

Sutton and District Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		25–28 March 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
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:

- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills which result in the majority progressing on to further education, training and employment.
- Tutors teach good lessons that are well planned and contain a wide variety of stimulating learning activities. They link English and mathematics well with vocational learning so that learners value these skills and develop them in a meaningful context.
- Learners receive good advice, guidance, care and support. This helps many remain on their course and make informed choices about their future.
- Staff promote equality and diversity well and create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. Tutors introduce very relevant activities and discussion topics that challenge successfully learners' awareness and perceptions of equality, diversity and stereotypes.
- Directors and managers develop good study programmes that meet learners' and partners' needs well. They listen to their views, take them seriously and respond very quickly when change is needed.
- Managers check the quality of lessons thoroughly and train, coach and mentor tutors well to ensure they provide learners with a good experience.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too many learners leave their programme without achieving which has led to low, although improving, success rates.
- Directors and managers do not use data often or quickly enough to identify trends that affect learners' success. Although they know individual learners very well, they have not identified why some leave their course without achieving nor taken action to improve this.
- Not all tutors adapt learning activities or use appropriate questioning techniques to meet fully the wide range of learners' skills and abilities.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Analyse data earlier to identify trends in learners' attendance, progress, retention, achievement and progression, including by different groups, and use this information to determine actions for improvement. Monitor and review the effectiveness of actions taken and seek alternative solutions where appropriate.
- Develop tutors' questioning techniques and their learning resources so that all learners in each group participate, and learn, to the best of their ability. Ensure that tutors extend the learning of the more able learners and allow those who struggle to learn at a suitable pace.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners' completion of their qualifications over the last three years has increased but is still too low and requires further improvement. In September, directors and managers made significant changes to Sutton and District Training (SDT) Limited's courses and this has led to more learners being retained. It is too soon to judge if these changes will have improved learners' success rates in the current year. ▪ Learners with autism, dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties achieve very well. Some of SDT's groups of learners achieved less successfully last year, particularly young women and African and Caribbean learners. Managers link some of the reasons for this to low retention rates in specific subjects but also to a wide range of circumstances beyond SDT's control. ▪ Learners produce satisfactory standards of work. In many lessons they develop confidence in using and applying the skills they acquire by working in small groups in vocational practical areas. In a building services lesson, for example, learners measured and fixed copper piping accurately and to industrial standards. ▪ Learners, many of whom have low self-esteem or few previous qualifications, develop good personal, social and employability skills. In SDT's hairdressing salon, learners respond very well to the high expectations set by tutors and work to professional standards, demonstrating good customer service skills. ▪ Most learners participate in high quality work experience as part of their learning programme where they develop rapidly a range of skills required by employers. They gain good timekeeping, communication, team working and industry-specific skills which increase their confidence. Learners apply these skills well in a range of personal, social and work contexts. ▪ Many learners begin their course with low confidence and skills in English and mathematics and those that complete functional skills achieve well. The small number of learners taking English and mathematics at level 2 had very high success rates in 2012/13. Learners' achievement of English and mathematics qualifications shows a rapidly improving trend. ▪ The majority of learners progress to further education or apprenticeships when they complete their programme. A smaller, but significant, number of learners gain employment. SDT's progression routes enable a good number of learners to progress to higher level programmes, including the apprenticeship they deliver on a partner's behalf. 	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although learners' historical achievement is low, tutors have improved the quality of teaching, which is generally good. As a result of this, current learners make good progress towards achieving their qualifications. ▪ Tutors and staff create a very positive rapport with learners and learners' behaviour is good. A dedicated member of staff provides learners with good pastoral care for a wide range of 	

problems that is helping to keep learners on their study programme. She works productively with external agencies, including social services and youth offending teams, to give learners a coherent support package and intervene swiftly when problems arise.

