

1–4 December 2015

**Inspection dates****Overall effectiveness****Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Clear and decisive leadership and management have led to swift improvements in quality, standards and outcomes.
- Outstanding partnerships and employer engagement result in the curriculum meeting local, regional, employers and apprentices needs.
- Apprentices develop very good skills, which help them to enjoy their work and develop their self-confidence, resulting in their achieving sustainable employment.
- Particularly good support, care and attention for apprentices enable a high proportion to make good progress in achieving their qualification and career goals.
- As a result of good on-the-job training, coaching and assessment, a very large majority of current apprentices make good or better progress.
- The proportion of apprentices successfully completing their qualification has improved quickly and is now good.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider

- In a very small minority of subjects, the proportion of apprentices completing their programmes within the planned timescales is too low.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that sufficient focus has been placed on all aspects of the promotion and development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills.
- The system for observing teaching, learning and assessment has not brought about sufficient improvement in the small amount of weaker teaching.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- TDR Training Limited (TDR) is a national provider of apprenticeships, with the vast majority of their provision based in the north-east of England. The focus while on engineering-based apprenticeships is on regional partnerships for the benefit of the local people and employers. Courses for the engineering sector and current initiatives are in place with local schools and employers. Apprenticeships are also offered in science, business and administration, leisure, travel and tourism, and warehousing.
- TDR has a purpose-built training centre in Newcastle and also provides training through two local colleges and other subcontractors in the region.
- Unemployment rates in the north-east of England are higher than national averages, while school leavers achieving grade A\* to C in English and mathematics are below the national average.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the improvement in success rates and improve the provision where it is not yet good or outstanding by:
  - continuing to rigorously monitor performance of all frameworks, and put actions in place where necessary
  - providing effective support to ensure that those apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeship programme within the stipulated timeframe, or who are at risk of not completing, are helped to succeed.
- Ensure that managers and training coordinators challenge and support most-able learners to develop their English and mathematical skills to levels above those required for their apprenticeship qualification to enhance their future career prospects by:
  - ensuring that the results of initial assessment are used promptly at the start of the programme and that apprentices are enrolled on the appropriate functional skills course quickly
  - engaging apprentices early in their programme by devising interesting activities related to their main qualification
  - ensuring that all tutors work with apprentices routinely to develop their English and mathematics skills sufficiently for future employment and progression.
- Review the strategy to observe teaching, learning and assessment so that it is focused on the learning taking place and the progress of apprentices.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers at TDR have the ambition to be the best provider of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) apprenticeships in the north-East, and have communicated this vision to all staff in the organisation very effectively. In response to a significant decline in success rates in 2013/14, leaders have implemented wide-ranging changes, which have secured a swift improvement in performance, and apprentices are now making good progress in all subject areas.
- Partnerships and employer engagement are outstanding. Staff at all levels within the organisation have very good working relationships with employers and board members are highly active in promoting TDR as a training provider. When managers are developing new courses, they work very well with representative employers to ensure that options best meet employers' needs, and that apprentices are well prepared for their time in the workplace. Managers and staff are at the forefront of developments in the science and engineering sectors, such as trailblazers.
- In addition to working with employers, leaders and managers have highly productive working relationships with other training providers, which increase the range and type of provision they are able to offer to apprentices. Staff also work very well with schools, promoting understanding of STEM subjects and apprenticeships for young people and their parents.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity from very effective coverage in their regular reviews and the projects that they work on. For example, apprentices gain an understanding of how the needs of employees with disabilities are met, including legal obligations.
- Previously, self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans did not focus sufficiently on evaluation of all aspects of provision and timely, easily measurable targets. Leaders and managers have improved systems to monitor all aspects of provision, including the performance of subcontractors, so that they are now highly effective.
- Staff at all levels within the organisation have an accurate view of the areas they are responsible for. Data are used well to monitor key performance indicators and staff have a very clear view of the progress of individual apprentices. A recent initiative is taking developments further in focusing on sharing good practice and continuous improvement, and is in the early stages of implementation.
- Leaders have adapted the previous system of appraisal to a more robust system of performance management. Staff understand this system and it is effective in highlighting strong performance for it to be celebrated, and weaker performance so it can be addressed.
- The system for observing teaching, learning and assessment is not as effective, and has not brought about sufficient improvement in the small amount of weaker teaching. Observers focus too much on compliance rather than quality, and on teaching rather than learning.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that sufficient focus has been placed on all aspects of the promotion and development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills. For those who need to gain a qualification, appropriate assessment and provision are in place, although this is not always offered as early in the course as it needs to be to for apprentices to gain most benefit. For most learners, mathematical skills are developed well as they form an integral part of their programme, such as for engineers and science apprentices. However, English skills are often not developed to the same high levels as the mathematical and vocational skills.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Trustees have a good understanding of TDR, its strengths and areas for development. They are fully involved in deciding the future direction of provision and use their expertise to good effect to help achieve TDR's vision and aims, liaising with potential partners and providing labour market intelligence.
  - Non-executive directors receive detailed reports about provision, which enable them to provide appropriate support and challenge to senior leaders and managers.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Apprentices feel safe both in training providers and in the workplace, and have a good understanding of health and safety. Apprentices know whom to contact in the case of a concern, and leaders and managers make sure that effective processes are in place to deal with any issues that might arise, and to help apprentices who need support.

