

Staffline Recruitment Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		24–27 September 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications within the planned time.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are good or better or sufficiently promote equality and diversity.
- Apprentices do not know enough about the options available to them at the end of their studies to help them progress to further training or to higher-level qualifications.
- The quality of written feedback to apprentices on their progress and achievement is inconsistent, and often does not help apprentices to know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Managers and staff do not routinely collect progression data and do not use data on the performance of different groups of apprentices sufficiently well to manage effective teaching, learning and assessment and so raise standards.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Staff are well qualified and understand fully the businesses in which their apprentices work.
- Apprentices develop very good personal and work-related skills and make a significant contribution to improving manufacturing processes in the workplace.
- The apprenticeship programme includes a range of carefully planned modules that are tailored to meet the needs of local, regional and national employers and apprentices.
- Directors and managers have a clear vision for improving and developing the training division success rates although still the below national average have improved significantly in 2012/13.
- Managers have responded quickly and effectively to areas for development and implemented an improved lesson observation process that is beginning to raise standards of teaching, learning and assessment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve the full framework within planned time by ensuring that:
 - staff use progress reviews to set challenging targets for achievement
 - staff monitor and record learners' progress and achievement effectively and systematically
 - all staff know when each apprentice is due to end their learning and take appropriate action to ensure that they do so
 - increase the proportion of learners who progress onto higher-level qualifications or training.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - teaching ,learning and assessment effectively prepares apprentices for progression into further training or employment enabling all apprentices to benefit from planned independent learning and the use of information and learning technology (ILT), particularly between training sessions, to further improve and develop the knowledge and skills they need
 - continuing to implement planned observations of teaching, learning and assessment linked to the quality improvement cycle and supported by programmes of planned staff development and coaching where improvements are required
 - ensuring that outcomes from initial advice and guidance adequately inform lesson planning and direct apprentices clearly to further learning or progression within their employment
 - taking all opportunities where possible to include the development of apprentices' English and mathematics knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that written feedback to apprentices is detailed and of a consistently good standard to help them improve.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring more staff and employers engage in rigorous and robust self-assessment
 - making better use of data through managers analysing the achievement of learners in more detail to give a full picture of the performance of different groups of learners
 - using more opportunities to promote equality and diversity in sessions
 - continuing to identify areas for improvement and effectively implement action plans.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Most apprentices are making satisfactory or better progress with a small minority making slow progress. More apprentices completed their studies in 2012/13 and achievement is satisfactory. The proportion of apprentices who completed their qualifications within the planned timescales in 2011/12 was very low. The proportion of apprentices achieving on time in 2012/13 has now increased substantially, but remains below the national average.
- It is too early to judge the improvement in success rates over time for different groups of learners. Staff review the success rates of all learners. At the time of the inspection, the proportion of female and minority ethnic apprentices was too small to allow for meaningful analysis of current success rate data.

- Apprentices' standard of work is good. Apprentices offer relevant business improvement suggestions and they create presentations about potential solutions to a high standard and use a range of media to support the presentations. In their portfolios, most apprentices demonstrate good information and communication technology (ICT) skills developed during their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices have good workplace and communication skills. For example, a group of apprentices analysed the strengths and weaknesses of an automated pallet repair system and are currently developing improved procedures and efficient workshop layouts. Apprentices have a clear understanding of how their personal and work skills have developed during their training.
- Apprentices enjoy their studies and increase their personal confidence and motivation. One apprentice, returning to work in manufacturing, is very pleased at how the programme has quickly helped to improve their self-confidence and competence. Apprentices understand how to work safely in manufacturing environments and have an extremely high commitment to working safely and the prevention of accidents.
- Many apprentices are not clear about the potential further education or training available to them. However, apprentices receive promotions, gain greater responsibilities and do work that is more complex, due to achieving the apprenticeship. Teaching for a minority of apprentices lacks aspiration for future progression and gives insufficient guidance about future progression routes.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching learning and assessment require improvement and is reflected in the trend of low performance of apprentices and the below average proportion of those who completed their programme within the planned time.
- Assessors/ trainers provide good care and support to enable the majority apprentices to progress and achieve. However, a minority of apprentices do not receive sufficient support and encouragement to improve their learning beyond the minimum requirements of the technical certificate.
- In most training sessions, the more able apprentices benefit from assessors and trainers who are enthusiastic about learning and achievement, and who provide positive role models. In these sessions, training is planned well and includes activities that engage and stimulate the apprentices effectively. A small minority of sessions are uninspiring, lack structure and sufficient challenge. As a result, learners lose interest. In the weaker sessions, assessors and trainers take insufficient account of the individual needs different learners.
- Apprentices gain good and relevant practical skills that they apply well in the workplace. For example, one apprentice's suggestion to recycle chemical bulk containers saved his company a substantial amount of money. Learners demonstrate good health and safety awareness.
- Assessment is insufficiently robust. The majority of assessors use good questioning that reinforces learning and promotes apprentices' confidence. However, in a few cases, written feedback from workplace observations is cursory, repetitive and not sufficiently individualised to enable apprentices to improve.
- Staff are vocationally well qualified and experienced. All have achieved appropriate teaching and assessing qualifications. Employers' training resources are mostly of a high standard and all practical resources are at least good.
- The promotion and encouragement of independent learning, particularly between training sessions, is insufficient to enable apprentices to further improve and develop the knowledge and skills they need. Information and learning technologies (ILT) in the training sessions are not readily accessible and apprentices are not aware of any on-line resources that may support their studies away from employers' premises.

