

Norfolk Training Services Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		16 – 20 February 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- the proportion of learners that successfully complete their qualifications is not yet high enough, particularly for adult learners and apprentices
- a majority of tutors are not sufficiently skilled in using teaching and learning techniques that help all apprentices and learners make the best progress possible
- teaching and learning of discrete English and mathematics are not good enough; most tutors and assessors do not integrate English and mathematics sufficiently in vocational studies
- tutors and assessors do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently
- quality improvement arrangements are not fully effective in eliminating the gaps in success rates between different groups of apprentices and learners
- leaders do not use data to analyse learners and apprentices' performance effectively at subject level; leaders do not monitor the impact of actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently well or track the destinations of all leavers
- procedures to identify suitably safe employment opportunities for apprentices require more rigour.

This provider has the following strengths:

- most learners on study programmes benefit from purposeful work experience in relevant industries that enables them to develop good vocational knowledge and skills
- a high proportion of apprentices in administration and customer service complete their qualifications successfully and gain full-time employment
- the large majority of assessors' individual coaching and use of assessment are effective in ensuring most apprentices develop good knowledge and skills in the workplace
- leaders ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the needs of local employers and the priorities of the local enterprise partnership (LEP) and plays an important role in ensuring vulnerable young people and adults have an opportunity to engage in relevant learning programmes.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that tutors' training and development focuses on helping them to improve the range and effectiveness of techniques they deploy to make sure all learners and apprentices make rapid progress.
- Make sure that assessors and tutors have high expectations of their apprentices and learners and provide a consistently high level of challenge, taking into account apprentices and learners' starting points, so that they excel and realise their potential.
- Improve how tutors integrate English and mathematics, and promote equality and diversity within teaching, learning and assessment in order for apprentices and learners to develop and absorb these essential skills and knowledge.
- Ensure tutors and assessors' action plans, following observations of staff, contain specific and timely interventions that will rectify identified weaknesses and promote swift improvement.
- Ensure that all arising information from quality improvement processes results in timely actions that improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that leaders analyse and use data well, particularly that relating to the standard of teaching, learning and assessment and the destinations of all leavers.
- Improve the rigour of health and safety checks on employers for apprentices by ensuring all staff who carry out such checks are appropriately qualified and experienced to ensure best practice in recording and reducing risks to learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Norfolk Training Services (NTS) provides apprenticeship training in six vocational areas at intermediate and advanced levels. Over a third of apprentices are working towards apprenticeships in motor vehicle and around a quarter in administration. Apprenticeships make up around two thirds of the total provision. The remainder comprises study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19, most of whom study motor vehicle or construction, courses for unemployed adults and a very few traineeships.
- The proportion of younger learners successfully completing their classroom-based courses has improved over time but remains just below that of similar providers. The success rate of younger apprentices remains stable but is below the national rate. The proportion of adults on apprenticeship programmes and classroom-based learning courses who successfully complete their qualifications has significantly decreased over time and is lower than the rates of similar providers. The provider's own data indicate improvement in the current year for success rates in all types of provision and for all ages.
- Achievement rates for classroom-based learners at all ages are very high. However, retaining both adults and learners aged 16 to 19 has been a particular problem for the provider. The provider's own data for the current year indicate that there has been considerable improvement in ensuring learners on study programmes and apprenticeships remain in learning.
- Learners' written work is often not of a sufficiently high standard and too few learners extend their understanding and application within theoretical topics. However, the standard of the majority of learners' practical work is good. For example, learners and apprentices on carpentry and joinery programmes exceed their course requirements and hone their furniture-making skills

through producing well-made and highly stylised wooden designs and artefacts for employers' reception areas.