- Managers carry out rigorous recruitment checks on new staff, keep accurate, up-to-date records and make sure that subcontractors have appropriate processes and procedures in place. Staff take part in regular safeguarding training and have recently completed online 'Prevent' training. They are now using their knowledge in reviews and online systems to promote effectively apprentices' understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- All 588 learners are apprentices, around three quarters following advanced level programmes. A very small number of apprentices follow higher-level programmes. The significant majority of apprentices, more than eight out of ten, are on engineering and manufacturing programmes. Around one in ten are following a waste management programme through a subcontractor. The remaining learners follow programmes in science, business and administration, leisure, travel and tourism, and warehousing.
- Training coordinators provide particularly good support for apprentices, enabling a high proportion to make good progress towards achieving their qualification and career goals. Training coordinators work very closely with employers to meet the individual requirements of apprentices, and agreeing, wherever possible, flexible adjustments to training and work activities, for example to fit in with shift patterns. The progress of a very few apprentices has been delayed recently through the absence of key provider and subcontractor staff.
- Assessment is good. The majority of training coordinators and apprentices use electronic portfolios well. Apprentices use them to engage in a good range of independent learning activities and assessment tasks, helping them to improve and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. The vast majority of current apprentices receive timely and constructive verbal and written feedback, which enables them to improve further their knowledge and understanding, and their workplace skills. Although most tutors and training coordinators routinely check apprentices' written assessments for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors, not all apprentices receive this important support.
- Training coordinators involve employers well in assessment. Employers have a clear understanding of the progress their apprentices are making. Through their routine work, apprentices gain experience on high-quality and challenging work activities. Good support from workplace supervisors enables apprentices to improve quickly their skills and confidence. For example, an advanced engineering apprentice in a manufacturing plant redesigned a production area and the workflow tasks of fellow workers to reduce waste and improve efficiency. However, not all employers are sufficiently aware of apprentices' off-the-job training plans to be able to consider and make best use of these when planning the sequencing of on-the-job training.
- TDR and subcontractor tutors, delivering training in engineering and science, plan activities that enable the vast majority of apprentices to apply mathematics skills well and, as a result, improve their skills. Tutors and training coordinators do not do enough to help apprentices in other subjects to improve their mathematics skills and in all subjects their English skills beyond the minimum requirements of the frameworks. Apprentices who have previously gained qualifications exempting them from having to achieve English and mathematics functional skills receive little support to improve their skills in these subjects further.
- The large majority of apprentices' reviews of progress occur frequently and are very good. Training coordinators coach apprentices particularly well. Reviews are highly structured and supportive, and focus well on apprentices' vocational skills, knowledge and wider work-related skills.
- Most training coordinators set clear and challenging short-term targets for apprentices during reviews. These provide good clarification about what they need to learn and produce to make the progress required against all parts of their apprenticeship frameworks. Targets set in a minority of reviews in science and waste management fail to clarify this well enough, providing apprentices with insufficient detail to support good progress. Adult apprentices in particular are often unclear about what they are expected to achieve against all aspects of their frameworks.
- Although often good, apprentices experience too much variability in the quality of the off-the-job training they receive in the training centres of TDR and subcontractors. Not all tutors plan training activities sufficiently well to meet the needs and abilities of all apprentices. Most-able apprentices in particular are often not challenged sufficiently.
- Training coordinators promote and develop apprentices' understanding and application of equality and diversity well in progress reviews. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe, and understand their rights and responsibilities to be protected from and to challenge discrimination and stereotyping.
- Through good links with a wide range of partners and often prestigious employers, tutors ensure that prospective apprentices receive good advice and guidance about apprenticeship programmes. Initial assessment, including a thorough review of the young people's interests, is used well to place apprentices

on suitable programmes and match them with suitable employers. Supportive employers often pay for higher-level additional qualifications. One large employer has, together with TDR, developed an innovative additional training programme to develop apprentices' thinking and problem-solving skills by solving some complex production issues. Apprentices who develop their thinking skills very well are selected to work as production and design engineers.

