

Wincanton Group Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58588

Name of lead inspector: Charles Clark HMI

Last day of inspection: 23 September 2011

Type of provider: Employer

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Information about the provider

1. Wincanton Group Limited (Wincanton) is one of the largest British logistics and supply chain solution companies. It operates from over 400 locations throughout Europe and has approximately 30,000 employees. Its head office base is in Chippenham, Wiltshire, and the main office for training operates from Doncaster. Wincanton provides Train to Gain programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) in warehousing and transportation. This was the first time Wincanton had been inspected.
2. The programmes are managed by a training manager with two other managers, one for warehousing and one for transportation. There are 45 driver trainers with 102 driving assessors and there are 77 warehousing trainers. About 12% of the provision is funded by Wincanton, the rest is government funded through the SFA. The company's training is integrated into the vocational qualification and assessment is provided by Steve Walker Associates as a subcontractor.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 20010/11
Employer provision: Train to Gain	1,189 learners

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 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject areas	Grade
Transportation	2
Warehousing	2

Overall effectiveness

- Outcomes for learners are good. Nearly all learners complete their qualifications and the number who complete within the allotted time is higher than the national average. Learners' acquisition of skills and knowledge is good and with the qualification learners enhance their prospects for promotion. Learners feel safe and have a good understanding of safe working practices. Training, learning and assessment are good. Learners value the quality of the training and can request additional training to meet their needs.
- The provision meets the learner and employer needs well. Learner development needs are thoroughly assessed and training is delivered flexibly to suit both individuals and work priorities. Individual personal support is good, although there is insufficient systematic identification of additional learning needs. Literacy and numeracy are identified through self-declaration and there is little support to meet these needs.
- Operational managers manage the provision well with good results. There is insufficient development of the management structure to provide adequate cover or to enable effective quality-assurance procedures. However, this has very little impact on the learners' experience nor on their outcomes.

Main findings

- Success rates for those learners who achieve within the allotted time are above the national average. Overall success rates are outstanding. These success rates have been maintained over the last three years. Learners make very rapid progress to complete their programmes.
- Learners significantly increase their potential for employment and progression through achieving a recognised qualification. Wincanton uses this to good effect to tender for new contracts. Learners improve their work skills, gain confidence, and gain an increased understanding of their profession. Learners value the high quality of the training.
- Learners have a good understanding of health and safety which is promoted well throughout the company by means of training and visual displays. Managers undertake regular analysis of health and safety and the number of accidents is being reduced.
- Appropriate training is provided to all employees and is well planned and professionally delivered. Wincanton delivers regular refresher training as well as additional training to meet changes in job role and legislative requirements.
- Assessment is thorough and efficient. Assessors are very experienced and collect a wide range of evidence within an electronic portfolio. However, warehousing learners are not sufficiently involved in the referencing and recording of assessment decisions.
- The provision meets the needs of learners and the company very well. The in-house training is carefully cross referenced to the vocational qualification which enables rapid completion. Managers and learners value the accredited qualification which is delivered flexibly to meet personal and work commitments.
- Support for learners with additional needs is not sufficiently effective. Wincanton does not assess additional learning needs formally but relies upon self-declaration. Learners are referred to appropriate resources for assistance, but Wincanton does not monitor whether these resources are used.
- Partnership working is satisfactory overall. The relationship with the awarding body to design an efficient assessment programme has been effective. Wincanton works well with the trade union in warehousing to promote learning opportunities. It has productive links with the subcontractor to support existing learners and develop new programmes.
- A very strong commitment to training and continuing professional development is linked to a clear identification of business needs. Training programmes are well designed with clear links between in-house training vocational programmes. Managers set a clear expectation that all employees will participate, resulting in a high uptake.
- Managers have a strong focus to maintain, high standards. High success rates have also been maintained. Good forward planning ensures that all legislative changes are met.

- Driver trainers manage the local programmes well ensuring good recruitment and timely completion. However, there has been insufficient development of key management roles to provide adequate staff cover and overall management support.
- Quality improvement procedures are ineffective. The quality improvement plan is not used sufficiently well and still contains unresolved issues from two years ago. Resources are insufficient to enable key quality-assurance procedures, such as observations of teaching and learning, to take place.

What does Wincanton Group Limited need to do to improve further?

