

# Hays Travel Limited

## Employer

<b>Inspection dates</b>		25–28 September 2012
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	Good-Grade 2
	<b>Previous inspection:</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>		Outstanding-Grade 1
<b>Quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>		Good-Grade 2
<b>Effectiveness of leadership and management</b>		Good-Grade 2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- An extremely high proportion of apprentices complete their apprenticeship and achieve their qualifications well within their agreed deadlines.
- Apprentices develop outstanding skills and knowledge.
- Apprentices have excellent career progression and promotion opportunities within Hays Travel.
- Trainer assessors use their extensive expertise and experience to contextualise training, learning and assessment making this highly relevant to apprentices and the travel industry.
- Trainer assessors and mentors provide good quality induction, training, assessment and learning activities enabling apprentices to progress well, particularly those new to the industry.
- Apprentices receive very effective care and support that helps them succeed.
- The very well-managed and resourced apprenticeship has a strong level of commitment from senior leaders and links clearly to strategic growth and developing the company's future managers.
- Managers and trainer assessors use a wide range of evaluations, feedback and data to make swift and very effective improvements to training and the programme.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- A minority of apprentices have insufficient levels of challenge in their programme.
- Trainer assessors do not promote diversity sufficiently within learning and assessment activities.
- Quality improvement planning has insufficient focus on raising teaching and learning to

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outstanding.

- The weak management information systems make it difficult for managers to monitor trends in programme performance.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of the results of apprentices' initial assessments, including their prior skills and achievements, to set more demanding learning targets and activities.
- Extend apprentices' awareness of diversity by developing and using stimulating, current and relevant topics within training sessions, learning materials and progress reviews.
- Use data and the results of observations of teaching, learning and assessment more incisively towards self-assessment and quality improvement planning.

## Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outcomes for apprentices at Hays Travel are outstanding. Overall apprenticeship success rates are very high and significantly above national averages, particularly by intermediate-level apprentices. Apprentices make very good progress towards achieving their qualifications and the very large majority achieve well in advance of their agreed deadlines.</li> <li>▪ The few male and Asian apprentices have particularly high success rates. Last year, apprentices' success rates were lower in one region, which was largely as a result of employees leaving the travel industry. As Hays Travel has only offered the programme for a short time it is too early to assess whether this region is now performing better.</li> <li>▪ Apprentices that are new to the industry gain the essential skills they need very rapidly so they become highly effective members of their team. Travel apprentices develop excellent technical skills and knowledge enabling them to sell complex, high value holidays competently and confidently. They contribute well to their store's sales targets, and at advanced level this has helped increase sales of cruise and tailor-made holidays.</li> <li>▪ Apprentices progress very well within their career and many are promoted into management roles taking additional responsibilities or more varied projects. Team leading and management apprentices' promotion routes and opportunities are particularly excellent and a high proportion of learners benefit from them. Since offering its own apprenticeship programme, Hays Travel's head office staff turnover has reduced and a higher proportion of managers are recruited internally than three years ago.</li> <li>▪ The majority of intermediate-level apprentices continue their learning through to advanced-level qualifications. A small minority of apprentices subsequently take qualifications at the same level but in a different subject which they enjoy and motivates them to achieve at work. However, these apprentices are not always sufficiently challenged and often do not develop new skills through taking these qualifications, given their previous experience and qualifications.</li> </ul>	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, significantly contributing towards Hays Travel's outstanding outcomes. Trainer assessors deliver good quality training sessions but do not always vary the activities sufficiently to stretch all apprentices within the group.
- Trainer assessors deliver good quality training that greatly increases apprentices' product, sales and company knowledge making them highly effective at work. Apprentices enjoy attending training sessions where they learn at a good pace, through interesting and varied activities. Travel apprentices use very useful learning resources thus increasing their geography and destination knowledge which they subsequently use to provide information for customers in their retail store.
- Well-trained mentors provide enthusiastic coaching and training for apprentices at work. Mentors have a good awareness of apprentices' targets and the company's expectations for their progress at set stages in the programme. Business, administration and law learning in the workplace is insufficiently planned into the overall apprenticeship programme.
- Apprentices use an extensive range of distance learning materials, developed by Hays Travel, tour operators and external companies, which enables them to learn flexibly and at times when the business is quiet. In particular, this helps apprentices to increase their product knowledge early in their programme. Apprentices research their technical certificate assignments extensively and produce very high quality written work.
- Apprentices take suitable initial and diagnostic assessments to determine their starting point, but trainer assessors do not always use these effectively to ensure all apprentices are challenged through learning activities, particularly within training sessions. They do not stretch the minority of business administration and customer service apprentices who have already taken similar qualifications or levels by selecting higher level units that might extend their existing learning or develop new skills.
- Trainer assessors plan assessments well, using a broad range of ways to record apprentices' achievements and maintain good progress. They provide apprentices with informative feedback which often affirms the high level of skills they are demonstrating. Trainer assessors question apprentices skilfully during assessment to encourage them to reflect on their learning and explain their written work and company procedures.
- Apprentices develop good English and mathematics functional skills through effective support workshops, independent learning activities and individual coaching. Trainer assessors use very creative activities to illustrate principles that apprentices find difficult to grasp and break down pre-existing barriers to subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- Apprentices receive good quality care and support from trainer assessors, the team they work with, human resources staff and specialist external organisations. They have highly accurate information about the job and training requirements which is reinforced through a very thorough recruitment process and good induction. However, apprentices have insufficient opportunity to discuss at an early stage their medium- and long-term career goals with managers and trainer assessors.
- Trainer assessors discuss equality and diversity with apprentices during induction and progress reviews ensuring they have an adequate understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Hays Travel accurately recognises in its self-assessment report that promotion of the topic is insufficient, particularly during training sessions and in distance learning materials.

