

GHQ Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		17–20 November 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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 learners who successfully complete their qualifications is improving and is good overall
- learners develop skills and knowledge very well
- support for learners is highly effective and sets high expectations
- on- and off-the-job training is well planned by staff who have very good industry experience
- assessment is thorough and staff provide particularly effective verbal feedback that helps learners improve their skills
- staff very carefully and skilfully match learners to appropriate learning programmes and employers
- senior managers have a clear vision and set a strategic direction which staff understand, and to which they are committed
- highly effective partnerships ensure that programmes meet the needs of learners, employers and the local community well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- success rates are not consistently high enough
- learners do not all receive sufficient routine reinforcement of their understanding of certain aspects of safeguarding, such as the prevention of radicalisation and appropriate e-safety measures
- the promotion of learners' understanding around the wider issues of equality and diversity is not yet sufficiently effective
- the focus on developing learners' English and mathematical skills outside of the requirements of their qualification is not sufficiently strong.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Achieve consistently high success rates by continuing to develop and implement robust quality improvement arrangements leading to more outstanding teaching, learning and assessment for all learners.
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate update training in aspects such as the prevention of radicalisation and appropriate e-safety measures, so they can better promote this to learners.
- Ensure all learners have a good understanding of the broader aspects of equality and diversity by more effective promotion of these themes in lessons and at progress reviews.
- Continue to develop all learners' skills in English and mathematics, to support their long-term employability; ensure that all staff understand the importance of promoting these skills during learning and assessment and have sufficient training to support learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
------------------------------	------

- GHQ Training Limited currently has 302 learners, of whom 256 are on apprenticeship programmes. The largest subject area is hairdressing and beauty therapy with about half of all apprenticeships at 127, followed by early years and playwork with 52 apprentices, administration and business management with 44, and supporting teaching and learning in schools with 32. In addition, a small number of learners are on workplace- and classroom-based learning programmes.
- Overall success rates for apprentices are good and improving well following a decline in 2012/13. Significant increases have been made in the success rates for both intermediate and advanced hairdressing apprentices, as well as increases for administration apprenticeships. Success rates for early years and playwork advanced apprentices were good in 2012/13, but too low for intermediate apprentices. The rates are now very high for intermediate apprentices, but in decline for the smaller number of advanced early years apprentices.
- Success rates for the small number of learners in workplace learning and classroom-based learning remain too low.
- Learners make very good progress in the development of their vocational skills and knowledge. They work to a good standard in their job roles. Hairdressers demonstrate good cutting skills; in beauty therapy, learners demonstrate good facial massage and nail skills; and early years learners work well with children in relation to their special needs. Administration learners show good telephone skills, as well as customer service skills. All learners improve their communication skills and team working, and become much more confident both at work and in their learning. Most learners produce a good standard of work for their qualification, writing detailed assignments and demonstrating good knowledge.
- Learners make good progress in the development of their English, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to meet the needs of their qualifications. Learners demonstrate particularly good ICT skills, becoming much more confident in using spreadsheets as well as email. A good proportion of learners work towards higher level functional skills qualifications, more than are required to do so for their qualification.
- Learners progress well into higher level qualifications and into employment, with the vast majority gaining permanent employment after their apprenticeship. In the largest subject area, hairdressing, a third of learners have progressed from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships, and most early years learners progress to advanced apprenticeships.

