

West Berkshire Training Consortium

Not for profit organisation

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:

- Directors and managers set and maintain an ambitious vision for the development of the organisation and the promotion of high quality training for learners.
- West Berkshire Training Consortium (WBTC) has a strong focus on improving the quality of the provision and ensuring all learners complete their training successfully.
- Significant numbers of learners achieve their qualifications and progress to higher levels of learning, gaining promotion at work and developing good vocational and interpersonal skills.
- Academic and pastoral support is particularly purposeful, ensuring learners with specific support needs complete their training and achieve their qualifications.
- Most training is good and inspires learners to achieve. Assessment of learners' work is good.
- Foundation Learning learners benefit from relevant, high quality work placements that are well monitored by staff and individually tailored to meet learners' needs.
- Arrangements to evaluate the quality of the provision are rigorous and have had a significant impact on improving managers', tutors' and training coordinators' ability to take actions to raise standards.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Tutors, assessors and subcontractors rarely reach an inspirational level of teaching and training, so do not yet fully stimulate and stretch all learners.
- Tutors do not always make the best use of naturally occurring opportunities to reinforce and promote the use of everyday English and mathematics during training sessions.
- Quality assurance of partner colleges is not sufficiently strong to identify and ensure that all problems are quickly resolved.
- The self-assessment report is not sufficiently evaluative and critical, nor adequately informed by the views of all partners and stakeholders, to be fully effective in improving quality.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the skills and expertise of tutors and training coordinators to enable them to deliver more inspirational teaching and training that will stretch and challenge learners. Identify and build upon pockets of good practice with a combination of consistent performance management and appropriate staff development.
- Ensure all training opportunities and tutor-led sessions develop and enhance learners' understanding and application of everyday English and mathematics. Build on the existing good practice of correcting written and verbal errors in the use of English, and incorporating aspects of mathematics into all sessions to improve learners' confidence and capability.
- Ensure partner colleges are rigorously and frequently monitored by senior managers who deal with colleges' or learners' underperformance quickly and decisively so that WBTC is demonstrably accountable for the progress and performance of every learner.
- Make better use of the self-assessment reporting process to provide an annual critical analysis of all aspects of training and learning, building upon the achievements and areas for improvement identified in the very detailed quality improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of learners achieving their qualifications has remained consistently high for several years for employed learners, short courses for adults, and business administration and customer service apprentices. A high proportion of apprentices achieves their qualifications on time.
- In 2011/12 WBTC concluded an unsuccessful partnership providing apprenticeships in health and social care and childcare. Two new subcontractors now successfully deliver health and social care, and childcare apprenticeships. Quality assurance is now strong and robust. A high proportion of Foundation Learning learners achieve their qualifications and progress to further training or into work. However, too many of the very small number of apprentices in engineering and construction fail to achieve their qualification within planned timescales.
- Apprentices progress well to higher levels of learning and employment. Apprentices in health, social care, childcare and business administration make good progress and many achieve their qualification ahead of schedule. Many gain promotion at work on completion of qualifications. Foundation Learning learners make good use of work placements and many progress into full employment.
- In recent years, minority ethnic learners have not been as successful as White British learners. WBTC has taken effective action to support these learners to enable them to achieve their qualifications. Whilst there is still a gap in achievement it is now closing. The relatively few learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are less successful than other learners and this gap in achievement is not narrowing.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills through a wide range of additional activities and qualifications provided by WBTC. Foundation Learning learners improve their confidence and employability skills well through an excellent range of work experience tailored to individual aspirations and starting points. Most apprentices take on additional responsibilities with confidence in the workplace, growing in confidence as they progress through their apprenticeship. WBTC celebrates learners' success well with a range of awards and recognition events that include community groups and employers.

