

Inspire 2 Independence Ltd.

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		30 June–4 July 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-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 on classroom-based programmes make good progress relative to their starting points and a high proportion develop skills that prepare them to enter the employment market.
- Learners on classroom-based programmes receive good support, care and training.
- A large majority of apprentices develop good vocational skills that their employers value.
- The teaching of English and mathematics for apprentices has improved and is now good.
- Performance management is strong, leading to staff taking greater personal responsibility for improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers have used local and national priorities to develop a clear strategic direction with a strong focus on improvement that is successfully improving the quality of provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too few business apprentices complete their qualifications.
- A minority of apprentices do not develop the broad range of skills necessary for them to progress at work.
- Classroom-based learners do not develop their mathematics skills sufficiently.
- The provider does not ensure that employers take sufficient responsibility for their apprentices' training and development.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of business apprentices who complete their qualifications by:
 - ensuring that all assessors are secure in their subject knowledge
 - increasing the expectations assessors have of their learners so that apprentices complete more work between visits and arrive at visits fully prepared
 - ensuring that all staff develop the skills required to provide enough challenge for their learners including the use of questioning to deepen their understanding.
- Improve the use of target setting during apprentices' progress reviews to ensure that they all develop a broad range of employability skills.
- Work with employment coaches to develop their skills in teaching mathematics. Support them to develop plans to incorporate mathematics in their sessions and monitor the impact of this through, for example, lesson observation.
- Develop a clear, detailed and challenging service level agreement with employers so that they are fully aware of their commitment to their apprentices' learning at all stages, including providing on-the-job training that links theory to practice, so that all apprentices make good or better progress. Include contingency plans within the agreement to ensure that all parties are clear about their obligations when things go wrong.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners following classroom-based programmes make good progress. The proportion who successfully complete their qualifications is high and increasing. One reason for this is that staff now provide better initial advice and guidance that help learners select appropriate courses. ▪ Apprentices' work is of a satisfactory standard and the large majority make the expected level of progress although for a few learners, progress is slow. The proportion who successfully complete their framework is around the national rate. A high and increasing proportion of apprentices remain on their programmes. ▪ There are no gaps of any significance in the progress made by learners from different cultural, ethnic, or socio-economic backgrounds. Despite their often low prior attainment, classroom-based learners make good progress. ▪ The majority of classroom-based learners make good progress in improving their work-readiness. Inspire 2 Independence recruits all its classroom-based learners through the Department for Work and Pensions' Work Programme. This programme provides learners with good initial support to develop a range of skills and attitudes to help prepare them for work. When they move onto vocational programmes, they continue to receive thorough individual support through the Work Programme to develop these skills. ▪ A minority of apprentices do not develop a sufficiently broad range of employability skills because target setting during progress reviews does not focus sufficiently in improving the full range of skills required for progress at work. ▪ A large majority of apprentices are successful in gaining functional skills qualifications. Assessors use initial and diagnostic assessment to identify learners with weak mathematics and English skills and they provide support that helps them succeed. Learners who are capable of gaining functional skills qualifications at a higher level than required by their framework are encouraged to do so. A steadily increasing number are choosing to do this although these learners are still a small minority. 	

