

West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		3–7 December 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
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:

- Overall apprenticeship success rates for adults were low in 2011/12 in health, public services and care, and in workplace learning. The success rates for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds on advanced apprenticeships were much lower than those of White British learners.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable between partners and not enough is good. Insufficient teaching and assessment challenges learners to extend their learning and reach their full potential.
- Reviews are not being used consistently well to provide wider opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge and skills, including improving their English and mathematics, and assessors too often miss opportunities to extend learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- The performance management of partners, including self-assessment, require further development to ensure improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

This provider has the following strengths:

- High success rates for 16 to 18 year-old apprentices and for learners on employability programmes, where learners grow in confidence and develop good vocational skills.
- Assessors are well qualified and provide very good role models and learners speak highly of the support they receive.
- Learners work in safe environments and have a good understanding of keeping themselves and others safe.
- Learning programmes meet well the needs of learners, employers and regional priorities.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates particularly focusing on those partners who are under-performing by consolidating quality improvement processes with these partners.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that best practice is shared across the consortium and fully implement effective observation systems to help staff improve their practice.
- Make sure reviews are held regularly, include employers, are clear and useful to learners and help develop and extend their learning opportunities through additional learning in the workplace.
- Emphasise more fully the importance of spelling, grammar, writing and mathematical skills.
- Extend the range of performance indicators in the business plan to include specific ambitions and targets to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learner achievements.
- Accelerate the implementation of activities to extend learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity in learning activities and reviews.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The overall success rate for apprenticeships was below the national average in 2011/12, the first year in which West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd (WYLP) provided apprenticeships, because the success rates in health, public services and care was low. Learners made satisfactory progress, with the same proportion completing their frameworks in the planned time as is the case nationally. ■ The success rate for apprentices aged 16 to 18 was high and the vast majority of these learners completed in the planned time. The rate for adult learners was low, due to two of the WYLP partners ceasing trading in 2011/12 and, in spite of WYLPs best efforts, a very low proportion of their learners continued with their programmes. With these learners taken out of the data, success rates are high. So far in 2012/13 success rates have improved. ■ Success rates in the subjects inspected are variable. They are high in retail and in functional skills, above average in business and low in health, public services and care, where most of the learners from the partners who ceased trading studied. A low proportion of health, public services and care learners completed in the planned time whereas a high proportion did so in the other subject areas. ■ The workplace learning success rate has been low in recent years but numbers on this provision have declined as more apprenticeships are started, and currently numbers are low. Success rates for learners on employability programmes are high. ■ There are differences in achievement between some groups of learners. For example, female apprentices do less well than male. This difference can be explained by the high number of females affected by two partners going out of business. White British learners' overall success rate was much higher than that of other learners at level 3 but similar at level 2. In workplace learning, the gender gaps that existed were closed in 2011/12. The differences between White British and other learners reverse from year to year. ■ Learners' development of vocational skills is good, for example in hairdressing they meet professional standards, and in warehousing they develop specialised skills. They enjoy their 	

programmes, improve their self-confidence well and make good progress in developing independent learning skills. They work safely and develop a good understanding of safe working practice and a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity in the work place, although this is variable, and insufficient in a few areas.

