the participants demonstrate effective reading and writing skills. In the workplace, most of the participants, with the appropriate support, are able to engage confidently with their supervisors and customers.

The retention rate for the project in 2015/16 is outstanding (96%) and very good in both 2016/17 and 2017/18, at 86% and 82% respectively. The project provides effective supportive progression for participants into a wide range of employment areas with good opportunities to achieve relevant qualifications that increase their employability. A strength of the project has been its success in progressing and supporting participants into employment and sustained employment, progressing participants to further education and to non-government programmes and securing a high level of appropriate work-experience placements.

Most of the participants build high levels of confidence, resilience and commitment to overcome their barriers to employment, including their disabilities and a diverse range of social, emotional and personal barriers to accessing training, further education or employment. Through their engagement with the project almost all of the participants can demonstrate improved wider skills and dispositions, including increased self-esteem, improved health and well-being, greater confidence, improved communication, improved employability and life skills and relevant accredited qualifications. The participants demonstrate a high level of motivation to succeed and are able to identify potential opportunities for career progression beyond their current role. The participants demonstrate a good understanding and are appreciative of the work being undertaken to support their progress toward employment, including the 79% of participants who have progressed from work-experience placement to paid employment within their current work place setting.

6. Quality of provision

Orchardville has developed an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum offer that includes a range of supportive services, employer liaison and social enterprise activities to support the development of the participants' personal, social, and employability skills. The planning for learning is comprehensive and well-matched to the needs of individual participants. The curriculum is delivered using a 'participant-centred' approach, including opportunities for them to access a relevant vocational curriculum offer at the local further education college that includes child care learning and development, customer service and horticulture. The range of employability experiences provided by the project is highly valued by the participants and is impacting positively on improving their employment opportunities and life chances. The curriculum provides an appropriately differentiated programme and includes the delivery of work preparation and social enterprise activities and work sampling to effectively support the needs of the participants. An initial work site analysis is carried out which captures the demands and challenges of potential job roles and this information is used effectively to match participants to the employment opportunity.

Orchardville provides effective pre-entry advice, guidance and induction to the participants. The processes and systems for identifying and managing individual support needs are well-established and highly effective. A coherent approach to planning, identifying, reviewing and supporting the participants' individual needs is in place and works well. The regular review and support sessions have a strong focus on progressing them at an appropriate pace towards further education, training or employment and include effective work preparation and tailored one-to-one support. The initial assessment processes have been developed to include the use of a needs assessment for each participant that is linked well to their individual learning plans. The employment officers agree individual plans with each participant across the project to identify and prioritise appropriate short-term interventions and actions. The participants' personal files capture well their prior experiences, qualifications, and barriers to learning and employment. An individual risk assessment is carried out and a risk management plan is put in place that effectively meets the needs of the participants and enhances their learning experience. As a result most of the participants overcome successfully their barriers to learning and progression. There is a well-developed 'work-place buddy' system in place, which works very effectively to support the participants' needs in the workplace.

The quality of the provision for learning and development, including the small number of learning and development sessions observed is very good. In the more effective learning, there was effective and engaging use of information learning technology (ILT) and active learning to support learning and skills development. The employment officers and job coaches engage effectively with the participants and foster very good relationships through a range of well-considered strategies including one-to-one and mentoring support. There is a well-established programme of enrichment activities that are key to supporting the

participants to overcome their barriers to learning and progression, including social enterprise activities in a 'real' business context, where the participants are developing further their employability and customer service skills; and social activities such as the user forum and film club which are highly valued by the participants.

The arrangements for care and welfare impacts positively on the participants learning and development. The managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the care and welfare needs of the participants. The participants are allocated an employment officer and receive individual guidance and support as an integral part of the project delivery. There are effective links to signposting to a range of services to support participants who have specific needs, including social and health related problems.

7. Leadership and management

The quality of the strategic leadership is very good. The management board and senior management team are highly supportive of the project, and are effective in setting its strategic direction. There is participant focused strategic planning and a strong commitment to invest in staff, accommodation and resources. Strategic links and partnerships are well established and include links with the health and social care trust to provide a referral service for young people and adults at risk, and collaboration with the local further education college to provide a range of curriculum offer.

Employer engagement is a high priority and employers are involved in supporting the work-placement requirements of the project. They have appropriate input to the development of the participants' personal training plans and a very good understanding of the requirements and needs of the participants. The work-experience placements are matched very well to the participants' learning and progression needs.

Management and staff are highly committed to making the project a success. Staffing levels for the project are very good, with clear roles and responsibilities established to successfully manage the project, including a clearly defined employment liaison role to support the participants. There is a very good induction process for new staff and they feel they are supported well by the organisation. Internal and external communication is very good and includes the effective use of social media. Staff interviewed are committed to supporting the participants. The quality of the accommodation to deliver the training and support the participants is very good, including recent investment in ILT to support learning and training. A key strength of the provision is the specialist expertise and professionalism of the staff, which are used to good effect to enrich the participants learning experience and build positive relationships with them.

There is an organisation wide self-evaluation process and quality cycle and while the process still needs to be refined and further embedded, the project team are highly reflective and have accurately identified most of the main areas for improvement. Senior management are well informed of the planned actions to bring about improvement, which are tracked and reviewed regularly. There is a dedicated and team of quality improvement staff with well-defined functions. The team members are systematic in implementing a robust quality improvement process which underpins effectively the collation and identification of key strengths and areas for improvement across the provision. The project team have appropriately identified the need to make better use of data and other evidence to better inform self-evaluation.

8. Safeguarding

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

9. Overall effectiveness

The Orchardville Society Ignite project demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the participants.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
European Social Fund Orchardville 2015/2016	200	100%
European Social Fund Orchardville 2016/2017	43	81%
European Social Fund Orchardville 2017/2018	17	32%

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 seventeen participants in a range of settings including learning and development sessions, focus groups and work-experience placements. Discussions were held with the management team, job coaches, employment officers and three employers in the workplace. The management information systems, including the tracking and monitoring systems, samples of the participants' work and personal training plans, and employment officers' planning documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were scrutinized.

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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