

YH Training Services Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		18–22 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Outcomes are good for the vast majority of learners. Success rates have greatly increased in the last three years and the majority of learners develop good personal, employability and occupational skills.
- Employers report significant improvements in learners' team working and workplace skills through effective support from trainers and assessors.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good for the majority of learners with tutors providing good role models and setting high levels of aspiration.
- The strong support that learners receive motivates them to learn, make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Managers and staff work together very effectively, setting high standards for learners and using particularly good performance-management processes to ensure improvements in teaching and learning.
- Senior managers set a clear vision for improvement based on a very good understanding of the regional and local needs and strong partnership working that develops good opportunities for learners.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- A minority of foundation or employability learners are making slow progress into further education or training or in achieving their functional skills qualifications.
- Too few learners experience outstanding teaching, learning and assessment that include the opportunities to use interactive information and learning technologies (ILT).
- Directors and senior managers do not sufficiently use long-term strategic action planning to promote the systematic development of cross-company themes such as equality and diversity, functional skills and access to work placements.
- Managers do not make sufficient use of data to set a range of challenging improvement targets in addition to those for success rates.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more employability or foundation learners achieve their functional skills qualifications or progress into further education, training or employment by setting and monitoring challenging short- and medium-term targets.
- Develop trainers' skills in using ILT in a more interactive way to promote better teaching and learning in all areas, including functional skills, by further staff training, sharing of best practice and improved use of the observation process.
- Develop robust action planning that includes longer-term strategic planning as well as the systematic development of key cross-company themes. Ensure that planning is based on good management information that is shared with, and understood by, all staff and is linked to the quality cycle.
- Further improve management information systems so that reports on progress and achievement are systematically available and in a format that is understood by all staff. Provide training to enable managers and staff to analyse and use the data reports.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. The vast majority of learners achieve well. Overall success rates have improved and are now good. The proportion of apprentices achieving within planned timescales has improved consistently in the last three years and is significantly above national rates.
- Current learners are also making good progress with their learning programmes. In particular, learners undertaking an apprenticeship in health and social care experience very high levels of achievement. Learners in administration, accounting and retail areas achieve good outcomes. In the last two years, the number of learners who have progressed from an intermediate to an advanced qualification has continued to increase but requires further improvement. Success rates for learners in the workplace are above the high national rates.
- In the last two years, outcomes for learners involved in employability programmes have been high, with many going on to positive destinations such as employment or further training on completion of their programme. For those on construction programmes, progression into employment has been particularly good. Achievement of vocational qualifications for learners on employability programmes is good overall but very good in retail, customer service, accounting, and administration.
- Outcomes for foundation learners are good overall and particularly good for learners on the access to apprenticeship programme.
- Foundation learners achieve good standards in English and mathematical skills but achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) requires improvement. Success rates in functional skills for learners on employability programmes are increasing but require further improvement.
- YH Training Services Limited (YH) has identified differences in performance across specific groups of learners, such as learners with additional learning support needs. Following YH's timely actions, the success rate for that cohort has increased significantly in the last year.
- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills. For example, most apprentices gain increased confidence in their telephone and communication skills with both colleagues and customers. Employers report significant improvements in learners' team working and workplace

skills through effective support from trainers and assessors. Foundation learners develop increased confidence and the ability to manage their behaviour more effectively.