- A high number of Foundation Learning learners progress into employment or further training as a result of the strenuous efforts made by WBTC to prepare them for work. Strong partnerships with employers, including the local authority and community groups, provide good opportunities to develop learners' employability skills. A programme for young offenders, care leavers and school refusers successfully prepares learners to progress into full-time education on the Foundation Learning programme.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Most learners work conscientiously to produce work that meets the required criteria. In business administration the electronic portfolio is used very well to collate evidence and monitor progress. Most learners do enhance their English and mathematics during their training courses. However, too often learners of higher ability are not challenged by tutors to produce work that reflects their capabilities.
- The collection of information on learners' destinations requires improvement. The provider knows the destination of Foundation Learning learners and has recently started collecting data about apprentices' destinations. However, these data are not yet comprehensive nor used systematically to improve learners' progression further.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in good outcomes for learners. Managers and tutors have high expectations of learners achieving qualifications. Improvements in teaching, learning and assessment over the last two years have enabled learners to develop better vocational and interpersonal skills and an increased proportion now achieves their qualifications. Most learners make good progress in their learning.
- Learning sessions are mostly good and effective work is underway to raise further the quality of all sessions. However, no sessions observed during the inspection were outstanding and measures to improve the quality of assessments and reviews are yet to be fully implemented. Resources are satisfactory but learners have limited access to resources to promote independent learning. Tutors and training coordinators are vocationally competent and appropriately qualified.
- Most learning is of a high standard and well planned with a good range of activities that engage learners' interest. Learners develop good technical skills well and apply them in the workplace. In the better training sessions, learners' knowledge and skills are extended as tutors and training coordinators skilfully question students to get them to solve problems themselves. However, some tutors provide answers too readily and do not sufficiently challenge the more able learners by setting harder work or providing encouragement to solve problems independently.
- All learners receive a comprehensive induction. Initial assessments determine learners' support needs and provide staff with clear information to plan individual learning. Most learners have realistic targets for individual improvement. For example, in business administration review meetings are effective in determining learners' progress and identify clear targets for individual improvements; training coordinators closely monitor progress towards targets and, as a result, learners make good progress. In other subjects, targets do not always identify what learners need to do to improve and, in a small number of cases, tutors do not sufficiently monitor progress towards the targets.
- Learners receive high levels of purposeful academic and pastoral support from tutors and employers that is tailored to their individual needs. Many apprentices who receive additional support achieve their qualification early. Some learners, previously disengaged from education, are particularly well supported; they receive, for example, help with transport costs to attend work placements or to purchase clothing for interviews.
- Apprentice training is well planned and frequently involves employers. Several employers participate with tutors and learners to select the most appropriate units for learners to complete. The more able apprentices often complete higher level units to develop their skills in preparation for promotion at work or progression to higher qualifications. WBTC has strong purposeful

partnerships with local businesses, employers and community groups to provide good quality work placements and training opportunities.

- Foundation Learning learners complete tailored work experiences where work-related skills are thoroughly embedded into the experience. These include an entrepreneurship project that Foundation Learning learners participate in, as well as a strong relationship between on- and off-the-job training for apprentices.
- Verbal and written feedback to learners in lessons and reviews is good. However, in too many cases, learners do not receive clear written feedback on what they need to do in order to improve their English and mathematics. In some sessions in health and social care and childcare, learners apply English and mathematics during their training activities; however, this application to everyday skills does not frequently happen in all vocational areas.
- Arrangements to provide learners with information, advice and guidance are thorough and ensure learners are placed on appropriate courses. Learners receive good guidance to ensure they follow the most appropriate course and units.
- Learners discuss cultural and personal differences during training and in reviews and consider how these relate to their professional practice or workplace. In one customer service lesson, the learners discussed how they could adapt their behaviour in order to provide customers with learning difficulties or disabilities with a good service. Similar discussions do not happen in business administration or care programmes. Tutors and training coordinators ask apprentices appropriate questions about equality and diversity during reviews but do not always conduct a discussion that extends the learners' knowledge or awareness.