- Given their starting points and, in many cases, barriers to learning, a high proportion of classroom-based learners progress into, and sustain, employment. Most develop skills that will help them secure employment when they are ready and the large majority improve their confidence.
- The large majority of apprentices remain in employment at the end of their programme. In retail, a reasonable proportion of apprentices move from an intermediate level retail apprenticeship to an intermediate level team leading apprenticeship, reflecting increased responsibility at work. A very small minority of apprentices progress from intermediate to advanced level and although a few take on additional responsibility, only a very small minority gain promotion following their programme.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Assessors and employment coaches generally have high expectations for their learners and provide good support towards their success. For some learners, their attainment gives them their first formal qualification in many years. Most apprentices develop good work skills. In a few cases, their training also has significant wider company impact. For example, one apprentice has produced a 'blue till book' containing bar codes for products too small to have the codes attached. Checkout staff use this book to correctly price each item. Her employer has found this so useful that they have issued it across the company.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good in classroom-based lessons. Employment coaches structure these sessions well, making good use of the centrally prepared planning documentation that helps provide consistently good teaching and learning. Sessions are enjoyable and this often helps to reform learners' attitudes to study following poor previous experiences. In a very few cases, coaches place insufficient emphasis on customising the sessions to fully meet the needs of individual learners in the group.
- Independent learning is stimulated well, helping learners to make rapid progress. This is because employment coaches encourage learners to complete simple additional activities outside of lessons. For example, customer service learners became much more aware of behaviour, body language and communication of staff in shops they visited between lessons, helping to extend their learning.
- Most coaching and assessment for apprentices is good and challenges learners well. Assessors visit frequently and provide good support for their apprentices. As a result, a large majority of apprentices make satisfactory or better progress. However, in a small minority of cases, assessors do not set targets that are sufficiently demanding and consequently, a few apprentices make slow progress.
- Most assessors have good vocational experience and relevant qualifications. All assessors support apprentices across a range of frameworks and a few lack the depth of theoretical knowledge to be able to extend fully apprentices' understanding.
- Staff use initial assessment appropriately to identify any help learners may need, particularly in English and mathematics. Assessors and employment coaches use the results of these assessments to plan effective support for their learners.
- All assessors have gained functional skills qualifications and successfully help their apprentices develop mathematics and English skills. They make good use of computer-based resources to support apprentices' English and mathematics development. More learners now undertake functional skills at a level higher than required by their apprenticeship framework, if their initial assessment identifies this as realistic.
- Employment coaches for classroom-based learning sessions have not yet gained functional skills qualifications themselves and while English is usually appropriately incorporated, they do not provide enough opportunities to include relevant mathematical themes in their lessons. As a result, their learners do not develop their mathematics skills sufficiently.

- Assessment is frequent and thorough. Assessors make good use of an increasing range of assessment methods including the use of audio evidence. Oral feedback to learners is good and this helps them understand what they need to do to improve. However, written feedback remains underdeveloped. Assessors and their line managers frequently review the progress made by learners and have drawn up appropriate action plans to support those who are struggling. This helps learners remain on target and few drop out.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Classroom-based learners benefit particularly well from employment coaches who may also work in other parts of the company, for example with Work Programme customers, for part of their time. This means coaches have a good understanding of difficulties facing learners and how they can respond effectively to them. This provides a much enhanced overall support for learners, which they greatly appreciate. Apprentices are given good information and guidance to support their studies and, in most cases, to select an appropriate next step. However, for a few advanced apprentices, advice is insufficient to clarify their options for continued learning.
- Coaches and assessors promote equality and diversity themes well. Helpful guidance for assessors divides these subjects into topics likely to be useful during visits to apprentices. Most learners have a good understanding and appreciate being able to think about equality and diversity on a wider basis than their immediate workplace.

Public services

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment in public services are good as reflected in the high proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their framework. Apprentices, the majority of whom are employees of Inspire 2 Independence, develop work skills, increase their confidence and, for example, are able to take responsibility for working with other agencies to support their clients' specific needs.
- Assessors support their apprentices well throughout their training. Assessors ensure apprentices understand the framework requirements so they identify how this links with and supports their job role.
- Assessors have appropriate qualifications and occupational experience, which they use well to plan taught sessions. Assessors create a range of well-designed learning activities that provide variety and maintain apprentices' interest and motivation enabling them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, assessors do not plan assessment visits so effectively, often simply referring to previous targets rather than drawing up session plans. Consequently, assessment sessions do not promote learning as well as they might.
- Apprentices receive regular visits to assess and monitor their progress. Assessors use coaching skills well to develop apprentices' knowledge during these visits and set appropriate and challenging targets for their apprentices. Apprentices respond well to challenging questioning that helps test and improve their understanding. However, in a minority of sessions assessors do not use exploratory questioning to consolidate and extend learning.
- Apprentices use a range of resources from within Inspire 2 Independence's intranet and assessors signpost them to appropriate websites that they use well to aid their learning. Apprentices work independently between visits from their assessor, which helps them make good progress.
- Assessors test apprentices at the beginning of programmes to identify their learning needs and make appropriate use of the results of these tests to produce individual learning plans that they monitor frequently. Employers are fully involved in the frequent reviews their apprentices have with their assessors, which enables them to provide suitable on-the-job training, resulting in good progress.

