

XTP International

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		21-24 January 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The success rates and achievement within planned timescales for the majority of learners are good and in some areas with smaller numbers of learners are excellent.
- XTP International (XTP) is particularly good at meeting the specific training needs of learners and their employers.
- XTP correctly identifies learners' starting points and provides good support for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology.
- Vocational coaches (VCs) pace sessions well and incorporate a good variety of teaching and learning activities.
- Recently recruited VCs are highly experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They confidently share their industrial expertise with learners.
- The performance management procedures effectively improve the capacity of all staff, including managers, to enhance the quality of provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The success rates for learners on customer service programmes are not outstanding.
- The high rate of staff turnover during the early stages of the programmes means a proportion of learners have made slow progress and are behind where they should be.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and assessment needs further improvement.
- Although the system for observing teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection, not all observations are sufficiently evaluative and used to improve the quality of staff delivery.
- XTP does not systematically monitor and record the apprentices' guided learning hours and off-the-job training entitlement.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for customer service learners further so that they are outstanding.
- Continue to monitor the progress learners make, identify those at risk and provide support to ensure that all learners successfully complete on time.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment and review sessions to better develop learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity.
- Extend arrangements to improve further the quality of teaching and learning so that more learners receive outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the observations of teaching and learning sessions are always evaluative, accurate and used to increase the capacity of staff to improve their teaching practices further.
- Improve the operational management of the provision by ensuring that staff monitor and record apprentices' guided learning hours and off-the-job training entitlement.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Overall, the outcomes for learners at XTP are good with some outstanding aspects. Discounting the learners that one employer transferred to another training provider without consulting XTP, the overall success rates for learners are high. Although the number completing in their planned time period declined in 2012/13, they are still considerably above the national average.
- Success rates for the smaller number of learners on security, business and administration, business management, and learning and development programmes are excellent. In the largest area of provision, customer service, although overall success rates and completion within the planned time period declined last year, they remain good. The success rates on the workplace programmes for the last two years are also good overall.
- XTP accurately identifies learners' starting points in English and mathematics. All learners undertake initial assessment in order to identify their starting points for English and mathematics. Many learners have low starting points but still succeed. Promotion of higher levels of functional skills to learners is good. Approximately 25% of intermediate learners are completing a functional skill at a higher level than required by their framework.
- The performance by 16-18-year-old learners declined last year resulting in this smaller group of learners performing less well than their older counterparts. There is no significant difference in performance between males and females. The very small numbers of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve better than the majority of White British learners.
- The development of learners' personal, social and employability skills is good. Learners recognise and value the skills they learn on their programmes. Employers also identify the impact on their businesses of the improved performance by learners in the workplace. The experienced staff confidently share their skills with learners.
- XTP introduced a learner destination survey last year. A good proportion of learners who had already left the provision were contacted to determine their progression. The proportion of learners progressing within XTP, together with those progressing to alternative or higher-level qualifications with other providers, is good. The revised quality calendar now includes more surveys of learners' progress. XTP recruits learners from employers and successfully meets their specific and local training needs.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected by the good outcomes for learners. Most of the observed sessions were at least good or better. VCs set high expectations for their learners and effectively plan sessions to ensure they have every chance of achieving their qualifications.
- VCs pace sessions well and incorporate a good variety of teaching and learning activities. Vocational coaches use questioning, direct coaching, workshop sessions, scenarios, illustrations and practical exercises to stimulate, reinforce and extend learning. The quality of teaching and learning successfully develops learners' vocational knowledge, skills and confidence.
- VCs also make good use of learners' own workplace settings to encourage learners to apply their learning to real-life work situations. For example, in a session on leadership and management, the VC challenged a manager very effectively to give examples of how she could apply her learning about delegation to situations that arise at work. In another session for security officers, the VC successfully challenged a learner to explain how he applied information security procedures to his role at work.
- The development of learners' English, mathematics, and information and communication technology skills is appropriate to learners' individual needs. Most VCs use assessment of learners' written work as a good opportunity to further develop, improve and correct their writing, grammar and punctuation skills. Vocational coaches use diagnostic assessments effectively to identify any areas for further improvement in relation to learners' literacy, numeracy or information and communication technology competencies. However, in a minority of cases, VCs do not pay sufficient attention to correcting learners' errors in spelling or grammar.
- VCs are well qualified for their roles and have a range of experience and expertise that they make good use of to promote learning. They also provide good quality printed resources, such as workbooks, to support learning. When appropriate, they make good use of information technology and mobile technology resources to promote learning.
- VCs enjoy a good rapport with learners and offer good learning support through telephone calls, emails and visits. They also have productive relationships with employers. Learners are enthusiastic about learning and value its relevance to their personal and work-related goals.
- VCs accurately assess learners' starting points and rigorously track their progress towards gaining qualifications. However, in a minority of cases VCs are not making enough use of information collected during the initial assessment process to ensure that they meet all learners' specific individual learning needs.
- Learners receive appropriate and constructive feedback about their progress. They also receive good written feedback about their work. However, there is insufficient focus on recording areas for improvement in their progress review records. Objectives for tasks are often set rather than specific targets that relate to learning. This limits learners' ability to identify from the progress records what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Assessment practice is good. During workplace visits, vocational coaches provide good and effective continuous assessment of learning. They also provide effective feedback to learners about their work. In addition, they often set time-limited targets to ensure learners complete assignments on time and are on track to achieve their qualifications.
- VCs generally provide good information and advice about programmes and induction is effective. However, for a minority of learners guidance on the selection of optional units for qualifications is not timely.
- Learners feel valued and supported by their vocational coaches. In addition, VCs routinely promote equality and diversity during sessions. In the best sessions, they make good use of real-life work situations to explore diversity issues. For example, during one session the coach used the learner's experience of interacting with parents who speak English as an additional

