

Expedient Training Services Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		2–5 December 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- the actions to improve provision identified at the last inspection have not all been fully implemented
- the teaching of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) requires further improvement
- although a high proportion of learners complete their apprenticeships, a good proportion do not complete within the planned timescale
- the quality improvement processes, such as the self-assessment system are not fully working to drive dynamic improvements.

This provider has the following strengths:

- the majority of apprentices gain their qualifications; they develop good skills as well as positive attitudes towards work
- a substantial proportion of apprentices progress to further or higher education and/or gain promotions at work
- teaching, learning and assessment are good with innovative teaching and enthusiastic, knowledgeable staff
- information, advice and guidance are good, particularly that provided by the main subcontractor
- subcontractors and Expedient Training Services Limited (Expedient) staff have a good understanding of the needs of the local area and their employers and use knowledge well to plan a curriculum that meets their needs.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the numbers of learners who complete their apprenticeship within planned timescales by ensuring the curriculum design meets the needs of learners, including functional skills. Develop the skills of assessors in the use of teaching and learning techniques in order to challenge and stretch apprentices both vocationally and in their functional skills.
- Further develop the teaching, learning and assessment of functional skills by improving the quality of resources, including online resources and e-learning, and ensuring learners have good access to, and guidance about them. Improve the company's capacity to deliver functional skills across provision both internally and in the subcontractors by ensuring there are sufficient suitably trained staff. Improve the observation of teaching and learning process so that it informs developments across all aspects of provision, both internal and subcontracted.
- Ensure that all the actions for improvement identified at the last inspection are fully implemented for the benefit of learners by completing a full review of those actions, assessing current progress and rigorously monitoring ongoing progress. Ensure staff are fully trained in using the management information system and have a good understanding of its use, so that new plans and milestones to measure progress are accurate. Work with subcontractors to ensure that actions are having a measurable impact on improving the quality of provision.
- Improve the quality improvement processes further by reviewing the observation processes with the subcontractors to assess where best practice lies and coming to a shared agreement about how they can improve teaching and learning. Strengthen the performance management of individuals and hold them to account for under-performance. Clarify the roles of those responsible for improving the quality of the provision so that lines of accountability are clear. Strengthen further the self-assessment process, and ensure all subcontractors share good practice with each other. By sharing any identified good practice, improve aspects such as tracking and monitoring processes and teaching and learning strategies.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Through their main subcontractor, Expedient provides apprenticeships at intermediate, advanced and higher levels in health and social care, which make up the vast majority of the provision. A few apprentices follow administration and business management programmes with this subcontractor. Expedient directly delivers apprenticeships for a very small number of learners on health and social care and support for teaching and learning programmes. Two other subcontractors deliver provision for the even smaller number of apprentices on motor vehicle and transport operations and maintenance programmes.
- Over the past three years, an outstanding number of health and social care apprentices have gained their framework qualifications. However, a good proportion of them, according to published data, do not gain their qualifications within their planned timescales. Managers have been taking appropriate actions using this information to make improvements; however, the data itself contain some inconsistencies that remain to be resolved.
- Apprentices' overall achievement of their framework qualification and their achievements within planned timescales are historically high on administration and business management programmes. However, the current provider data, while containing many anomalies, indicate a dip in performance.
- Transport operations and maintenance apprentices' achievement of their overall framework qualifications is very high but achievement within planned timescales is low. Framework

completions, both overall and in planned timescales for the very small proportion of learners on motor vehicle apprenticeships, are low.

