

IPS International Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52533

Name of lead inspector: David Martin HMI

Last day of inspection: 14 October 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. IPS International Limited (IPS) has its head office and main training facilities in Rochester, with a smaller training centre, housing care provision, in Dover. It is a privately owned commercial training provider. IPS has a contract with the Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeships and Workplace Learning, formerly Train to Gain. The main subject areas are engineering and manufacturing, including motor vehicle engineering, health and social care, including childcare, and business services, including management. All trainees are employed by client companies of IPS, located largely in Kent and Medway. Currently, there are 527 apprentices and 309 Workplace Learning learners. This government-funded provision accounts for around 60% of the work of IPS, with commercial contracts contributing to the balance. IPS has a Young Apprenticeship programme for learners aged 14 to 16, which was not inspected. The vision of IPS has been developed as, 'an independent organisation to deliver training giving high quality and value for money'.

2. Kent and Medway, whilst often perceived as part of the affluent south east of England, have areas which are among the most deprived in the country. In August 2011, the unemployment rate for Medway was 4.1%, just above the national rate, whilst in Kent it was 3.1%, but with significantly higher rates in some boroughs of up to 5.5%. Kent has an overall minority ethnic population of around 8% and Medway 9%.

3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - Concept Training (fenestration installation and performing manufacturing operations)
 - The Fenestration College (fenestration installation and curtain wall installation)
 - Milestones Training (childcare)
 - Soloman Limited, the Society of London Manufacturers (business improvement techniques and customer service)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Workplace Learning Apprenticeships	343 learners 324 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Health and social care, including childcare	2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies, including motor vehicle engineering	2
Business	3

Overall effectiveness

- IPS is a good provider, with good leadership and management and good capacity to sustain, and make, further improvements. It has made significant progress since the previous inspection. Learners, and improving their success and opportunities, are central to its work. IPS encourages learners to express their views, which are listened to and acted upon. Quality improvement arrangements are sufficiently effective to have brought about substantial improvement, but weaknesses in self-assessment and the self-assessment report reduce the extent of their impact.
- Learners achieve good outcomes and enjoy their learning. Their overall success, taking into account pass rates and how many complete their courses, is good, although it is no better than satisfactory in business. Learners' overall success within agreed course lengths is not as good, but has significantly improved in the last two years, to around national averages. Learners' skills and standards of work are good. Learners often make good or better progress on their courses. They feel safe and the arrangements for their safeguarding are good.

6. Teaching, training and assessment are good, both at IPS and with employers. Experienced and well-qualified trainers and assessors deliver carefully planned training and support. Interactive technologies, especially to help learning, are often well used in engineering, but little used in other subjects. IPS meets the training needs of learners and employers well, and good partnerships support the development of IPS' work. The care, guidance and support of learners are good, although targets for learners' improvement are insufficiently specific. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Main findings

- Learners' attainment of their qualifications is good. Overall success rates for apprentices have improved significantly since the previous inspection, increasing year on year to 84% currently. High overall success rates for Workplace Learning have been maintained.
- Many more learners complete their programmes within agreed timescales than at the previous inspection, both for apprentices and for Workplace Learning. The 2010/11 in-year success rate for apprentices is just above the national average and for Workplace Learning it is around national averages.
- Learners develop good vocational and workplace skills and gain significant confidence in their ability to carry out their work. Employers are positive about their abilities and value their skills. Learners enjoy their studies and make good progress.
- Teaching, training and learning are good. They are well planned, with an emphasis on very effective one-to-one and small group work, using a good variety of approaches. Other than in engineering, interactive technologies are not often used by teachers and learners. Industry standard workshops support engineering learners. IPS's observations of training insufficiently identify actions for trainers to improve.
- Assessment is fair and accurate. IPS uses a wide range of approaches, flexibly timed. Reviews of learners' progress are thorough, but action planning, other than in engineering, fails to use suitably developmental targets in other subjects. Initial assessment is thorough, including checks on learners' literacy and numeracy skills, but does not clearly assess or identify other specific learning difficulties.
- IPS meets the needs and interest of learners and employers well. Courses provide them with a good choice of relevant options and allow appropriately for progression. IPS uses its good knowledge of employers' needs to tailor courses to suit them.
- Partnerships are highly effective. In addition to its close partnerships with employers, IPS works proactively to develop and maintain good working relationships with a wide variety of local area employers, schools, further education colleges, public agencies and other training organisations. It has good strategic-level involvement in the local area training network.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive support appropriate to their individual needs, although IPS does not have a structured

approach to supporting learners with some additional learning needs, such as dyslexia. Trainers provide extra tutorial and support sessions to help learners complete their programmes.