Health, social care and early years

Apprenticeships

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Good teaching, learning and assessment have improved outcomes for learners from around the national average to well above these figures. Tutors have high aspirations and support learners very effectively to make good progress with their learning. Consequently, learners make good progress towards their qualification, with many significantly ahead of schedule.
- Learners develop employability skills very well. Tutors use case studies expertly in sessions to contextualise and integrate experience and learning. Childcare learners demonstrate great skill in storytelling and in creative activities with children. Health and social care learners speak confidently and knowledgeably about the correct procedures in a care home for the administration of medicines.
- Tutors plan learning very well and build on learners' experiences and previous learning. Learning is well organised with lively activities carried out at a brisk pace, maintaining the interest and motivation of learners. Tutors evaluate learning and consider how well individual needs have been met and how best to progress learning. However, the more able learners are not always given work to stretch and challenge their learning.
- Assessors and tutors are well qualified, with extensive vocational experience. Tutors encourage the sharing of good practice and learners say they enjoy and benefit from helpful discussions. For example, childcare learners discussed in a mature and informed way the positive management of children's behaviour, sharing the different approaches taken in each of their childcare settings. Health and social care learners showed good knowledge and awareness as they discussed how they would manage various infections such as athlete's foot.
- Learners are highly motivated. They articulate positively about their learning experiences in the classroom and at work. Learners spoke confidently about the importance of effective verbal and non-verbal communication with children and parents. A small number of intermediate childcare learners did not know how well they were progressing or what was required of them to complete their qualification.

- Assessors conduct comprehensive assessments and use a good range of assessment methods, fitting in assessments to meet learners’ work and shift patterns. Learners’ progress reviews are frequent and usefully involve employers. However, some employers do not understand the training well enough to help link work activities to training.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies individual learning needs. Tutors promptly share the outcomes with learners and work together to plan and set learning goals. However, in some cases learners’ previous experience is not recorded on the plan nor used to plan learning.
- Tutors use a wide range of vocationally relevant examples or exercises in English and mathematics to emphasise their importance in everyday life. Learners appreciate and apply this approach; for example, one childcare learner used her understanding of fractions to resolve how much fruit was required for a children’s tea party.
- The best written work demonstrates reflective and critical thinking. Tutors, however, do not always critically evaluate or provide correction when learners’ work contains errors in spelling, grammar or sentence construction.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity very well. Most taught sessions include discussions about equality, and how learners plan for play and create learning opportunities which are fully accessible and meet the needs of all children. Childcare learners described how they would modify play activities for a child with a hearing impairment or a skin disorder. Other learners described how special arrangements were made for the use of a prayer room, and also ways of carrying out independent research activities without the use of internet access in the home.

Business management, administration and customer service Apprenticeships Learning programmes for 19+	Good
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- Good teaching and learning are reflected in the high number of apprentices achieving their qualification and developing a wide range of skills including personal learning and thinking. Many learners progress to higher qualifications. Many are set challenging targets in their apprenticeships and choose National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units that require the addition of extra duties that develop good administration and customer service skills to stretch more able learners.
- Learners enjoy their training and frequently benefit from well-managed interactive group sessions. Additional specific courses, for example in customer service and sales, enhance learners’ commercial understanding. Learners with additional learning needs and disabilities receive good additional learning and pastoral support.
- Learners who find some aspects of the course difficult or need to complete early receive additional individual support at work and in the training centres to help them achieve. Reviews are frequent and involve employers in setting appropriate targets linked to work activities. Where necessary, employers ensure managers and supervisors provide additional support to learners.
- Particularly purposeful recruitment, in collaboration with the local authority, has placed previously unemployed learners on a one-year contract with the authority to complete an apprenticeship. Of the current cohort, several have already been offered permanent posts. On a previous programme 15 out of 20 starters found permanent jobs.
- Individual vocational training sessions are well planned by capable, well-qualified tutors with good relevant occupational experience, which they use well to enhance and embellish learning. Coaching and tutoring are very effective and adapted to meet individual personal circumstances. The teaching of English is nearly always contextualised to the learners’ work. Although well planned with a good range of diverse activities, mathematics and information and communication technology are not always contextualised to business-related topics.

