

NLT Training Services Ltd

Reinspection report

Unique reference number: 53535

Name of lead inspector: Tim Hanson HMI

Last day of inspection: 17 June 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. NLT Training Services (NLT) is a registered charity providing a range of work-based learning programmes for adults and young people. Operating in Chesterfield and Scunthorpe, NLT employs 48 members of staff and currently has 367 learners. Contracting with the Skills Funding Agency and the Young Peoples Learning Agency, NLT provides apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). A Skills for Life programme provides foundation qualifications. The organisation also provides a young apprenticeships programme and commercial training which accounts for approximately 30% of overall business.

2. At the previous inspection in May 2010, NLT’s overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, leadership and management, outcomes for learners and business administration and law were judged to be inadequate. All other aspects of NLT’s provision were judged to be satisfactory. The monitoring visit in January 2011 judged that reasonable progress was being made in all identified areas for improvement. For the purpose of reinspection, all previously inadequate aspects were reinspected as was the inadequate subject area of business administration and law. The two previously satisfactory subject areas of engineering and manufacturing technologies and warehousing and distribution were sampled within leadership and management.

3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - Chesterfield College (engineering)
 - North Lindsey College (accountancy)
 - Rotherham College (engineering)
 - West Notts College (engineering)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	200 learners 201 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Area	Grade
Business administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

- Since the previous inspection NLT has considerably improved the effectiveness of its provision. The inadequate aspects and subject area reinspected are all now satisfactory or better. Senior managers have focused on improving learner achievement through a range of quality improvement measures and the creation of a culture of openness and inclusivity. NLT has maintained the strengths for the subject areas which were not graded during this reinspection and were identified by inspectors at the previous inspection as satisfactory. In addition, the provider has made appropriate progress in addressing relevant areas for improvement in these areas. Overall achievement rates are satisfactory. All subject areas now show improving trends and performance is in line with national averages or better. Learners are enjoying their learning experience and are progressing well in the workplace. Although many systems and processes are newly developed the impact of their introduction has contributed greatly to the enhanced achievement and experience of learners. Some systems are still under development and others are not yet fully embedded. Performance management of staff, although thorough, does not set targets to drive forward learner recruitment. Safeguarding arrangements have improved since the first inspection and are now good. Equality and diversity remain satisfactory with some improvements now in place.

Main findings

- Apprenticeship success rates have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are satisfactory overall. More learners are completing their programme within the planned time. This has improved significantly and is good for the current year. No significant achievement gaps exist between different groups of learners. Success rates for Train to Gain programmes have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Learners' work is of a good standard. Learners greatly improve their skills, knowledge and confidence during their programmes. Many learners have made significant progression in the workplace. Learners' progression from intermediate to higher-level qualifications is good.
- Teaching and training are well planned, motivating and engaging. Diverse activities enliven sessions and reinforce learning. Learners contribute well in sessions and show their commercial experience and knowledge. However tutors do not always provide sufficient opportunities for learners to make notes and record potential evidence for future assessments in some lessons. Some lesson plans are too generic.
- Assessment methods are diverse and maximise evidence gathering with good opportunities created to capture naturally occurring evidence. A well planned holistic approach is used in assessment and evidence gathering. However, a few learners are not always aware of the evidence required for planned observations.
- Reviews are robust and focus keenly on driving forward learner achievement. Learners and their employers are actively involved. Overall target setting is satisfactory. Short-term target setting between visits is effectively linked to guidance notes that map out what learners and employers need to do. However good practice in target setting is not always shared between centres.
- The provision is well planned to meet learner and employer needs. Further progression routes are signposted. Learners are well matched to programmes and are able to link their learning with work duties. Employers value the use learners make of their new skills and knowledge and encourage other employees to participate in training.
- Communication with employers is very good. Good links also exist with colleges providing specialist training and universities providing staff development. Recently NLT has been proactive in working with a national network of training providers to share good practice and offer mutual support.
- Good advice is offered on progression routes and effective signposting is in place. NLT staff are very supportive and easily contactable. Recent examples of help and support given include help with homelessness, bullying, family issues, finding new employment and redundancy.
- Senior managers provide satisfactory leadership. Since the previous inspection a culture of openness and inclusivity has emerged. Trustees have become more involved and have a greater understanding of the business. They are, however, limited in number and in their range of expertise. Management initiatives to improve recruitment of learners are not yet fully successful.