- The leadership and management of IPS are good. Effective communication, including appropriate use of targets, ensures that staff are clear about responsibilities and are actively encouraged to help improve the provision. Consistently applied open management and good staff development help staff to feel valued, although aspects of the generally helpful annual personal development review are not fully effective.
- The safeguarding of learners is particularly strong. Alongside rigorous attention to health and safety, extensive and consistently well-applied procedures help protect or support learners. Staff training is good. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of safeguarding. IPS properly carries out a range of routine actions that help with the safeguarding of learners, such as checks of staff or risk assessment.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is satisfactory. Learners and staff treat each other with respect. IPS applies appropriate policies and procedures soundly. Good training allows learners to succeed in generally equal terms. However, improvements in learners' broader understanding of equality and diversity are insufficiently achieved in training and reviews.
- Established quality improvement activities ensure that most aspects of IPS' work are reviewed and improved, to the benefit of learners. Extensive quality assurance procedures help this, but plans to maintain their currency in the longer term are unclear. IPS uses accurate data well in improvement planning. The self-assessment process is not fully effective in providing a clear direction for improvements supported fully by evidence.

What does IPS need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of learners completing their courses on time, by ensuring that their targets for improvement make clear the additional learning necessary in order to make progress.
- Help trainers to better understand what they need to do to improve teaching and learning, by ensuring that observations of training use agreed IPS judgement criteria and that observation records clearly indicate how well teaching promotes and supports learning.
- Further revise the approach to self-assessment reporting, to increase its contribution to quality improvement. Improve the analysis of evidence, with clear identification of likely causes for weaknesses and appropriately detailed and timely action plans.
- Improve learners' understanding of equality and diversity by helping trainers and assessors to develop this aspect in their reviews and in training sessions with learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the very supportive and helpful trainers
- the way in which their courses help them at work
- the safe environment in which they work
- the one-to-one coaching
- well-organised assessment
- the good working atmosphere.

What learners would like to see improved:

- for business courses: the speed with which key skills development is arranged following diagnostic assessment.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the way in which learners and employers are always at the heart of IPS' work
- the good support received by their trainees
- the high standards IPS demands of trainees and the good development of trainees' skills
- the expert way in which IPS meets their needs
- the good communications they have with IPS.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the information provided to them about the initial stages of trainees' courses.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. IPS has a good track record of improvement since the previous inspection, driven by clear direction from the company's directors. Nearly all inspection grades have improved. Overall, outcomes for learners have consistently improved to a good level. Improved management structures ensure that more staff have a clear interest in, and responsibility for, maintaining and improving the quality of the provision. Extensively revised quality assurance systems are now generally well applied. Routine quality improvement work ensures regular enhancements to most aspects of provision, but weaknesses in annual self-assessment, particularly in the report, reduce its effectiveness. The system for observing and improving teaching and learning is applied with insufficient rigour.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Learners' attainment of their qualifications is good. Overall success rates for apprentices have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Framework success rates have increased year on year, to just over 80% overall in 2009/10. This trend of improvement continues in 2010/11, with the in-year rate at 84%, well above the national average for 2009/10 of 74%. High success rates are evident at both intermediate and advanced levels, but performance on business courses is poorer than in engineering and in health and social care.
9. IPS has maintained high overall success rates for Workplace Learning, albeit with a significant fall in performance in 2008/09, but recovering in 2009/10 to 87%. The in-year success rate, at the time of the inspection, was just over 89%, some three percentage points above the most recent national average.
10. Many more learners complete their programmes within agreed timescales than at the previous inspection, both for apprentices and for Workplace Learning. On this measure, success rates have improved significantly and at the time of the inspection were just above national averages.
11. IPS uses data appropriately to analyse the performance of learners from different gender, ethnic and other groups. There are no significant variations in their performance.
12. Learners make good progress in improving their economic and social well-being. They are often well motivated and enjoy their studies. Learners develop good vocational and workplace skills in all subject areas and gain significant confidence in their ability to carry out their work. For example, for advanced level engineers, a personal development programme enhances their social and employment skills and they often make good progress to higher education. Employers are positive about learners' abilities and value their skills. Learners' attendance is good.

