

Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		4–8 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 proportion of apprentices and learners who achieve their qualifications is high.
- A large majority of teaching, learning and assessment sessions are good; apprentices and learners are supported well to achieve their qualifications and equip themselves better for work.
- The training, learning and assessment provided by enthusiastic, skilled and experienced staff are good. Staff use their wealth of industrial experience well, which they apply beneficially to learning programmes. Apprentices and learners enjoy their learning experience; a strong culture of mutual respect supports learners' needs.
- Arrangements to improve teaching, learning and assessment are having a positive impact on apprentices' and learners' experience and success.
- Extensive and well-developed partnership arrangements and work with local groups increase opportunities for employers, apprentices and learners.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Although teaching, learning and assessment are good, few lessons are outstanding.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires further development in order to improve and extend learners' understanding and ability to apply the principles in their workplace.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the process of setting short-term aspirational targets for apprentices and learners by documenting goals and objectives in a clear way that will enable apprentices and learners to understand what they need to do next to reach their potential.
- Widen apprentices' and learners' understanding of equality and diversity as they apply within the workplace by ensuring that progress reviews and feedback to staff after observation covers this area, and that managers provide further training to develop staff confidence and understanding of equality and diversity matters.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of apprentices and learners who achieve their qualifications is high. Overall success rates increased in 2013/14 after dipping very slightly in the previous year. Apprentices achieve particularly well, but the few apprentices aged over 25 do not always achieve within their planned timescales. Adult learners on short courses achieve very well. Apprentices in business management achieve particularly well; however, in-year data for 2013/14 indicate a slight decline in this area.
- No significant variations exist in achievement between different groups of learners, or for those apprentices who receive training from subcontractors. However, apprentices aged 16 to 19 in administration are not achieving as well as adult apprentices in this area. Managers and staff are aware of the need to monitor the performance of different groups of learners and do provide good support where required.
- Apprentices appreciate the need to improve their English and mathematics to develop their work skills and enhance future workplace opportunities. They complete appropriate levels of qualifications to meet their aspirations, and a very small minority of apprentices complete English and mathematics at a higher level. However, in a few cases, apprentices do not have the opportunity to enhance their literacy and numeracy beyond the expectations of the qualification requirements.
- The assessment of apprentices' and learners' abilities at the start of their courses is comprehensive and determines their starting points well. Apprentices are working towards the completion of relevant work-related qualifications that meet the requirements of employers. The vast majority of employers are involved in the planning of learning and the reviewing of progress to meet their specific needs and work requirements.
- Apprentices develop good workplace practical skills, valued by their employers, for example in areas such as childcare where training takes place in very good and outstanding workplace settings. Apprentices and learners enjoy their learning and almost all make good progress with their qualifications. However, a very small minority of apprentices in business and administration make slow progress and are not always aware of the progress they are making, nor of the requirements of their qualification.
- Apprentices work in carefully selected and generally good work environments. In early years and playwork and in business administration they have access to high quality developmental opportunities. However, a minority of assessors do not challenge apprentices sufficiently well to exploit these opportunities and develop their skills further.
- A very large majority of apprentices make good progress, and subsequently progress into or continue in employment, either with their current organisation or with other industry-related employers. Progression into employment or further training for those on short employability