- Good links with subcontractors provide full-time learners in local further education colleges with good opportunities to progress to apprenticeships with TDR.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

- Current apprentices make very good progress in the development of their work-related skills. They develop confidence and demonstrate their learning in the workplace. For example, the employer of a business management apprentice has sufficient confidence in the skills that their apprentice has gained that they have tasked her with the implementation and roll-out of a new customer relations management and sales system across the company. As they gain more experience, apprentices take on more responsibility. They develop good teamwork skills and build good working relationships with colleagues.
- Current learners enjoy their apprenticeships, and are very motivated and committed to learning and progressing in their job roles and careers. Apprentices attend well, show high standards of behaviour at work and become highly valued employees. Apprentices receive high levels of support, care and attention from both their employers and TDR, which is highly valued.
- The majority of current apprentices are making at least the expected progress and many good progress in their qualifications. Apprentices produce a good standard of work, both in their job roles and in their electronic portfolios. They present their electronic portfolios well, and the majority of apprentices value this opportunity to reflect on knowledge and skills gained.
- Apprentices develop good skills matched well to their level and ability. The very large majority of training coordinators and employers work well together to plan apprentices' skill development and to identify any gaps so that they can arrange specific additional training if required. For example, one large national bakery company is upskilling maintenance engineers to be able to repair electrical and mechanical faults. Employers speak positively about how the skills and confidence of their apprentices have improved.
- Engineering and science apprentices apply mathematical techniques well in their learning: for example, engineering apprentices calculate loadings and shear force limits, and use these to specify safe design tolerances. For most apprentices, there is no clear plan to ensure that they develop the required English for progression into more demanding roles once they have achieved at Level 2.
- Apprentices feel very safe both in the training centres and at work, and develop a good understanding of safe working practices. TDR, subcontractors and employers have robust health and safety policies, carry out regular reviews of safety that involve employees and apprentices, and ensure that all apprentices wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required. Apprentices have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and harassment, and know what to do should they have any concerns.
- Training coordinators have recently started to develop apprentices' understanding of life in Britain and are developing their understanding of how cultural values and differences are being respected and considered in their workplaces. Training coordinators promote apprentices' general understanding of their rights and responsibilities effectively.
- Initial information, advice and guidance provided for prospective apprentices at the start of their programme are effective. However career guidance to plan the next steps of their programme is not consistently good across all subjects.

## **Outcomes for learners** are good

- The majority of current apprentices make at least the progress expected and many good, given their existing skills and qualifications. All learners gain relevant and valuable personal and social skills that help them to grow in confidence and deal effectively with their colleagues and the clients with whom they work.
- TDR's own data for 2014/15 indicate that the proportion of apprentices who now successfully achieve their apprenticeship within the planned time has risen significantly and is now high.
- At intermediate level both success rates and the time taken to achieve are very high, and at advanced level they are in line with that of similar providers. The large majority of apprentices are in engineering and the majority of their success rates are high.
- Apprentices develop good vocational skills and knowledge through very effective planning of on-the-job training and, as a result, they make good progress, become more able to evaluate their own performance accurately, and are aware of how they can improve the quality of their work and their working practices.

- Apprentices demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect their peers, customers, employers and training coordinators. They develop appropriate skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. In most cases, training coordinators provide good levels of support for apprentices who need to gain qualifications in English and mathematics up to Level 2. The development of apprentices' English skills to take on more demanding roles requires further development.
- All apprentices follow an individual training programme that meets their needs and aspirations and prepares them well for employment. Almost all apprentices gain permanent employment. A minority of apprentices progress on to higher levels of learning, such as a higher national certificate in engineering, and a few secure early promotion.
- Apprentices who lose their job are quickly re-employed and continue to make good progress on their programme because of successful interventions by TDR's staff. Few differences exist in the performance of different groups of apprentices.
- The success rates on science and leisure apprenticeships in recent years were too low and the time taken to complete was too long. However, this has improved for the most recent apprentices.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16–18, 19+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	1,054
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Ian Young
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.tdrtraining.co.uk">www.tdrtraining.co.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age</b>	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	39	192	310	200	1	3		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
<b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b>	None							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	Tyne Metropolitan College South Tyneside College Safety Advisory Consultants Sustain Agility							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Andrea Machell, Lead Inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Fraser	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barnett	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Grimmer	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Whitehead	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Clark	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.



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