

Lancaster Training Services Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52923

Name of lead inspector: Howard Foster HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Lancaster Training Services Ltd (LTS) was established in 1968 by a consortium of 10 haulage contractors in conjunction with the Road Transport Industry Training Board. Since the previous inspection, it has moved from Lancaster to larger purpose-built premises close to the port in Heysham. LTS provides training programmes for the road haulage and automotive industry. The learners are all employed in the industry by companies in the Lancashire and Cumbria areas.
2. LTS has 73 learners in engineering, of whom 16 are advanced apprentices and 57 are intermediate apprentices. Forty-two of the learners are working towards qualifications in automotive engineering. The other 31 learners are working towards goods vehicle driving qualifications. The apprentices are funded by the Skills Funding Agency. LTS gains about half of its income from commercial training.
3. Fifteen people are employed by LTS to manage the programmes and to train the learners. One learner is receiving training subcontracted by LTS to a local college. LTS has a young apprenticeship programme and provides training for school students aged 14 to 16. These are not included in the scope of this inspection.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
 - Blackpool and the Fylde College (vehicle body repair)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	145 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	2
Subject Areas	
Transportation operations and maintenance	2

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of LTS's provision is good. The company demonstrates good capacity to make and sustain improvements. Outcomes for learners are good overall. On the driving goods vehicles apprenticeships they are outstanding. The company's approach to health and safety is also outstanding and learners use safe working practices at the training centre and in the workplace.
6. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The resources at the new training centre are excellent. Staff are highly experienced practitioners in the industry. There is a good mix of theory and practical learning. The proportion of time spent on practical training has recently increased in response to feedback from learners. The progress of learners is good and it is frequently reviewed. The targets set for learners are not recorded in sufficiently specific detail. Partnerships with employers and schools are strong.
7. The management of LTS is good. Resources are deployed effectively but managers do not have a clear overview of learners' progress. Quality improvement arrangements are highly effective. The board of directors provides good strategic direction for the company. The approach to safeguarding and the promotion of equality and diversity to learners are good. In addition to thorough training at induction, equality and diversity modules are integrated

throughout the technical training. However, efforts to encourage the participation by women learners are insufficient.

Main findings

- Success rates for learners are good overall. The rates for advanced and intermediate apprentices in driving goods vehicles are outstanding, as they are on the vehicle maintenance and repair advanced apprenticeship. They are around the national average on the intermediate programme.
- Learners develop a high level of skills. Many of them achieve additional units beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. A large proportion of learners progress to higher levels.
- The approach to health and safety is outstanding. Learners have an excellent awareness and understanding. They apply safe working practices at the training centre and in their workplaces. A strong emphasis is placed on health education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners take an active role in the sessions. The practical training is very good and the proportion of time they spend in the workshop has recently been increased in response to feedback from learners.
- The new training centre has excellent teaching resources. The vehicles used for practical training are modern and in good condition. The workshop is well equipped. Staff are highly experienced practitioners and demonstrate a high level of skills, gaining the respect of learners and employers.
- LTS has very good and long-standing partnerships with employers which ensure the training meets their needs and those of their learners. Partnerships with schools have extended as the company has built up a substantial programme of training for 14 to 16 year old learners.
- The targets set for learners at the progress review meetings are not always sufficiently specific. They do not refer to jobs in the workplace but to qualification units. The timescales are not always considered with sufficient care to support the learners in making steady progress.
- Leadership and management are strong. The board of directors provides good strategic direction and oversight. The operational management makes efficient use of resources that benefits the learners.
- Learners' progress is monitored individually and discussed at staff meetings. However, the overall progress of all learners is not collected, analysed and reported upon. Managers have to refer to the records of individual learners to gain information on their progress.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners are good. Staff have received effective training in safeguarding and learners are given information at their induction which is checked and reinforced during their training programme.
- The promotion of equality and diversity to learners is very good. A series of modules on equality and diversity are integrated into programmes alongside the

technical training modules. LTS has not made sufficient effort to encourage more women learners to enrol.

- Quality improvement processes are very effective and are well established. Feedback from learners and employers is generally used effectively although few responses are received. Good practice is routinely shared with other providers. The observation system has raised the standard of teaching and learning.

