

TCV – Employment and Training Services

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		05-08 August 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-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 progression rates to employment and further education are much improved with the majority of learners who have left in the current contract year having already progressed into work or further study.
- The opportunities for learners to undertake good quality work-experience placements have considerably improved with the introduction of the study programme.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in vocational and personal development sessions are good.
- Learners receive high quality, timely pastoral support which is responsive to their individual needs and enables them to remain in learning.
- Highly effective partnership working in conjunction with good quality information, advice and guidance is enabling learners to gain access to further training opportunities and make good progress in their programme.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to improve weaker aspects of the provision quickly.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The qualification success rates in long vocational qualifications at level 2 and functional skills are too low.
- The improving functional skills training is not yet of a high enough quality to enable learners to achieve well in these subjects.
- Not all quality improvement processes are fully implemented at individual tutor level; management of the subcontractor is too informal.
- Many of the management actions in securing improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment although significant are new and therefore have not yet shown they are sustainable.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for learners by:
 - reviewing attendance procedures to ensure their full effectiveness
 - reviewing the curriculum design of level 2 long courses to ensure that they are achievable alongside all strands of the study programme
 - improving the quality of functional skills lessons by matching the learning to each individual learner's needs, abilities and prior learning, so that all learners make good progress by challenging them to reach their full potential.
- Build on the improvements to teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring the results of initial assessments are fully used to set targets for learning and for personal and social development and improving target-setting generally
 - improving the range of learning resources to promote independent learning, reduce the use of hand-outs and workbooks and increase variety in lessons particularly in functional skills sessions
 - ensuring that all learners who are ready for work experience receive a work placement as soon as possible to maximise their opportunities for on-the-job learning and experience
 - linking functional skills more effectively to employment contexts to increase their relevance and appeal to learners.
- Secure further improvements by:
 - identifying where teaching is not leading to effective learning, working with tutors to identify the specific actions they individually need to take to improve, and monitoring more consistently their progress in making improvements
 - providing tutors with sufficient training opportunities to help them to become more skilled in challenging and extending learners to excel in lessons
 - ensuring the trustees challenge and support senior leaders to improve the quality of learners' experiences
 - building on improvements in data reliability to inform fully the analysis and evaluation of all performance and accuracy of self-assessment.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Most key outcomes for learners have much improved since the last inspection and are now good. Managers have placed a strong focus on improving retention, the quality of work experience and successful progression to employment and/or further education. Progression rates at the time of inspection are better than at the same point in the previous year. Rates for 2013/14 are likely to improve significantly due to the large number of learners projected to progress to further employment in the 2014/15 academic year.
- Success rates are improving rapidly but overall are still low. Indicators are that overall success and achievement rates will further improve by the end of the 2013/14 contract year. However, functional skills qualification success rates and rates on most long courses at level 2 remain too low.
- Managers have significantly improved the availability of high quality work-experience opportunities since the introduction of the study programme in the 2013/14 contract year from a very low starting point and against a backdrop of high local unemployment and low job

vacancies. Early indicators are that the work-experience dimension of the programme is leading to employment opportunities.

- Learners' overall attendance is too variable. Managers have instigated a wide range of actions to address this but not all of these have been effective. Actions include bonus payments for good attendance but the payment structure has not been well thought through. Monitoring of attendance shows that as learners progress through their programme and achieve new skills their attendance improves. Learners' behaviour is very good enabling them to make good progress and they are positive about their learning.
- Since the last inspection, managers have placed significant attention to the improvement of the learners' personal and social development in order to prepare learners for their next steps in education or employment. Learners who attend regularly are now demonstrating good behaviours, commitment to their programme and strong team-working and communication skills. For many learners who have low starting points this is major progress in their learning. However, while senior managers have introduced systems and procedures to measure the acquisition of personal and social skills the review of their effectiveness is very recent.
- Males and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not achieve as well as other learners. The provider has recognised this difference and has put in place strategies to address this. For instance, additional support sessions and an enhanced curriculum offer that is attractive to young male learners. Early indicators are that these initiatives will reduce the differences in achievement for these learners.
- Learners initially assessed at foundation level and placed on long vocational courses at level 2 do not achieve as well as other learners. While the provider has recognised this and is altering the curriculum offer, current management actions have not been sufficiently effective for this group of learners.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. It has improved since the last inspection and this is now reflected in the recently improved outcomes for learners.
- Vocational and employability lessons are now mostly good. Learning is appropriately matched to learners' individual learning needs. Learners are challenged and engaged in a range of practical, stimulating and enjoyable activities that successfully develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Functional skills are successfully integrated into most vocational or personal development training sessions. For example, in an employability lesson pie charts and percentages were skilfully included into the learning. However, in discrete functional skills sessions too many learners are not challenged enough and learning is not carefully matched to their needs, abilities and prior experience.
- Work-experience placements and on-the-job learning give the learners very good opportunities to develop their vocational, personal and social skills. Good-quality work placements are used. Learners undertaking work experience are very positive about its beneficial impact. However, a small minority of learners who are ready for work experience are awaiting a placement.
- Tutors do not always make the best use of initial assessment results. The thorough initial assessment of personal and social development needs is not used well enough to set targets for developing strategies to remove barriers to progress. Diagnostic assessments are not used effectively to plan individual learning in functional skills. Target-setting generally still requires the improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Support for learners is good. Very good links have been established with a range of specialist organisations to which learners are effectively referred when they need help with, for example, housing issues, mental health problems, and drugs or alcohol misuse. Specialist agencies also refer learners to the provider because they consider they will receive a high level of pastoral

support when this is needed. Staff are very caring and helpful and are committed to helping learners overcome their barriers to learning and effective living.