- Learners produce work of a good quality. Trainers in the retail programme support learners to improve the standard of their work through particularly challenging questions. Learners enjoy their programmes and take pride in their increasing skills.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the good and improved outcomes for learners, with high overall success rates and increased skills development for the vast majority of learners. Trainers have high expectations of learners and are very successful in motivating them to work hard, make good progress and achieve within planned end dates.
- In the majority of good or better sessions, planning is detailed and aims and objectives are clearly stated. Learning is carefully matched to learners' preferred learning styles and to their needs and abilities. In retailing and wholesaling, for example, particularly good coaching helps learners understand the theory of retailing and develops their occupational competencies. In the small number of less effective sessions, planning is insufficiently detailed to take account of individual learners' abilities and learning needs.
- Good use is often made of ILT. However, not all trainers are proficient in its use. Although an interactive whiteboard and data projector were available in one session observed during the inspection they were not used sufficiently to enliven learning and to stimulate learners. Trainers make particularly good use of electronic tablets for completing progress review records efficiently. However, unreliable internet connections in retail workplaces prevent learners from accessing their electronic portfolios and this may delay their progress.
- Assessment is good and a wide range of assessment methods is used. Good oral feedback is given to learners and they know what they have done correctly and what they need to do to improve further. However, written feedback is not consistently detailed. Good use is made of online assessments from which learners receive immediate results. Internal verification is robust.
- Support for learners is particularly good and it makes a significant contribution to their retention, progress and achievement. Many staff are very knowledgeable and have good vocational experience which they use to great advantage when providing learning support. Personal support is also good. Trainers working with foundation learners provide high levels of personal support sensitively and use planned peer support beneficially to promote learning.
- Trainers make good use of initial and diagnostic assessments for determining learners' starting points in English, mathematics, and ICT. However, the assessment results are not consistently used well to develop individual learning plans. Good use is made of skill scans for selecting optional units in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes and for identifying and analysing learners' occupational training needs.
- Overall, the development of learners' functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT is adequate. In most vocational training, English and mathematics are not sufficiently embedded or developed within occupational training sessions. However, in the Foundation Learning programme, trainers plan for, and successfully embed, English and mathematics into sessions. In a healthy eating session, foundation learners counted the calories in food and, as part of a quiz, tallied the results. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' written work are not routinely corrected and used to develop learners' skills further.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Most learners receive good information and advice to enable them to enrol on a suitable course at the correct level and to be very clear about progression routes and opportunities available. Good advice is given to learners through YH's employment brokerage service which successfully matches them to employers with apprenticeship opportunities.
- Learners generally have an adequate understanding of equality and diversity through their induction and specific programme units. However, equality and diversity are insufficiently

promoted through sessions and not enough importance is given to developing learners' basic awareness. Staff receive regular training in equality and diversity but some are insufficiently skilled and confident in promoting equality and diversity in sessions. The majority of learners work cooperatively and show mutual respect.

Retailing and wholesaling
Apprenticeships
Other work based learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting the good outcomes for learners. The percentage of learners who achieve their qualification in the planned time is significantly above national rates. Learners' work is of a good standard, particularly at advanced level.
- Apprentices receive good, challenging coaching that strengthens their effectiveness in the workplace and deepens their understanding of complex areas such as retail legislation. However, the planning for coaching sessions lacks sufficiently clear learning objectives and structure.
- Trainers provide highly motivating support and respond promptly to learners' queries between visits, ensuring progress is not delayed. Productive working relationships with employers ensure learners have access to necessary training and assessment opportunities.
- Trainers have very good retail experience which they use effectively to extend apprentices' understanding of retailing in other stores. They make very effective use of carefully prepared learning materials to support retailing and functional skills development and use digital technology appropriately when assessing. Many learners using electronic portfolios experience difficulties connecting to the internet in their stores, which hinders progress.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive. Trainers make good use of the results of learning-styles assessments to plan training that meets learners' specific needs. Particularly good use is made of skill scans to ensure apprentices' work roles match programme requirements and, where appropriate, to identify higher-level units that will provide apprentices with appropriate challenge and support their professional development. The more-skilful trainers work very effectively with learners to plan early completion of units that will increase their competence in the workplace.
- The standard of assessment is good. Trainers use a broad range of assessment methods and respond flexibly to requests for additional assessment visits, helping learners to maintain focus on their awards. Thorough questioning encourages learners to think about how they meet occupational standards in their work roles. Good oral feedback following assessments motivates learners. Good use of internal verifier feedback by trainers encourages learners to reflect on and improve their performance.
- The quality of progress reviews is variable. Better reviews specifically focus on progress and result in clear, appropriate short-term targets. Trainers make good links between the apprenticeship and in-store training. Productive discussions encourage learners to think about wider personal and career-related development. Many review records do not provide sufficiently detailed targets and trainers frequently fail to engage learners in meaningful discussions about equality and diversity.
- Trainers provide a high level of support for apprentices to achieve their functional skills qualifications. However, trainers do not routinely correct learners' spelling and grammatical errors.
- Learners receive appropriate advice and guidance before enrolling onto their apprenticeships. Trainers provide good, timely information about progression opportunities.
- Learners have an adequate understanding of equality and diversity. However, this comes mostly through their employer rather than from YH. Trainers do not sufficiently look for ways to