What does Lancaster Training Services Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Increase the success rates on the intermediate apprenticeship in motor vehicle maintenance by supporting the learners in making steady progress throughout the early stages of their programme.
- Continue to implement the curriculum changes to increase the proportion of time the learners spend on practical training.
- Set more specific targets at progress review meetings so that it is clear to learners and their employers exactly what they are expected to achieve and by when.
- Improve the collection, analysis and reporting of learners' progress monitoring so that managers are able to gain an overview of the progress of all the learners more easily.
- Find more imaginative ways of encouraging more women to participate in training by using the strong partnerships LTS has with schools.
- Extend the observation system to more effectively cover the observation of progress reviews on all programmes so that weak practice, such as insufficiently specific targets recorded on the review records, are identified and corrected quickly.
- Review the systems for collecting learners' and employers' views in order to generate more suggestions for improvement.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good training facilities
- the excellent quality of the training
- tutors' understanding of the industry
- practical training sessions in the workshop
- the flexibility in the timing of assessments and reviews
- being treated like an adult and with respect
- the friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more time spent on 'hands-on' practical work at the training centre
- more tools at the subcontracted college provision.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- training which meets the highest standards
- the high level of skills and experience of the tutors
- the way the training is changed to meet the needs of employers
- being able to offer employers a complete package of training
- staff always being punctual
- the professional approach and commitment of LTS staff
- the continuous communication about learners' performance
- the history of supplying well-trained mechanics over many years.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no areas for improvement identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. LTS's capacity to make and sustain improvement is good. The company has maintained a very high standard of training during the six years since the previous inspection. The transfer to a new training centre has substantially improved the resources. The company has retained and recruited training staff who are highly skilled and experienced. The partnership work with schools has greatly increased.
9. The quality improvement systems, including self-assessment, quality improvement planning and the use of feedback from learners and employers, are all effective and well established. The observation of teaching and learning is good but the observation of progress reviews has not identified a weakness in the setting of targets. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the grades, as well as the strengths and most areas for improvement.
10. The success rates have been sustained at the very high level on all programmes except the intermediate apprenticeship in vehicle maintenance and repair, where the success rate has fallen.
11. Equality and diversity arrangements have improved since the previous inspection. Health and safety have further improved to become outstanding. The introduction of safeguarding arrangements has been carried out in a highly organised and sustainable way.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Outcomes for learners are good overall. Success rates for intermediate and advanced apprentices in driving goods vehicles apprenticeships were outstanding in 2010/11 at 100% for both levels. The advanced apprenticeship in vehicle maintenance and repair had a very high success rate of 90% in 2010/11 and was sustained above the national average for the previous four years. The intermediate apprenticeship success rate in vehicle maintenance and repair fell from a high level of 83% in 2007/08 to 70% in 2009/10, which was still slightly higher than the national average. In 2010/11 it fell again to 59%.
13. The standard of learners' work is good and often exceeds the requirements of the awarding body. Additional units of study are successfully completed by many learners. Their portfolios are comprehensive and well presented, containing a wide range of diverse evidence.
14. Learners develop good occupational and social skills. They are confident and are able to communicate well. The skills of some learners have been recognised through the achievement of national and local skills awards.

15. Learners feel very safe at all times. Health and safety are outstanding and are given a high priority by LTS and the employers. Learners' knowledge and understanding of the subject allows them to apply safe working practices throughout their training and in the workplace. LTS staff and employers continually reinforce all aspects of health and safety during training and workplace activities. Learners' awareness and application of health and safety practices are outstanding.
16. The induction programme introduces a wide range of health and well-being topics which include healthy eating, drug awareness, smoking and sexual health. Awareness is effectively reinforced by the use of posters and information leaflets displayed throughout the training centre.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