language to explore equality issues. However, a few VCs miss opportunities to incorporate equality and diversity into their teaching.

Business management and customer service

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as demonstrated by the good outcomes for learners. The majority of learners and employers are enthusiastic and positive about the benefits of working with XTP. Recently enrolled learners are making good progress towards timely completion of their qualifications. Vocational coaches now work more closely with employers and learners to organise frequent visits, although a minority of learners have previously experienced large gaps in their learning programmes. More recently, the appointment of new assessors has improved learners' progress and experience.
- Most VCs set high expectations and engage well with learners to set realistic targets. A few vocational coaches provide good guidance on how learners manage their work-life balance. For example, a learner had guidance on how 'pressure mapping' models would be beneficial to manage demands at home and balance priorities. A small minority of vocational coaches miss opportunities for learners to develop their independent learning skills in group-teaching sessions.
- Recently recruited VCs are highly experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They share their industrial expertise very effectively with learners. The majority of learners make good use of a 'Five-minute session plan', which helps them progress quickly during sessions. For example, one coach encouraged learners to check their own work for grammatical errors. A learner explained how she was teaching her partner to use his phone to spell-check and improve his communication and that her VC had taught her to do this. In the better learning sessions, learners improve their confidence and benefit from good individual support.
- The range of off-the-job learning opportunities prevents vocational coaches using a greater variety of strategies to engage and stimulate learners. However, the vocational coaches make increasing and creative use of mobile technology and video resources to reinforce learning outcomes.
- The system for carrying out initial and diagnostic assessment is effective and, as a result, learners enrol on the correct programmes. Learners are clear about their diagnostic assessment results. VCs do not always use these results to help learners develop a structured learning plan which sufficiently challenges them beyond their starting points and matches their learning styles.
- The majority of assessment is good. VCs make good use of face-to-face assessments and digital recording and they frequently email tasks to learners between assessments. VCs provide good oral feedback on learners' work particularly in higher-level management programmes. Learners gain in confidence as their skills improve and they further develop communication and team-building skills.
- However, not all learners are provided with detailed written feedback on how they can improve their work. The majority of learning plans are not detailed enough to help guide learners through their programme. Short-term target-setting is good but learners do not receive sufficient opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.
- The use of functional skills learning resources is adequate but the electronic resources do not suit all learners' learning styles. Not all VCs routinely correct spelling and grammatical errors during group or one-to-one sessions or when marking learners' work.
- VCs now give good information and advice about the programme. Induction is effective but guidance on the selection of optional units for the competency component of the qualification is too late in the programme for a minority of learners. At the end of the programme, some learners have a good opportunity to complete additional units.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is inconsistent. The majority of learners can describe how to avoid discrimination and can recall the equality and diversity knowledge they have