- Information, advice and guidance are good. Learners receive good information from staff about progression routes and employment opportunities. Good emphasis is placed on the need for tutors to hold a guidance qualification and most of them are either working towards an advanced certificate or they have already completed it. Induction is comprehensive but some learners have difficulty in recalling what was covered a short time afterwards.
- Equality and diversity are integrated into lessons very effectively and learners' knowledge and understanding are successfully developed. Topics are chosen, for example crime and punishment and global conflicts, which generate lively discussions and interesting debates. Discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying are not tolerated and learners and staff show commendable respect for each other.
- Learning resources have improved since that last inspection. Learners now have access to desktop computers and electronic tablets, though resources to support independent learning are underdeveloped. Functional skills resources that are currently available restrict the range of learning activities that can be planned for learners. For example, learners do not have access to graded reading materials to support the development of reading skills.
- Written feedback on learners' marked work is inconsistent. While some written feedback is constructive and helpful, too much lacks detail and information on how learners can improve their work. Too much assessment activity does not identify and correct spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors. For example, curriculum vitae are not error free and learners do not receive enough feedback to ensure all mistakes are removed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good and the leadership team and trustees have established a purposeful strategic direction for the provision aided by clear lines of communication with staff at all levels. Leaders and managers closely monitor strategic priorities against performance targets on a regular basis and this has secured improved outcomes for learners. Staff at all levels are able to articulate key performance priorities for the organisation and describe how they contribute to securing their achievement. However, at board level there is insufficient focus on the overall quality of learners' experiences.
- Leaders and managers quickly reviewed the effectiveness of the recently introduced study programme in order to secure improved outcomes and better quality of the programme delivery for learners. Leaders have introduced a series of changes to the management structure, performance management and quality improvement activities in 2014 and these are beginning to bring improvement. Trustees hold senior leaders within the organisation to account on key performance indicators on a regular basis.
- Performance management has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have introduced a much improved and revised system for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment and increased the number of staff within the provider's observation team. Staff take part in regular appraisals and agree '90 day plans' with line-managers on a rolling cycle throughout the year; these are detailed and focus on a wide range of tasks that are securing improvement.
- A few staff action and development plans resulting from appraisals and the observation of teaching, learning and assessment do not enable those tutors to understand how to improve their practice. Findings from observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not always inform appraisals of teachers' performance sufficiently well. The leadership team is fully aware of this issue and plans are in place to rectify this.
- Leaders and managers have recently recruited a team of advanced practitioners in functional skills with the aim of significantly improving the level of learners' achievement of English and mathematics skills and access to high quality learning. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this new team in raising standards.

- The self-assessment process is fully informed by the views of staff and learners. The leadership team is appropriately self-critical in identifying areas of underperformance in relation to retention, achievement, success and destination of learners and this has led to recent improvement. However, until recently, leaders' use of reliable data was too inconsistent to inform decision making fully.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum considerably in the past year to offer learning in several vocational subjects alongside English, mathematics and personal, social and employability training. Effective partnership working with local authority services and community partners ensures vulnerable young people with experiences of disengagement from education can gain access to learning where otherwise they would not.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff at all levels thoroughly and enthusiastically promote equality and diversity throughout all aspects of the provision. For example, each month teachers plan 'sizzling themes' that raise learners' understanding of equality and diversity through studying and debating topical cultural and world affairs. Centres are welcoming places, learners are well behaved and they work well together. The leadership team identifies gaps in performance between differing groups of learners and prioritises actions to reduce them.
- The leadership team's monitoring of the performance of the subcontractor that is delivering a small amount of vocational learning requires improvement. Leaders have carried out only one formal observation of teaching, learning and assessment. The identified actions for improvement have been monitored too informally with insufficient challenge of the subcontractor's performance to ensure good outcomes for learners.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners in the locations where it directly offers learning and where learners participate in work experience. However, health and safety checks at the subcontractor's provision are not rigorous enough. All staff and trustees receive regular training on safeguarding. Bullying and harassment are rare and incidents are tackled immediately.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**TCV – Employment Training Services**

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	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

Type of provider	Independent learning provider									
Age range of learners	16+									
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	430									
Director	Miss W Ellis									
Date of previous inspection	August 2012									
Website address	www.tcv.org.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+		
	69	4	45	1	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+			
	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 learners aged 14-16	N/A									
Full-time	119									
Part-time	N/A									
Number of community learners	N/A									
Number of employability learners	119									
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"> ALD Hair and beauty Training 									

Contextual information

TCV – Employment and Training Enterprises is the training subsidiary of The Conservation Volunteers registered charity. It has five training centres in the North East of England. Since the previous inspection the provider has changed its Foundation Learning programme offer to meet the requirements of the vocational route of the study programme. Around half of the learners who commence the study programme have low levels of previous academic achievement, are typically at entry level and have multiple barriers to learning and/or learning difficulties and disabilities. The unemployment rates in the North East are considerably higher than those found nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Maxine Mayer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the finance and commercial 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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