13. Learners feel safe, both with IPS and in their workplaces. Themes of health and well-being are part of learners' induction and are reinforced at reviews.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

14. Teaching and learning are good. They are well planned and learners are fully involved through the good variety of training methods used. Learners benefit from instruction and tuition in small groups, or on a one-to-one basis, with highly experienced and knowledgeable trainers.
15. Teaching resources are good overall and particularly good in engineering, with industry standard workshops. Interactive technologies are not yet fully available across IPS. In engineering, their availability and use are good. Assessors make good use of laptop computers and interactive whiteboards, and computer-driven presentations are commonly used in theory-based teaching. There are fewer opportunities for care learners to use technology resources and trainers rely too heavily on paper-based materials.
16. IPS makes insufficient use of its teaching observation scheme to help trainers improve their teaching. Whilst observations of training take place regularly, formal procedures and grading criteria are not rigorously followed. Records of observation findings do not adequately reflect the grades awarded and focus too little on the learning that takes place.
17. The initial assessment of learners' needs is thorough and includes checks on literacy and numeracy skills, learning styles and specific additional support needs. IPS provides a good range of support for literacy, numeracy and key skills. However, it makes insufficient use of assessment information to help plan learning or to make appropriate adjustments to training.
18. Assessment practice is good, fair and accurate. Assessors are highly flexible in arrangements to assess learners' performance. They are mindful of learners' work patterns and arrange visits to fit with shift work patterns very well. Reviews of learners' progress are suitably frequent and routinely involve employers. However, action planning and targets are not always sufficiently specific to inform learners what they need to do to progress or improve.
19. IPS meets the needs and interest of learners and employers well. The range of courses and levels provides good choices for learners and employers. Courses are relevant to the main employment sectors in the area, and allow for progression. IPS understands learners' and employers' needs well and tailors qualifications to suit them. Communications are good between assessors, employers and learners. Employers are highly satisfied with their employees' development and the quality of service from IPS. They comment positively about the impact of the training on employees, citing examples of improved working practices, communication skills and confidence.
20. Partnership working is good. In addition to employers, IPS works highly effectively to develop and maintain good relationships with a wide variety of

organisations, including schools. It is closely involved in local, community-based and national initiatives, with good success. Strategic-level involvement with the local area training network yields many benefits, including a peer review and development group. Recent work with a young offenders institution provides good opportunities for learners in custody to develop vocational skills to prepare them for future employment or further learning.

21. IPS supports learners well to help them achieve their learning goals. Staff show particular commitment to helping learners achieve, including extra tutorial and support sessions. Learners value the flexibility and hard work of their trainers. They speak highly of responsive, helpful one-to-one tutorials. Where needed, learners with additional support needs have access to appropriate resources. IPS does not have a structured approach to providing specialist additional support in areas outside the expertise of its own staff, as with dyslexia, for example.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

22. IPS' directors are very effective both in long-term planning to improve the company's performance and in responding to short-term challenges and changes. A revised management structure, as of 2010, has improved routine working and given more staff the incentive and opportunity to maintain and improve standards. Communications are good. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and, partly through the good use of business and personal targets, understand their part in improving IPS and outcomes for learners.
23. Staff feel valued and take good advantage of the many opportunities for personal and professional development. An annual performance development review helps with communication, target setting and the planning of professional development, but is inconsistently applied and does not effectively review performance against targets.
24. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are now particularly good, having been considerably improved over the past three years. IPS applies comprehensive policies and procedures consistently. Management meetings review their effectiveness and safeguarding is covered satisfactorily in routine action planning. Health and safety are promoted rigorously. Staff training in safeguarding is extensive, and staff have a generally good understanding of their responsibilities. Safeguarding is promoted well to learners at induction. Subsequent reviews offer learners the chance to discuss their circumstances but do not reinforce understanding. Safeguarding concerns are dealt with appropriately. IPS deals well with such things as checks on staff, risk assessment, acceptable use of the internet and contact points for young learners.
25. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. IPS has generally appropriate policies and procedures. Staff training and understanding are good. IPS takes a particularly active approach to such things as equality impact assessments and producing equality improvement action plans. Good analysis

of the performance of different groups of learners leads to improvement planning, although some targets are too vague. Learners have a reasonable reminder of equality and diversity in their induction, but refreshing of their knowledge in reviews and some training is insufficient.