- Learners' achievement in English and mathematics functional skills qualifications varies at different levels and not enough are successful. The proportion of learners studying level 2 mathematics courses that complete their qualification is higher than nationally. However, success is low on level 1 courses in mathematics and level 2 courses in English. The provider's own data indicate significant improvement in the current year at all levels of functional skills.
- The gap between the proportion of male and female apprentices completing their programme has reduced considerably over time. However, a much lower proportion of apprentices with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve compared with their peers. In classroom-based learning courses, the success rates of younger learners with dyslexia and adults with learning difficulties remain lower than the rates of other groups of learners. Leaders have recognised these achievement gaps and have recently increased substantially the number of support staff for learners and apprentices with identified additional needs; as a result more learners with additional needs are making better progress in the current year.
- The large majority of younger learners benefit greatly from work experience as part of their study programme. Leaders and managers have established purposeful placements with employers in relevant industry settings that bolster learners' technical knowledge and skills. Learners on study programmes make good gains from additional qualifications in employability to supplement their main qualification and further strengthen their understanding of the world of work.
- Learners' attendance is good. Learners and apprentices' absence is monitored rigorously with immediate follow-up contact by administrators. Most learners enjoy their learning and value highly the support given by staff, the inexpensive café and free transport provided by NTS. Leaders and managers ensure an inclusive culture which places a strong emphasis on learners respecting one another.
- The provider attracts learners often with previously poor experiences of education; the majority of learners on study programmes progress to employment, further education and a rising proportion to apprenticeship training with employed status. However, the destinations of too many learners are not known.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The main aim of the provider is to provide vocational programmes that enable learners to develop the skills required for employment within the region. The four subject areas inspected and reported on represent a sample of the provider's most significant provision. Inspectors also evaluated study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19, functional skills in English and mathematics, and sampled provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and construction.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, as reflected by the proportion of learners and apprentices who complete their qualifications which is not yet high enough. This is because tutors are not always sufficiently skilled in using teaching and learning techniques which help all learners make the best progress possible.
- Staff carry out initial interviews and assessment at enrolment skilfully to determine learners' existing skills and needs. However, too many tutors lack the teaching skills to use information on learners' prior achievement and assessed strengths and weaknesses to plan and craft lessons that consistently interest learners and apprentices and meet their individual needs.
- Support staff offer a good level of specialist help and pastoral support to learners with identified needs and as a result, more learners with identified needs are staying in learning, achieving and making good progress than in previous years. Support staff work effectively with other relevant

organisations involved in the learners' lives on matters such as accommodation and benefits in order to support learners' attendance and motivation.

- The majority of teaching, learning and assessment are characterised by weak planning and over-reliance on a narrow range of teaching approaches which fail to inspire learners, so that learners lose interest and do not make good progress. Not enough tutors offer a sufficiently broad range of assessment activities to accelerate learners' understanding and application of key theoretical concepts and principles. Too few tutors encourage more active and independent learning, for example by using information and learning technology (ILT) creatively to enhance learners' interest and understanding. Consequently learners lose interest and make slow progress.
- The minority of teaching and learning is good and characterised by careful planning of directly relevant activities for learners with clear individual targets which stretch learners and encourage them to become more independent. For example, a new business apprentice was asked to review health and safety practice at the small company where she was employed. Following independent research, the learner designed a new signing-in procedure which the company adopted. A minority of tutors use their wealth of industry experience to make practical learning tasks realistic and enjoyable for learners. For example, learners in construction created their own imaginative designs which they then transferred into a tiled wall display. As a result, learners gained good practical skills and a sense of pride in their achievements.
- The majority of assessors' individual coaching and use of assessment are effective in ensuring most apprentices develop good knowledge and skills in the workplace. Assessors' flexible visits to meet work schedules and employers' pertinent training help apprentices in the workplace develop the competences and skills needed to perform their job well. However, a minority of assessors' assessment of apprentices' progress in the workplace is of poor quality; a minority of apprentices do not make sufficient progress because assessors do not use questioning techniques sufficiently to draw out apprentices' reflection on tasks completed or consider how they might improve further.
- High quality work placements in relevant employer settings enable most learners on study programmes to develop good work-related skills and understanding of the challenges of the world of work; tutors enable learners to assess the learning they have gained effectively and identify what steps they need to take to improve their chances of securing employment in the future.
- Despite recent improvements, teaching in discrete functional mathematics lessons requires further improvement. Not enough tutors set sharply focused, individual targets for improvement consistently which build on learners and apprentices' previous skills in mathematics. Not enough learning activities link sufficiently with the learners and apprentices' vocational areas and as a result a majority of learners and apprentices do not fully recognise the value of functional mathematics for their future careers. In contrast, in the best workshop sessions, tutors weave mathematics into realistic practical activities. For example, learners in joinery and carpentry calculated the angles they would need to cut to fix skirting boards accurately, while learners in painting and decorating calculated wall areas and the number of rolls of wallpaper needed to in order to price a job.
- The teaching of functional English in discrete lessons requires improvement because too few tutors embed English activities in topics which learners see as relevant. In vocational learning, tutors do not emphasise consistently enough the importance of good written and spoken English for learners' future lives and careers. Tutors pay too little attention to learners' errors in English, so that learners do not develop a better understanding of grammar and spelling, particularly in relevant industry-specific vocabulary.
- The quality of written feedback on learners' work requires improvement because tutors do not always give learners sufficient information on their progress and performance, or give clear and detailed advice so that learners can improve their performance.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Learners from very diverse backgrounds work together collaboratively in an inclusive environment. However, tutors and