- They make satisfactory progress in improving their generic employability skills but progress in English and mathematics is inconsistent. Not all learners are challenged to take English and mathematics at least to level 2.
- A high proportion of learners progress from level 2 to level 3 but the proportion is low from level 1 to level 2. A high proportion of apprentices progress to full- or part-time employment and a satisfactory proportion make the transition from employability programmes to employed status. Inspectors saw several examples of learners gaining promoted posts following course completion.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- WYLP is effectively revising its focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through the development of a teaching, learning and assessment strategy, establishing a teaching, learning and improvement group, better opportunities for staff development, peer observations and moderation activities. A new observation of teaching and learning system is enabling partners to think more critically about how to improve learning rather than simply focusing on assessment and awarding body requirements. This renewed focus is leading to the majority of learners making progress broadly in line with national averages.
- Cross consortium moderation activities are leading to helpful continuing professional development, but WYLP is some way behind in identifying actions points and how these might lead to measurable improvements. The quality of observations varies. The majority of assessors are enthusiastic and keen, but the opportunity to share good practice, particularly across consortium partners, is not yet having an impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment consistently.
- Learners appreciate the very good vocational and subject expertise of their assessors and trainers and consider they have very effective role models helping them develop and apply their vocational knowledge and develop their skills. The majority of learners have access to a range of good resources with their employers supporting their learning, including good online resources.
- While some assessors plan sessions carefully, and use questioning well to probe learner understanding, not all assessors set out what they intend learners to learn. Assessors do not consistently consider the best approaches to learning to suit individuals. The poorer sessions tend to be too assessor focused and do not enable learners to develop their critical thinking and independence. Assessors are not sufficiently skilful at checking learning. Consequently, not all assessors know what learners have learned.
- The vast majority of learners undertake an initial assessment; however, assessors do not use this consistently well to plan learning. Partners across the consortium effectively support small numbers of learners who have identified learning needs, and this additional support ensures they do at least as well as their peers.
- The majority of learners have regular reviews. A very small number of learners are still waiting for their first review having started the programme four months ago. While the best reviews effectively, involve employers and coordinate learning activities, including opportunities for both on-and-off the job training, many are not effective in reviewing learning and enabling learners to extend their learning meaningfully. As a result their usefulness is limited. Individual learning plans also vary in quality and learners are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets.

- Assessment and feedback to learners is frequent, fair and supportive. Learners appreciate the feedback they receive and mostly understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, evaluative feedback for the more-able learners is not sufficiently challenging, with the consequence that learners are not always reaching their full potential.
- Much assessment is too assessor led. Learners are not routinely taking responsibility for their own learning, with the consequence that they are not sufficiently encouraged to work independently or think about developing their skills further. Assessors are not checking spelling and grammar consistently. Inspectors reviewed some learning materials with spelling and grammatical errors.
- Discrete teaching in functional skills ensures that most learners have the required skills in order to complete their apprenticeships. Learners understand well the importance of developing their functional skills and are keen to improve. The opportunities to reinforce English, mathematics and information technology is not always grasped consistently by all partners, with the consequence that learners do not have enough opportunities to apply these important skills to their vocational area.
- Helpful initial advice and guidance supports the vast majority of learners onto appropriate programmes. WYLP effectively manages the recruitment process across the partnership and learners are well matched to employers and vocational training within their local area. Learners say they receive good advice and guidance on career options and a number of learners take up the opportunity to progress onto higher qualifications when the opportunity arises. For a small minority of learners, advice and guidance is of poor quality, with the consequence that these learners are unsure of the possible next steps in order to progress.
- Learners seen by inspectors treat each other with respect and understand that harassment and bullying are unacceptable. Learners display a sound understanding of their own and others safety. Some learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity, for example, learners on sports programmes are very aware of the need to develop sporting activities that take full account of peoples' abilities, age, gender and culture. However, despite having some good resources at their disposal, assessors often miss opportunities to promote a deeper understanding of equality and diversity during reviews and taught sessions.

Health, public services and care Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates in 2011/12 were very low because of poor retention, as a result of two companies ceasing to trade; retention of new recruits has improved. The standard of learners' work is variable but is at least adequate.
- Learners enjoy their studies and employers comment on their improved self-confidence and their improving professional practice. Learners demonstrate safe working practices and have a sound understanding of respect for individual differences and how to safeguard those in their care. Many progress to the next level of study or promotion within the work setting to, for example, senior care or room supervisor.
- Assessors are well-qualified and vocationally experienced; they use their knowledge well to promote understanding of the sector. Learners and employers value their assessors' vocational expertise and flexibility to meet learners' and employers' needs. For example, assessors undertake observation of practice during evening or week-end shifts when required.
- Assessment is insufficiently varied and relies heavily on the direct observation of practice and witness testimonies. Professional discussions to check learning, during one-to-one sessions, often fail to fully challenge and extend the learner's understanding of, and the implications for, their work. Not all providers offer workshops away from the workplace.