26. Continuous review of IPS' work leads to improvement in most important aspects of provision. The good analysis of performance by managers and staff is supported by good use of appropriate data and, in most instances, is accompanied by the application of a comprehensive range of quality assurance procedures. Quality assurance was extensively revised by a quality improvement manager in 2010. That post no longer exists. Arrangements to maintain the system are working currently, but lack a long-term structured approach. Reviews of subcontractors are particularly rigorous when contracts are awarded, with satisfactory routine monitoring thereafter.
27. Two aspects of quality improvement are weaker. The system for observing and improving teaching and learning is not rigorously applied. The annual self-assessment process, although it includes good use of data and involves staff well, leads to a generally descriptive report with lack of detailed analysis of evidence and a quality improvement plan produced too late, with targets lacking clarity.
28. The views of users are used well to guide development at IPS. The opinions of learners are now gathered effectively through a wide range of activities and lead to demonstrable improvements. IPS liaises well with employers at an individual level through appropriate networks and by gathering views through survey.
29. IPS achieves good value for money. It maintains a good balance between reducing costs and maintaining the quality of provision and improving outcomes. The company takes a positive approach to sustainability. Government-funded learners benefit from resources supplied for IPS' commercial training.

Subject areas

Health and social care, including childcare

Grade 2

Context

30. IPS has 265 learners, made up of 183 apprentices on health and social care and childcare programmes and 82 learners on Workplace Learning courses, at intermediate and advanced levels, all working in the care sector. All learners are employed. Twelve per cent are male.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates are high in Workplace Learning and for apprenticeships overall, with a trend of rapid improvement, and are currently 93% and 88% respectively. In 2009/10, completion within agreed timescales was also high for Workplace Learning and for advanced apprentices, but was only 50% for intermediate apprentices. In the current year, to date, this has improved to 87%.
- Learners enjoy their learning and find it challenging. They are motivated to succeed and are enthusiastic about their training. They progress, and develop their professional skills, well. Employers feel confident in offering promotion, such as becoming an on-call domiciliary supervisor and a mentor to new staff. Learners receive good pastoral advice about the next steps in their professional training and career.
- Learners feel safe and respected and they adopt safe work practices. They are very aware of their rights and responsibilities at work and extend this effectively to the support of those in their care. Learners have confidence in their assessors to whom they would go if a problem concerning safeguarding arose.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Learners attend well-planned group or individual training sessions and complete tasks between training sessions. In the best examples of good practice, trainers help learners to make important holistic links between units of their programme, enabling them to use new learning in practical ways at work.
- A wide range of well-chosen assessment methods is used to address qualification requirements and individual learners' needs. Assessment planning is detailed and learners understand what is required of them. Learners receive affirming feedback following assessed activities, with clear guidance for improvement.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are insufficient. Interactive technologies to help promote learning are not readily available, limiting opportunities for learners' independent study. The majority of the resources provided by trainers are paper based and not freely accessible to learners. Voice recorders are used effectively in assessment to greatly support learners' understanding and self-reflection.