- Managers use data well to identify any gaps in achievement and have successfully eradicated differences in achievement between groups of learners. Male learners previously achieved less well, but are now achieving at the same rate as female learners. The small number of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are now making progress which is as good as that of learners without additional support needs.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The three subject areas that are reported separately account for the vast majority of the overall provision. Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which aligns with the significant improvements in success rates and the good progress that learners make in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Learners benefit from good support from their assessors, who encourage and motivate learners very effectively and have high expectations that learners will progress well in their learning and careers. For example, teaching assistants become valued members of staff in their workplaces and take on more responsibilities. Staff provide good individual support for learners, including between visits, with regular email and telephone contact to give feedback and plan visits. Learners feel safe, both at work and in training centres, and staff take care to support learners whenever they raise concerns. However, learners do not receive effective guidance on the safe use of the internet, to improve their understanding of important issues such as cyber bullying.
- Learners benefit from good teaching and learning. Most learners in hairdressing, early years and supporting teaching and learning in schools attend regular off-the-job training workshops, where knowledgeable teachers provide interesting and informative sessions. Learners enjoy learning, participate well in activities and increase their knowledge. In beauty sessions, teachers plan a good mix of theory and practical activities to keep learners involved. Trainers effectively promote understanding during sessions through good use of resources, both electronic and useful handouts. On a few occasions, sessions are less interactive, and trainers do not sufficiently ensure all learners participate fully in discussions and check each learner's understanding.
- Employers provide good workplace training, both on- and off-the-job. Employers of supporting teaching and learning in schools apprentices include them in all staff training, such as manual handling, child behaviour and safeguarding. Employers in hairdressing provide good on-the-job training by experienced trainers to teach different cuts and styling. In administration, learners make particularly good progress in how to manage data. Assessors provide good one-to-one coaching at workplace visits, leading good discussions around relevant topics which raise learners' understanding, for example about legislation.
- Staff effectively assess learners' skills on entry to their training, with good involvement by employers who contribute well to the identification of appropriate units for study within the qualification. Programme timescales are flexible, and staff fast track learners where appropriate. Staff make good use of diagnostics to establish learners' levels for English, mathematics and ICT, and identify specific individual skills development needs in topics such as spreadsheets and presentations.
- Assessment is thorough. Assessors provide good verbal feedback to learners, with helpful detail which enables them to understand what they have done well, and how they can improve. Staff also provide effective written feedback, both paper based or via the new e-portfolio which learners and assessors are using well to review work and to plan for visits.
- Most learners make good progress in the skills and knowledge required to achieve their functional skills qualifications, and many progress to higher levels. Teachers use workshops well to raise understanding of aspects such as mean, median, mode, or spreadsheets. Learners make good progress in their learning, using tasks that challenge them appropriately. They use learning support materials in sessions to meet their individual needs and improve their skills well. However, trainers and assessors do not plan to develop skills outside of the requirements of the qualification; for example, where learners already have the required qualification in

mathematics, they do not have opportunities to improve these skills further. Trainers and assessors do not routinely correct grammatical and spelling errors, and thus are not promoting workplace standards.

- Learners receive good initial advice and guidance when entering the apprenticeship programme. Staff take care to match them to potential apprenticeship vacancies and help prepare them for interview. Care is taken to give learners relevant information about their qualification and the appropriate optional units needed to help their development in their job as much as possible. Good advice is given about progression opportunities to a higher level apprenticeship.
- Trainers and assessors do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently well outside of the requirements of learners' qualifications. Learners have an adequate understanding of matters relevant to their qualification, for example relating to discrimination and prejudice and do not experience any unfair treatment or have any concerns. However, they do not receive sufficient reinforcement to their wider understanding of for example different forms of bullying and harassment. Progress reviews are ineffective in discussing relevant topics and checking understanding. Lesson plans refer to the learners' own equality of opportunity and support, but do not effectively plan to explore wider equality and diversity themes.