assessors do not encourage learners sufficiently to reflect on different people's needs in relation to the learners' chosen vocational area or the expectations of living and working in modern, diverse Britain.

Motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes

Apprenticeships

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in motor vehicle require improvement because:

- not enough apprentices and adult learners on classroom-based courses complete their qualifications; however, a far higher proportion of younger learners on study programmes succeed than in similar providers
- too few tutors use information on learners' starting points to inform their planning of teaching theory or deploy a pertinent range of activities and resources to ensure all learners are challenged to make good progress
- tutors' use of questioning and discussion to check all learners understand key principles and concepts and consolidate their understanding requires improvement; too many tutors focus their questions and explanations on a few learners without involving all
- the majority of tutors do not check and ensure that learners grasp essential theory to underpin their practical work effectively; for example, learners enjoy fitting starter motors in cars but cannot fully describe the components of the starter motors or how they work despite having studied their function and impact on engines
- tutors' marking of learners' written work and use of feedback requires improvement; tutors provide good verbal feedback but too much learners' work is not sufficiently recorded and evaluated to help all learners understand how to make good progress and as a result the standard of learners' written work is often not good enough
- tutors and assessors integrate mathematics into motor vehicle learning and assessment activities but rarely offer learners opportunities to deepen their understanding and extend their mathematics skills
- tutors do not incorporate sufficiently the development of apprentices and learners' English skills within their motor vehicle studies; they do not plan enough opportunities to embed apprentices and learners' use of technical language and industry-specific vocabulary
- staff provide an inclusive learning environment but the promotion of equality and celebration of diversity is perfunctory and too few tutors and assessors prepare resources that sufficiently accelerate apprentices and learners' awareness and understanding.

In motor vehicle the provider has the following strengths:

- assessors plan good quality assessment and offer effective individual coaching that enables apprentices to develop a good level of knowledge and skills in the workplace, reflecting the provider's data for the current year that indicate significantly improved success rates for apprentices
- very effective partnership working with employers in the motor vehicle industry enables younger learners on study programmes to participate in meaningful work experience that bolsters their

technical knowledge and skills and make contributions their employers value; tutors reinforce the practical learning gained from placements well

- a high standard of equipment and resources provide good realistic working environments for learners studying at the training centre in Norwich; learners value highly their practical learning.

Retailing and Warehousing

16-19 study programmes

Apprenticeships

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in retailing and warehousing require improvement because:

- the proportion of adult apprentices and adult learners successfully completing warehousing and distribution courses declined to below the national rates in 2013/14; the providers' own data indicate improvement in the success rates for these cohorts to above the national rates in the current year
- tutors and assessors do not always use information on learners' prior achievements and strengths and weaknesses to plan learning that is sufficiently demanding
- a minority of tutors' planning at induction is not effective in developing fully learners' understanding of programme content, qualifications and requirements and as a result a minority of learners are not always clear as to what is expected of them
- a minority of assessors do not use reviews of apprentices' progress to challenge effectively or set precise targets in order to motivate all apprentices to excel and make good progress
- the standard of a majority of learners' written work requires improvement; too many tutors do not ensure apprentices and learners demonstrate their understanding and apply relevant theory to their written work
- tutors and assessors integrate mathematics well within vocational studies; however, tutors' development of learners' written English skills, including the reinforcement of relevant industry vocabulary and technical language is under-developed
- a minority of assessors do not ensure that all apprentices can access the electronic learning portfolio system so they can develop their independent study skills and reinforce required knowledge and understanding
- staff do not use learners' experiences or apprentices' work settings sufficiently to develop their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

In retailing and warehousing the provider has the following strengths:

- retail apprenticeship success rates are good and a high proportion of classroom-based learners achieve their qualifications
- the majority of apprentices achieve additional industry-specific relevant qualifications and develop good technical skills; a good proportion gain promotion in the workplace or progress to further learning
- assessors offer a high level of pastoral support to apprentices; the provider's own data for the current year indicate that more apprentices and learners are staying on their programme than in previous years

Employability Training

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in employability training require improvement because:

- not enough learners studying employability, mathematics and English courses have been successful over time; the provider's own data for the current year indicate significant improvement in the achievements of learners at all levels and success rates on level 2 courses in functional skills mathematics remain above the national rate
- the majority of tutors do not plan a sufficiently wide range of activities and methods that inspire all learners to overcome barriers to learning and make the progress in mathematics and English they are capable of; these tutors lack the expertise to change plans and deploy effective alternative approaches when required in order to retain the interest of all learners
- not enough tutors offer a sufficiently broad range of assessment activities to accelerate learners' understanding and application of English skills; tutors pay insufficient attention to developing learners' free writing skills or the value of reading to improve learners' comprehension skills
- in mathematics, tutors place too much emphasis on learners spending long periods working through past examination papers on their own and as a result, learners become bored and distracted and do not make the progress they are capable of
- too few tutors provide interesting, independent learning activities in mathematics and English that promote learners' desire to learn outside the classroom
- tutors' use of verbal questioning and feedback on learners' work are frequently helpful, but not enough is recorded; learners are not always clear how to progress because the majority of tutors' feedback on written work often lacks pertinent information on how to improve
- a minority of tutors do not draw upon learners' personal or workplace experiences sufficiently to enable learners to understand and value the importance of living and working in a multi-cultural, diverse society.

In employability training, the provider has the following strengths:

- most learners on study programmes take up meaningful work experience that enables them to develop good work-related, personal and social skills
- work placements are supplemented by useful employability qualifications; tutors skilfully enable learners to assess the learning they have gained effectively, identify what actions they need to take to find meaningful work in the future and develop their job search skills
- learners with often complex needs value highly the pastoral support that staff provide; recently appointed learning support assistants are enabling more learners with additional support needs or disabilities to make better progress in their employability, mathematics and English studies.

Administration and customer service**Apprenticeships
19+ Learning programmes**

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration and customer service are good because:

- a high proportion of apprentices successfully complete their qualifications within the planned timescale; current apprentices are making good progress and work to a high standard in the workplace
- assessors' high expectations and effective coaching enable apprentices to develop good technical and customer service skills that are valued highly by their employers; a high proportion of apprentices remain in full-time employment on successful completion of their apprenticeships
- assessment is good and enables learners to demonstrate their competence, skills and knowledge to a high standard frequently; assessors' pertinent feedback ensures apprentices are very clear on what they have achieved and what they need to do to make good progress
- tutors and assessors monitor apprentices' progress well; assessors work well with employers and fully involve apprentices in the regular evaluation of their progress and setting of targets and as a result engender a commitment from apprentices to work hard and excel
- assessors enable the more able apprentices to develop higher order specialist skills that enhance their contribution in the workplace through successfully motivating apprentices to extend their learning beyond the normal course requirements
- assessors use their substantial industry experience well to develop and embed learners' understanding of how relevant theory underpins the skills required in the workplace
- tutors and assessors' feedback on apprentices' written work is highly informative and challenges learners to extend the level of their reflection and analysis effectively; apprentices' work improves as a result.

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration and customer service are not yet outstanding because:

