

Bridge Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		14-17 January 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Attendance is low for all groups of learners.
- Success rates for functional skills qualifications are low.
- It provides insufficient opportunities for learners, including those on a traineeship programme, to develop employability skills through work placements.
- Tutors make insufficient use during progress reviews of information about learners' starting points and the progress learners are making. They do not use this information to set specific targets related to the development of learners' personal, social and employability skills.
- Senior managers do not give sufficient strategic focus to developing learners' readiness for the world of work.
- It does not yet have effective processes for producing sufficiently accurate data on learners' destinations.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners who regularly attend the training centres achieve their key objectives and the majority go on to further education or training.
- Most classroom teaching is good.
- Tutors and managers provide particularly good support to promote learners' welfare.
- Tutors improve their classroom practice effectively through good quality continuing professional development.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Raise attendance rates so that more learners achieve qualifications and skills to help them progress into employment or training.
- Set very specific targets for developing learners' personal, social and employability skills at progress reviews, clearly based upon the learners' starting point and their progress during the programme.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to increase employer engagement and the number of work placements in order to improve learners' employability.
- Improve further the processes for recording the destinations of learners to enable an accurate record of all learners who progress into employment, further education or training.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- The proportion of learners who achieve their key objectives has improved and is now good, particularly for those who regularly attend the training centres. Provisional data suggest that the proportion of learners who progress to courses that lead to higher level qualifications is also good, having improved from a low base over the last two years. Bridge Training Limited (BTL) recognises these strengths in its self-assessment report.
- The majority of learners have very low level skills in English and mathematics when they join BTL. Nevertheless, most make satisfactory progress in further developing these skills during their time on programme. However, achievement of qualifications in English and mathematics is low and requires further improvement. BTL's self-assessment report does not give sufficient weight to the significance of this area for improvement.
- Most of BTL's learners have a history of disengagement from formal learning. Many have disorganised home lives and unstable or difficult personal and family relationships. Few are ready to join the labour market when they first come to BTL. The provider's team of enthusiastic tutors and support staff works effectively with each learner individually to identify and overcome their diverse barriers to learning and achievement. Consequently, learners who regularly attend learning sessions make satisfactory progress relative to their starting points.
- Few achievement gaps exist between different groups of learners. BTL has identified and successfully tackled the small disparities in the performance of male and female learners. However, attendance is low for all groups of learners, as acknowledged in BTL's self-assessment report. The provider has struggled to motivate learners to attend sessions and has recently implemented an incentive scheme to improve attendance but it is too soon to judge its impact.
- Learners who regularly attend the centre develop useful personal, social and employability skills. They follow an appropriate range of vocational programmes in hairdressing, construction, administration and motor vehicle engineering. They develop good skills in timekeeping, carrying out simple work tasks and communicating with others.
- Most learners develop confidence and a greater awareness of what they have to do to secure paid employment. However, learners do not sufficiently develop their knowledge of the world of work because opportunities for work experience and related employer engagement activity at BTL is very limited.
- Although provisional data suggests that the proportion of learners who progress into further education or training is good, the destination of too many learners remains unknown. It is too early to judge the impact of recent initiatives to improve the accuracy of this information.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teaching, learning and assessment are good, and individual support for learners in class is of a high order, as reflected in the recently improved outcomes for learners who regularly attend the training centres. However, insufficient opportunities exist for learners to develop an understanding of the skills and attitudes to progress into apprenticeships or employment through a well-planned work experience programme. BTL recognises this area for improvement.
- BTL is not meeting the work experience requirements for the eight learners on a traineeship scheme. The planned work experience provided for the three learners following the beauty therapy programme is below the minimum requirement. Administration learners are carrying out in-house work experience with BTL and, while developing some appropriate knowledge and skills, have not had the opportunity to benefit from work experience in any external setting.
- BTL has an exceptionally strong ethos of providing personal support for learners. Tutors involved in initial assessment receive thorough training from a well-qualified manager who supports their findings, particularly with learners who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very productive individual discussions result in learners gaining the confidence to disclose sensitive information and to agree to the support offered, including from external agencies. This support has included strategies to overcome barriers arising from autism, substance misuse, domestic violence and childcare needs.
- Good teaching results in learners developing useful knowledge and skills. Tutors motivate learners effectively through teaching and learning sessions which focus clearly on the practical skills needed in the relevant vocational area. Tasks in the motor vehicle programme are challenging and learners can see the immediate benefits of being able to dismantle brakes and diagnose electrical faults in vehicles. Beauty learners practise skills such as waxing and make-up which they value and enjoy.
- Tutors support learners particularly well by sensitive individual coaching. They are mindful of learners who may be having difficulty and respond unobtrusively to ensure that learners remain engaged. Learners recognise and appreciate their tutors' knowledge and experience.
- Tutors identify accurately learners' starting points in functional skills through initial assessment and determine the appropriate qualification level. However, during progress reviews, they do not use the available information about learners' starting points and the progress learners are making, to identify specific targets related to the development of personal, social and employability skills. As a consequence, a few learners do not fully understand how they are developing these skills. BTL recognises this area for development in its self-assessment report.
- Learners make satisfactory, and often good, progress in their English and mathematics in most classes and tutors correct the more obvious mistakes in grammar and spelling. Vocational staff are aware of the importance of developing learners' English and mathematics and learners understand how to apply percentages, ratio and measurement skills in their construction, motor vehicle and beauty sessions.
- Tutors are occupationally well qualified and have very relevant industrial experience. Learners respond respectfully and well, both to their tutors and to their peers. In response to the high expectations of all tutors, learners' behaviour in class is good. Practical resources in vocational areas are of industry standard, resulting in centre training locations reflecting realistic working environments.
- Assessors give clear feedback on most written assignments and, in some instances, learners are encouraged to add their own views, to encourage reflection. Tutors check learners' understanding regularly during each lesson. However, the system for reviewing learners' progress does not result in learners having a clear picture of their progress across all elements of their planned programme.
- Information, advice and guidance arrangements are effective. All learners attend a 'look round' session before they begin their programme, at which BTL staff give out information, assess learners' English and mathematics, and show learners round the training areas. The tour of the training areas is highly motivational, with learners recognising how BTL's vocational workshops