- Allow learners to be more involved in the planning and recording of assessment activity and have better access to records of their achievement.
- Implement formal assessment of additional learning needs and identify appropriate support systems to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills.
- Review the management structure to ensure that key roles are in place with sufficient resources to implement quality improvement procedures and provide adequate cover for staff absence.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the quality of the company training
- the knowledgeable and professional assessors
- gaining a recognised qualification
- improved understanding of the job
- even better awareness of health and safety
- the flexibility of assessment to meet work patterns
- gaining a qualification within work
- time in work to complete the qualification.

What learners would like to see improved:

- retaining a portfolio to show competences achieved
- opportunities for additional learning and accreditation.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

6. Wincanton has not been previously inspected, but over the last three years has maintained high success rates and introduced an additional subject area effectively. The overall success rates are very high and the number of learners who complete within the allotted timescale is above the national average. Performance trends of different groups are monitored and there are no significant differences.
7. Managers use data well to monitor the day-to-day provision and learner performance. Quality checks are completed, but these are insufficient to provide adequate quality assurance of all the sites. Managers make good use of surveys and feedback to make improvements locally, but there is insufficient collation of this information centrally. The self-assessment process is not inclusive and few staff have knowingly contributed. The self-assessment report is well written, judgemental and largely accurate. The quality improvement plan is not used sufficiently and contains unresolved issues from previous years.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Successful completions within expected timescales are above the national average. Overall success rates are outstanding with the vast majority of learners achieving their qualification. These high rates have been maintained over the last three years. Current in-year data show that these rates continue to be maintained at this level. The success rates and performance of different groups of learners are similar.
9. Learners acquire good work and personal skills. Transportation learners gain a better understanding of dealing with difficult driving conditions and have increased confidence in driving in hazardous situations. Warehousing learners also gain in confidence in their job roles.
10. Wincanton places great emphasis on health and safety in the workplace. Very high standards are set and there is a strong culture of safe working practices both on the road and in the warehouse. The number of accidents has reduced consistently over the last three years.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

11. Training is well planned and professionally delivered. Learners receive regular refresher training which is carefully monitored to ensure that all learners are up to date. Additional training is available so that warehousing learners can meet changes in their job role. Assessment is good in warehousing and assessors use a wide variety of techniques with detailed observations. However, learners have insufficient involvement in the recording of assessment. Assessment in

transportation is satisfactory, with a wide range of evidence collected, but learners have no access to their electronic portfolios of evidence.

12. In-house training has been carefully matched to the qualification so that learners can achieve the qualification very quickly. Recruitment to the qualification is effective in engaging the maximum number of learners, with very few choosing to opt out. The delivery of the programmes is flexible to meet learners' needs and shift patterns. The programmes equip learners with skills and confidence to gain promotion within the company and additional professional credibility in a competitive market.
13. Wincanton has effective links with the subcontractor to assess and verify the provision, to support existing learners and to develop the provision. Wincanton has worked well with the awarding body to integrate the in-house training into the qualification and with the trade union in warehousing to promote educational opportunities for employees.
14. Wincanton provides good personal support for individual learners. Initial assessment relies upon self-declaration to identify additional learning needs and these are referred to outside agencies. Wincanton does not monitor the uptake of these services. A new learning resource is now available to enhance access to literacy, numeracy, language and information and communication technology (ICT) support and Wincanton is working well to develop this support.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

15. Wincanton has a very clear commitment to the promotion of training and staff development. Managers analyse the business needs well. They map the in-house training against the vocational training and produce well-designed programmes. These meet the business needs and enable learners to achieve very rapidly. Managers expect all employees to participate in the programmes unless they specifically do not wish to do so, and uptake on to programmes is very high.
16. Managers promote very high standards for professional qualifications and ensure that high success rates are maintained. They plan the programmes carefully to ensure that they develop to meet current and future changes in legislation. Trainers work well with assessors to guarantee that all professional needs are met. A well-planned strategy is in place to check that all professional qualifications are current.
17. Operational management is good. Driver trainers manage the local programmes well and set very high standards. They make effective use of learner feedback locally, but this is not collated or used well centrally. Wincanton coordinates driver training and performance well.
18. Wincanton promotes health and safety very effectively and there has been a significant improvement of drivers' safety records, with fewer accidents. The company has effective policies for safeguarding learners and has a good

awareness of safeguarding issues. Learners have sufficient awareness of issues relating to bullying, harassment and safeguarding.

19. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Wincanton uses funding effectively to enable all employees to participate in training. Performance rates are compared between groups with no significant differences between them. Driver trainers and assessors have provided some good support for learners through the use of interpreters and adaptive communication. However, there is insufficient analysis of the reasons why some learners do not take up training opportunities. There is little promotion of equality and diversity within the training delivery.
20. Wincanton uses feedback from driver trainers well to develop the training programmes through a steering group. However, learner feedback is not collated, analysed or used centrally to effect improvement. Wincanton has a good working relationship with the assessors, Steve Walker Associates, although representation at standardisation meetings has been poor.
21. Formal quality improvement procedures are ineffective. The self-assessment process is not inclusive and has not involved contributions from staff or learners. The quality improvement plan is out of date and still includes many unresolved issues dating back over two years. This plan and the self-assessment process are not used to improve the quality of the provision. There are not enough staff to complete sufficient observations of training or site visits to quality assure the provision. The few observations of training that have taken place are not recorded well and have no recorded recommendations for improvement.
22. Wincanton uses its resources well to provide good value for money. The training successfully reduces fuel consumption, insurance costs, and improves customer service key performance indicators. Outcomes are high, with learners improving skills and confidence and gaining a marketable qualification.

Subject areas

Transportation

Grade 2

Context

23. There are 229 learners working towards driving qualifications. Of these, 54 are National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and 175 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) at level 2 in delivery goods vehicle qualification. Learners are spread nationally working on a range of contracts delivering fuel, foodstuffs, white goods and construction materials. Off-the-job training takes place at delivery depots in various centres around the country. Assessment is carried out by observation of drivers on their day-to-day delivery duties.

Key findings

- Success rates are high for transportation learners. The number completing their qualifications within the planned timescale is good and above the national average for the sector.
- Learners' acquisition of the qualification, skills and knowledge are good, and enables them to improve their economic well-being. The opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications is appreciated by learners in the very competitive transportation industry. Wincanton refers to drivers' formal qualifications when tendering for new work.
- Learners adopt exemplary working and driving practices. Staff have no concerns over safety and are fully involved in supporting health and safety management. Company expectations are established thoroughly during the company induction, and are further reinforced during subsequent NVQ and other driver training. Drivers feel very well cared for, and respond very positively to company safety initiatives.
- Learners acquire very good work and personal skills. Through their training programme they extend their knowledge, understanding and skills and have increased confidence in dealing with difficult or hazardous situations. Learners make good progress. Employers report a reduction in personal and vehicle accidents and improvements in operational efficiency. Employees feel valued and respected.
- Training and learning are good. The level of individual coaching is effective in meeting the training needs of the individual and the business. The training is well planned and professionally delivered. However, there is no observation of training and assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of learning. There are good resources provided, located in dedicated training rooms throughout the country. Learners value highly the quality of training.
- NVQ assessment is satisfactory. The assessments are thorough, and are mainly by direct observation over a driver's complete shift. A wide range of evidence is collected including video and photographic, and recorded in an electronic portfolio. However, learners have no access to their portfolio of evidence so are

unable to have an electronic record of progress they have made to show, for example, to prospective employers.

- The programme meets the company and staff needs very well. Skills scans effectively identify staff development needs which are addressed through training. The programme enhances the promotion of the company's standards of driving and knowledge, and develops drivers' personal skills. Arrangements for both training and assessment are flexible to suit both individual and work priorities.
- The identification of additional learning needs is not systematic and relies on learners to self-declare any difficulties. Learners value the informal support arrangements provided. However, there is no clear systematic approach to addressing individual needs. The effectiveness of the support currently provided is not adequately evaluated.
- Wincanton is committed to the high-quality training of its workforce to meet the needs of a demanding and competitive logistics industry. It has linked closely with industry partners to develop sector skill standards and has provided good resources through subcontracted arrangements for assessment.
- The self-assessment process does not fully involve staff and learners. Although feedback from learners is gathered locally, this does not inform the self-assessment report. The report is well written and in the main accurate in its identification of strengths and areas for improvement. However, managers and training staff are not aware of its content and its associated action plan.
- Wincanton gives good value for money. Completion rates are high. Mapping of qualifications to the in-house training has been rigorous and the NVQ complements well the mandatory licensing required for the industry. Employees who have higher-level qualifications and are not eligible for government funding are also able to access all training programmes at no cost.

What does Wincanton Group Limited need to do to improve further?