courses is adequate and a small minority of learners is successful in gaining a suitable sustainable job on completion of the course.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which is reflected in good outcomes for learners. Since the previous inspection, a higher proportion of lessons is consistently good or better.
- Assessors and tutors have high expectations of apprentices and learners, successfully raising their aspirations to progress at work and in their learning. Staff are fully supportive of their learners and working relationships are very good. Assessors and tutors are well qualified and vocationally experienced. They use their expertise well to motivate apprentices and learners, enabling them to gain a thorough understanding of the relevant vocational sector.
- Assessors and tutors are skilled in using a wide range of effective strategies to support apprentices and learners to aid their progression. In most sessions, they support learning well and use questions effectively to establish and extend understanding. Drawing on their good industrial knowledge, assessors and tutors broaden apprentices' and learners' awareness by providing relevant examples and scenarios from the workplace. For example, in a childcare session, nursery assistants developed very useful knowledge about the way young children learn. Using imaginative role-play games, they shared their own work placement experiences, which helped them to consolidate their understanding and to reflect critically on their own practices.
- In the minority of less effective sessions, assessors and tutors do not challenge apprentices or learners to demonstrate good secure progress against clear learning objectives. In these sessions, the work set and the questioning techniques used lack purpose and focus.
- Resources to support learning are good, and have improved since the previous inspection. Apprentices and learners make good use of electronic resources to support their knowledge and skills development. Assessors and tutors monitor accurately apprentices' and learners' progress through their qualification and provide timely support where necessary via electronic tracking systems, particularly so with subcontracted provision. Assessors use online resources well to carry out remote interviews and assessment activities with apprentices at their workplaces.
- The initial assessment of apprentices' and learners' starting points accurately identifies their understanding and prior attainment, including their English, mathematics and computer skills. Assessment focuses well on evaluating the skills and knowledge apprentices and learners have in order to identify the best optional units they should take to fulfil their job roles and career aspirations. The majority of employers contribute effectively to the choice of additional units. Support for any additional needs is provided where necessary and is of good quality.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors use a range of effective assessment methods that provide apprentices with frequent opportunities to demonstrate their competencies in different workplace settings. Apprentices prepare well for assessment and the quality of their work in portfolios is of a good standard. Apprentices and learners have a good understanding of the progress they are making. The recording of their progress is good and documented well on learning and assessment plans; this supports well the timely development of their vocational knowledge and skills. However, the recording by tutors of apprentices' and learners' progress towards shorter-term personalised targets is often superficial.
- Oral feedback from assessments is good, enabling learners to identify what they have done well or need to improve further. However, written feedback from a few assessors, particularly relating to the setting of short-term targets, is not precise or detailed enough. Apprentices and learners do not always understand what the next stage of their learning is.
- Apprentices' and learners' development of English, mathematical and information and communication technology skills is good. The majority of learners develop and improve their functional skills through well-planned sessions. Assessors and tutors skilfully link English and mathematics to the sector subject area and, as a result, apprentices and learners use these very

well in their daily work. Literacy and numeracy pass rates are high and a small minority of learners are working at levels above the requirement of their apprenticeship and making good secure progress. However, written feedback from a minority of assessors and tutors contains grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors, which slows improvement in apprentices' and learners' written English.

- Information, advice and guidance are good. Apprentices and learners receive detailed pre-course information outlining the different qualifications available, enabling them to make informed choices about courses that best meet their personal requirements. Trained advisers use questions well to establish the interest and motivation of apprentices and learners, enabling them to be guided effectively towards their next steps and career goals.
- The promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity require improvement; the extent to which tutors actively promote relevant equality and diversity principles to learners is underdeveloped. Few tutors take advantage of naturally occurring opportunities during coaching and assessment sessions to extend apprentices' and learners' understanding of equality and diversity beyond a basic level. As a result, apprentices and learners also have a limited understanding of ethnic diversity beyond their immediate locality and experience. Learners feel safe and have a good awareness of how to work safely.

Early years and playwork

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good progress made by apprentices and in their high success rates. Current provider data indicate continued improvements in timely completions for 2013/14.
- Apprentices rapidly develop the good skills they require for the workplace. Highly structured work placements within a range of settings enable them to develop the variety of skills required to work successfully with children.
- In better teaching and learning sessions, apprentices reflect well on their experience of work to consolidate their learning in their academic studies. Assessors encourage apprentices to apply their subject knowledge to a range of demanding and enjoyable activities.
- In the few less effective sessions apprentices are passive during questioning sessions and, consequently, they do not participate fully nor develop their knowledge and understanding. In these sessions, the planning of teaching, learning and assessment does not sufficiently meet the needs of different groups of apprentices, failing to make effective use of their individual starting points to inform planning.
- Apprentices are fully aware of the progress they are making. They work together well and share their experiences, which enhances their understanding. For example, apprentices worked in pairs to review how they could refine effective communication strategies within their nursery settings. Assessors make good use of well-prepared resource material, such as workbooks, assessment sheets and electronic resources which provide excellent support that promotes apprentices' learning and progress.
- Apprentices know their long and short targets well. Frequent individual coaching and portfolio-building sessions provide apprentices with clear oral feedback. However, written feedback on work does not always provide appropriate guidance on how apprentices can improve their work further.
- Assessors use information and learning technology well to support learning. Apprentices use high-quality electronic materials to enhance and develop their learning. Assessors and apprentices communicate very effectively in remote settings through highly effective and well-developed electronic means.
- Apprentices benefit from a supportive and caring ethos with a culture of mutual respect. Employers and assessors provide stimulating learning environments and well-planned support

