

TRN (Train) Ltd

Independent learning provider

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| Inspection dates | | 13–17 May 2013 |
| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Good-2 |
| | Previous inspection: | Good-2 |
| 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:

- A high proportion of learners gain qualifications, promotions at work, go on to further study or gain jobs.
- Learners develop very good levels of skills that they use well both at work and to help them gain access to employment.
- Assessors/trainers have good levels of professional experience and expertise that they use very well to the benefit of learners.
- Learners benefit from good coaching, support, and information, advice and guidance from staff that encourages many to progress to higher or additional qualifications.
- Strong management, particularly in a changing environment, continues to set high standards and aspirations for learners.
- Particularly strong partnerships enable learners both to develop good skills and to gain wider work and training opportunities.
- Highly effective performance management processes challenge and enable staff to perform well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough apprentices complete their qualifications.
- Too few teaching, learning and assessment sessions are outstanding.
- Trainers and assessors do not promote equality and diversity or safeguarding consistently or meaningfully, through learning opportunities.
- Not all quality processes are well-established or applied in practice to improve teaching, learning and assessment consistently, or to make informed judgements for self-assessment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more apprentices successfully complete their qualifications by: monitoring their progress; by intervening with extra support; and by extending the variety of teaching approaches when apprentices show signs of falling behind.
- Ensure all staff are fully trained and confident to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment by: continuing their professional development in this area through gaining more qualifications; the sharing of good practice; developing wider teaching methodologies; and using the observation of teaching and learning more rigorously to improve to outstanding.
- Train assessors to appreciate the challenges to equality and the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Inform them on the impact that safeguarding issues can have on learners. Review and amend promotional materials so they are easier for learners to use. Ensure trainers are more confident and consistently promote safeguarding and equality and diversity to learners in reviews and training activities.
- Simplify and streamline where possible key quality processes to ensure they meet the company's needs and are fully effective. Use the information arising from them to improve practice across the company.

Inspection judgements

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| Outcomes for learners | Good |
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- Workplace learners on construction programmes gain their qualifications at an outstanding level, both overall and those within planned timescales. The success rates for the smaller number of engineering learners are also outstanding.
- Success rates for learners on employability courses are good overall, with those on construction and business administration related courses being outstanding. They benefit significantly from additional units at both intermediate and advanced levels that provide stretching and challenging goals.
- Employers value these extra units highly and view them as a key to learners gaining employment. For example, construction learners can offer employers a good awareness of asbestos or of domestic drainage, giving them a significant advantage over other candidates.
- Overall success rates for health and social care apprentices were at national averages in the last full year, with in-year data showing a significant upward trend, though still requiring improvement. The rate that apprentices achieve qualifications in planned timescales is well over national averages.
- Apprentices and workplace learners develop very good skills that they use well, for example, learners in health and care research health-related topics such as dementia very well, and use this to understand their clients' behaviour. Business administration learners research training and development for their staff. Construction learners develop a wide range of skills that, in at least one case, has allowed the employer to gain lucrative work contracts.
- Learners on employability programmes gain a good knowledge and understanding both of the world of work generally and of the specific sector to which they are applying. They demonstrate their success in gaining this knowledge through the high numbers moving into positive destinations such as employment, further study or voluntary work. However, more learners could benefit from progressing to such positive destinations.
- Half of all employability learners who gained jobs have previously been unemployed for over a year, with over a quarter of them being out of work for three years, so have progressed well from very low starting points in terms of their confidence and motivation.

- Learners across all programmes develop good skills in team-work, with some taking on tasks that demonstrate well their ability to work independently and take the initiative. Health and care apprentices gain promotion and take on roles such as an infection control champion. A significant minority of apprentices progress well from lower-level courses to higher. Learners are highly aspirational and keen to further their careers.
- Learners develop understanding of English and mathematics at an appropriate rate, although for some learners progress in this area has been slow.
- Managers use a range of information to understand achievement gaps for learners and have taken some actions to address these, including improving initial assessment and the programme design for apprentices. They have been particularly successful in ensuring younger apprentices start the right programme and stay throughout.
- Most achievement gaps have narrowed; however, the success rates for men are low compared to those for women. Managers are not yet using management information in a systematic and fully effective way to narrow all achievement gaps.