Early years and playwork

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are good. This is reflected in the good skills development of learners and that the majority are successful in progressing from intermediate to advanced level apprenticeships and in gaining promotion or achieving permanent contracts. GHQ Training has highly effective and longstanding partnerships with employers who set high standards to ensure learners receive a good level of learning.
- Assessors demonstrate high expectations of their learners and they provide very good support for their welfare. As a result, learners develop confidence, good communication skills and other skills required for working within the demanding environment of early years and playwork. The majority of learners regularly attend and thoroughly enjoy theory-based sessions. They relish meeting others and sharing good practice. However, the inconsistent level and detail of planning of workplace assessments do not sufficiently challenge all learners to produce work to the standards of which they are capable.
- Assessors promote the use of technology well in lessons and in the workplace. The process of developing effective electronic resources is ongoing; as a result of these resources, learners develop good skills for working in this sector. For example, one learner used a hand-held tablet for children to follow a highly enjoyable exercise routine with accompanying music and using modelling material. The majority of learners skilfully use an electronic recording system for their course and navigate it with confidence.
- Assessors monitor progress effectively in both workplace observations and in marked work. They use questioning techniques appropriately to check learning and understanding in class and in workplace assessments. As a result, learners develop good reflective skills to enhance their childcare practice and this has a positive impact on their care of children and communication with their carers.
- Assessors conduct effective initial assessment of learners' skills. As a result, learners understand their starting point and are able to focus their learning on the areas identified as needing improvement, especially in English, mathematics and ICT. Trainers and assessors use the information well to plan learning and assessment in functional skills, and learners with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, receive appropriate support provided by suitably qualified staff.
- Trainers and the majority of assessors support the development of functional skills in English and mathematics well. Learners gain an understanding of vocational language and, as a result, are able to write professional observations of children, a skill required by employers in this

sector. However, not all assessors routinely use naturally-occurring opportunities within the workplace or in marked work to develop further learners' spellings, grammar and mathematics to professional standards.

- Learners benefit from a culture of support where experienced staff offer ongoing advice and guidance about their work and careers and, where relevant, personal difficulties. Staff correctly use information to place learners on the right courses. Learners clearly understand the options open to them at the end of their training, including progression to higher level courses and career options. However, staff do not record information, advice and guidance sufficiently well to enable learners, parents/carers and others to monitor progress towards learners' goals and targets.
- Trainers and assessors promote equality, diversity and inclusion appropriately and the majority support the development of inclusive language. As a result, most learners develop a good understanding of the needs and rights of others and the majority of them are able to speak confidently about protected groups within society.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good

Apprenticeships

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing is good, which is reflected in the significant increase in success rates in 2013/14. The proportion of learners who complete their programmes is high.
- Learners confidently demonstrate good commercial hairdressing and employability skills. For example, learners display highly skilled precision cutting techniques in barbering which exceed qualification requirements. Client consultations are thorough and learners communicate well with a diverse range of clients.
- Learners benefit from small group sizes and from good individual learning sessions led by highly motivated, enthusiastic and experienced trainers. All trainers are skilled current practitioners employed in the hairdressing industry, who have suitable qualifications and inspire learners to achieve well. They routinely relate theory to practice which enriches and enlivens learning. In a minority of theory lessons, some trainers rely too much on paper-based learning activities. Learners lose interest and deviate from the learning topic.
- Trainers and assessors provide good individual coaching in both the training centre and in their workplace training sessions. Training takes place in good quality salons, with employers who fully support the development of apprentices. Employers have high expectations and are good role models. Good employers are actively involved with training at the workplace. After completing their training, many apprentices remain employed, often progressing to senior stylist and management positions.
- The GHQ Training Centre provides a good learning environment in the heart of the city. Learners have good access to ground floor training rooms. The hairdressing salons are well equipped. Rooms for teaching theoretical aspects have a good range of equipment, including large screens, whiteboards, flip charts and computers, to enable a variety of teaching methods to progress learning.
- Assessment practices are rigorous and carried out frequently. Assessors prepare learners well before undertaking assessments. They provide motivational verbal feedback to enable learners to progress and take their learning to the next level.
- Trainers give consideration to apprentices' prior learning when planning their length of time in learning. For example, learners who have previous experience or knowledge in hairdressing are able to progress more quickly towards achieving the level 2 qualification. Less confident learners are able to take slightly longer to complete the qualification.
- Systems to track and monitor learners progress are good. Assessors use fortnightly progress reviews in the workplace effectively to identify achievable learning targets with set dates for

completion. These targets enable learners to monitor their own progress and take responsibility for their learning.