- The assessment of learners' work is timely and thorough. Learners receive detailed feedback following reviews and assessment. Feedback is constructive, positive and often also explained verbally. It is clear, and indicates how to improve and what still needs to be done. Very good use is made of the electronic portfolio by learners and tutors to record achievement and monitor progress.
- Learners receive good pastoral care. Tutors motivate learners to achieve and are responsive to their welfare and pastoral needs. Learners use text, emails and web-based technology and telephone to report personal or work-related problems to tutors.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance which enable them to select the best programmes of study in conjunction with their employer. Initial assessment is comprehensive and informs the targets and support needs agreed with each learner. The induction process is comprehensive and includes a visit to the workplace and comprehensive health and safety briefings.
- Too few learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. Many learners only have a superficial understanding of how to apply equality and diversity expectations and awareness, developed during induction, in their workplaces. However, the subject area does contain examples of good practice; a good session dealing with racism in the workplace was observed at one subcontractor, which included good questioning of learners' knowledge and application to their work.

Foundation Learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and this is reflected in the high numbers of learners who progress into further education, training and work and gain vocational and functional skills qualifications. All learners enjoy their learning, and are inspired to produce good work by the positive and supportive learning environment created by tutors.
- Tutors are well qualified, highly motivated, and plan lessons with diverse groups of learners well. In the best lessons, learning resources are specifically tailored to learners' abilities and learners are actively engaged and interested in learning. In one session, learners worked well in carefully planning the design, costing and sale of bracelets they make to support local charities. Learners worked independently and diligently on their own parts of the project. All learners were involved and extended their communication skills discussing how to market and where to sell their product.
- Adult learners acquire and practise useful interview techniques. They develop their curriculum vitae, and become more familiar with the skills necessary to complete on-line job applications. Tutors use information and learning technology (ILT) appropriately in most lessons to illustrate learning points and maintain learners' enthusiasm and interest. In weaker lessons, tutors are too directive and do not always take account of individuals' previous learning or capability.
- Foundation Learning learners consistently benefit from purposeful, relevant, well-monitored work experience placements. These placements are carefully tailored to meet individual needs. Learners grow in confidence and self-reliance as they become appreciated in the workplace. Skills and knowledge gained from one work experience are built upon to extend capability. For example, a work placement in an animal shelter has led to the learner progressing to a veterinary practice.
- Initial assessment is effective in determining learners' individual employment and interest needs. However, staff do not initially set incremental literacy and numeracy targets with learners. Several learners did not know what they needed to achieve in order to improve their English and mathematics.

- Tutors regularly review learners' progress and reviews clearly demonstrate the substantial improvements that learners make. Strong emphasis is put on learners' awareness of their improved attendance, social ability, communication and confidence. Learners know the progress they are making towards vocational qualifications. Tutors and learners know about the improvements they make in enhancing their employability prospects.
- Effective specialist teaching in functional skills sessions improves learners' English and mathematics. For example, in a session on the potential pitfalls of payday loans, learners keenly discussed potential problems and calculated levels of interest payments with exercises specific to their needs. Functional skills are taught well and integrated very well into everyday learning, which learners found interesting, relevant and meaningful.
- Tutors use excellent strategies to engage and support adult learners on employability programmes. Tutors know and understand their learners well and have a sound understanding of their complex needs. Learners value the advice and guidance and the continuous learning and pastoral support they receive.
- Learners value the atmosphere of mutual respect in the learning training centres. Tutors promote an understanding of equality and diversity at learners' reviews. However, in taught lessons, learning materials and resources do not always actively reinforce or widen understanding of equality and diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The board of trustees has a good oversight of WBTC's performance, offering appropriate challenge through detailed reports and effective board meetings. Financial and performance problems during 2009/10 led to decisive and effective action, particularly the appointment of a new senior management team.
- The new management team has identified and rectified problems quickly and effectively. Senior managers have a clear vision and provide an open management style which is valued by staff. They raise expectations for learning and achievement, instilling key values around learning and developing every learner's potential. They appointed good new subcontractors with similar ideals and have improved quality systems and learning processes across the organisations. The restructured organisation has transformed previously underperforming programmes. Business planning is thoughtful and offers challenging targets based on careful analysis.
- Managers and staff know what actions to take to improve outcomes for learners. They use data well to monitor performance, track learners' progress and measure achievement towards organisational and individual targets. Attendance, punctuality, retention and achievement rates are frequently reviewed for all groups of learners. Data are used well to monitor trends in performance over time and identify irregularities in participation and achievement. Management of resources is at least satisfactory and often good. Staff development and performance management are good, leading to well-qualified and competent staff with a clear focus on improving learning.
- Subcontracting arrangements are good. Subcontractors and suppliers are monitored closely through frequent useful meetings. Managers implement tight compliance checking and effective quality monitoring of most subcontractors. The organisation continually examines the effectiveness of its quality systems to meet changes in working with new subcontractors. Contracting arrangements with supplier colleges are clear and generally well managed.
- WBTC has very well understood and well-developed systems to improve teaching and learning which incorporate all aspects of work with learners. Joint observations are completed with the subcontractors. All staff are observed at least twice each year. Observations are thorough, address learning in sufficient depth and lead to appropriate actions which are pursued through individual development plans. Moderation meetings include subcontractors and set the standards required. Staff development and company training are well managed. Performance management is robust, with monthly meetings linked to individual appraisals.