- Performance management of staff is effective with regular and robust monitoring of individuals. Managers recognise underperformance quickly, and agree actions with staff to help them improve. Targets to improve learners' achievement are a priority, however targets are not routinely set for staff who link with employers to encourage new recruits on to programmes. Initiatives to encourage under-represented groups on to programmes have not yet been fully implemented.
- Since the previous inspection, safeguarding arrangements have further improved and are now good. Learners feel safe, protected and have a good understanding of safeguarding. Three safeguarding officers regularly monitor and develop staff and learner awareness. Safeguarding issues are promptly dealt with and well recorded. Health and safety is a high priority.
- Quality improvement arrangements have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Quality assurance and improvement is now an over-arching priority for NLT and has had a substantial impact since the previous inspection. Some aspects of quality improvement are not yet fully embedded but are in place.
- Self-assessment is now well established and fully inclusive with appropriate involvement from staff. Since the previous inspection and monitoring visit the self-assessment report has improved considerably and is now a concise and cohesive document. Although generic in its approach, key subject area issues are specified.

What does NLT need to do to improve further?

- Improve lesson planning so that sessions better meet the criteria required by the qualification and ensure learners identify and record potential evidence.
- Continue to develop assessment planning for observations to maximise learners opportunities to demonstrate their competence in the workplace by improved communication between employer, learner and assessor prior to observation.
- Further improve training, assessment and target setting through the sharing of good practice across all centres.
- Introduce learner recruitment and commercial business growth targets for staff that link with employers. Use role models to promote programmes to under-represented groups.
- Increase the number of trustees in order to extend the areas of expertise on the trustee board.
- Further develop the quality improvement cycle and ensure monitoring and review takes place of all key aspects.
- Further develop the self-assessment report to expand into specific subject areas.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the helpful and flexible assessors who are easily understood
- training that fits in with work commitments
- being involved in the assessment process
- the very encouraging feedback from assessors
- putting theory into practice
- earning money while training
- the good support with learning
- the quality of the off-the-job training.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the staff cover while tutors are absent
- being able to complete the qualification more quickly.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good communication that exists with NLT staff
- the relevance of the training to the business
- the involvement with NLT that helps with internal training
- good consultation with company regarding learners' progress
- good reporting on individuals' performance.

What employers would like to see improved:

- how well NLT markets the range of provision on offer.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

5. NLT is now able to demonstrate some good and overall improving learner achievements since the previous inspection. Management are fully focused on driving forward learner achievement and channel staff resources to ensure achievement rates improve from those found at the previous inspection. Extensive improvements to resources and decisive actions following learner feedback have led to increased learner enjoyment of their learning experience. Senior managers have introduced and implemented highly effective quality improvement and assurance arrangements ensuring that staff are better able to monitor and drive achievement. Good internal verification also drives forward learner progress. However, some aspects of the quality assurance and improvement cycle are new and are not yet fully embedded. The focus on learner achievement has led to significant improvement in a short timescale. Inspectors judged that although other key aspects were satisfactory, owing to significant management initiatives still being in progress, NLT has a good capacity to improve.
6. Since the previous inspection, self-assessment processes are greatly improved, and the resulting quality improvement plan is monitored and reviewed regularly. The self-assessment report is a far more cohesive and concise document with reflective judgements, however currently only generic aspects are covered and not the subject areas in detail. Some grades proposed in the self-assessment are accurate and the areas for improvement identified are mainly in line with the reinspection findings.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

7. Apprenticeship success rates show an improving trend since the previous inspection and are satisfactory overall. The rate of learners completing their programme within the agreed timescales has improved significantly and is good for the current year. No significant differences in achievement exist between diverse groups of learners. However, the small number of advanced level apprentices aged 16 to 18 are not achieving at the same high rate as older learners. Success rates for Train to Gain programmes have improved significantly since the previous inspection. In-year success rates are around the national average with a satisfactory proportion of learners now completing within the planned timescale.
8. Learners' work is of a good standard. Portfolios are appropriately referenced and detailed. Learners demonstrate significant improvements in their skills, knowledge and confidence during their programmes. They develop a good range of employability skills that help them to advance through promotion or to gain greater responsibilities. Learners' progression from intermediate to higher-level qualifications is good.

9. Current learners are making good progress. They enjoy participating in their programme. Learners confirm that they feel safe and protected in their work environment and during off-the-job training sessions. They develop and follow very effective health and safety practices. Learners complete a comprehensive health and safety review at induction. Attendance is well monitored.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