- Learners achieve their functional skills well. However, the promotion of mathematics and English in vocational learning is insufficiently challenging. For example in a weaker session, the teacher read the tasks aloud from activity sheets, thus not encouraging learners to develop confidence in reading skills.
- All apprentices and staff at GHQ Training work well together and treat each other with mutual respect. Bullying and harassment do not feature. Learners feel safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. However, they do not fully understand the concept of equality. For example, when questioned, learners thought that equality meant treating everyone the same. Tutors create too few opportunities to extend and develop learners' understanding during lessons at the training centre.

Administration

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment in administration and business management are good. This is reflected in the good outcomes that apprentices achieve. Apprentices are well motivated and are enthusiastic about their learning. They are making good progress and developing their confidence well. Apprentices are valued highly by employers and most apprentices go on to secure permanent positions. They are successfully meeting the needs of customers.
- Apprentices receive good support from their assessors and their employers. Assessors visit the workplace regularly and communicate with apprentices well between visits via email, telephone and through the online learning environment.
- Assessors are adept in providing effective one-to-one coaching support that helps apprentices develop their administrative skills and gather the evidence required for their portfolios efficiently. They make good use of audio recorders to create digital evidence. Assessors are sensitive to the needs of their learners and are highly regarded by them.
- Learners develop skills well in the workplace, undertaking roles that provide good opportunities for practising administration tasks. Learners develop confidence quickly in dealing with customers, managing files and creating systems to archive documents. Assessors make good use of questioning to develop, check and extend the understanding of their learners. Learners develop their knowledge and independent learning skills effectively through the online resources available.
- Accurate initial assessment helps assessors and trainers to target their support on the skills that require development. Assessors carefully match the skills and knowledge requirements of the optional units of the course with the opportunities available within the workplace. This is undertaken with the cooperation of the employer. For example, one learner within a company that produces promotional products has been set a challenging project to undertake the preparation for a trade fair. This provides significant opportunities to develop project management skills.
- Assessors set learners challenging targets to complete assessments between visits. This allows them to develop their understanding and to derive the required evidence for their portfolios efficiently. In a small minority of workplaces, employers insist that learners undertake mundane tasks in their first few months, even if they are capable of more challenging activities. Assessors did not assign more challenging optional units to the few more able learners to counteract this.
- Apprentices benefit from frequent, detailed and accurate feedback of assessed work. Assessors mark and respond promptly to work submitted by learners. Assessors clearly indicate in their feedback on work assessed what needs to be improved in terms of the content covered, but do not always identify spelling and grammatical errors and do not promote good workplace standards in these skills.

- The majority of apprentices are articulate and communicate effectively in both written and verbal English. For example, they deal well with customers over the telephone. Learners develop functional skills well through one-to-one support in the workplace, and through workshops they attend if in need of additional support.
- Apprentices demonstrate good ICT skills and are confident, for example, in tasks such as using sophisticated graphics to create images for electronic displays and websites. One learner has responsibility for the social media for the organisation they work for. Learners are applying in their workplaces the advanced spreadsheet skills acquired while attending ICT workshops, including how to manage data more effectively. One apprentice has become the acknowledged source of expertise in using the customer relationship management software within a workplace.
- Learners benefit from good advice and guidance that ensure that they are on the right course and are undertaking an appropriate job role to meet their aspirations. Learners are clear about the opportunities for progression. Many employers are keen to provide opportunities for their apprentices to progress within the organisation.
- Apprentices treat customers and colleagues fairly, and with respect, but assessors’ promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Assessors do not routinely develop learners’ broader understanding of cultural diversity or how learners should provide service that best meets the needs of all customers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
---	------

- Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and leaders have a clear vision and strategic direction, and set high expectations. Strategies for growth and improvement are clear and realistic. Senior managers have successfully implemented the organisation’s three-year business plan to expand provision into North Devon, Cornwall, Exeter and Torquay to meet identified needs. Care has been taken to build on already well-established vocational provision and to resource it well so that high standards are maintained and provision is sustainable. Success rates declined in 2012/13, partly due to some learners transferring from other providers’ part way through their programme. However, managers have taken prompt and effective action, and success rates have improved significantly in 2013/14.
- Managers plan well for development and improvement. The management structure is clear and staff understand their roles in the organisation, which has an open and positive culture and good communication. Staff are involved and informed well in regular meetings which focus effectively on improving provision and learners’ success. Managers encourage feedback from learners to help the organisation improve. They employ staff with good industry experience and appropriate qualifications and provide good opportunities for further professional development.
- Partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders, such as the regional training provider networks, the local enterprise partnership, employers and chambers of commerce, are highly effective. These partnerships provide mutual benefits including developing and improving provision for learners and widening employer and business networks. Recent improvements to the self-assessment process and the observations of teaching and learning have been developed in partnership with other organisations.
- Managers plan and manage the curriculum well. GHQ Training offers a good range of programmes and levels to suit learners’ needs and allow learners to progress. The recent expansion has been carefully planned and based on sound labour market information about local and national needs, derived from external partners. Learning programmes are generally accessible to potential learners. However, a few employers are reluctant to release learners for functional skills programmes.
- Managers implement rigorously the well-established arrangements to assure the quality of provision and improve teaching, learning and assessment, including effective observations and internal quality assurance of work-based assessment. Managers make good use of management information to monitor and improve performance. They have recently sharpened their analysis

of data in order to monitor the performance of assessors as well as learners at subject level. Managers agree action points for improvement with staff as a result of observations of teaching and learning. However, the reports of these observations do not focus sufficiently on the quality of learners' progress and learning.

- Managers include all staff and learners in the self-assessment process. Their quality improvement plan is realistic and indicates that the company is aware of its main strengths and areas for improvement. However, the targets for improvement are insufficiently specific or time bound. The initial judgements in the draft programme area self-assessments are not supported by robust evidence.
- Managers have established suitable arrangements to protect learners from harassment and bullying, and take swift action to respond to any identified areas of concern. They have clear complaints and equality and diversity policies which they convey to both learners and staff effectively. The organisation promotes equality and diversity effectively through masterclasses, events and competitions.
- The arrangements for safeguarding require improvement. Managers provide staff with sufficient training to ensure that learners are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are effective. However, training updates for aspects such as the prevention of radicalisation and the promotion of e-safety are not yet routinely in place for all staff. The safeguarding policy, which is distributed to all staff on induction, is clear and is reviewed regularly. The policy contains useful advice on appropriate interaction between staff and learners, and helpful links to training materials and other guidance. A designated safeguarding officer has been trained to an appropriate level. Essential checks are made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on staff who work with children and young people. Effective links are maintained with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and areas of concern are recorded and reported appropriately. Learners report that they feel safe. Good attention is paid to health and safety in training and in the workplace.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

GHQ 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	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
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Administration	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16–18, 19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	170							
Principal/CEO	Mrs J Rogers							
Date of previous inspection	November 2011							
Website address	www.ghqtraining.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+
	-	-	2	21	-	17	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	91	66	31	100	-	3		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	3		-		-			
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"> ▪ N/A 							

Contextual information

GHQ Training Limited (GHQ) is a private training company established in 1992 and located in Plymouth city centre. In recent years, GHQ has increased its provision and now offers training in North Devon, Cornwall, Exeter and Torquay. The company holds contracts with the Skills Funding Agency to provide apprenticeships in early years and playwork, hairdressing and beauty, supporting teaching and learning in schools, and administration and business management. GHQ also delivers funded vocational training aimed at helping people back into employment. GHQ is run by two directors and employs 45 people. Approximately 90% of GHQ's provision is publicly funded.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Gary Adkins
-----------------------	-------------

One lead inspector 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>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

