

People and Business Development Ltd

Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates		19–22 November 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:

- At People and Business Development Limited, a high proportion of learners overall complete their programmes successfully.
- Learners develop good personal and vocational skills and knowledge, as well as good independent learning skills.
- Assessors set high and realistic expectations and provide excellent care and support for learners.
- The provider makes good use of technology and develops e-learning resources well to support learning.
- Managers provide strong leadership and use data well to monitor learners' progress and assessors' performance.
- Managers plan and develop learning programmes very successfully to meet the needs of learners and employers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Staff do not use initial assessment sufficiently well to develop personalised learning plans and set individual targets for learners.
- Assessors do not integrate functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) sufficiently into teaching, learning and assessment. This prevents learners developing their understanding of the relevance of these skills and using them in their job roles.
- Managers do not use the observation process sufficiently well to enhance staff skills and ensure consistently good quality in all aspects of the learners' experience.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the planning of personalised learning; make better use of initial assessment to develop individual learning targets for learners, rather than just working towards the overall qualification.
- Integrate functional skills into teaching, learning and assessment more effectively, to ensure that learners have a better understanding of the relevance of these skills to their job roles, and can use them well in their work.
- Develop the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, by expanding the observation process across all aspects of the learners’ experience; and by providing staff with clear feedback and actions to bring about improvement.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of learners who completed their apprenticeships successfully in 2011/12 was particularly high. According to the provider’s own data, the proportion expected to be successful in 2012/13 is good, although the data indicate a small decline since 2011/12. The provider is maintaining good rates of success while considerably increasing the number of learners.
- Success rates for apprentices who completed within agreed timescales in 2011/12 were very high. The provider’s own data indicate that the rate for completion within planned timescales in 2012/13 remains at a high level, but there is a small decline from the very high rates of the previous year.
- In workplace learning, a much smaller provision, overall success rates were particularly high in 2011/12, but the provider’s data show a small decline in 2012/13. The proportion of learners expected to complete their qualification within planned timescales is satisfactory.
- Learners develop good skills and knowledge and make good progress in their job roles, taking on more responsibilities, with some gaining promotion. They become more confident and improve skills such as teamwork. Teaching assistants develop a much better understanding of how schools are managed, and learners in childcare become better able to manage activities for children and also progress to key worker roles.
- The majority of learners develop mathematical, English and ICT skills sufficiently well, but a minority makes slow progress in improving their skills, such as grammar and spelling and the use of ICT. Assessors do not consistently ensure that learners understand the relevance of these skills in their job roles, or ensure that learners maximise their use at work.
- There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of learners. However, during 2012/13, intermediate apprentices are achieving at a lower rate than advanced apprentices, having previously consistently achieved at a higher rate. The provider effectively monitors individual learners who are not achieving, but has not yet formally evaluated the discrepancies between achievement at levels 2 and 3.
- The rate of progression to higher levels of qualifications is satisfactory. Learners are employed in good quality workplaces and opportunities for progression are good. In the latest year, there are signs of an improving trend of progression to higher-level qualifications, partly owing to the introduction of the level 5 diploma for senior early years practitioners.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment in child development and well-being are good, as reflected in improving outcomes which are above the national average. Although the most recent provider

data demonstrate a small fall in the success rate in 2012/13, the organisation is maintaining good levels of success, whilst also significantly increasing the number of learners.

- Assessors give excellent pastoral support to learners throughout their training. They set high expectations for learners at the beginning of the programme, which encourage and motivate them well, developing their independent learning skills. Assessors have appropriate qualifications and occupational experience, which they use effectively to motivate their learners by setting and reviewing challenging targets, and developing knowledge, understanding and practical skills well.
- The provider encourages independent learning as the primary method of learning. Learners have access to a good range of online learning materials, which they reach via links from their electronic portfolio (e-portfolio). These online resources include textbooks and a range of articles, as well as journals and bibliographical references. The provider also provides online seminars, known as webinars, and online support sessions. However, there is insufficient use of all these resources by learners to develop their learning further. Employers provide additional learning resources within the workplace which support learning effectively.
- Assessment practice is flexible, frequent and effective. In better assessments, assessors check learners' knowledge thoroughly, resulting in most learners making good timely progress. However, a minority of assessors do not use exploratory questioning sufficiently well to consolidate and extend learning. The provider's links with employers are good, and most employers participate in reviews, feedback and planning for learners. Support for learners in the workplace ensures they continue to make good progress. Employers regularly refer their staff to the provider for training, and for many it is the preferred supplier.
- Staff do not always use the results of initial assessment well when developing personalised learning plans. They emphasise completion of the qualification rather than planning the individuals' learning. The learners' named assessors provide effective additional learning support which learners may require to assist them to achieve their learning goals.
- Assessors give good accurate oral feedback to learners, enabling further development of their knowledge. In better feedback sessions, they provide coaching, which encourages learners to identify and recognise their own progress. Assessors effectively track the progress of their learners. However, written feedback via the e-portfolio is variable and lacking in detail, so that learners do not always know what they have done well, or what they can do to improve their work.
- The provider has good online resources in place to support the development of mathematics, English and ICT, that most learners use sufficiently well to prepare for tests. The results of diagnostic assessment ensure that learners are effectively directed to learning materials at the appropriate level for their study of English, mathematics and ICT. However, staff do not effectively integrate into learning and assessment materials enough opportunities for learners to develop these skills further, or to help them understand their relevance to job roles. The correction of spelling and grammatical errors by assessors is inconsistent within learners' work, and assessors pay insufficient attention to the development of these skills.
- Learners receive comprehensive induction to their programme of learning and effective initial advice and guidance to ensure that they are on the correct programme. However, advice for learners at the end of their programmes varies in quality, and the provider is in the process of introducing a more formal exit interview to help learners understand their options for progression.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is adequate during assessment and reviews. Learners have a mixed understanding of equality and diversity, with some demonstrating a thorough knowledge and application of the terms, whilst others have just a superficial understanding. Some assessors miss opportunities to challenge learners' understanding related to aspects of early years practice, for example when discussing various cultural preferences linked to food.
- Learners demonstrate a good understanding of child protection and personal safety, and can relate this to their work with children and themselves in the context of their work. Learners can