sessions that ensure apprentices make good progress. Apprentices receive good advice and guidance on working in the childcare sector. As a result, the vast majority progress to further training or education, employment or higher education.

- Apprentices frequently engage in activities with children within their work settings that develop their own English skills. However, assessors do not always ensure that learners develop and use specialist vocabulary. The correction of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors requires improvement.
- Apprentices develop relevant mathematical skills well. For example, they reviewed the weight of babies in their first months of life against the national norms to identify whether they were growing and developing adequately.
- Apprentices demonstrate an adequate understanding of equality principles and how these relate to childcare settings. However, assessors do not enhance learners' awareness further through probing questions, visiting speakers, or by reference to pertinent examples from work settings to develop apprentices' understanding of the needs of the children and families with whom they will work.

Administration and business management

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in success rates for apprentices, which are good. However, current in-year results show a decline in progress of younger apprentices. Support systems, such as extra assessor visits, have been put in place to ensure that apprentices who are not making as much progress as expected complete their course on time; it is too early to judge the effectiveness of such measures.
- Apprentices benefit from experienced assessors who communicate their industry knowledge and expertise well to ensure that apprentices are producing work to a high standard. Most assessors use electronic software well, which enables independent learning and effective monitoring and tracking of progress. Apprentices acquire useful business administration skills, for example responding to mail using a formal style of communication, leading and managing teams, and producing high quality marketing and promotional materials to advertise business events.
- Apprentices produce good work that develops their business and management skills. For example, through a selection of more challenging modules and the completion of English and mathematical skills at a higher level their knowledge is extended further. A minority of apprentices has the opportunity with their employer to take additional management qualifications leading to early promotions within their workplace.
- The setting and monitoring of academic targets and reviews requires improvement overall. However, the development and recording of a minority of personal goals is poor. Assessors do not always properly record goals to help apprentices review their progress. For example, apprentices set personal goals during the induction period, but as the course progresses many forget what these goals are. During progress reviews there is a focus on achievement of tasks leading to completion of the qualification as a whole rather than the development of wider skills and understanding.
- Apprentices receive good frequent oral, written and electronic feedback that enables them to improve the quality of their work. Assessors make good use of written feedback to set out specific and incremental targets to assist apprentices to achieve their aims. However, witness statements are not always proof read and some contain spelling and punctuation errors that do not provide good models for learners.
- Initial advice and guidance are good. The selection of learning modules matches well with the requirements of job roles and workplaces. Apprentices receive timely initial and diagnostic assessment to identify their needs and to negotiate the level of study in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Most apprentices receive appropriate support,

including good access to interactive electronic resources to develop their functional skills to a high level, ranging from, for example, the accurate use of commas to good public speaking.