- Assessors provide detailed and accurate feedback to apprentices, which supports further development of their skills. In the majority of feedback sessions, there is a focus on coaching, which encourages apprentices to deepen their knowledge. Apprentices receive detailed written feedback following assessment in the workplace; the feedback given on other written work is of variable quality and a small minority of learners have no record of what they have to do to improve their work.
- Apprentices make good progress developing English, mathematics and ICT functional skills and achieve qualifications at appropriate stages in their training. The large majority of apprentices' work is carefully marked for spelling and grammar and as a result, they improve their English skills. Assessors refer their apprentices to a specialist tutor for further support if required.
- Assessors provide appropriate information, advice and guidance to apprentices. Assessors give their apprentices an informative handbook at the start of their programme and this ensures that they understand the requirements of their programme. All apprentices receive a guidance interview at the end of their programme that helps them make appropriate progression decisions.
- Assessors develop well apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity topics. Consequently, apprentices have a thorough understanding of these subjects and one gave an example of how she met the needs of a partially sighted client by ensuring that all written documents were in a suitably sized type.
- Apprentices have a good knowledge of health and safety and safeguarding. They identify health and safety concerns and know how to deal with them. For example, a learner described how to deal with accidents, including who could administer first aid and the process for recording the incident; another described how she had dealt with difficult clients in a threatening situation.

Retailing and wholesaling

Apprenticeships

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good and the development of learners' retail skills and their wider employability skills reflects this. Apprenticeship learners progress well and the proportion who successfully complete their framework is above the national rate. Apprentices become much more competent in their job roles and a few have gained promotion or increased responsibility since starting their programme. Learners on classroom-based courses gain a good knowledge of the skills required to get a job in retail and a high proportion successfully complete their qualification.
- Apprentices benefit from high expectations from their assessors who encourage them to focus on their future career aspirations. They enjoy rising to the challenges set for them by assessors and workplace managers and make good progress as a result.
- Assessors use their good occupational knowledge and experience to tailor discussions effectively, enhancing apprentices' understanding of retail topics. They plan and structure sessions thoroughly, engaging learners well. Learners gain knowledge of different retailing practices, such as different stock control methods and the use of loyalty cards. Assessors work closely with shop managers, planning on-the-job training to meet learner needs and business requirements.
- Good coaching sessions challenge learners well, extending their knowledge of retail practice. Assessors are helpful and supportive, motivating learners to apply their new skills at work. For example, learners confidently use a wide range of questioning skills, selling the features and benefits of products. In classroom-based sessions, employment coaches successfully engage learners in discussions and activities that develop well their confidence and knowledge of retailing.