- Most progress reviews take place regularly; they are detailed and provide accurate feedback to apprentices. However, a small minority of assessors/trainers do not use the reviews sufficiently to support apprentices to complete their studies on time. Targets set for this small minority of learners are often insufficiently detailed and do not challenge learners to achieve within the framework completion dates.
- The monitoring and tracking of progress requires improvement. While assessor/trainers monitor learners' attendance at training sessions and record the activities that take place, they do not monitor learners' progress or achievements in the development of professional competencies, their knowledge and understanding, or their achievements in English, mathematics and functional skills. As a result, some apprentices are not sufficiently aware of what they still need to do to complete their apprenticeship.
- Induction is good and focuses on establishing good teamwork amongst apprentices with very diverse abilities, experiences and job roles. However, apprentices receive insufficient information at their induction and on their programmes about progression opportunities inside and outside the company in which they work.
- The assessment, advice, guidance and support apprentices receive when they begin their studies allow them to progress satisfactorily. However, the development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills is insufficiently effective. Assessor/trainers do not regularly or sufficiently identify and correct spelling, grammatical and calculation errors in learners' work.
- The planning for and promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. However, the regular reinforcement of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is insufficient to enable the apprentices to understand the wider and diverse needs of colleagues in the workplace.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Elpis Training, a division of Staffline Recruitment Ltd, provides the apprenticeship programme. Staffline Recruitment Ltd directors and Elpis Training managers have a clear vision for improving and developing the Elpis Training division and high expectations for the achievement and progress of apprentices. As a result, success rates are improving. The reorganisation and relocation of the management and administrative functions, and the development of a closer working relationship with another Staffline Recruitment Ltd training division, indicate a commitment to more efficient and better quality support for apprentices and employers.
- Managers and directors responded robustly to low success rates in 2011/12 by improving administrative and reporting processes and resolving errors. They now ensure that more apprentices are able to complete their learning within expected time-scales. This has led to rapidly improving outcomes for apprentices. Although managers have improved monitoring systems, these systems do not yet fully inform managers, staff and apprentices about the progress that apprentices make.
- Management of staff performance is rigorous and it is beginning to improve teaching learning and assessment. Managers use appropriate procedures to tackle underperformance, including setting targets for professional development and coaching from more experienced staff, which they follow up by using lesson observations that focus on improving problem areas.
- Managers have improved arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to focus more clearly on equality and diversity, improving learning and raising standards. Internal quality assurers and lesson observers give clear feedback to assessors/trainers, set clear targets for improvement, including sharing best practice at team meetings where appropriate.

- Apprentices benefit from the support given by the directors to recruit highly experienced industry specialists as assessor/trainers. Appropriate training and support ensure that these staff gain relevant assessor qualifications.
- The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Managers collect useful data and feedback from employers and apprentices, but these data are not used sufficiently to inform actions for improvement. Managers are aware that the analysis and evaluation of apprentices' performance, progress and progression data does not adequately provide them with the information they need to implement specific improvement activities to raise standards further.
- Directors understand the strengths and weaknesses of Elpis Training and they work well to support and strengthen the leadership team. Directors shape the strategic direction, and ensure that appropriate structures and processes are now in place to improve further teaching, learning and assessment and to increase the success rates of apprentices.
- Managers engage positively with employers and use a network of Elpis Training regional operational development managers (RODMs) to gather data and information to review and plan effective provision that meets local and national needs and priorities.
- Curriculum planning is good. Managers and staff plan provision flexibly to meet the needs of apprentices and employers through thorough analysis and identification of their needs. For example, Elpis Training staff changed their programme and redeveloped learning and assessment paperwork to reflect more accurately a food manufacturer's terms for its production processes.
- Managers have ensured that curriculum planning enables apprentices develop their English, mathematics and functional skills alongside their job-related learning. They employed a specialist consultant to advise on further development and improvement. As a result, the confidence of staff providing functional skills that relate directly to the needs of employers is increasing through a pilot using better diagnostic tools and resources to improve the teaching, learning and assessment of English, mathematics and functional skills.
- Managers have ensured that planning recognises the need for apprentices to understand how equality and diversity impact upon their work and their personal lives. Recently introduced systems support internal quality assurers or lesson observers to identify sessions that do not reinforce the promotion of equality and diversity. Managers are beginning to effectively follow up areas for development and improvement at regular meetings with staff.
- Incidents of bullying and harassment are rare. Staff record fully the few incidents that apprentices report and managers ensure that staff support apprentices well. Apprentices treat each other with respect. Staffline Recruitment Ltd (Elpis Training) meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding apprentices. Staff receive appropriate training and are subject to disclosure and barring service checks.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Staffline Recruitment Ltd

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Manufacturing technologies	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 220
Principal/CEO	Andy Hogarth
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Website address	www.staffline.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	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	16-18	19+	16-18		
	150	100	0	150	100	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asset Training ■ Central College Nottingham ■ ESG ■ In-Training ■ Tresham College 							

Contextual information

Elpis Training, formerly Peter Rowley Ltd, was established in 1997 and was acquired by Staffline Recruitment Ltd in 2009. The Staffline Group also acquired Eos Works in June 2011; Eos is the prime contractor for the work programme in Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country. Through group collaboration, the Elpis Training division of Staffline Recruitment Ltd now operates under the managing director of Eos Works. Elpis Training provides workplace learning within the food, manufacturing and logistics sectors. They have 14 field-based trainer/assessors located across the country. The division specialises in education, training and consultancy, providing apprenticeship frameworks mostly in improving operational performance.

Information about this inspection

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

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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