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| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
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- Learners are highly engaged and motivated. They benefit particularly well from the good support and care from staff. Many are encouraged to progress to higher levels through the challenging expectations of staff. Good coaching and mentoring enables learners to achieve additional qualifications and some gain promotions or extra responsibilities in their workplace.
- Staff use their good vocational expertise productively to inspire learners and this contributes well to high standards of practical work. Accomplished trainers plan sessions well and use varied activities to sustain learners' interests and concentration. Staff are highly motivational and learners are enthused to do well. Learners develop their ideas and contribute well to group discussions that are stimulated by focused questioning from trainers.
- Some theory teaching is less successful and trainers take insufficient account of the need to vary learning styles and activities to keep all learners focused. Trainers do not always take enough account of the results of initial assessment in planning programmes.
- Trainers value the positive actions to monitor and improve teaching and assessment arising from the observation of the teaching and learning process. They appreciate the guidance and support from observers in helping them improve.
- Accommodation is mostly good and trainers use stimulating learning resources well to support individual coaching and group training. They also use learning technologies well to develop practical activities for learners. The provider works collaboratively with partners to increase access for learners to specialist equipment. On a few occasions, trainers make poor use of information technology and fail to give employability learners enough opportunity to be responsible for their own learning.
- Trainers make good use of initial assessment for most learners to test both their functional skills and their vocational aptitude. On-going assessment is thorough, well-planned and regular and learners have a good knowledge of their progress. Assessors arrange sessions very flexibly to meet the demands of learner and employer work patterns. Internal verification is rigorous and assures the quality and consistency of the assessment process.
- Learners benefit from a good and flexible range of assessment methods to capture their learning. Assessors and learners make good use of computer-based portfolios to ensure that units are completed and assessed promptly and to identify any areas of concern.
- Employers contribute very actively to learners' reviews in the workplace. Learners benefit considerably from the detailed oral and written feedback they receive from trainers, assessors and employers. They know how well they have done and use this information to improve their work or to plan further training to extend their knowledge. Learners' portfolios demonstrate a good standard of work.

- Learners who need help with English and mathematics skills to progress and achieve their qualifications receive satisfactory support from trainers and assessors. Construction learners develop good mathematical skills enabling them to apply this learning to a range of work contexts. Across all programmes, staff do not pay enough attention to extending learners' literacy skills. Not all assessors correct spelling and grammatical errors in written work.
- Induction programmes very effectively ensure learners are on the right programmes and at the right level. Learners identify their preferred learning styles and assessor/trainers generally use these well to plan programmes. Induction packs are very informative and are adapted well to meet programme and vocational requirements for learners on different courses. Assessors, trainers and employers provide good information, advice and guidance on progression and further opportunities.
- Staff promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Learners acquire good knowledge during induction of aspects such as legislation and respect for others; however, trainers and assessors create few opportunities for learners to extend their understanding through challenging discussions or case studies in the rest of the programme.
- All learners feel safe and have a good knowledge of safe working. Assessors/trainers do not always use reviews and training sessions sufficiently to extend learners' wider knowledge of safeguarding.

Health and social care Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as demonstrated by the improving outcomes for learners with current learners progressing well. Learners enjoy their programme, gain in self-confidence to ask questions and challenge poor practice in the workplace. Learners are inspired to provide a good standard of work and advance their career. For example, learners in a care home have additional responsibilities, one as a dementia champion and the other as an equality and diversity champion. Both are working towards team-leader awards.
- Assessors are well qualified, vocationally experienced and have appropriate qualifications. Assessors plan flexibly around the work patterns of individual learners and make visits at unsocial hours including late evenings and weekends. Assessors monitor individual progress well through regular reviews and comprehensive documentation.
- Assessors motivate learners well and inspire them to aim high when considering future career opportunities. Employers and assessors collaborate well to monitor progress and ensure learners stay on target to achieve.
- Learners value the support and flexibility of their assessors in meeting their personal and employment needs. Where learners want to complete ahead of target, they are given additional weekly sessions, and in a minority of cases twice weekly, enabling them to achieve early. However, historically a small minority of learners have fallen behind and become demotivated due to changes in assessors and gaps in visits.
- Assessors promote learning well and encourage learners to make good progress and take responsibility for their own learning. For example, a pregnant learner was able, through risk assessment, to safeguard her health when working. She used this experience to demonstrate a good understanding of relevant legislation for health and safety and the implications for professional practice.
- Staff plan assessments well, ensuring that appropriate evidence is completed with the learning linked to the learners' professional practice. Good use is made of technology to enable learners to record their assessment and progress; however, not all learners are able to access the computer-based portfolio. Oral feedback enables learners to improve; however, the quality of written feedback is variable.
- Resources to support learning are good. Assessors work collaboratively to develop comprehensive workbooks. Hand-outs make useful reference to a number of appropriate web

sites and other resources to encourage further research and study. Learners take responsibility for their own learning and demonstrate evidence of good research skills. A minority of learners are unable to use the internet due to poor reception in some areas.