- Tutors use a good range of learning and assessment activities, including discussions, videos and presentations, to capture learners' interests and motivation. In a health and social care lesson, for example, learners created good, informative posters on human rights and care legislation which they used to good effect in a whole group discussion.
- Learners benefit from a good range of work experience placements that help them develop skills and make informed choices for future employment. SDT's hairdressing salon offers learners a good, realistic work environment where they develop and practise their skills with clients. Some parts of the construction workshop, namely the practical bench-working areas, opportunities for working at height in cubicles and general housekeeping, do not replicate industry practice well and require improvement.
- Not all tutors use questions or hand-outs effectively to develop, check or extend the learning of all learners. At times, tutors answer their own questions and do not use silence well when waiting for learners' responses to questions. Tutors do not always design hand-outs to meet the wide range of learners' levels and abilities, which impedes a few learners' understanding and progress.
- Tutors know their learners very well and plan programmes that develop their skills and confidence effectively over a period of time. Learners complete suitable diagnostic assessments which tutors use to plan additional English and mathematics support and measure each learner's progress towards successful achievement.
- Learners' work is assessed satisfactorily. Learners receive constructive and supportive written feedback following assessment. Although tutors correct learners' English and mathematical errors, they do not always provide worked-out explanations, such as in calculations, to help learners understand where they have made mistakes.
- Tutors set learners good, clear targets within study programme reviews that link effectively the work they need to complete with planned assessments. Learners know what they need to complete, and by when, because tutors are very clear about their expectations. Although learners agree personal targets at the start of their programme, they rarely update these to meet their on-going developmental needs in aspects such as attendance and assertiveness.
- Learners receive highly effective and impartial advice and guidance at all stages in their programme. Tutors offer learners helpful guidance on their next steps which provides them with a good focus and purpose to their learning. Learners attend individual and group sessions where they receive up-to-date advice about career opportunities.
- Learners value the importance and relevance of improving their English and mathematics because SDT provides highly effective functional skills teaching within vocational lessons. Learners receive good individual support in lessons, particularly where the English and mathematics specialist tutors work alongside vocational tutors. Additionally, learners attend helpful English and mathematics small group sessions which supplement the in-class support.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity particularly well. They develop good learning activities and thought-provoking scenarios which learners find both useful and enjoyable. Tutors exploit opportunities that occur naturally in lessons and learning activities to develop learners' understanding. For example, in a hairdressing lesson, learners discussed and considered how stereotypical attitudes and perceptions of Caribbean women's hairstyles might apply to themselves when working in salons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors and managers took very effective action to improve the previously low retention rates, which are much improved in the current year. Managers and tutors now monitor carefully learners' progress, particularly those identified as being vulnerable or at risk of not achieving. However, they do not include all factors affecting learners' success, such as low attendance.

- Directors involve themselves fully within SDT's activities, are highly visible and know staff and learners very well. This extensive working knowledge of the organisation enables them to respond very quickly when change is needed. They monitor routinely SDT's progress with action plans but have not had reliable enough data to challenge progress sufficiently.
- Directors and managers forge strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations. They listen to partners' views and use these well when designing courses to ensure they meet their needs. In particular, this enables SDT to meet its strategies well for recruiting learners with few previous qualifications, who have not engaged in education recently and/or are vulnerable.
- The study programmes manager regularly checks the quality of lessons through well-managed and thorough observations of teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors receive clear feedback about what they need to improve, which is followed up with highly effective individual coaching and mentoring, staff development and external training. During team meetings and peer observations, tutors benefit from sharing best practice and resources. This has helped them introduce equality and diversity in lessons more innovatively, revise the questions they ask learners in progress reviews and plan lessons well.
- Directors and managers set SDT and tutors challenging targets for 2013/14. During appraisal meetings, directors recognise, challenge and take appropriate action with tutors who have not achieved targets. They place a good emphasis on improving tutors' delivery and support, which are aided by good staff development.
- Directors and managers have not had sufficiently reliable data to enable them to identify retention, achievement and success rate trends and make accurate self-assessment judgements. Directors rectified this by investing significantly in a new management information system. Managers now have access to data and are starting to use these more effectively to monitor retention and progression rates and the reasons why learners leave without achieving.
- Learners have frequent opportunities to give their views, including the regular subject area learner forums. Directors, managers and tutors take learners' views seriously, which are often the catalyst for reviewing and changing the provision. Learners' feedback results in a wide range of improvements including to computers, practical activities in lessons, security and introducing a breakfast club.
- SDT's programmes are well managed and the transition from foundation learning to study programmes was smooth and successful. Changes made to the structure of the week, subjects being offered, functional skills delivery and increased work experience all meet learners' and partners' needs well. Managers and tutors plan quality improvement arrangements coherently across the year to sustain good quality delivery. Tutors complete course reviews, but these vary in consistency, with a few lacking sufficient depth to be useful.
- Most staff have had recent equality and diversity training which has helped them introduce relevant and stimulating examples within lessons. The equality and diversity steering group meets regularly to monitor how well SDT promotes equality and diversity through its policies, strategies and learner recruitment. SDT offers a very welcoming, inclusive learning environment where staff strive to remove learners' barriers to attending and participating.
- Directors and managers have not analysed how well different groups of learners attend, achieve or progress. Although they know some of the underlying reasons, they have yet to formally identify these and prioritise them into actions for improvement.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Staff identify the many vulnerable learners very effectively, respond appropriately to incidents and maintain suitable contact with external organisations. They have a high regard for learners' safety and risk assess the training centre and work placements appropriately.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

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

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: 219							
	Part-time: N/A							
CEO	Mrs Julie Ingleton							
Date of previous inspection	March 2012							
Website address	www.suttondistrict.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	50	-	33	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	44							
Full-time	25							
Part-time	19							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	-							
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"> ■ N/A 							

Contextual information

Sutton and District Training Limited (SDT) provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 through vocational qualifications in health and social care, construction, hairdressing, information and communication technology (ICT) and sales and marketing, alongside functional skills. Learners attend SDT's training centre in Sutton, Greater London. SDT also has contracts with local authorities to provide alternative education for pupils aged 14 to 16. Youth unemployment in the Sutton area has been falling and is now below the London and national rates. SDT attracts learners from several London boroughs that have mixed levels of deprivation, qualifications and unemployment. A small, but significant, number of learners are referred to SDT from the Youth Offending Team.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Janet Rodgers HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by one of the directors 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 and progression 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, partners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. 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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