- The majority of learners develop good skills that they use well at work and in home life. For example, health and social care learners take the initiative and plan care for their residents well. Apprentices in domiciliary care interpret the often complex instructions with regard to medication for older clients with multiple health issues well.
- Support for teaching and learning apprentices work well with professionals in nurseries and schools to develop interesting activities for the children in their care. However, their development of occupational skills is hampered by insufficient challenge to them by assessors.
- Motor vehicle apprentices develop good skills and they show good understanding of the practical application of the skills they have learned. For example, they fully understand and can explain in detail the importance of regular vehicle checks to ensure safety on the road.
- A high percentage of learners gain promotions at work or move into jobs with greater levels of responsibility. Health and social care apprentices move into supervisory roles and oversee care plans. Learners generally make good progress. Standards of work for most learners are good. Learners progress to higher levels of study and other courses very well, particularly at the main subcontractor.
- English and mathematics skill development across the programmes requires improvement. Learners with the main subcontractor develop competency in writing care plans to varying levels, though their use of grammar and spelling are not well developed. Internal Expedient learners' development of English and mathematics skills, though benefitting from some recent improvements, still requires improvement.
- A significant minority of apprentices across provision have to re-sit tests in both English and mathematics. Apprentices' progress in developing their ICT skills is slow but improving.
- Managers in the main subcontractor scrutinise information to understand achievement gaps for learners and have taken some actions to address these. For example, where they identified low attendance at sessions in particular companies, managers took swift action to improve this. However, managers of Expedient do not use information well or systematically to identify issues quickly and put relevant actions into place.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection and are good. This matches the good outcomes apprentices gain. Learners benefit from good training in small groups as well as one-to-one guidance that increases their confidence and supports the development of employability, personal and social skills well. For example, they develop good communication skills and understand the importance of confidentiality as they work with clients and their relatives.
- Assessors plan assessment activities well, using a varied, interesting and sometimes innovative range of learning and assessment strategies to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of health and social care, enabling them to make good progress through their apprenticeship. For example, skilful questioning techniques and the very productive activities, such as professional discussions and the use of workbooks, ensure that learners' skills, understanding and expertise improve over time.
- However, the use of information and learning technology to support learning is under-developed. Expedient is planning to introduce electronic portfolios to support teaching, learning and assessment in the coming months.
- Well-qualified and experienced subcontractor assessors have recent occupational experience and significant expertise in areas such as learning disability support, dementia support and moving and handling clients. Assessors motivate learners well. The majority of apprentices develop their skills to such high levels that they progress to higher-level qualifications or gain promotion in the workplace.

- Assessors successfully integrate equality and diversity into training in a lively and engaging way and this supports learners' knowledge and understanding very effectively. For example, as learners discuss modifications for clients with mobility issues, they carefully consider types of disability and issues surrounding mobility needs and how they can treat clients with sensitivity so that they maintain their dignity.
- Subcontractors' assessors make good use of initial assessment to identify learners' starting points, ensuring they are placed on the correct programme to meet their individual learning needs. For example, learners complete a self-review of their current areas of skills and expertise. Assessors then help them assess where they need additional support and guidance. Conversely, Expedient assessors make insufficient use of initial assessment for the small numbers of learners they work with; learners undertake initial assessment too late in their programme and assessors make limited use of the information to support learning. Learners do not complete their programmes in planned timescales.
- Learners within the subcontractor have a good understanding of the progress they make. The majority of assessors visit their apprentices at least monthly and clearly monitor and record their progress. Assessors and learners jointly agree focused and challenging targets that very effectively consolidate and extend learning and prepare them for their next learning session. Planned learning activities build on previous learning and ensure learners broaden well their knowledge and understanding over time.
- Apprentices know how to improve the quality of their work using the constructive verbal feedback from assessors. However, written feedback on their work is inconsistent. While the minority of written feedback is constructive and detailed, too much lacks detail resulting in learners not always knowing what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. Their English skills are not supported well enough, for example, the majority of assessors do not identify and correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors on learners' work.
- The teaching of English and mathematics skills requires improvement. Historically, the introduction of teaching for the development of functional skills was too late in the apprenticeship programme, resulting in learners not completing their frameworks quickly enough. Although improving, too many learners are significantly behind targets set for the achievement of functional skills. Identical written feedback for learners following functional skills assessment in speaking, listening and communication results in inaccurate recording of what the learner has achieved.
- Information, advice and guidance in subcontracted provision are very good. Assessors are highly experienced and all have level four qualifications in specialist information, advice and guidance. Assessors skilfully support learners in making decisions and choices regarding their next steps in training and employment, such as apprentices who have aspirations to progress to university to study nursing.
- Learners have a good understanding of safeguarding. They know who to contact if they have an issue or concern and talk knowledgeably and confidently about how to keep vulnerable clients safe. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe when working alone in the community and have a good understanding of employers' systems and procedures that they are required to follow.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Although arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision, including that of subcontractors, have improved, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these changes.
- Leaders recognised that additional capacity was required to implement the improvements identified at the last inspection, and they have appointed two experienced senior managers to take this forward. The provider has begun to make progress in most of the areas for

improvement reported at the last inspection. Success rates for the great majority of apprentices remain high.