offer a good introduction to the demands of the various trades. Through this effective initial information, learners have a clear understanding of the support available to them, including benefits to which they are entitled. The on-site crèche facilities help those learners with children to participate in training.

- The inclusive ethos of the provider is effective in promoting diversity and in removing potential barriers to learners' access to learning and development. Female learners in motor vehicle sessions work effectively and unselfconsciously. Tutors respect all learners, irrespective of their gender, race or cultural background. Wall displays in the centre both confirm the commitment to diversity and deepen learners' awareness of various faiths and cultures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- BTL has a clear and well-communicated vision for its learners that links well with its aims to develop good personal and social skills in line with its social enterprise values. Initiatives introduced by leaders and managers since the previous inspection have contributed to recent improvements in learners' outcomes and progression to positive destinations.
- Although learners benefit from the good teaching on the study programme, managers have given insufficient focus to the importance of providing learners with sufficient opportunities to participate in work placements. Only a few learners participate in any work experience or placement outside of BTL's training centres. BTL does not have sufficiently strong links with local employers. Consequently, few learners are able to improve their employability through external work placements.
- BTL has developed a range of different meeting structures across the organisation that facilitates effective communication and the sharing of good practice. These work effectively and managers make sure that all staff are kept up to date and aware of the strategic direction of the company.
- BTL has firmly established a rigorous approach to performance management that has contributed to improvements in the quality of provision. It has a well-planned and effective staff appraisal procedure. Targets to improve teaching and learning are challenging and robust and have brought about improvements with suitable urgency.
- Managers have introduced a newly devised observation of teaching and learning scheme that tutors have received well and which has resulted in an improvement in teaching and learning. Productive arrangements with a local college have resulted in teaching staff being much more reflective, with many now inspired to embark on higher level teaching qualifications.
- Self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Managers accurately identified most of the strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors, although they did not give sufficient weighting to some areas for improvement such as poor attendance and the lack of sufficient work experience opportunities. Self-assessment takes account of the views of learners, staff and employers and uses the information gained to improve aspects of the provision, such as the induction programme.
- Building on the good, productive partnership working with the local authority, colleges, and schools, BTL has developed appropriate programmes that successfully recruit vulnerable learners and those excluded previously from education and training. These programmes, which include motor vehicle, beauty, construction and administration, are appropriate first steps into learning for these learners.
- BTL learners receive clear equality and diversity information at the start of their training and, in the better lessons, tutors integrate equality and diversity effectively with the taught subject. BTL has been successful in recruiting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those traditionally hard to reach. Staff and managers tackle bullying and discrimination issues effectively and ensure that learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Learners receive appropriate, timely support that helps them to progress into further education or training.

- The provider meets its statutory duties for safeguarding learners. Safer recruitment practices are effective, as are risk management and health and safety practices. Strategies for identifying vulnerable learners and their needs are effective, and managers and tutors deal with them sensitively and supportively through broad multi-agency collaboration. Learners feel safe when attending the centres and are respectful of their tutors and of each other.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Bridge Training Limited

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	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Employability training	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16-18							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 13							
	Part-time: 153							
Principal/CEO	Mr Mark Harrod							
Date of previous inspection	November 2011							
Website address	www.bridgetrainingltd.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	12	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	128	7	17	1	-	-	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	8		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
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	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gloucestershire County Council ■ Swindon College 							

Contextual information

The city of Gloucester is ranked 125 out of 326 in the deprivation index for local authority areas in England, with four wards ranked among the 10% most deprived. Some 25% of the city's population is under the age of 20. Gloucester's Black and minority ethnic population stands at 9.8%, which is considerably lower than the national average. The unemployment rate is low when compared with the national average, but higher than in the county. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics at GCSE, is higher than that nationally, but lower than the county average. Some 4.5% of 16- to 18-year-olds are not in education, training or employment.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Jai Sharda HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the strategic business 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 and telephone calls 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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