

# Voyage Group Limited

## Employer

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>04–07 February 2014</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	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:

- Most learners achieve their qualifications.
- Learners develop a wide range of very good skills and use them to make a significant contribution to the Voyage Group business.
- Learners are enthusiastic and many now take personal responsibility for their learning.
- Service managers value learners' skills and professional approach to work.
- High levels of support and care encourage and motivate learners.
- Good learning resources help learners develop employability and professional skills.
- The progress of learners is carefully monitored and appropriate help is given to learners who need extra support.
- Teaching and learning are good because of the high standards set by managers and the support given to trainers and assessors.
- Senior leaders and managers manage the Voyage Group very effectively, particularly through an extensive period of change.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Assessment of work is variable and feedback to learners is not always formally recorded.
- Initial advice and guidance does not always lead to personalised learning programmes that offer sufficient challenge to more able learners.
- The arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not fully established across the organisation or clearly linked to the Voyage Group plan to improve the quality of apprenticeships.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of the monthly team meetings by ensuring all identified good practice is incorporated into teaching, learning and assessment activities across the company.
- Widen the range of learning and assessment opportunities by recording the learners' extensive workplace practice and professional skills developed within their job roles.
- Further improve the quality and consistency of written assessment of learners' work to identify gaps in learning and to help learners develop their skills and knowledge further.
- Improve initial assessment and the provision of appropriate learning support during functional skills sessions by reviewing the current initial assessment arrangement and ensuring it covers all aspects of the apprenticeship.
- Make better use of the detailed analysis of the full range of available management information to set specific, measurable performance targets that will improve the quality of learners' experience.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Success rates for learners are very high overall. Staff have made significant improvements in overall success rates since 2010/11. The proportion of learners that achieved their qualification in 2012/13 within the time planned showed an improvement but remains low. In-house data indicates that this positive trend will continue, with current learners scheduled to complete their qualification by the identified end dates. The achievement of functional skills qualifications is also good with the large majority of learners demonstrating good progress from their starting points.
- Learners make a significant contribution to the Voyage Group business. They respond well to the high standards and challenges set by assessors and service managers, developing effective personal and employability skills. Where service managers are committed to supporting apprenticeships, learners use their new skills and knowledge in the workplace very effectively. For example, one learner now coordinates all therapies in the home, another is responsible for the induction of new staff, and other learners take responsibility for petty cash or service users' finances. Several learners are now senior support workers following successful completion of their apprenticeships. Where promoted positions are not available, many service managers provide good opportunities for learners to extend their experience and broaden their skills.
- Outcomes for different groups of learners show very small differences as a result of highly effective, personalised support from assessors and service managers. Male and female learners succeed at broadly the same rate. Learners of African and Caribbean heritage achieve at slightly lower rates compared with other learners. Overall achievement for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities is good. However, staff do not use initial assessment routinely to identify other specific groups of learners who might benefit from additional support, for example those with dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties.
- Learners are enthusiastic and many now take personal responsibility for their own learning and development. The vast majority of current learners make good progress, acquiring knowledge and understanding that prepares them well for their next stage. The regular and frequent monitoring of learner progress, supported by swift and appropriate actions where necessary, minimises the likelihood of learners failing or not making the progress expected.

- The majority of learners benefit from the good professional development opportunities that match the needs of service users. Specialist training courses as required by the business, such as specialised feeding or understanding challenging behaviour are readily available for learners. However, staff do not routinely record learners' achievement in individual learning plans nor celebrate these successful outcomes across the organisation.
- The majority of learners make good progress to higher-level qualifications, gain promotion or take on greater responsibilities in the workplace. Learners are now clear about progression opportunities and many are eager to continue learning.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are good as reflected in the improvement in the overall success rates, which are now significantly above the national average. Current learners make good progress towards completing their apprenticeships. Learners develop good levels of personal, social and employability skills and often progress into more senior support worker, management job roles or higher-level qualifications.
- Learners are motivated and encouraged as a result of the high levels of support and care from their assessors and service managers. The good and flexible working relationships between assessors and service managers contribute greatly towards learners' completion of their apprenticeship while at work.
- Learners respond well to the effective use of searching questioning by assessors and trainers that tests their levels of technical knowledge and specialist care practice. In the best sessions, learners enjoy working and gain a good understanding of the professional language and skills required in very challenging health and social care settings for adults. Assessors and trainers plan workplace sessions effectively to include good one-to-one workplace skills coaching; they are very skilled in matching the level of work to the individual needs of learners.
- Assessors and service managers encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning. Many learners work effectively and independently at home to complete work. They improve their study skills and knowledge through access to a good range of resources including e-learning information and a range of websites and online occupational training units. The heavy reliance assessors place on learners completing the workbook as part of the apprenticeship occasionally restricts their opportunities to develop wider knowledge.
- The good learning resources, including the occupational courses, contribute to developing good employability skills and excellent professional practice. The Voyage Group staff produce many textbooks and workbooks to meet the specific needs of the apprenticeship and the company. These online resources and courses are highly valued by learners and service managers and include safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, behaviour management, moving and handling and customised training for service users with very challenging and complex needs. Materials on understanding behaviour training are particularly helpful in enabling learners to recognise the factors that cause individuals to display challenging behaviour and how to prevent the behaviour escalating and becoming a safeguarding issue.
- Assessment of learners' work is variable. Learners often receive comprehensive and helpful verbal feedback to aid progress. However, assessors do not always formally record this, resulting in learners not being clear about how to improve to reach a high standard of work. A small minority of assessors fail to correct poor spelling or grammar.
- Good quality teaching develops learners' English and mathematics skills. Most learners receive effective support from their vocational assessor to improve specific mathematical skills, for example, focusing on weighing and measuring in the context of the care industry helps learners extend their understanding and use the skills developed in the workplace. However, a small

minority of learners do not benefit from the good mathematics teaching necessary to help them master specific skills and do not receive the necessary additional learning support.