- At the last inspection, systems to monitor learners' progress were not sufficiently rigorous. The provider has introduced a data system to track learners' progress more closely across all provision. Managers check reports on learners' performance at weekly meetings. However, the data currently held are incomplete and have some inconsistencies. Managers do not yet analyse performance in sufficient depth to produce sharply focused action plans for improvement.
- The performance management of staff to raise the standards of teaching, learning and assessment has also improved. This was a weakness at the last inspection. Assessors across the provision have high levels of vocational expertise and relevant professional experience, which they apply very effectively in workplace training to help learners progress. Managers support assessors well to improve their performance. For example, they have encouraged the assessors to improve their own levels of functional skills in English and mathematics. However, small pockets of under-performance remain.
- The provider has begun a more systematic approach to conducting and monitoring observations of teaching, learning and assessment. This is leading to more focused feedback for assessors to help them improve, but is not yet fully implemented. The provider does not share sufficiently the good practice identified across the provision to drive more rapid improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- The self-assessment process requires improvement. Although the self-assessment report is broadly accurate, it does not evaluate provision in sufficient depth, for example, by subject area or by provider. As a result managers set improvement targets that are too general to bring about rapid improvements for apprentices, in their outcomes or in their teaching and learning programmes. Managers do not identify clear milestones within action plans so that they can measure progress against targets.
- Self-assessment takes account of the views of staff and learners, and draws on individual self-assessment reports from subcontractors. However, the provider does not involve sufficiently subcontractors in the process to ensure they share ownership of the resulting quality improvement plans.
- The managers of Expedient have a very clear vision and priorities for the future, which staff within Expedient understand well and support. Although subcontractors share the same high expectations and aspirations for learners, they do not uniformly share the same vision. The provider has taken firm action to remove subcontracted provision that has fallen below expected standards.
- The provider and its subcontractors are very well established within their specialist sectors, and have good market intelligence on economic plans and developments in their area. Close involvement in extensive provider and employer networks means that the provider and its subcontractors are very responsive to the emerging training needs of employers and apprentices locally and regionally. The curriculum therefore, is well-planned to meet employer needs. Progression opportunities for apprentices in health and social care programmes managed by the largest subcontractor are well planned and extensive.
- The leadership of English, mathematics and ICT across the provision requires improvement. The provider has revised its contractual agreements so that subcontractors are now required to ensure that all new apprentices complete their functional skills awards at an early stage of their programmes. Managers have appointed a specialist coordinator for functional skills within Expedient with some improvement for current learners. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these actions.
- Staff promote equality and diversity well with their apprentices, who are able to apply their increased understanding in the workplace, for example, when considering vehicle adaptations and essential maintenance for drivers with mobility issues. All staff receive annual training on equality and diversity.
- At the last inspection, the provider did not monitor the performance of different groups of apprentices effectively, in order to identify and address any gaps in achievement. Managers now

routinely receive data on outcomes for different groups of learners. They do not yet analyse this information in sufficient depth to identify the reasons underlying any differences in achievement, and consequently they do not plan effectively to eliminate these gaps.

- Expedient's safeguarding of all learners is good. All staff complete annual training in safeguarding at an appropriate level. The single central register confirms that appropriate checks on staff have been completed. Apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding and how to report any concerns. Managers and staff closely monitor employers' approach to health and safety. They are very alert to risks in the workplace, and are meticulous in ensuring the health and safety of apprentices.

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	19+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	848								
Principal/CEO	Mr Malcolm Atkinson								
Date of previous inspection	June 2013								
Website address	www.expedient-training.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+	
	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	N/A	30	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	313	N/A	92	N/A		12		
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KT Associates Merit Skills Actions Limited 								

Contextual information

Expedient, based in Jarrow, provides apprenticeships nationally with the vast majority within the North East of England. At the time of the last inspection, Expedient was part of a consortium with partners offering health and social care programmes. Since the last inspection the consortium has dissolved and Expedient has become the lead contractor with responsibility for all provision. The largest numbers of learners by far are with the health and social care former partner that has now become a subcontractor. Two other very small subcontractors deliver transport operations and motor mechanic provision. Expedient is now delivering directly a very small health and social care programme as well as a course in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. The percentage of pupils in the local area gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics is 1.4% above the national average. Unemployment in the area is above the national average. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is 12.6%, which is 1.5% more than the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

June Cramman HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Quality and Delivery Manager 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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