- Care and support for apprentices are good. They receive frequent visits either face to face or remotely through using telephone and internet systems. Progress is monitored and tracked well and all apprentices are clear about the progress made and what they need to do next. However, a minority of apprentices do not make timely progress where employers are not fully involved in monitoring their progress.
- Measures to promote equality and diversity are inadequate. Assessors make only passing reference to equality and diversity and lack confidence in challenging inappropriate language in the office environment. Even though apprentices are broadly aware of the concept of discrimination and the importance of treating others fairly, they are unable to explain the impact of these in the work environment. Apprentices are not often encouraged to discuss the diverse range of needs of their clients and customers in a business environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior managers have made a number of positive changes since the previous inspection to bring about improvements to provision. Members of the recently restructured management team have implemented improvements since the previous inspection, using effective quality assurance procedures to good effect. Managers work with carefully selected employers, subcontractors and dedicated, experienced assessors, tutors and staff who together support apprentices and learners in realising their potential and ambitions.
- Managers and staff respond quickly to problems relating to learners and fully understand their roles, responsibilities, and those of colleagues. Managers and staff value the organisational emphasis on improving teaching, learning and assessment. The staff recruitment process is rigorous and support for new assessors and tutors is good, with shadowing opportunities and the sharing of good practice commonplace. Managers and staff work effectively and as a team.
- Managers use comprehensive company policies and procedures to monitor and implement actions to improve staff performance. A good staff appraisal process supports development opportunities for assessors and tutors. The sharing of information within Rewards Training and their subcontractors is particularly good, with clear lines of communication between those working with employers, recruiting learners and assessors.
- Senior managers use data effectively to monitor apprentices' and learners' progress and achievements. Such data use also informs sound financial business planning. Managers use data systematically to evaluate the performance of particular programmes, and groups of learners, including apprentices on the subcontracted provision. However, records of monthly performance meetings do not document sufficiently the learning experience or progress made by apprentices or learners.
- Arrangements to improve teaching, learning and assessment are sound. Managers monitor and implement action plans for those staff who require improvement. Action plans following observations inform staff development planning, with activities arranged to support their development. However, observation reports often describe the lesson rather than evaluating effectively the learning taking place.
- Managers and staff systematically gather the views of learners and employers to help plan the courses on offer. Evaluations from employers and learners are particularly positive, while relationships and communications with subcontractors are highly effective.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and is suitably informed by staff, learners' and employers' evaluations. The self-assessment report, whilst largely descriptive, does identify the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision accurately. However, there are too few judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The accompanying quality improvement plan clearly reflects the areas requiring improvement and actions and improvement targets are

rigorous and realistic. However, information on non-completed actions does not suitably inform managers of the progress made towards the completion of those actions.

- Managers and staff make effective use of their membership of a wide range of network groups and of their understanding of local priorities. They work well in conjunction with several partners to help provide a range of subjects and programmes that meet local needs and national initiatives. Relationships with employers are predominantly strong.
- Progression from apprenticeship programmes is very good, and most apprentices successfully gain employment on achievement of their qualification. Employers value the skills developed by apprentices; for example, a business management apprentice successfully managed to cover several operational sites for his employer while completing his apprenticeship qualifications. A large majority of learners completing short employability courses progress into further training, employment or, in a few cases, to higher education.
- Managers and staff are responsive to apprentices' and learners' individual needs, build supportive relationships and promote an atmosphere of mutual respect. At the start of programmes of learning, staff inform apprentices and learners well of their responsibilities and those of their assessors. Managers monitor the performance of all groups of apprentices and learners well. When managers identify underperformance by apprentices or learners, effective interventions provide additional support, resulting in improved outcomes for learners.
- Managers and staff have completed equality and diversity training, but the promotion of equality and diversity within teaching and learning requires further development. Assessors often fail to improve apprentices' knowledge and understanding of matters directly affecting their particular working environment or sector.
- Rewards Training meets statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Policies effectively cover all aspects of safeguarding, including the safe use of the internet. Recruitment processes are robust. Appropriate training and good relationships with local agencies keep practices and policies current and relevant. Appropriate employer health and safety audits and apprentices' inductions into the workplace are thorough.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy Ltd

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	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
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
Early years and playwork	2
Administration	2
Business management	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1641							
Principal/CEO	Marion Ward							
Date of previous inspection	July 2012							
Website address	www.rewardstraining.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+
	-	38	-	110	-	127	-	1
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	103	217	94	172	-	1		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16	-							
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	-							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Childsplay Training ■ Gateway Training Solutions ■ Let's Do Business ■ Partners 4 Training ■ Professional Vocational Training ■ Tempus ■ The Child Care company ■ The Training Place of Excellence ■ Trade Skills 4 U 							

Contextual information

Rewards Training provides apprenticeships and employability courses across the south east of England. The company is based in Crawley, West Sussex, where it has its head office and employability training facility.

Rewards Training operates in a densely populated part of the country, with good commuting access to London. A very small minority of the local population has no qualifications. The proportion leaving school with five or more A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is above the national rate. Unemployment in the region is below the national rate.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Stephen Hunsley HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four 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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