- not enough adult learners on classroom-based courses complete their learning and progress into employment or further learning
- tutors do not sufficiently focus on the importance of business language and writing styles when promoting the value of English skills to apprentices and learners; tutors and assessors do not plan sufficient learning to ensure all apprentices and learners improve their mathematics skills
- tutors do not offer apprentices and learners prompt feedback through the electronic learning portfolio system consistently and as a result apprentices and learners do not advance their understanding and knowledge quickly enough through independent learning outside the classroom and workplace
- tutors and assessors do not reinforce apprentices' and learners' knowledge of e-safety sufficiently.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that the current management structure is not effective and does not sufficiently promote the organisation's vision and strategic priorities; they are in the process of introducing a new management layer of team leaders with responsibilities to ensure all staff fully understand and work to securing the key objectives that centre on sustainable improvement
- Self-assessment identifies accurately headline strengths and areas for improvement which inform strategy effectively. Leaders' planning of improvement of the total provision provides precise, measurable targets. However, leaders do not use data sufficiently well to analyse performance effectively at subject level; quality assurance arrangements do not identify areas that require improvement or provide a precise process for intervention sufficiently well.
- Business managers do not implement their responsibilities fully with regard to teaching, learning and assessment; a few recommendations arising from the last inspection are yet to be fully completed. Leaders' improvement planning clearly identifies the new team leaders' responsibilities, reporting processes and time frames to secure improvement, indicating that in the new structure there is capacity for improvement. In recent appraisals, assessors and tutors have been given precise targets for improving success and retention; as a result the provider's own data indicate that more learners are staying in learning and achieving than in previous years.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Managers do not monitor the impact of staff training or share best practice sufficiently. The observation and grading of teaching, learning and assessment by managers includes too many observations of assessment and too little focus on vocational subject-specific teaching and learning. Inspectors found that while observers often over-inflate grades they are able to identify generic strengths and areas for development accurately within teaching and learning. Actions to improve teaching and learning often miss the development of tutors' vocational subject specialism. Strategies to improve functional English and mathematics are not yet fully established. The observation and standardisation of assessment practice complies with awarding body standards, however the development of tutors' marking and feedback on learners' work is not yet good enough.
- The curriculum offer meets New Anglia Learning and Enterprise Partnership priorities for increasing and promoting apprenticeships. Much of the provision focuses on motor vehicle, care provision in the local community, administration and customer service. These vocational areas are heavily drawn upon by the largest employers in the Norwich area. NTS also provides flexible study programmes for younger learners, successfully attracting a large proportion who are not in education, employment or training across Norfolk. Leaders have ensured that study programmes provide learners with good work experience to improve their vocational skills supplemented with employability qualifications that raise learners' awareness of employers' expectations.
- Data on performance of different groups are recorded but are just starting to be analysed; strategies to narrow gaps in the performance between different groups of learners are at an early stage. However, newly appointed learning support assistants are starting to make an impact on under-performing groups with better attendance and improved achievement of learners with difficulties and disabilities. More learning support posts are planned to support apprentices with additional needs.
- Safeguarding of learners requires improvement. Procedures and policies including whistle blowing and preventing extremism and radicalisation are promoted and implemented well. For example, managers have ensured that there is good visible promotion of the 'prevent' agenda at the King's Lynn training centre at learners' inductions and through visual displays. Leaders and managers ensure there is adequate safeguarding cover; staff are fully aware that they are able to contact any of four designated safeguarding officers if needed. All staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to reporting concerns and dealing with disclosures and only a very

few have not yet received mandatory training. Learners feel safe and have received training on how to stay safe. However, the promotion of e-safety is not sufficiently reinforced with learners on administration and customer service courses. Health and safety practices comply with legislation and staff promote health and safety well in classrooms and practical workshops. However, procedures to identify suitable employment opportunities for apprentices require far more rigour as the majority of staff who carry out this task are not suitably qualified or experienced in the subject areas to effectively risk assess and judge the safety of each workplace.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Norfolk 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			3		3	3		
Outcomes for learners	3			3		3	3		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3			3		3	3		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3			3		3	3		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Motor vehicle	3
Retailing and Wholesaling	3
Warehousing and Distribution	3
Employability Training	3
Administration	2
Customer service	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,188								
Principal/CEO	Mr James Mason								
Date of previous inspection	August 2011								
Website address	www.norfolktraining.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+	
	67	68	5	8	0	0	0	0	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	132	90	29	50	0		0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	1		1		2				
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	0								
Part-time	93								
Number of community learners	0								
Number of employability learners	0								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ N/A								

Contextual information

Norfolk Training Services (NTS) was established in 1969 and is an independent learning provider based in Norwich, with other training centres in Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth. NTS provides 16 to 19 study programmes, apprenticeships, 19+ learning programmes, workplace learning and traineeships. In addition, NTS provides part-time education provision for 14 to 16 pupils. In Norfolk, the proportion of pupils aged 16 achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is lower than the national average. The number of young people in Norfolk aged 18 who leave education to progress to employment, training or higher education is less than the national average. The number of adults of working age who are not working and in receipt of benefits is higher than that nationally in Norwich and Great Yarmouth but lower in Kings Lynn.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Matt Vaughan Her Majesty's Inspector

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Training 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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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