gained. In business management, learners' awareness and opinions are challenged during visits although this is not routine in customer service. In teaching sessions, vocational coaches promote relevant equality and diversity effectively although equality questions covered at reviews are often superficial and not sufficiently relevant to the workplace.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, XTP has experienced a period of significant turbulence and change, including financial and staffing difficulties. Despite this, the company has made good progress to improve many aspects of the provision. Learner outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have improved and these are now good.
- The operational management of the provision has improved, although a few aspects still require further improvement. Until recently, the high staff turnover has resulted in a reduction of visits to learners, contributing to a number of learners making slow progress. The company has now recruited all the staff that it considers necessary. It is now ensuring that all VCs have sufficient time to visit and support learners who need to catch up on their progress towards completing their qualifications.
- The performance management procedures effectively improve the capacity of all staff including managers to increase the pace of improvements. A good range of staff development events has ensured that teaching practices have improved. For example, receiving effective training on the use of a new 'Five-minute session plan' has helped vocational coaches to plan their sessions efficiently and effectively.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and the resulting report has identified successfully most areas for improvement found at the inspection. The detailed quality improvement plan provides a good focus for improving both learners' outcome rates and many aspects of the teaching, learning and assessment processes. XTP has improved most areas found to require improvement at the last inspection.
- Since the last inspection, a number of the processes to monitor and improve the provision have been developed and implemented. However, their development and implementation have not been consistent. For example, while the more recent records of the observation of teaching and learning sessions show improvements, some are still not sufficiently evaluative and accurate. In addition, as XTP acknowledges, the arrangements for formally recording and monitoring the quality of assessment processes still require further improvement.
- The company collects learners' and employers' views through recently introduced surveys and by informal systems, for example by learners discussing issues with VCs. There is a good response by XTP to the issues raised. For example, as the result of learners' feedback, XTP has improved the quality of some of the learning resources for learners on business administration programmes. The company acknowledges that the arrangements to collect learners' views systematically are still quite new and not yet developed sufficiently.
- Most employers value the effective working relationships with all staff from XTP and the flexible provision that promotes good development of skills and meets industrial needs. Good teaching, learning and assessment make an invaluable contribution to high-quality employability and vocational skills developed by apprentices.
- Since the last inspection, the company has improved significantly its management information system. XTP now has effective systems to collect, analyse, monitor and identify learners at risk of slow progress. However, it does not systematically collect individual apprentices' guided learning hours or their allocated hours for off- the-job training.
- Managers routinely use data to analyse performance differences between groups of learners. XTP is developing strategies to engage more learners from under-represented groups. However, the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good enough.

- XTP meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Safeguarding policies are appropriate and have made a strong contribution to learners reporting that they feel safe while training and can confidently discuss concerns with VCs.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

XTP International

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Business management	2
Customer service	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 155							
	Part-time: 51							
Principal/CEO	Mr Craig Shaw							
Date of previous inspection	October 2012							
Website address	www.xtp-international.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	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 traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	25	65	3	67	0	51		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	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"> ■ No subcontractors 							

Contextual information

XTP operates from Stockport, Greater Manchester. It recruits learners from a wide geographical area including Merseyside, the North West, Yorkshire, London and the South East. XTP engages with a wide range of employers in order to meet their specific and individual training needs. XTP currently offers apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced levels in public services; education and training; and business, administration and law. The Skills Funding Agency contracts with XTP to deliver these apprenticeships which constitute all of XTP's work.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tim Gardner HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Operations 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 two 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 relevant 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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