

Travis Perkins plc

Employer

Inspection dates		13-16 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate-4
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualification within their planned timescale is poor.
- Not all groups of learners achieve equally well.
- The plans apprentices have to help them manage their learning are not sufficiently detailed or structured to meet their individual needs. The plans have too few clear targets to help them progress.
- Learning programmes are not sufficiently flexible and adaptable to meet the different needs of all learners.
- The training and support for staff managing apprenticeship programmes is not continuous. Managers do not plan sufficient reinforcement and sharing of good practice.
- Managers do not use data sufficiently to help them improve learning programmes.
- Staff do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently in learning programmes to develop learners' understanding and help them challenge inappropriate actions in the workplace.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners develop a very good range of work-related, employability and personal skills.
- Apprentices get permanent jobs and, many employed learners gain promotion and greater levels of responsibility.
- The apprenticeship programme is well-structured and designed as a highly relevant workplace learning experience. Apprentices and managers value learning and recognise its benefit to the business.
- Travis Perkins has developed a very good tracking system enabling the effective monitoring and management of learners' programmes and assessors' activities in DIY retail stores.
- Travis Perkins provides learners with a wide range of additional learning opportunities and qualifications.
- Leaders and managers offer excellent high profile support for apprenticeships and make them central to their strategic and business plans. They promote ambition and expect high standards.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further embed and rigorously apply systems to support and promote learners' timely achievements.
- Develop the expertise of managers and buddies to better support their apprentices in all aspects of learning and assessment.
- Ensure that learning programmes are flexible and adaptable and meet the differing needs of all learners and allow them to achieve their full potential.
- Develop and implement a strategy for identifying, planning and providing support for those apprentices with additional learning needs.
- Improve the analysis and use of data in all aspects of learning programmes.
- Continue to develop quality improvement practices to ensure that they move from compliance to actively evaluate and improve learners' programmes.
- Ensure the good company equality and diversity ethos is embedded throughout learning programmes.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Outcomes for apprentices at Travis Perkins require improvement. Success rates have improved significantly since the previous inspection and, during 2011/12, reached the national average. However timely success rates, although improving, remain poor.
- Key skills achievements are very good. However, all learners who are not exempt take the qualification only at level 1 which is the requirement of their framework. Managers do not sufficiently challenge more able learners and give them the opportunity to take the qualification at a higher level.
- Many employed learners make good progress in their job roles. They describe, and inspectors confirmed, how they develop good product knowledge and a very sound understanding of the scope of the business within which they work. They fully understand and effectively promote the culture of the organisation.
- Learners develop very good employability skills. They become better able to prioritise tasks and manage their time. All of the apprentices on the Travis Perkins scheme who achieved their qualification in the current year were offered and accepted a permanent job. Many learners achieve promotion or take on more responsible roles within their store.
- Learners undertake a wide and relevant range of additional qualifications, for example, fork lift truck training. Many also undertake useful company and additional training which allows them to assume greater levels of responsibility in their store, for example, key holding and kitchen and bathroom advice and sales.
- Learners develop good personal skills. They enjoy their learning and their work role. They grow in confidence, learn to work well in teams and are motivated to use these developing skills effectively to provide good customer service.
- Not all groups of learners achieve equally well. Learners in a few stores make slow progress. The success rate for females is higher than that for males. Managers know this and have

identified some reasons for the differences but have not so far put plans in place to resolve them.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment at Travis Perkins require improvement. Learning programmes are well-structured and planned, and learners are aware of the end date of their programme, although some make slow progress towards completion of their qualifications. However, managers have recently taken steps to prioritise learning activity and support their more timely achievement.
- Training is provided in high quality DIY retail stores and builders' merchants branches. Learners work with in-house, fit-for-purpose learning resources that are well mapped to qualification and apprenticeship framework requirements. They benefit from an embedded programme of learning which is highly relevant to their job role, is knowledge rich and which encourages multiskilling.
- The apprenticeship programme is championed by store managers and 'buddies' most of whom provide motivational and supportive learning. However, the expertise and capability of some managers and 'buddies' are under-developed and they do not always optimise opportunities for learning and assessment. Managers are aware of this and have recently established workshops to improve learning support and assessor skills.
- Learners use well-designed and helpful workbooks which direct them methodically through both learning and assessment activities. However, the workbook is not sufficiently flexible to support the learning styles of some apprentices and assessors do not make use of a sufficient range of assessment methods, for example, digital recording. Some stores have too few managers and staff to deal effectively with the number of learners.
- All learners complete a well-planned, work-relevant induction at the start of their programme using a specific structured workbook. Apprentices benefit from the strong health and safety focus which directly relates to their workplace.
- Initial assessment of apprentices is satisfactory and those without appropriate English and mathematics qualifications complete a computer based assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Assessors' record results in learners' workbooks, but they do not use the information to individualise learning plans or set challenging targets and milestones. They give learners who are identified as having additional learning needs some additional support but this is generally informal with a focus on extra coaching time. Individual learning plans do not routinely detail any support planned or provided.
- Managers have put in place excellent arrangements for tracking apprentices' progress and recording progress reviews in DIY retail stores. However, arrangements for tracking apprentices' progress in builders' merchants' branches are underdeveloped. Progress reviews are satisfactory. However, although reviews record basic targets for all learners they do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able.
- Assessors' checking of learners' knowledge and understanding is good. However, the recording of learners' performance through observation is weak and assessors' feedback is not sufficiently detailed to help learners improve. Internal quality assurance is focussed on compliance and internal verifiers do not effectively comment on and drive improvement in assessor practice.
- Most apprentices achieve key skills at the required level. Some learners lack the confidence to develop the relevant maths and English skills, and opt out of completion of their apprenticeship. Key skills are insufficiently embedded into work-related learning resources.