identify health and safety issues and know how to deal with them, for example a learner conducted a thorough risk assessment of the outdoor play area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors demonstrate a very clear vision for providing top quality training which they share very effectively with the team of assessors, who show a strong commitment to achieving this aim. Quarterly team meetings are very effective in communicating developments and tackling any problems. Between meetings, managers maintain good channels of communication and provide effective support for assessors who are working remotely. In the last three years, success rates have generally been at least satisfactory or good, particularly in 2011/12 when they were particularly high.
- Performance management to improve teaching and learning is generally good. Managers use data very well to monitor learners' progress and identify those making slow progress. Regular meetings between the training director and assessors effectively monitor the progress of groups of learners and the achievement of targets, and agree any actions to address shortfalls against targets.
- Staff development has a good focus on standardisation activities, for example agreeing appropriate evidence to meet qualification requirements. However, the process for observing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is insufficiently effective. Managers do not routinely observe aspects such as workplace learning, induction, reviews of progress and functional skills learning. They do not have enough information to inform staff development or ensure consistent good quality in these aspects.
- Assessors have good occupational experience but do not all have sufficient formal teaching and learning qualifications to maximise and support workplace and functional skills learning. However, the provider does use those staff with more experience in aspects such as functional skills to act as mentors and support other assessors effectively.
- The provider demonstrates a good commitment to continuous improvement. Assessors participate well and suggest improvements at the quarterly team meetings, while senior managers raise awareness of areas of development and propose actions. The provider is developing a substantial range of online learning resources, as well as introducing webinars and support surgeries. However, the take up by learners of these additional resources is currently very low.
- Managers complete an annual self-assessment that provides a broadly accurate overview of the provision. A quality improvement plan for 2013/14 sets some clear objectives to improve aspects such as e-learning, functional skills and training for equality and diversity; there is no accompanying formal action plan with clear timescales which outlines how or when these objectives will be achieved.
- Managers regularly collect useful feedback from learners, and managers use this well to identify areas for improvement; for example the provider has worked to improve e-learning resources, and develop support videos for learners and assessors to improve understanding of the use of the e-portfolio, following feedback from learners.
- Although feedback from employers has been used well on occasions, such as in the development of the new level 5 diploma, managers do not yet routinely collect and evaluate sufficient qualitative employer feedback in order to promote improvement.
- Managers very successfully plan and develop learning programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers. The managing director is taking a leading role, developing strong partnerships with universities and an awarding body, for the introduction of a level 5 diploma, to meet the needs of employers nationally. Managers are successfully recruiting many more apprentices to their programmes and are developing the use of technology well to provide good e-learning opportunities. Managers are introducing additional learning programmes, such as supporting teaching and learning, business administration and customer service very effectively.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a strong ethos amongst all staff to support all learners. Most learners demonstrate a reasonable level of understanding of equality and diversity in the work they produce for their qualifications, but assessors do not always sufficiently reinforce this, for example at reviews of progress. Managers have recently raised the awareness of assessors about how to promote and check learner understanding more effectively. Further training for assessors is a specific objective on the quality improvement plan.
- People and Business Development Limited meets legislative requirements for keeping learners safe.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

People Business and Development Ltd

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
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
Early years and playwork	2

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: 858							
Principal/CEO	Ross Midgley							
Date of previous inspection	December 2010							
Website address	www.pbdevelopment.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	35	-	140	-	63
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	22	91	75	432				
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"> ▪ N/A 							

Additional socio-economic information

People and Business Development Limited is based in the East of England, but also has learners in other regions such as London, the South West, South East, Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside. It primarily provides learning programmes in child development and well-being, but also offers apprenticeships in supporting teaching and learning, business administration and customer service.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Gary Adkins

One lead inspector and two additional inspectors, assisted by the training 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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