promote equality and diversity within the retail programme delivery. Promotion of equality depends too much on the confidence of the trainer.

Employability training Employability

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment on the employment training programme are good, which matches the good overall outcomes for learners. Many learners are making very good progress, including gaining employment.
- Trainers use a wide range of appropriate strategies to engage learners. Learners who have not been successful at school find the support and reassurance they receive allows them to develop self-confidence and achieve qualifications, often for the first time in their lives. Most sessions are planned thoroughly to develop good employability skills.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments are used very effectively to identify learners' attainment levels. However, the outcomes from assessment are not used consistently to plan learning. Individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed and short- and medium-term targets are not specific, measurable or time-bound.
- Resources to support learning are good. Classrooms are pleasant and provide good learning environments. Paper-based materials are professionally produced and recent purchases of laptops and interactive whiteboards ensure that most learners now have access to a fuller range of resources. In a few sessions, insufficient use of ILT results in learners not being able to fully develop their technology skills and confidence.
- Learners receive high levels of support to develop their functional skills. Trainers use resources creatively to support learning and make English and mathematics fun and relevant to learners. For example, in one functional skills English session on prefixes, all the examples used to develop understanding were directly relevant to job-seeking skills, and paired work encouraged learners to contribute and debate.
- Trainers understand the needs of their learners very well and refer them to specialist agencies for any additional support needs, including dyslexia. Enthusiastic and committed trainers have, or are developing, the appropriate levels of skills and qualifications. Good opportunities for professional development ensure that sufficient numbers of staff have higher-level qualifications in literacy and numeracy.
- Trainers provide learners with constructive oral feedback, which clearly identifies ways in which they can improve. However, written feedback is not always sufficiently detailed and evaluative. Learners are not routinely involved in reviewing their own progress, which can limit the ownership and direction of their learning.
- Pre-course advice and guidance are effective in motivating learners to succeed on a programme that is designed to improve their employability skills. Induction is thorough and learners receive good information about their rights, responsibilities and entitlements. Centre staff provide additional guidance on future options and refer learners to specialist agencies, such as the National Careers Service, when this is appropriate.
- Learners work together very effectively and show mutual respect. Trainers do not always promote equality and diversity sufficiently in sessions. Learners are not always provided with opportunities to discuss what equality and diversity mean in practice, and to recognise the importance of difference.

Foundation Learning Foundation Learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the improved outcomes for learners which are now good overall. Learners participate very well in sessions and are making good

progress in developing their communication skills, which impacts positively upon confidence, self-esteem and behaviour.