- The self-assessment process provides a valuable platform for quality improvement and leads to an effective quality improvement plan that is frequently updated and used well to improve the provision. However, managers recognise that the annual report is not sufficiently evaluative or concise and lacks the key influence of employers, learners and subcontractors. WBTC does not collect employers' views effectively and learners' evaluation is insufficiently developed or systematic.
- Quality assurance is good. Systems are well planned, with frequent and rigorous monitoring through a twin track system which examines both compliance and quality of records. Discrepancies feed quickly into the performance management system. All aspects of quality assurance are covered well, apart from the monitoring of learners attending supplier colleges where managers have been unaware both of learners' progress and of the dissatisfaction of a few learners and their employers.
- A wide range of training programmes meets the needs of learners, employers and the local community. Staff network well with external agencies to support existing learners and recruit hard to reach young people, for example by working closely with the education business partnership and National Careers Service to provide relevant training opportunities. Relations with employers are good and focus on improving the involvement of supervisors and managers to enhance learners' experience. Staff carefully match learners to training and work, and where appropriate direct learners to more suitable provision.
- WBTC meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Staff understand the importance of looking after learners and are well supported by five staff who are trained safeguarding officers. Staff continuously promote and reinforce e-safety to learners and encourage healthy living and personal well-being. Incidents and safeguarding concerns are well recorded and receive prompt and effective action. Strong links are maintained with the local safeguarding board and social services.
- Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Equality is a well understood core value, driven by the board and evident throughout the organisation and its subcontractors. Equality and diversity are promoted well to both staff and learners and are closely monitored by trustees. All schemes of work and lesson observations incorporate aspects of equality and diversity. Induction, reviews and programme content frequently reinforce and test learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Learners with specific needs and backgrounds receive relevant support to ensure they succeed. Support for learners with disabilities is very strong. WBTC has appropriate plans in place to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

West Berkshire Training Consortium

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Foundation learning	2
Business management	2

Provider details

West Berkshire Training Consortium	
Type of provider	Not for profit organisation
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 299
Managing Director	Mr Matt Garvey
Date of previous inspection	May 2008
Website address	www.wbtc-uk.com/

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	26	125	12	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age								
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	164	39	31	106	0	3		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
N/A								
Number of community learners								
N/A								
Number of employability learners								
15								
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"> ▪ Manley Summers ▪ Best Practice ▪ Tigers Training ▪ Basingstoke College of Technology ▪ Bracknell and Wokingham College ▪ Eastleigh College ▪ West London Training ▪ Oxford and Cherwell Valley College ▪ Newbury College ▪ Sparsholt College 								

Additional socio-economic information

West Berkshire Training Consortium (WBTC) is a charity which has been providing training since 1983. WBTC operates from training facilities in the centre of Newbury, delivering training and managing 12 subcontractors in the Thames Valley, Home Counties and London. WBTC provides work-based apprenticeship programmes in health and social care, horticulture, engineering, construction and building services, information and communication technology, warehousing, learning and development, business administration and Foundation Learning. Most learners are employed, receiving training and coaching in the workplace on a part-time basis. WBTC is governed by a board of four trustees and led by a managing director and two other directors who make up the management team, supported by 29 other staff.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Martin Hughes HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the director of training 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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