

Inspection of TDR Training Limited

Inspection dates: 27 to 30 May 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

TDR Training Limited is a specialist provider of apprenticeships, mainly in engineering, science and manufacturing, in North Tyneside. At the time of the inspection, 381 were on apprenticeships from level 2 to level 4. Of these, 363 apprentices were on a range of engineering apprenticeships, including engineering design technician, machine technician, maintenance and operations engineering technician, engineering technician and engineering manufacturing technician. The remaining apprentices were on business administration apprenticeships to support the industry.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Staff successfully support apprentices to improve their skills, knowledge and confidence throughout their apprenticeship. They help apprentices to settle well at work and communicate effectively with colleagues. Apprentices are prepared effectively for their roles as engineers across a wide range of engineering disciplines, becoming valued team members in the workplace.

Staff set consistently high expectations for behaviour and are ambitious for apprentices to achieve their full potential. Apprentices understand what is expected of them, both at work and when undertaking off-the-job training. They demonstrate maturity and professional behaviours. They are focused and attentive in workshops and classrooms, and they work very well with fellow apprentices, training staff and work colleagues.

Apprentices have high attendance and are punctual. This is because leaders and managers have a strong focus on attendance, and staff carefully monitor this. Any issues with attendance or punctuality are reported to employers and followed up quickly.

Apprentices benefit from a safe environment both at work and when attending off-the-job training. Training officers monitor the welfare of apprentices when they visit them at work. Apprentices also benefit from well-being training, which includes sleep awareness training for those working shifts.

Most training officers carry out useful quarterly progress reviews to discuss apprentices' career aspirations in the companies where they work. The ambition of most apprentices is to stay and progress in their current companies and job roles. However, apprentices are not made sufficiently aware of the wide range of possible opportunities and pathways that are available to them in their future careers.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have developed a specialist engineering curriculum that is responsive to the needs of employers across the north east region to help alleviate a shortage of skilled technicians in the industry. Leaders are aware that the demand for skilled machinists in the region is high, with a variety of large and small companies providing precision components for industries such as oil and gas, automotive, and excavation plant sectors. Employers value the training that apprentices receive and support them well in their training. They recognise that this training helps to grow and develop their workforce.

Leaders engage exceptionally well with employers. Employers value the collaboration opportunities available to them, which enables them to align learning provided in the centre to activities in the workplace that develop their apprentices' skills and knowledge. Employers are invited to attend steering groups to evaluate the current curriculum delivery plan and give feedback on areas for improvement and

enrichment. As a result of this feedback, leaders have enhanced the resources that they use with apprentices and provided training beyond the apprentice standard to ensure that apprentices are fully prepared for the world of work and have current and relevant skills.

Leaders recruit training officers and tutors who have worked for many years in various specialisms in the engineering industry. Tutors use this vocational experience effectively, to inform their teaching and to provide apprentices with a realistic insight into the industries they are entering. Training officers use their contacts with employers to provide them with opportunities to keep abreast of evolving technologies and processes within the engineering industry.

Staff feel well supported by their managers and appreciate the positive culture in the organisation. Leaders and managers are mindful of maintaining a reasonable work-life balance for their staff.

Tutors use a range of effective teaching strategies to enable apprentices to understand key concepts. For example, they use effective questioning and recall and retrieval practices to enable apprentices to develop an equation to calculate a phase shift angle in maintenance and operations engineering technician. As a result, apprentices develop a thorough understanding of concepts and techniques that they can then apply effectively to their future studies and at work. Tutors ensure that apprentices remember and apply their learning fluently and consistently. Staff check the knowledge that apprentices have retained from earlier learning at the beginning of sessions. They then assess what further learning apprentices have gained and what they need to do next at the end of sessions. In workshop lessons, tutors monitor repeatedly the actions and time taken by apprentices when using machinery to ensure that they are competent. As a result, apprentices achieve well and develop the required skills and behaviours.

Training officers and tutors use a combination of knowledge-based questions and technical observations to assess apprentices' understanding and competency. They provide helpful feedback on apprentices' work to help them improve the standard of their work.

Apprentices produce practical work of a high standard. For example, machining technician apprentices produce a taper point spigot turned from aluminium. To achieve this outcome, apprentices apply knurling techniques to the right tolerances and exact measurements.

Leaders have not ensured that the small proportion of apprentices who need to pass their English and mathematics functional skills receive effective support and training. Too few pass their examination at the first attempt.

Leaders and managers use comprehensive quality assurance processes to improve their provision, including programmes provided by subcontractors. Leaders carry out effective observations of training and learning, request feedback from employers and apprentices to inform quality improvements and ensure staff are sufficiently trained

and supported. As a result, apprentices benefit from a very good standard of teaching and assessment.

Leaders have in place a board of governors, which includes senior leaders, who ensure that the business is financially successful and offer strong strategic guidance. However, the board does not provide effective challenge to leaders to assure themselves of the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide apprentices with unbiased careers information, advice and guidance to inform them of the wide range of careers available in the engineering sector.
- Take action to support apprentices who are working towards functional skills examinations to enable them to pass first time.
- Ensure governors provide sufficient challenge to leaders to ensure that the provision remains at a high standard.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54755
Address	Q1 Quorum Business Park Benton Lane Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 8EX
Contact number	0191 491 1505
Website	www.tdrtraining.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Li Xue
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Dates of previous inspection	4 to 5 March 2020
Main subcontractors	Hartlepool College of Further Education

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the learning and development manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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