- Trainers use a wide range of teaching methods and assessment activities to successfully engage learners. Sessions are well paced and provide a good challenge for most learners. Learners have good opportunities to research, and to develop team-working and independent thinking skills. However, they do not always have enough activities to enable them to develop their skills in the use of ILT.
- Learning support is good overall. However, insufficient attention is given to planning the use of learning support assistants and to ensuring they are effectively deployed.
- Trainers have a wide range of vocational experience which is used very effectively to engage learners. Theoretical training and vocational practice are skilfully linked, which successfully motivates learners and encourages them to aim for high standards in their work.
- Too few learners have work experience as an integral part of their programme. Although a minority benefit from experience in work placements, for example, in hotels and care homes, this is an aspect that requires improvement.
- A good range of assessment methods is used skilfully by trainers. In the military preparation courses they use very effective assessment techniques appropriate to drill parades and physical fitness. While oral feedback provides learners with invaluable information about how they can improve their skills, written feedback is insufficiently detailed. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not routinely corrected.
- Initial assessment results are appropriately used to plan for the effective learning of functional English and mathematics skills. For example, in a healthy eating session learners counted the calories in food and, as part of a quiz, tallied the results. Learners expand their vocabulary well by using new words and practising their use with peers. All learners report a good increase in confidence in their use of mathematics, English and communication skills.
- Monthly reviews very effectively track learners’ progress and learners are actively involved in the process. Appropriate medium- and long-term targets are set and achievements are systematically monitored against them.
- Trainers provide a high level of personal support to learners. They are skilful at providing good support for learners to make progress in their social, emotional and behavioural development. When necessary, learners are sensitively signposted to specialist agencies, such as those dealing with dyslexia and housing issues.
- Information, advice and guidance are of a consistently high standard. Pre-entry guidance is particularly effective in recruiting learners onto programmes. Learners benefit from comprehensive and practical careers and academic advice which motivates them to plan for their future.
- Learners have an awareness of equality and diversity, which are included effectively in their induction programme. However, equality and diversity are not actively promoted in learning sessions.

**Accounting, finance and administration
Apprenticeships
Other work based learning**

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which is reflected in the overall outcomes for learners that are also good. Trainers are appropriately qualified with relevant occupational experience, which they use very effectively to support learners. Learners are clear about what is expected of them and this encourages them to work hard and complete their programme within planned timescales.
- Trainers use a good range of relevant activities to engage, motivate and develop learners. Learners engage in focused discussions which challenge and stretch their understanding.

However, in the minority of less effective lessons, insufficient time is spent consolidating knowledge and understanding, questioning lacks depth and delivery is sometimes rushed.

- Learners are set clear objectives, and action plans are used very effectively to plan learning and review progress. Good use of initial and diagnostic assessment results ensures that learners are enrolled on the correct level of functional skills. Good use is also made of skill scans to ensure that learners are enrolled on the correct NVQ. The majority of learners successfully progress on to the next level of qualification.
- Trainers make frequent visits to workplaces to support, coach and assess learners. Visits are arranged at convenient times to suit learners and employers. Individual coaching successfully develops learners' vocational skills. Specific feedback and guidance identify actions that help learners to have a good understanding of their progress.
- Assessments are thoroughly planned and flexible. Learners frequently submit evidence for assessment and this makes a significant contribution to their progress. Good oral feedback provides learners with helpful advice on how to progress. However, written feedback is not sufficient to enable them to reflect on their performance and how it can be improved. Where available, online assessments are used and good use is made of immediate feedback.
- Employer engagement is good. Employers are kept fully informed of learners' progress and they ensure that learners have good access to in-house training, which further develops their knowledge and skills. Employers value the high level of support that is given to learners because it enables them to gain qualifications and become effective team members.
- The development of learners' English competencies requires improvement. Trainers do not routinely check spelling, punctuation and grammar in written work. Accountancy learners' skills in mathematics are improved in all lessons. However, administration learners' mathematical skills require further improvement.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance at induction and during progress reviews to enable them to make informed choices about further study and career progression. They are clear about the occupational opportunities that are available to them.
- Learners have an adequate understanding of equality and diversity and treat staff and each other with respect. Equality and diversity are adequately addressed at induction and in subsequent reviews. However, equality and diversity are not actively promoted in learning sessions and learners' basic understanding is not sufficiently developed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors and senior managers provide good management and are ambitious to improve the provision further. The managing director and senior management team have a shared vision to provide high-quality training programmes for learners and employers. Managers have a good understanding of the needs of employers, apprentices and the unemployed. They have a good awareness of national training priorities, being active with national and regional networks. Morale within the highly motivated staff team is good.
- The organisation has undergone a number of carefully managed changes to the provision including re-positioning to deliver programmes for unemployed adults. Managers fully recognise the need to tackle underperformance of staff to raise the quality of the learners' experience, and have taken good actions to bring this about. YH makes good use of data to monitor performance against the key targets of overall success rates and those gained within planned timescales.
- Wider management and analysis of data, such as progressions through programme levels or the positive destinations of learners, are not always given a high enough priority for target-setting. The company has appropriate business, employer development, and training centre action plans. However, these are mainly concerned with narrow targets and the generation of income.