- Assessors do not always sufficiently encourage apprentices to explore and debate the wider impact of technology in retail such as the impact of online shopping. In the small minority of less successful sessions, assessors and employment coaches do not always sufficiently check learners' understanding before moving on to the next task.
- Learning resources are good. Staff provide high-quality hand-outs that support their preparation for knowledge tests and classroom-based activities. Classrooms are of a high standard and provide a professional environment for learning. They are well-located providing easy access for learners to attend.
- Assessors work closely with apprentices and their managers to plan assessments. Assessors work flexibly and arrange visits around shift patterns and busy work periods. Oral feedback following assessment is clear and concise and learners understand what they need to do to improve. However, written feedback varies in quality and a few learners cannot remember what they need to do.
- Assessors set supportive targets that help learners make progress between visits. Learners understand how they need to prepare for any forthcoming assessments. Employers participate well in progress reviews. However, assessors do not always use these reviews effectively to measure apprentices' improvements over the longer term.
- Staff evaluate learners' existing retail knowledge and their mathematics and English skills at the start of their programme. They use the results well to identify an appropriate learning programme. However, staff do not always use the outcomes of English and mathematics assessments to plan and accelerate learning. While they increasingly encourage learners to take higher levels of study, a few learners are studying English and mathematics courses that are too easy.
- Assessors routinely monitor and correct learners' English errors in their written work. They provide coaching and practical activities linked to the learners' work role, to extend their knowledge and prepare them effectively for tests. Learners develop their mathematics skills well. In one session, learners used their mathematics skills to calculate and analyse sales patterns.
- Learners have a good understanding of discrimination, bullying and harassment. They are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns.

Business

Apprenticeships 19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. The large number of learners on classroom-based programmes achieve well. Tutors motivate them to develop good customer service skills and a high proportion achieve their qualifications. The proportion of current management apprentices who remain on programme is high. The number who have successfully completed their framework has increased but remains below the national rate. The small number of current customer service apprentices are making slower progress.
- Assessors have high expectations of their apprentices and apprentices' aspirations reflect this. However, the level of challenge provided by assessors and the amount of work apprentices complete in their own time do not always reflect these aspirations. Assessors make frequent workplace visits and show a good level of care and support for their apprentices.
- Most assessors have relevant vocational backgrounds and experience. They use this experience to plan assessments and coaching sessions that are flexible and meet the needs of apprentices and their employers.
- Employment coaches plan classroom-based sessions well. They provide a range of interesting learning activities that motivate learners who develop a good understanding of customer service

principles. Learners develop an accurate understanding of legislation affecting customer service and they are able to make appropriate links to the workplace.

- Assessors do not always provide a sufficient level of challenge for management apprentices who consequently do not deepen their understanding of relevant management techniques and theories sufficiently. In a few coaching sessions, apprentices are encouraged to reflect on their own roles and to identify how they can improve the effectiveness of their team's performance. However, in too many sessions, assessors' questioning is limited and focuses on low-level knowledge. A minority of apprentices are not well prepared for their coaching and assessment visits and do not always meet previously set targets.
- Assessors and employment coaches accurately assess their learners' starting points and use this information well to plan learning that meets the needs of classroom-based learners and intermediate apprentices. However, for advanced level management apprentices, initial assessments of mathematics and English are too basic and do not provide enough information to help assessors to plan learning programmes.
- Apprentices and classroom-based learners receive prompt verbal feedback that helps them identify ways they can improve. However, learners often lack written feedback to which they can later refer. Targets are consistently set during progress reviews but these often lack the challenge needed to promote more than satisfactory levels of progress and achievement.
- The use of good quality and creative resources, including the use of technology in management programmes, requires improvement. As a result, apprentices do not engage in learning as fully as they might between assessor visits.
- The majority of apprentices are prepared appropriately for their functional skills assessments. Although satisfactory overall, the development of mathematics and English skills is not consistent in vocational sessions.
- Advice and guidance ensures that most apprentices have a clear understanding of their apprenticeship framework. They understand the benefits of their qualification and can see its relevance to their job role. Intermediate level apprentices are well informed about progression opportunities. Progression guidance for advanced level apprentices is less useful and does not inform them well about the range of future options available.
- Learners demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity themes. They are able to describe the diversity in their workplaces and the importance of promoting equality of opportunity within their teams. Classroom-based learners understand their employment rights and responsibilities and are able to identify the impact equality and diversity legislation has on providing customer service in a range of settings. Apprentices have a good understanding of the health and safety requirements of their work roles.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. Directors and managers provide clear strategic direction and set priorities to place Inspire 2 Independence in a strong position to provide integrated skills and employment services. Staff share this vision and work diligently to provide a seamless service for the unemployed customers of the Department for Work and Pensions. A large number, over 700 customers per month, join the 14 centres across the country that provide opportunities to improve their personal skills and prepare them to rejoin the employment market.
- Performance management has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff take full responsibility for managing the caseload of their learners and their progress. Monitoring of performance is frequent and thorough with detailed recording to hold staff to account.
- Managers are supportive, caring, firm and fair. They adopt an open and transparent style of management to enable their staff to provide the best possible service for their learners. They are willing to take difficult measures such as parting company with the staff who do not meet expected standards and supporting others to correct dips in their performance.