10. Teaching and training are well planned to motivate and engage learners who enjoy learning and participate fully. A wide range of exercises and activities enliven sessions and reinforce learning. Tutors welcome learners' contributions that show their commercial experience and knowledge. Learners demonstrate deep respect for each other and participate well in group activities. Tutors make good use of question and answer sessions to check and reinforce learners' understanding. Staff develop and make good use of a wide range of resources that link theory to everyday work practice. Employers provide good accommodation for learning sessions. However in some lessons sufficient opportunities are not always given to learners to make notes and record potential evidence for future assessments. Many lesson plans are generic and do not focus closely enough on the criteria laid down for the specific qualification being followed.
11. A wide range of assessment methods maximises evidence gathering with good use of naturally occurring evidence. Since the previous inspection, assessments are well planned and cover a range of assessment criteria. However, in a minority of cases learners are not always fully aware of the evidence they need to produce during assessment observations.
12. Rigorous reviews focus very keenly on learner achievement and actively involve learners and their employers. Target setting overall is satisfactory. Short-term target setting between visits is linked effectively to guidance notes that map out what learners and employers need to do. However, the quality of target setting varies between centres.
13. Initial assessment and induction are effective and the provision is well planned to meet learner and employer needs. As identified at the previous inspection, NLT offers a good range of courses in business administration, customer service and accounting at intermediate and advanced levels. They have subsequently introduced functional skills for maths and English. Learners are well matched to programmes and are able to link their learning with their work duties. Employers value learners using their new skills and knowledge in their everyday work and have encouraged other employees to participate in training.
14. Very good use is made of partnerships to develop learning with a high level of employer involvement in reviews and training. As reported at the previous inspection, employers are involved actively in training programmes and are very well informed on learner progress. Communications between employers and NLT are very effective. Good links also exist with colleges to provide specialist training and with universities for staff development. Recently NLT have been

proactive in working with a national network of training providers to share good practice and offer mutual support.

15. Learners now receive good information and advice. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Sixty four percent of current apprentices were recruited and introduced to their employers by NLT. Staff offer good advice on progression routes and effective signposting is in place. Learners feel supported and staff are easy to contact. Recent examples of help and support given include help with homelessness, bullying, family issues, finding new employment and redundancy. Support is well recorded and proactive.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

16. Senior managers provide satisfactory leadership. Since the previous inspection a culture of openness and inclusivity has emerged with trustees becoming more involved and having a greater understanding of the business. Trustees now have a better awareness of the organisation and its different priorities but are limited in number and in their range of expertise. Strategies to maintain and improve learner recruitment and retention are a priority. However initiatives to enhance and improve learner recruitment and commercial business have not yet been successful. NLT continues to focus on improving the achievement of learners. Staff performance is managed effectively through annual appraisal and development planning with targets to improve learners' achievement a priority. However targets are not routinely set for staff who link with employers to encourage them to place new recruits on to programmes and encourage commercial business.
17. Since the previous inspection, safeguarding arrangements have improved and are now good. NLT provides a safe learning environment where learners feel secure and protected. Health and safety are highly prioritised with very effective promotion and monitoring of safe working practices. Three safeguarding officers ensure colleagues are well briefed and updated in safeguarding developments and hold regular awareness raising sessions. All staff have received training to an appropriate level and have a good understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. Learners' understanding of safeguarding is good and is well promoted by NLT at induction and throughout the programmes. Good examples of NLT's response to safeguarding matters show that issues are dealt with professionally and well recorded.
18. Equality and diversity are satisfactory as they were at the previous inspection. NLT continues carry out equality and diversity impact surveys and confirms that different groups achieve at least as well as other groups. Learners' knowledge of equality and diversity and active promotion at learner progress reviews has improved since the previous inspection. Actions to promote equality and diversity are appropriate. However, positive role models from current learner groups are not being used effectively to enhance recruitment initiatives. Proportions of learners from under-represented groups on non-traditional programmes are representative of national averages. Learners are respected

and show respect and are aware of anti-bullying and harassment policies and how to complain.

19. Since the previous inspection, NLT has made good progress to improve its collection and use of data. Senior staff now interrogate the management information system routinely to produce an appropriate range of reports for performance management purposes. NLT has effectively improved its monitoring of learners' progress and significantly reduced the number of learners who have passed their planned completion date. It is too early to make a judgement on initiatives that better link targets to the use of data for comparative purposes.
20. Quality improvement is now a priority for NLT. A range of new and improved quality assurance systems, introduced since the previous inspection, have been central to promoting a good pace of improvement. A detailed and effective quality assurance calendar now supports the quality system; staff are responsible for ensuring key activities take place in a systematic way and are electronically reminded when actions are due. However, some aspects of the quality improvement cycle are not yet fully embedded and review and monitoring mechanisms are at an early stage of development. Self-assessment has improved greatly since the previous inspection and is now thorough and inclusive. The quality improvement plan is a well presented and effectively used document. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and regular monitoring and updating takes place.
21. NLT provide satisfactory value for money. Learners are achieving well in most areas and upward trends are apparent across all programme areas. Strategies are in place to increase work opportunities for current learners and to encourage learner recruitment. These strategies have had mixed success to date.

Information about the reinspection

22. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's quality manager, as nominee, carried out the reinspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's reinspection monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
23. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
NLT Training Services Limited
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Leamer responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	367	367
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals? How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	3	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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