### Travel and tourism

#### Apprenticeships

Good

- Hays Travel delivers good quality training and assessment which contributes significantly to apprentices' outstanding outcomes.

- Trainer assessors deliver good quality training days that help apprentices develop their knowledge and confidence with travel geography, technology and selling different types of holiday. This greatly helps apprentices to work productively as team members early in their career. They use the knowledge they gain well to help achieve store targets for bookings, meet individual customers' needs and make more complex bookings, such as cruises and tailor-made holidays.
- Apprentices use a wide range of good quality learning resources, including online activities, to extend their knowledge of destinations and products. They complete technical certificate assignments enthusiastically, producing work of a high standard that is well researched and provides them with a useful reference tool for unfamiliar destinations.
- Mentors provide apprentices with frequent and thorough coaching and opportunities to shadow experienced sales staff. They take particular care to ensure apprentices develop their skills and confidence by setting them regular tasks, role plays and quizzes to complete when the store is quiet. They set high expectations and often encourage apprentices to work at a higher level than is required by the qualification they are studying.
- Trainer assessors plan assessments well to ensure apprentices are aware of what is expected from them and make good progress towards achieving their qualification. They provide them with constructive feedback to enable apprentices to improve their written work and performance in their store.
- Trainer assessors and apprentices negotiate challenging but realistic targets. However, a minority of apprentices' targets are not sufficiently prioritised or specific, focusing purely on completing the apprenticeship rather than medium- and longer- term aspirations.
- Apprentices develop mathematics and English functional skills effectively through training days and learning activities although trainer assessors do not use the results of apprentices' initial and diagnostic assessments sufficiently when planning functional skills support. They do not always correct apprentices' mistakes, such as in grammar or spelling, in a timely way.
- Apprentices receive good quality care, guidance and support. Trainer assessors and mentors motivate apprentices to learn, develop and achieve. They provide good quality support to ensure they remain on track and take a very active role in reviewing their progress.
- Trainer assessors frequently miss opportunities to further reinforce equality and diversity during induction and training. The learning activities they set apprentices do not fully reflect the diverse client base of the organisation, the staff in their store or the range of different cultures that customers would encounter on their holidays.

**Business, administration and law**

## Apprenticeships

Good

- Training and assessment are good which is reflected in the very high proportion of learners who achieve their qualification. Trainer assessors deliver group training sessions at a good pace through very interesting, imaginative and meaningful learning activities.
- Trainer assessors use their extensive experience of the travel industry alongside good knowledge of the organisation and qualification to contextualise learning well. They use resources creatively, such as travel magazines to practice reading skills and cola cube sweets to calculate volume, to motivate apprentices and explain difficult concepts. Trainer assessors do not routinely use technology during group training sessions.
- Apprentices learn through a good range of activities that develop skills such as business letter writing, dealing with complaints, time management, verbal Spanish, motivational theories, presentation skills and the phonetic alphabet. They value the programme, which for many increases their job satisfaction, confidence and career progression opportunities.
- Mentors provide apprentices with thorough and good quality coaching at work which helps

them progress well. Apprentices attend a comprehensive induction training which enables them to be productive in their departments quickly. Managers review apprentices' performance regularly to ensure they are meeting the expectations for their job role.