- The majority of sessions do not help learners to work independently. In the better sessions learners are encouraged to reflect on their practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Learners value the detailed oral feedback they receive but it is not recorded systematically in order to inform later reflection.
- Initial information advice and guidance help ensure learners are on an appropriate programme. Individual learning plans and progress reviews vary in quality and focus too much on short-term targets for the completion of units and not enough on medium- and long-term goals for improvement. Although supportive, not all employers are involved sufficiently in monitoring learners' progress during the review process.
- Support for learners is good. For example, one learner was provided with home support following major surgery, additional equipment was provided for a learner with sight impairment and overlays for a learner with dyslexia.
- Collaboration between assessors and functional skill specialists is good and results in the satisfactory development of English and mathematics throughout the programme. Initial assessment ascertains learners' levels of English and mathematics and additional support on a one to one basis or small-group work is provided as required.
- Learners have a sound understanding of inclusion particularly in relation to its relevance to adult care and childcare and understand the need to treat individuals with respect. However, assessors too frequently miss opportunities to check and develop a wider understanding of equality and diversity during sessions and progress reviews.

Retail and commercial enterprises Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates are high because learners are assessed frequently but the quality of assessment practice requires improvement; although there is some good practice there are too many occasions when assessment lacks sufficient rigour. Most learners feel well supported; however, for those learners who undertake all the learning in the workplace there is insufficient privacy to discuss welfare concerns.
- Assessors work closely with employers to motivate learners and support the development of their skills to meet salon standards. Learners benefit from their assessors' up-to-date practical skills and learn well from their practical training in the workplace. The quality of off-the-job training is mixed, some is good and benefits from good quality resources and extends learners knowledge well; however, other sessions require improvement because they do not enthuse and engage learners enough. Warehousing learners develop specialist skills while working with their employers.
- Assessment visits are planned appropriately and most assessment is satisfactorily completed. However, some assessment practice is weak with assessors leading and prompting inappropriately, resulting in incorrect decisions about knowledge and understanding. Internal verification does not consistently identify areas of poor practice and is not targeted enough on priority areas where the quality of assessment is at a higher risk of compromise.
- Insufficient care is taken by assessors to ensure learners build well-presented portfolios and there is too much badly copied, poorly completed paperwork. Overall, feedback, both verbal and written, is comprehensive and useful, and enables learners to understand how they might improve. Too often, however, learners' incorrect written work is not checked and support not given to help them to improve their spelling and grammar.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies learners' skill levels. However, assessors do not use this information consistently to set individual learning targets and they do not always use these targets to inform planning and to ensure that teaching and learning meet each learner's needs effectively. Learners' progress reviews are used to reflect on the progress made; however,

targets are insufficiently specific and informative to enable learners to be clear about what they need to do.

- Learners' progress to higher-level qualifications is good. Staff and employers are responsive to learners' needs and effectively encourage them to progress and take on greater levels of responsibility in the workplace. Learners consider that their programmes prepare them well to progress in their careers.
- Whilst learners understand the need to treat individuals with dignity and respect their understanding of equality and diversity is not well developed. This is because some staff have insufficient knowledge to be able to explore broader aspects of the promotion of equality and diversity.