- The personalised approach to learning contributes to the good progress learners make in completing their functional skills qualifications. Learners are particularly well practised and competent in communicating with each other, their service users, service managers and assessors. They work well with their peers during assessment sessions to critically analyse and review their own written care plans and reports, and use the findings to improve professional practice.
- Initial advice and guidance is not sufficiently robust to ensure that more able learners are always placed on sufficiently challenging programmes. For example, a few learners who are likely to complete their apprenticeship within the time planned are not systematically offered additional qualifications or other enhancements to their programme. The recording of initial assessment outcomes does not identify clearly where a learner has an additional learning support need such as dyslexia.
- Staff promote equality and diversity effectively, building on learners' existing understanding and challenging their knowledge through carefully constructed discussions and activities. All learners have a high regard for the personal dignity and rights of the extremely vulnerable people they work with. Learners carefully consider service users' emotional, health and physical needs. One learner involved adults with learning disabilities in their speaking and listening assessment that focused on inclusion, successfully integrating and all service users in meaningful discussions.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The good leadership and management results in good outcomes for learners as well as good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Senior leaders and managers steered the Voyage Group through an extended period of organisational change and expansion very effectively. All staff, including service managers, have very high expectations of learners. The company recently introduced wide-ranging procedures and approaches to improve further the quality of learning; however, it is too early to judge the full effect of these initiatives.
- Training managers have improved the arrangements to monitor the provision since the previous inspection. Managers use data effectively to monitor individual learners' progress and manage the performance of assessors, resulting in further improvement in success rates in the current year. The large majority of current learners now make appropriate progress towards their learning outcomes relative to their starting point. Many learners progress to sustained employment, higher-level qualifications or supervisory work roles following their training. Service managers value the contribution learners make in the workplace.
- Performance management arrangements have improved since the previous inspection and are now good, reflecting the priority given to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff performance reviews and appraisals help staff focus on areas for further personal and professional development arising from learner feedback, analysis of success rates and results from observations of teaching and learning.
- The response to many of the areas for development identified in the previous inspection by senior managers is good and has resulted in improving the apprenticeship experience. Service managers offer better support and guidance throughout the programmes leading to learners making good progress. The advice learners receive about career progression opportunities within the Voyage Group is now good. Apprentices aged 16-18 now benefit from the mentoring programme.
- The recently revised arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment are beginning to give training managers a clearer understanding of where teaching, learning and

assessment is most effective and where improvements are required. This process is not applied consistently across all areas so is not fully effective in driving up standards. The judgements made by observers are close to those made by inspectors, but associated improvement plans do not contain sufficiently specific, measurable action points to ensure consistently good or better standards of teaching, learning and assessment are offered to all learners. The monthly assessor meetings and specific training events help staff identify and share areas of effective practice. However, the quality of key aspects of the provision, such as assessment practice and feedback on learners' written work remains an area for improvement in a minority of areas.

- The self-assessment process includes appropriate consultation with service delivery staff, training staff and learners to provide an accurate view on the quality and impact of training programmes. The current self-assessment report correctly identifies most of the issues that affect learning. However, the accompanying quality improvement plan does not contain sufficient clear, measurable, time-bound improvement milestones to evaluate the impact of each improvement strategy.
- Training staff have strong relationships with service managers, leading to flexible arrangements for training and assessment that suit the needs of most learners and service users. In-house training and development programmes closely match the curriculum content of apprenticeship programmes and focus particularly strongly on meeting the needs of vulnerable service users.
- Managers have a clear understanding of the business needs and the skills required to deliver high-class provision to service users. They are beginning to reduce the staff turnover rate by providing good training and promotion opportunities. Senior managers have ambitious plans to retain staff at levels well above the industry average.
- All staff promote equality and diversity strongly throughout the Voyage Group. Relevant topics are integrated into the apprenticeship curriculum. Staff and learners have a good awareness of relevant equality and diversity issues that are particularly important when acting as advocates for the vulnerable people they work with. Data for equality and diversity are collected and used to analyse gaps in achievement for particular groups.
- The Voyage Group meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. The safeguarding policy reflects current legislation. Managers respond quickly and appropriately to any incidents or causes for concern raised. Staff receive good training on safeguarding matters. Learners feel very safe, understand their rights and responsibilities well and demonstrate very good respect and behaviour towards each other.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

<b>Voyage Group Limited</b>		
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b> 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Apprenticeships</b>
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2
<b>Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>		<b>Grade</b>
<b>Health and Social Care</b>		<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Employer							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 306							
	Part-time: 0							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Kevin Roberts							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	October 2012							
<b>Website address</b>	www.voyagecare.com							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	13	172	0	98	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

The Voyage Group Limited known as Voyage Care is a large national employer with approximately 8000 staff. It has over 26 years' experience providing health care, social care and support to a range of vulnerable adults. Voyage Care provides residential, supported living and outreach care across England, Wales and Scotland. It currently operates 284 registered care homes, 24 specialist acquired brain injury and intensive support services as well as supported living schemes dedicated day and respite services, resource centres and nearly 16,000 hours of outreach services per week.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Nigel Evans HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the head of people development 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 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 area 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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