- Trainer assessors plan assessment well to ensure flexibility around the needs of the business and make best use of evidence gathered in the course of apprentices' work. Apprentices receive feedback that confirms the high level of their work and encourages them to reflect on their own performance. They use this feedback constructively to agree realistic short-term targets to improve their effectiveness at work.
- Trainer assessors do not always use the results of apprentices' initial and diagnostic assessments effectively to build a detailed learning plan, arrange appropriate exemptions for functional skills or link the on- and off-the-job training. A minority of apprentices, especially those who have progressed from one qualification to another at the same level, are not being sufficiently challenged to develop new skills or select units that would stretch them.
- Apprentices develop good mathematics and English skills through lively and interesting functional skills support sessions and independent learning activities. Trainer assessors carefully check apprentices' work and the resulting feedback is helping them improve their skills further. Apprentices often study functional skills at a higher level than required for their qualification but they only take the test at the level they need for the apprenticeship framework.
- Apprentices receive very good care, guidance and support. They benefit from timely advice and value the regular support they receive from the training department.
- Trainer assessors do not extend apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently during training sessions and assessment. They routinely check apprentices' awareness of diversity during induction and progress reviews but do not build on this through interesting or travel-related activities or questions.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Hays Travel provides good leadership and management of the apprenticeship programme and in the short time the company has had its own contract it has developed good learning resources, established a highly effective team of managers and trainer assessors and achieved outstanding success rates.
- The apprenticeship programme features strongly in Hays Travel's strategies and mission. Managers have grown the apprenticeship programme sensibly alongside the company's plans for expansion and diversification. Hays Travel invests significantly in developing its staff, training resources and facilities and offers good value for money.
- Managers use Hays Travel management information systems particularly well to gauge the impact of the apprenticeship and training sessions on profit, achievement of targets and store efficiency. They set very high standards for the apprenticeship programme with an expectation that all apprentices will achieve and by their agreed deadlines but do not set suitable targets for success rates including by different groups. Managers rely too heavily on published data to confirm success rates and cannot easily monitor in-year trends due to their weak apprenticeship data systems.
- Managers frequently observe trainer assessors' delivery through an improved and critical system that clearly highlights areas for improvement. They incorporate these well when setting trainer assessors developmental targets within appraisal and performance reviews. A minority of store managers do not include apprentices' progress towards their qualifications within their appraisals and performance reviews.
- Hays Travel's self-assessment process is highly inclusive, makes good use of feedback and results in an effective evaluation of the provision. However, managers do not use the results

of their observations of trainer assessors sufficiently when analysing the quality of training and assessment which results in a commentary that is too descriptive and focused on processes. The training team regularly reviews progress with the quality improvement plan, which is helping drive improvement in many areas, but this has insufficient actions for improving training and assessment.

- Apprentices and trainer assessors constantly evaluate programmes and learning sessions through a wide range of formal and informal mechanisms. Managers and trainer assessors respond dynamically, making rapid but well thought through changes and developing new programmes. They share best practice routinely during meetings.
- Managers and trainer assessors link the apprenticeship programme very effectively to in-house training, particularly between team leading and management with Hays Travel's 'rising stars' and 'management' programmes. The business, managers' and apprentices' needs and interests are met extremely well resulting in high levels of satisfaction, motivation and enthusiasm.
- Equality and diversity are promoted effectively within Hays Travel's systems for recruitment, training and promotion. Apprentices feel part of a caring organisation where staff will take their concerns seriously and bullying and harassment are not tolerated. They have a good awareness of the appropriate systems to raise their grievances and appeals but their overall appreciation of equality and diversity requires improvement.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners and staff place a very high emphasis on ensuring apprentices are safe. Trainer assessors give careful consideration to training locations, times and travelling arrangements to minimise risks. They adhere well to company procedures, such as those for working alone in the foreign exchange bureau, and use young people's risk assessments to ensure the safety of apprentices under the age of 19.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF 2012)

### Hays Travel Limited

#### Learning types:

#### Apprenticeships

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b> 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	2
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	1	1
<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	2	2
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	2	2

Subject areas graded for quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Travel and tourism	2
Business, administration and law	2

## Provider details

Provider name	
Inspection dates	25–28 September 2012
Lead inspector	Janet Rodgers HMI
Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year 2011/12	147
CEO	John Hays
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Website address	www.haystravel.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection			
Apprenticeship level	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher
Number of apprentices	89	40	N/A
Number of part-time learners	N/A		
Number of main sites	one		
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)		

## Additional socio-economic information

Hays Travel Limited is the United Kingdom's largest independent travel agent, with 43 retail travel agency stores in the north east of England, two call centres and over 300 homeworkers. Additionally, over a hundred independent travel retailers are part of the Hays Travel Independence Group (IG) consortium. The company's head office, including its training department, is based in Sunderland. Since acquiring a travel agency chain in North Yorkshire, Hays Travel has established an additional training room in Northallerton. Apprentices work at Hays Travel's head office, call centres, travel agencies or for one of the IG retailers across England. Within the retail travel sector a large proportion of employees are women and from White ethnic heritage groups. Hays Travel's apprentices work in retail stores across a wide range of locations and areas with mixed levels of affluence, deprivation and qualification levels.



## **Information about this inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Approved Centre Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last two years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners and employers. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. These views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Subject inspectors looked in detail at a sample of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in travel and tourism and business, administration and law.

## What inspection judgements mean

Provider		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding provider is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its learners' needs. This ensures that learners are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good provider is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its learners' needs. Learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A provider that requires improvement is performing less well than it might be reasonably expected in one or more of the key areas. This provider will receive a full inspection 12-18 months after the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A provider that is inadequate is one where the provider is failing to give its learners an acceptable standard of education and/or training and the provider's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the provider. This provider will receive a re-inspection within 12-15 months after the date of this inspection.

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