17. Teaching and learning are generally good. Learners are actively involved in group work, discussions, and question and answer sessions. Tutors continually reinforce the main points of the lessons. However, a few sessions contain lengthy demonstrations and presentations with too much input by the tutor. LTS recognised that a greater proportion of practical training in the workshop was required so tutors have reorganised the teaching plans to place a greater emphasis and more time on practical activities. The standard of practical training is very good. It ensures that learners are able to progress rapidly to complete complex diagnostic and repair work. Teaching staff are well qualified, highly experienced and enthusiastic.
18. The resources at the training centre are good. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards, computerised projectors and a wide range of visual aids. The vehicles used for driver training are modern and in good condition. LTS has two reversing courses marked out which are identical to vehicle test centre courses.
19. Employers are very supportive of their learners and help them in the accumulation of portfolio evidence. They appoint mentors and organise on-the-job training and assessment opportunities, as well as participating in the progress reviews.
20. Assessment practices in the workplace are good. Assessors are well qualified, very experienced and make good use of their knowledge to check learners' understanding of the NVQ requirements. Assessment takes place at regular intervals and is very flexible to suit the needs of learners and employers. Assessors clearly define the tasks to be completed by the learners and provide detailed feedback afterwards. Internal verification is thorough and effective in maintaining and raising the standard of assessment.
21. Learners' progress reviews take place frequently and their progress is recorded in detail, including an estimate of percentage completion of each unit of study. However, the targets agreed by learners and employers are insufficiently specific and can lead to misunderstanding. For example, they generally refer to

units of study to be completed rather than specific jobs in the workplace. Timescales are almost always set at the date of the next review.

22. LTS works very effectively with partners including employers, colleges and local schools to meet their needs. LTS works particularly well to develop its provision and to ensure that programmes cover all aspects which are important to both the employers and the learners. Programmes are reviewed periodically with specific reference to future developments within the industry.
23. Literacy, numeracy and language support for learners is good. Target setting and the monitoring of progress in literacy, numeracy and language are effective and learners are involved in planning their own learning. Materials relate very closely to the motor vehicle industry and are linked to the main qualification. Information and communication technology facilities and resources for additional support are good.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

24. Leadership and management are good. The operational managers are highly effective in managing the resources of the company to the benefit of the learners. The board of directors provides excellent strategic direction for the company as well as monitoring its current operations. The board members are employers in the sector and give valuable guidance on the needs of employers in the design of training programmes. Managers do not have an adequate overview of the progress of all the learners. They rely on training staff to monitor and report on the progress of each individual learner, which they do at frequent management meetings.
25. Very good safeguarding procedures contain detailed information and instructions for staff. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are carried out on all staff and a central register is maintained. Some administrative and cleaning staff are awaiting clearance. However, they do not have unsupervised access to young people or vulnerable adults. Staff receive excellent training in safeguarding. During induction learners receive detailed training in safeguarding. LTS checks the safeguarding policy of its subcontractor. Although LTS is not required to conduct CRB checks on employers, it carries out a risk assessment. In the case of a lone female learner working at a garage in a remote location, LTS decided the risk warranted CRB checks on that particular employer. The self-assessment report identifies the reporting of safeguarding practice to the board of directors as an area for improvement. This has now been implemented.
26. The equality and diversity policy is good. It is reviewed regularly and improvements are made to the policy each year. Learners are given training in equality and diversity as an integral part of their programme. A series of three modules each year, such as one on 'Why should we value diversity?' in the first year, are substantial and are effective in raising learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Learners' understanding is systematically checked at the

end of each module. Equality and diversity are also checked at learners' progress reviews, although the questions are not sufficiently open to promote discussion and improve their understanding. LTS consistently attracts a small number of women learners onto its programmes. Action has been taken in the past to try to increase the proportion of female learners but it was not sustained when it had no effect. The minority ethnic proportion of the population in the area served by LTS is low and the proportion of minority ethnic learners reflects this.

27. Learners' views are collected and analysed routinely at induction, several weeks after induction and at the end of each year. Employers' views are collected and analysed annually. The responses are overwhelmingly positive. The feedback is used to make changes to the provision. For example, learners asked for a greater proportion of their time to be spent in the workshop on practical learning and this has led to revised teaching plans.
28. LTS has a good system for reviewing and updating policies and procedures. The self-assessment report is very clearly presented and is accurate. It is produced following a self-assessment process which involves all training staff and includes the views of learners and employers. A well-established and effective training observation system is in place. LTS has shared good practice with other providers and with a local college over a long period of time, and has used the good practice from elsewhere to improve its provision, such as in safeguarding.

Information about the inspection

29. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's training manager, 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, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
30. 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 and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Lancaster Training Services Ltd

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	73	73
Part-time learners	0	0
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?	1	
<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>	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?	1	
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>	1	
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?	2	
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?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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