- Inspire 2 Independence has invested heavily in staff training and learning resources. The culture of the organisation has changed and staff have gladly embraced their roles as trainers, teachers, coaches and assessors. They have grown in confidence and provide good support, teaching and assessment that enable most learners to make good progress. High-quality in-house monthly updates have enabled staff to sharpen their skills by learning from each other.
- Through forming productive links with two Local Enterprise Partnerships, Inspire 2 Independence has accurately identified skills shortages in employment sectors such as retail, and customer services for the tourism industry. It has provided learning programmes in Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and Humberside providing coaching for unemployed learners in response to employers' needs. Managers have worked closely with some national and local employers to provide bespoke apprenticeships.
- Managers do not set clear enough expectations of employers to ensure that their apprentices continue to make rapid progress to develop their careers. Most partnerships with employers work effectively and employers fully support the development of their apprentices. However, in a few instances, the lack of an effective service-level agreement led to a small but significant number of learners losing their apprenticeship places because of changes in training policy at the employers.
- Inspire 2 Independence knows its provision well. Managers work efficiently to improve the quality of training in response to feedback from employers and learners alike. They have used a broad range of evidence such as achievement of qualifications, data, progress reviews, findings from the observations of key elements of learners' experience and staff views to produce a broadly accurate account of the organisation's performance.
- Through a robust quality improvement plan, Inspire 2 Independence has made good progress and has been successful at improving most areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The planning, teaching and management of English and mathematics has improved markedly. Other aspects such as analysis of management information, target setting to improve learners' progress and observations of teaching and learning have all improved. Changes to some processes, such as observations of teaching and learning, are recent but are well considered and lead to strong development planning. The quality and frequency of written feedback and progress for business learners still require improvement.
- Inspire 2 Independence has continued the good promotion of equality and diversity among its learners and staff. Staff understand what they need to do to provide services for diverse client groups as well as how to recognise and deal with bullying, including cyber-bullying, harassment and discrimination. Support for additional needs helps all learners to achieve equally well.
- Inspire 2 Independence meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Inspire 2 Independence managers recruit suitable staff, accurately assess venues and activities for risk and establish provision in easily accessible locations where learners feel safe. Staff and learners have good awareness of safeguarding matters and take prompt and effective action to protect adults at risk.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Inspire 2 Independence 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	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	3	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Public services	2
Retailing and wholesaling	2
Business	3

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1201							
Principal/CEO	Natalie Keating							
Date of previous inspection	January 2013							
Website address	www.enteri2i.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+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	72	N/A	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+	
	6	235	1	91	N/A		N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
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:	N/A							

Contextual information

Inspire 2 Independence Limited is a private training provider founded in 2004 and based in York. In addition to training funded through the Skills Funding Agency, Inspire 2 Independence acts as a subcontractor delivering the Department for Work and Pensions funded Work Programme. The Skills Funding Agency contract accounts for approximately 9% of Inspire 2 Independence's annual revenue. The Skills Division of the business supports apprenticeships in retailing, administration, customer service, team leading, management, employment-related services and warehousing provision in Yorkshire and Humberside, North West, North East, East Midlands and West Midlands regions. Short qualifications at level 1 and 2 are offered in retail, customer service and Workskills to Work Programme customers.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Russell Henry HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Managing 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 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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