Preparation for life and work Employability

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Success rates for the achievement of employability units are high; however, learners are not developing English and mathematics skills sufficiently to fully support improved employment opportunities. Assessors do not always correct spelling errors and grammatical inaccuracies.
- Assessors have high expectations of the learners and make good use of small-group size to facilitate and support learning. In the better sessions, assessors plan learning well and use good-quality resources that develop learners' skills and confidence in a wide range of situations. In one session, for example, the assessor used an anatomical context to explain basic concepts to an entry level learner before introducing more technical language.
- Learners develop good independent learning skills at level 1 and 2 through use of the virtual learning environment, with assessors recommending additional websites and materials for learner use. However, the reading level of many resources is too high for entry level learners. Learners at entry level stated there was too much writing on one page for them to understand the booklet they were using.
- Assessors have good subject knowledge and use a wide range of ways of assessing learning. In one functional skills session the learners were encouraged to use self-assessment and peer assessment as well as formal feedback. In one employability session, learners, who are on the course to improve their self-esteem, benefitted from effective questioning and participated well in the group discussion.
- The majority of learners complete initial assessments. In functional skills sessions to support apprenticeship programmes learners are set useful targets to improve their English and mathematics to help them achieve their main learning aim or career goal. However, insufficient attention is paid to improving English and mathematics in employability programmes. In one session, learners benefitted from the assessor embedding mathematics into practical activities; however, the results of initial assessment were not used and consequently there were missed opportunities for further learning.
- In functional skills sessions apprentices are set useful personal targets and benefit from detailed individual learning plans. In the better functional skills sessions, learners are monitored using detailed progress checks and action plans and take responsibility for their own learning. On employability programmes targets lack detail and learners do not take responsibility for their own learning.
- In the majority of sessions feedback on learners' assignments concentrates on the achievement of assessment criteria and lacks sufficient information on what needs to be done to improve. There is little correction of spelling and grammatical errors and, in a few cases, learners are simply referred to a computer spell-check to find the correct spelling of a word.
- Initial advice and guidance are adequate and learners are prepared appropriately for their programmes of learning through, for example, initial interviews with an advisor. There is good

practice in one provider where the advisor continues to support in the session until the learner develops the confidence to work independently.

- Learners have good opportunities to develop their understanding of equality and diversity through their employability programmes. In one session on self-esteem, the assessor used the topic to reinforce the importance of listening to each other and respecting others' views and opinions. However, in another provider too many opportunities were missed to extend learners' understanding through further discussions.

Business, administration and law Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, reflecting the overall success rate, which is close to the national average. The majority of learners develop good vocational skills, build their confidence and gain good occupational skills. However, not all learners are encouraged sufficiently to take additional units to extend their current skills.
- Assessors have high levels of vocational skill and experience and use these well to develop learners' competence in the workplace. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to record learners' assessments, resulting in most learners making good progress.
- Short-term action plans are effective in helping the learner prepare for the next assessment visit. However, individual learning plans focus too heavily on meeting the needs of the framework and not enough on how and what the learner will learn. Employers are very supportive but have little involvement in planning the programme and there are missed opportunities to coordinate the wider learning planned from both on- and off-the-job training.
- Learners are well prepared for assessments and assessors are flexible in meeting employers' and learners' needs. Good use is made of digital recordings and detailed questions are used to ensure learners have a thorough understanding of their progress. Learners receive accurate and useful feedback that confirms their standard of work and informs them of how to improve. The majority of learners use electronic portfolios and can see their progress clearly. However, the more-capable learners are not encouraged sufficiently to work independently and match their own evidence to the standards.
- Advice and guidance are effective and learners appreciate the level of care and support provided by their assessors. Most learners receive a thorough, if not always memorable, induction. A large majority of learners progress from level 2 to level 3. Most learners spoken to by inspectors are only employed for the duration of the programme and the consortium does not sufficiently monitor next employment steps.
- Most learners join the programme with the levels of English and mathematics required to meet the framework and assessors use initial assessment tools effectively for those learners who do not. However, the quality of the teaching, support and resources these learners receive is variable; some receive good individual support, whereas others are left to practise on their own using workbooks and mock tests. Spelling and grammatical errors are not consistently checked.
- Learners have sufficient understanding of equality and diversity and treat each other with respect in the workplace although assessors frequently miss too many opportunities to further extend their knowledge through their assignment work. The questions asked during progress reviews are not sufficiently specific or useful enough to enable learners to broaden their awareness of these matters.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Requires improvement**