- Initial advice and guidance is good providing the learner with a clear understanding of programme requirement and timescales. When learners identify any additional learning needs prompt actions are put into place. Exit interviews offer guidance for career progression although the majority of learners discuss progression opportunities with their employer.
- Good use of initial assessment ensures that learners start at an appropriate level and that staff provide appropriate English and mathematics support. Assessors refer learners who require a high level of additional support to specialist organisations. Individualised lesson plans include the development of English and mathematics relevant to health and social care work. However, not all assessors correct spelling and grammatical errors on learners' work.
- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity although assessors do not consistently use opportunities to extend their knowledge throughout the programme. Learners have a thorough knowledge and understanding of how to safeguard clients but are less clear on safeguarding as it relates to their own personal circumstances.

Building and construction Other work based learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflected in the outstanding success rates for learners on workplace programmes. Learners make very good progress and the proportion achieving within planned timescales is high and well above similar groups of learners nationally.
- Learners are highly motivated and develop their vocational skills in the workplace very well, producing high quality work using excellent industry standard resources. For example, learners demonstrate high skill levels in safely demolishing a building in a residential area using heavy construction plant.
- Assessors have good industry skills and knowledge that benefits learners well. They use a wide range of appropriate assessment strategies, including the use of video, to engage learners and to meet their needs. Learners receive good quality and challenging coaching that strengthens their effectiveness in the workplace and deepens their understanding of complex ideas and industry regulations.
- In the most effective lessons, assessors draw on their industrial experience well to link theory to industry practice. They set challenging but realistic targets that learners achieve well in the planned timescales. Learners demonstrate safe working practices and have very good knowledge of health and safety legislation.
- Employers and learners value the flexibility of assessors who attend sites to carry out assessments at short notice. They also appreciate the support and guidance provided by assessors. Employers provide good extra training and development to supplement TRN's training.
- Induction is effective. Assessors make good use of the results of learning-styles assessments to plan training that meets learners' specific needs. Particularly effective skill scans ensure learners' work roles match the most appropriate programme. Assessors work very effectively with learners to plan the earliest possible completion date for their qualification.
- All learners undertake initial and diagnostic assessments of literacy and numeracy during induction; however, the outcomes of these assessments do not always consistently inform planned learning. Staff guide learners to literacy or numeracy training but few take this up; however, assessors provide effective individual support as part of the overall training.
- Learners develop their mathematics skills by being able to estimate, quantify and calculate through a range of tasks, integrated into their programme. For example, after coaching, one learner was able to identify capacity load limits for forklift trucks and work out the size of work

areas. However, the development of literacy skills requires improvement. Assessors do not routinely correct spelling and grammar in learners' work.

- Learners' portfolios are well organised and assessment of work is frequent and thoroughly planned. Assessors provide prompt written and verbal feedback. Written feedback is particularly detailed and constructive and gives clear direction to learners about how they can further improve their work. Most assessors use very good questioning techniques to stretch and challenge learners. Target-setting is good and assessors monitor the progress of learners effectively.
- Learners receive good, timely advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about further study and career progression. For example, assessors offer learners information on abrasive wheels, asbestos awareness and manual handling qualifications. A significant minority benefit well from taking up this offer.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Assessors cover equality and diversity sufficiently in induction; however, it is not regularly reinforced with learners thereafter either in reviews or teaching sessions and learners have limited understanding.

Employability Training

Employability

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good, matching the high number of learners who achieve their qualifications and progress into positive destinations that include jobs, further training and voluntary work. Learners enjoy the good lessons where they improve significantly their confidence and develop good group collaboration skills.
- Trainers have a very good understanding of learners' individual and often complex needs. They skilfully encourage and support learners. Trainers have high expectations of their learners and this motivates them to raise their aspirations. They explain concepts clearly and this helps learners to make good progress.
- Trainers use their knowledge and extensive expertise to good effect in lessons to provide clear vocational examples to illustrate the key learning concepts, for example, when discussing how infections can occur through cross-contamination. Trainers structure lessons well with clear links in learning that build on learners' prior knowledge. Learners participate highly in discussions and team tasks, completing these with enthusiasm.
- Practical activities are good and provide highly stimulating learning experiences. Learners demonstrate their understanding and application of learning well, for example, when using manikins to practice resuscitation techniques. Trainers assess learners thoroughly through very effective questioning.
- Planning for lessons requires further development to ensure that staff organise activities well enough to meet individual learners' needs. Initial assessment is comprehensive and provides a detailed profile of the learner. However, trainers do not always use this information effectively enough to plan challenging learning.
- Learners receive constructive verbal feedback that highlights how they can improve. Trainers provide detailed written feedback on assessment so that learners know what they have done well and what they need to improve. Learners produce work to a high standard, for example, when explaining the effects of dementia. Assessment material, workbooks and information booklets are of a good quality.
- The standard of learners' written English is high and work in their portfolios is good, particularly in the health and social care employability option. Trainers do not routinely correct errors of spelling and grammar in learners' written work and they do not ensure that opportunities occur in their lessons for the development of functional skills.
- TRN has highly effective relationships with the Jobcentre and other agencies to promote the employability programme. The well-established and highly productive links with employers provide learners with good progression opportunities into employment. Learners receive good,

clear and detailed information and advice on their learning programmes and progression routes. However, the recording of key milestones in learners' reviews is not detailed enough to monitor progress sufficiently.