- Directors have insufficiently developed long-term strategic planning. Planning that enables a whole-company approach to development, ensuring company-wide themes such as equality and diversity or the development of functional skills are delivered systematically, is also insufficiently developed.
- Despite much success, managers recognise that success rates and progressions to positive destinations, for a minority of learners, need to improve further.
- YH has developed a range of different meeting structures across the organisation that facilitates highly effective communication, sharing of practice and development of provision. These work very effectively in the geographically dispersed provision to ensure that all staff are kept up to date and have a say in the direction of the company.
- A highly rigorous approach to performance management is now firmly established and is promoting good achievements for learners. This is conducted through monthly meetings by managers with each staff member to monitor performance against key performance indicators. This is followed up by similar monthly internal verifier meetings.
- Quarterly meetings collect the results of all audits, internal verifier information and any observations of teaching and learning and ensure that staff are kept on track towards their targets. Staff bonuses are also linked strongly to increased success rates, providing an additional motivator. This approach has successfully raised staff accountability for the achievement of company priorities and awareness of the part they can play in achieving them.
- Senior managers and staff have revised the system for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment and this is improving their quality appropriately in conjunction with the internal verification process. However, the process is not always sufficiently judgemental and specific, with some over-grading and insufficient moderation to ensure consistency.
- Self-assessment arrangements are good. Managers and staff have a good knowledge of the provision and meet regularly to review quality and effectiveness. They have mostly identified the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision correctly. The views of learners and employers are valued and collected appropriately.
- YH has established good partnerships with employers, subcontractors and external partners, such as Jobcentre Plus, and works with them very effectively to broaden training activities. Managers and staff develop good bespoke training packages to meet both employers' needs and those of the learners. However, while relations with subcontractors are good, YH is aware that the management of subcontractors is not sufficiently formal.
- Equality and diversity is managed appropriately with relevant policies, procedures and staff training. A working party drawn from staff across the company meets regularly to take appropriate actions. However, the promotion of equality and diversity during training and assessment activities is insufficient and requires improvement. There are few achievement gaps in YH. However, where they exist the company has taken good and very effective action to eliminate them.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners meet legislative requirements. Staff are highly diligent in promoting the welfare of learners and they work in partnership to make sure learners are well protected. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. Policies and procedures are appropriate.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

YH Training Services Limited					
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	Foundation Learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Retailing and wholesaling	2
Employability training	2
Foundation learning	2
Accounting and finance	2
Administration	2

Provider details

YH Training Services Limited	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,004
	Part-time: 135
Principal/CEO	Frank McMahon
Date of previous inspection	January 2010
Website address	www.yh-group.co.uk

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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	72	53	3	35	0	7	0	3
Part-time	0	180	2	72	0	19	0	3
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	106	244	6	119	0	17		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Business Improvement Solutions Ltd ■ CareSkills Ltd ■ Superskills Ltd ■ Whitby and District Fishing Industry School Ltd 							

Additional socio-economic information

YH has its head office in Scarborough, North Yorkshire. It delivers training across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The director of training and development manages the programme reporting directly to the managing director.

YH delivers training under a variety of contracting arrangements. It offers a wide range of apprenticeship programmes to learners based in companies across the region. YH also has contracts to deliver employability and Foundation Learning programmes, including a specific foundation programme for young people interested in a career in the armed forces. Through its four subcontractors, YH provides programmes in health and social care, manufacturing, construction and the fishing industry.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Margaret Hobson HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's training and development 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 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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