- Equality and Diversity are adequately covered during induction within the workbook. Learners demonstrate a basic understanding, but assessors do not develop their knowledge further. Equality and Diversity are not promoted sufficiently during learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers promote ambition and expect high standards of learners. Apprenticeships are a high priority for managers at Travis Perkins; they are central to strategic and business planning, and their importance is recognised throughout the organisation. Board members are very supportive of the programmes and attend learners' national and regional celebration events. Learners greatly value this interest in their progress.
- Managers throughout the organisation take well-planned actions to enhance learners' experience. They have made a significant investment in learning resources, developed software tools to monitor learners' performance, and provided opportunities for their promotion. Managers further demonstrate their commitment to apprenticeships by their continued sponsorship of an international skills competition. A well-produced in-house magazine effectively promotes and celebrates the high standards expected and achieved by individual apprentices.
- The store managers and learner 'buddies' deliver all learning and assessment within the stores and managers give them appropriate initial training for their role. However, managers do not support this training by a continuing planned programme of assessor and trainer development. Managers have put helpful informal support in place but some assessors still lack confidence in their role. Opportunities to share good practice and help assessors develop their skills and improve learning opportunities are limited.
- Quality improvement arrangements have developed significantly since the previous inspection. Managers now have a strong focus on improving the learners' experience and have significantly reduced the proportion making slow progress. The new on-line tracking system is enabling managers to monitor learners' activity closely, along with the performance of assessors and internal verifiers, and to intervene where necessary to effectively manage performance.
- Managers do not systematically analyse or use data effectively to inform their decision making and to improve performance. Senior managers collate the views of store managers to inform self-assessment, however staff do not give learners sufficient opportunity to review, reflect on or improve their learning. The quality improvement plan is comprehensive and the actions managers identify closely match the findings of the inspection. However, too many actions have no timescale or indication of what has so far been achieved.
- The learning programmes are planned well to meet the needs of the organisation, to fit with the national agenda for apprenticeships, and to provide an appropriate career path for learners. Learning materials are designed to be used effectively in the workplace but they do not include sufficient variety to support the differing needs of learners including those with additional learning needs or opportunities for learners to develop their English and mathematics skills. The learners' workplace provides only limited opportunities for the use of information and communication technology.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Travis Perkins has recently been listed as one of Britain's top employers for its cultural management, and its mission to be a 'great place to work' generates an inclusive and supportive culture. However, although the apprenticeship learning materials provide a basic understanding of both equality and diversity, training and development for assessors and managers is limited and they do not have the confidence or knowledge to regularly promote and develop learners' understanding or help them deal with the diversity they may encounter with customers during their daily work.

- Although managers are aware of the major differences in the performance of different groups of learners they do not set targets for improvement or establish related action plans. The system managers use to monitor and manage learner's progress generates standard review and assessment dates and takes no account of learner's different abilities or situations.
- Travis Perkins meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners; practices are appropriate for an employer provider. Managers have put effective arrangements in place to reinforce safe-working practices in the stores focusing particularly on the safety of the public. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the protection of lone workers and key holders who work late or early shifts and in out-of-town stores.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Travis Perkins plc

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
	Overall effectiveness	3				3			
	Outcomes for learners	3				3			
	The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3				3			
	The effectiveness of leadership and management	3				3			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Retailing and wholesaling	3

Travis Perkins plc	
Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 119
	Part-time: N/A
Principal/CEO	Mr Geoff Cooper
Date of previous inspection	November 2011
Website address	www.travisperkins.co.uk

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	28	91	0	0	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider has no subcontracting arrangements. 							

Additional socio-economic information

Travis Perkins plc (Travis Perkins) is a large company supplying the United Kingdom's building and construction industry and home improvements market. Learners are based throughout the United Kingdom in Travis Perkins builders' merchants with the significant majority in Wickes DIY retail stores. The apprenticeship scheme in Wickes, which is known as the Master Programme, was launched in March 2010 and the scheme in Travis Perkins, Building People, in June 2011. Both lead to a level 2 retail apprenticeship. The funded learners in scope for this inspection are approximately one fifth of the total apprentices at Travis Perkins.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Sandra Summers HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Group Training Manager, Operations and Skills as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the currently funded provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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