- Trainers work very hard and successfully to support their learners, but support needs for literacy and specific learning difficulties are not systematically addressed in teaching and learning. The outcomes of learners' initial assessments are not used well to record and plan their additional learning support needs.
- The tracking of learners' progress is satisfactory. Progress is reviewed with learners after each training session and recorded in individual learning plans. Following assessment at work, feedback to learners is digitally recorded, but not added to these plans, for ready reference. Targets for learners' improvement and next steps are too often task related, rather than focusing on key areas for improvement.
- IPS meets the needs and interests of its users effectively. Assessors go to great lengths to find unit options that best fit the job roles and interests of learners. Commonly, assessments will be arranged to fit in with working patterns, including night shifts, to capture particular evidence for assessment.
- Partnerships with employers are good. IPS is very responsive to the needs of employers and their subcontractors. IPS responds well to requests from employers to focus on particular aspects of training that they believe would benefit their trainees and their organisation.
- IPS promotes equality and diversity satisfactorily. Learners are routinely asked about equality and diversity in their reviews, but the substance of discussions is too limited. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity in relation to their own rights. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of learners are good.
- Leadership and management are good, with good management of learning. IPS makes good use of the helpful and clear feedback from internal verifiers on the quality of provision. Success rates have improved substantially since the previous inspection. However, the self-assessment report is incomplete. The action plan does not specifically mention teaching and learning in addressing identified areas for improvement.

What does IPS need to do to improve further?

- Increase the use of technologies in training, to improve learning, by assisting learners to be more independent and take ownership of their studies.
- Enhance learners' understanding of what the learners need to do to improve their work and progress, by ensuring that target setting for improvement distinguishes immediate tasks and wider targets for improvement.
- Improve support for learners, by systematically recording and using the outcomes of initial assessments to plan teaching and learning more effectively.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Context

31. Some 91 intermediate apprentices and 47 advanced apprentices are on a range of programmes, including mechanical engineering, motor vehicle engineering, electrical, maintenance, instrumentation and production. There are 137 learners on Workplace Learning programmes, at intermediate and advanced levels, with 109 and 28 learners respectively. Overall, 91% of learners are male and fewer than 8% are from minority ethnic groups. IPS delivers its own technical certificates.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall apprenticeship framework success rates are high and above national averages. While the completion rate within agreed timescales is very high for advanced apprentices, too few intermediate apprentices complete on time. Success rates for Workplace Training are high at advanced level and around the national average for intermediate learners. Too many intermediate learners fail to complete within agreed timescales.
- Learners develop a high standard of industrial skills in their vocational training. Teachers and assessors have first-hand industry knowledge and use good industry standard resources. Health and safety are embedded well in all engineering activities, from initial health and safety briefings to best industry practice procedures for processes, tools and equipment. Learners feel safe in the workshops and in the workplace.
- Learners' progression is good. Learners are encouraged to progress to higher levels of study beyond their apprenticeships. Currently, 22 are studying for higher national awards and nine for foundation degrees. Most learners pursue extra qualifications, including electrical testing, 17th edition regulation training and abrasive wheel training. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good, monitored carefully and reported to employers promptly.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Training with IPS is to high standards, developing a broad range of engineering skills quickly. Theory lessons are coordinated effectively to support practical activities. Learners progress quickly, demonstrating early on that they can carry out realistic tasks independently. Trainers make insufficient use of initial assessment outcomes to plan teaching for learners with identified learning needs.
- Assessment and verification are timely, accurate and fair. Portfolios are well organised and presented. Most present a good and clear record, utilising a wide range of evidence for assessment. Reviews are frequent and comprehensive, with clear targets set for learners' progress. Recently-developed interactive learning technologies are used effectively on BTEC programmes to manage all aspects of learning and assessment.
- The range of provision is good and is developed to meet the needs of learners and employers, ensuring that learners acquire the skills and knowledge relevant

to their workplace. Employers are well informed about programmes and are fully involved in assisting their learners to make good progress. They meet with their learners on a frequent basis.

- Support for learners is good. Much support is informal, with staff readily available to help with academic and personal matters. Pastoral support is covered well in reviews. Initial advice and guidance are thorough, providing learners with a comprehensive range of information about their programmes. Induction is thorough. The strong emphasis on health and safety prepares learners well for their practical work.
- Leadership and management are good. Communications are good. Trainers feel well informed and involved and have confidence in the management of IPS. Resources are well managed and appropriate to provide the current programmes. Productive meetings include a strong focus on quality and improvements. Annual appraisals incorporate business objectives and set staff targets, with appropriate associated staff development.
- Safeguarding is good. Training is delivered at induction, with learners and staff fully aware of the requirements for safeguarding. Learners are issued with a card containing useful contacts. Equality and diversity, while covered during induction, are promoted insufficiently during workplace reviews.
- Learners are able to voice their views well, for example through forums and course representatives, which has led to improvements being made. Learners feel that their views are heard and that IPS responds positively to requests. Employer feedback from a questionnaire survey showed high levels of employers' satisfaction with IPS.
- The self-assessment report is written clearly, with trainers involved at all stages. It is broadly accurate in its judgements, but does not fully evaluate all key aspects. For example, teaching and learning are not covered. The quality improvement plan is insufficiently detailed to help foster improvement.