- The overall quality of leadership and management requires improvement. Most current learners are making good progress. Success rates in most subject areas in 2011/12 were good apart from in health, public services and care. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment for most learners is uneven and requires improvement. Since the consortium was formed WYLP has launched several initiatives to improve all aspects of the learners' experience but some are very recent and have yet to have much impact.
- WYLP has ambitions to become an outstanding provider of education and training and is highly regarded by partners and employers. The board sets a clear strategic direction and gives priority to making the best use of the collective strengths of the partnership. The management team monitors well the overall performance of learners in the consortium. However, the comprehensive list of performance indicators in the business plan excludes specific mention of, and targets for, improving the quality of teaching and learning and learners' achievements. Not all partner staff set sufficiently challenging targets for all learners.
- The management of subcontractors and the monitoring of staff performance are becoming more rigorous but still require further improvement. Good opportunities for professional development are leading to better practice in assuring the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. The moderation of findings is more robust. Staff are starting to benefit from training opportunities to share and improve their practice in delivering areas such as functional skills.
- The consortium has identified several initiatives to improve key learning processes, and the work of the teaching and learning improvement group, mock inspections, peer observations and fuller moderation practice are all contributing to an improving profile. However, many of these are too recent to have a strong impact on the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment for current learners. There remains considerable variation in the quality of reviews, assessment practice, including initial assessment, the development of functional skills, the extension of learners' knowledge of equality and diversity and planning to meet the particular needs of individual learners.
- The 16 delivery partners in the consortium value highly the strong support and informative guidance from WYLP. Smaller and less experienced partners particularly value the mentoring role of WYLP staff in helping them develop more efficient processes that strengthen their ability to deliver effective teaching and assessment. The quality of information sharing is widely praised. External funding and referral agencies have a high regard for the company and the swift response it makes to meet industry needs.
- Self-evaluation and action planning are improving and some use is made of the delivery partners' own assessments to inform summary findings. Summary findings in the report for subject areas are too brief to give a clear sense of their overall quality. Learners' views are used appropriately to inform judgements. Data are analysed well to illustrate trends in apprentices' performance. Employers are not sufficiently involved in reviews or self-assessment in some areas.
- Learning programmes meet well the needs of learners, employers and regional priorities. The consortium uses extensive data on the local economy well to inform the partnership's capacity to respond to emerging training needs. WYLP is now giving greater priority to improving learners English and mathematical skills. Programmes to enhance the skills of unemployed adults are good but not all learners have positive opportunities for progression. Learning programmes are mostly well managed. Participation levels by apprentices from black and minority ethnic groups are satisfactory.
- Arrangements to ensure that learners work in safe working environments are good. The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners throughout the consortium.

Any emerging issues concerning the well-being or safety of learners are swiftly addressed. A few staff in one partner have not attended recent safeguarding training.

- Clearly written policies and procedures meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Most staff are appropriately trained to recognise and address any abuse or inappropriate behaviour and there are no serious instances of harassment. The provider recognises and has prioritised the need to strengthen its ability to extend learners' knowledge of equality and diversity matters through learning and assessment activities and has purchased a quality package with associated training to achieve this. It is too soon to assess the full effectiveness of recent actions to promote equality and diversity. In 2011/12 there were achievement gaps between some particular groups of learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Provider name				
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning	Employability
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	3	3	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health, public services and care	3
Retail and commercial enterprise	3
Preparation for life and work	3
Business, administration and law	3

Provider details

West Yorkshire Learning Providers	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 992
	Part-time: 244
Principal/CEO	Mr Don Bearley
Date of previous inspection	October 2008

Website address	www.wyplp.org.uk
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Provider information at the time of the inspection								
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	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	110	NA	NA
Part-time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	154	267	42	559	NA	2		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	110							
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"> ■ Accent Community and Regeneration Partnership ■ Aspire-1 ■ Bradford Metropolitan District Council ■ Business Training Company ■ Aire Vocational Training Limited ■ EMD ■ Learning Innovations Training Team ■ Temple Hewitt ■ Roche Training Solutions ■ CMS Training ■ Halifax Opportunities Trust ■ M&M Learning ■ Mark Betts Limited ■ Taylors Training ■ Allied Business Solutions 							

Additional socio-economic information

WYLP is a not-for-profit company that operates from a base in Bradford. It works with a skills consortium of 16 partners to deliver apprenticeship and other workplace training. Learners are drawn from a wide area but mainly from within West Yorkshire. A large number of WYLP learners come from disadvantaged postcodes. The local population is culturally and ethnically diverse and this is reflected in the learner cohort. The unemployment rate for Bradford is above the national average. The proportion of 16 to 24 year-olds not in education, employment or training is also above the national average. In the Bradford area the percentage of 16 year-olds achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is below average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Pamela Blackman HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by WYLP's Performance Contract 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, 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. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the 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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