- Assess candidates more closely to determine language, literacy and numeracy needs and provide sufficient resources to meet the needs of all those learners who would benefit from them. Evaluate the effectiveness of the support provided.
- Introduce a planned programme of observing training sessions to gauge more accurately the quality of learning and assessment.

Warehousing operations

Grade 2

Context

24. Currently 179 learners are on the Train to Gain programme. All learners are on the level 2 warehousing programme. Wincanton provides training for learners before they join the programme. All assessment takes place in the workplace and is carried out by a subcontractor. At the time of the inspection all learners were located in one warehouse in Doncaster.

Key findings

- The success rate for learners is very high and the great majority complete quickly within their agreed timescale. Learners progress very quickly through their qualification which fully recognises skills and knowledge gained through previous learning in the company. They generally enjoy their programme, gaining confidence and improving understanding of their job role and safe working.
- Learners work to a good standard using stock-moving equipment and compiling customer orders. Learners feel they increase their prospects of promotion by achieving the qualification. Some learners access additional training, such as information technology. However, overall, there are currently few opportunities for progression in the job with insufficient encouragement for further learning.
- Learners generally feel safe in the workplace, but recognise additional risks at busy times. They have a good understanding of safe working practices and risks in the warehouse. Wincanton reinforces health and safety well, by regular update training and many visual displays. Managers undertake regular analysis of health and safety issues and the number of accidents is being reduced.
- Wincanton promotes healthy lifestyles well. Hygiene standards are good, and learners are able to access a gymnasium and table tennis. Healthy food options are available and there are regular social activities. Wincanton has a good focus on energy saving and recycling and staff participate in charity fundraising and local community events such as fêtes.
- Training and assessment are good. Wincanton ensures all employees receive appropriate training to meet the needs of the business. Learners receive regular refresher training and additional training to meet changes in their job role. Learners can access useful additional training such as in the use of different lift trucks for moving varying stock items.
- Assessment is thorough and efficient. Assessors complete very detailed observations and use good questioning techniques to explore knowledge and understanding. Assessors have good experience and use digital voice recorders and photography well to support assessment. However, learners do not access e-portfolios, so have no record of the competences they have achieved.
- The provision meets learner and employer needs well. Learners feel more confident about future employment and promotion prospects and value the

recognition of their skills and knowledge. Managers value the external accreditation of their training and increased staff competence. They recognise the benefit the programme brings within a very competitive sector.

- Personal support for learners is good. Learners generally value the friendly and supportive environment in the workplace. Wincanton supports employees with personal or health concerns through effectively promoting the services of an external support agency. A useful new learning resource is now available, in partnership with the union, to promote access to additional learning and support in literacy, language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The provision for information, advice and guidance in relation to learning and progression is insufficient. Wincanton is not consistently providing the six-monthly employee review to discuss training and development needs. At the end of the assessment process there is insufficient focus on what the learner can do next to continue in learning and further progress their career.
- Operational management is effective. A systematic training plan meets the needs of the business and good mapping of in-house training matches qualification requirements. Communications are good, ensuring effective promotion of the programme and good planning for delivery. Assessors undertake appropriate safeguarding training and have relevant training and assessment qualifications.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Policies are clearly displayed and learners know how to voice any concerns. However, a lack of recent staff and assessor training has resulted in a failure to ensure learners' understanding of equality, such as recognising bullying and harassment. Wincanton does not analyse data to ensure different groups are accessing training equally.
- Wincanton makes good use of surveys and listening groups to gather feedback on suggested improvements in the workplace and action is taken to try and meet employee requests. However, the collection of feedback on training and the qualification is insufficient to inform improvements to the training programmes.
- Quality arrangements, including self-assessment, are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and training managers and subcontractor feel included in the process. Wincanton monitors subcontractor performance effectively but does not quality assure all internal training. The subcontractor has effective internal verification processes.

What does Wincanton Group Limited need to do to improve further?

- Improve information, advice and guidance for learners to progress further in learning by more focus on training and development at the six-monthly reviews, and better discussion and planning at the end of the qualification.
- Strengthen existing employee feedback mechanisms to better capture qualitative learner views on training and development and use this to further improve the quality of provision.

- Further promote equality and diversity by additional staff training and better checking and reinforcement of learners' understanding at induction and during programme.

Information about the inspection

25. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's training manager operations, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and data on learners and their achievement.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also 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)
Wincanton Group 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		
Full-time learners	398	398
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	
Capacity to improve	3	
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>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
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?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
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>	n/a	
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?	3	
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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