What does IPS need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the outcomes of learners' initial assessments are provided to trainers at an early stage and used to provide effective learning support to help learners achieve their qualification within agreed timescales.
- Provide sufficient opportunities at learners' review visits to help develop and reinforce their understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity.
- Foster quality improvement by ensuring that the self-assessment report critically evaluates all aspects of quality and performance and that the quality improvement plan has detailed and specific actions for improvement.

Business

Grade 3

Context

32. Currently, 192 learners are on apprenticeship programmes, with 161 working at intermediate level and 31 at advanced level. Courses are offered in administration, management and customer service. A further 22 learners are completing Workplace Learning courses in administration and customer service. Two thirds of learners are female and a small number of learners are of minority ethnic heritage.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory overall, having recently improved from low levels to 78%. The success rate for those completing within agreed timescales has also improved, but remains below the national average, at 55%. The overall success rate for Workplace Learning is high, at 93%, but that for completion within agreed timescales is around the national average.
- Learners make good progress. Their work is of a high standard. They make significant improvements in their confidence, communication skills and overall efficiency in their business-related job roles while studying. Employers value these benefits to their organisations. In some cases, learners take on additional responsibilities at work and progress to higher level qualifications.
- Learners feel safe in their working environment. They observe safe working practices and in some cases have responsibility for aspects of health and safety in the workplace, such as fire marshalling duties and undertaking risk assessment. At review meetings, assessors check frequently that no health and safety issues have arisen.
- Training and coaching are good, fully meeting the needs of learners. IPS uses well a good range of teaching and learning methods and resources, adapted to the needs of the business and the learners. They include training through workplace assessments, one-to-one training and group workshops at IPS premises.
- Assessment practices are good. Assessors flexibly match their work to that of individual businesses, for example through assessment during learners' particular shift patterns. Some target setting for improvement, following reviews, is weak and focuses on tasks rather than on the learning that needs to occur. Assessors and employers highlight where further assessment opportunities are required to complete a unit.
- IPS has good partnerships with employers. Employers are very satisfied with the quality of service they receive from IPS. In many cases, IPS is the preferred training provider for employers.
- Support for learners is good. Assessors work well to ensure that the range of optional units closely matches learners' workplace opportunities. They refer

learners to colleagues where they are unable to support them in specific areas. Support for learners on key skills courses is not always sufficiently timely to enable them to progress quickly enough.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers now set clear and challenging targets to raise expectations and promote ambition within their team. These are focused on improving completions within agreed timescales and the training team is aware of the targets and the actions required. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact.
- Safeguarding of learners is satisfactory. Learners develop a satisfactory awareness of safeguarding issues, what safeguarding is and what they should do if they encounter a safeguarding issue in the workplace.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners are made aware of the strands of equality and diversity and what they might mean for them in their workplaces. However, insufficient attention is paid to regular reinforcement and the review of learners' understanding of equality and diversity themes beyond that required by their course content.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory, with a considerable amount of self-assessment taking place in course team meetings, leading to actions for improvement. However, the self-assessment report does not use all available sources of evidence to help make judgements, and actions for improvement arising are insufficiently specific to bring about change.

What does IPS need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of learners' completions within agreed timescales by changing the focus of target setting for improvement to one which identifies learning still to take place.
- Improve the timeliness of support for learners following key skills courses to enable them to progress at a faster rate.
- Ensure the full integration of themes of equality and diversity into the curriculum through the frequent and thorough review of learners' understanding.
- Improve the value of the self-assessment report to quality improvement by drawing on all forms of evidence to make secure judgements and agree sound action plans for improvement.

Information about the inspection

33. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's managing director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
34. 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)
IPS International Limited
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner 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	0	0
Full-time learners	836	836
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
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?	2	
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>	3	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	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	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2	
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?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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