- Staff challenge learners to achieve a good range of intermediate and sometimes advanced units, which improves significantly their chances of securing employment. Learners, some of whom have been long-term unemployed, receive good additional support to overcome their barriers to learning and to ensure they complete their qualifications in a timely manner.
- Learners' understanding of health and safety is good. They feel very comfortable to learn in the safe environments. They can explain well equality and diversity and treat each other fairly and with respect. However, tutors do not always promote and explore equality and diversity sufficiently in lessons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strategic leadership in TRN is highly effective, particularly so in identifying and rectifying the underlying reasons for the previous decline in apprenticeship success rates. Managers took decisive and highly effective actions when staff failed to meet a number of quality and financial performance targets, conducting an extensive and successful reorganisation at all levels of the business.
- The managing director extensively revised staff roles and responsibilities with a clearer focus on accountability and performance aligned to both improving outcomes for learners and ensuring that the company successfully responds to business development opportunities. Since the restructure, managers have set a clear strategic direction for the business, which is well understood and communicated.
- Performance-management processes are working well across the organisation and are leading to sustained improvement. Appraisals now succinctly reinforce company values, behaviours and expectations, and contribute positively towards improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers monitor assessors' performance effectively against key performance indicators.
- They quickly identify any staff development needs in order to maintain professional standards, and ensure individuals have an appropriate skills profile commensurate with their job role. Managers effectively challenge staff identified as underperforming and where necessary, implement the formal capability arrangements swiftly. Staff morale is high and supportive of the new management culture and systems.
- The revised arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment are good. The observation system is self-critical and mostly accurate in terms of its evaluative judgements and the reported grades. Managers observing teaching and learning activities focus on what learners are doing, the skills they are developing and the progress that they make in the classroom and beyond. Observers provide detailed oral feedback; however, action plans often lack clear targets to improve.
- Improvements to quality assurance arrangements now place a stronger focus on the learners' experience. There are now more succinct procedures covering all the key processes of training including initial assessment, internal verification and the observation of training. A revised system of internal audits provides a more rigorous review of the learner' experience. These combined processes are leading to good improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Self-assessment arrangements require improvement. Although self-assessment is broadly accurate, senior managers have made insufficient use of feedback from all interested parties to inform judgements. In addition, some of the judgements contained in the report are not sufficiently self-critical in identifying areas for improvement.
- Appraisals provide staff with effective development and support which ensures staff are equipped with both the confidence and knowledge to provide learners with a good experience.

Staff value this support and are responding well by implementing a broad range of teaching and learning strategies. Staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

- Staff make good use of an extensive range of partnerships to ensure that training offered reflects local demand and skills gaps in the North East region for both employers and learners. New training venues located in key centres around the region provide local and accessible opportunities for learners. Highly effective work with partners such as Jobcentre Plus and a wide range of employers is ensuring that unemployed learners are getting good help to enter jobs.
- The promotion of equality and diversity to learners requires improvement. The company has a well-considered equality strategy covering learners, employers and staff and recently won a highly respected regional equality award for its work in promoting construction to women. However, although equality and diversity is well promoted and discussed with learners at induction staff do not sufficiently reinforce these during the programme.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements; they are robust, well planned, and cover all staff and learners. Policies and procedures are appropriate and are up to date. Measures to secure learners safety and well-being are good; however, some learners have a weak understanding of safeguarding procedures.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

| TRN (TRAIN) Ltd | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 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 |
| Overall effectiveness | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Outcomes for learners | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

| Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Grade |
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| Health and social care | 2 |
| Building and construction | 2 |
| Employability training | 2 |

| 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 | 108 | N/A | 230 | N/A | 2 | N/A | N/A |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | | |
| | 30 | 188 | N/A | 150 | N/A | N/A | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Number of learners aged 14-16 | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Number of community learners | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Number of employability learners | 108 | | | | | | | |
| Funding received from | Skills Funding Agency (SFA) | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | N/A | | | | | | | |

Additional socio-economic information

TRN (Train) Ltd operates from two centres in Gateshead and Cramlington, with additional satellite accommodation in Middlesbrough and South Shields. Learners are mainly located in the North East and North West of the country with smaller numbers in Yorkshire and Humberside. A very small minority are in the South of the country. Unemployment rates fluctuate greatly given the geographic spread of the provision; however, pockets of high unemployment and areas of deprivation can be found, particularly around Newcastle, the Tees Valley and Liverpool.

Information about this inspection

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| Lead inspector | June Cramman HMI |
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Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the managing director 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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