

YMCA Training

Not for profit organisation

Inspection dates		23–27 March 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:

- a significant minority of learners, many of whom had negative experiences of education prior to joining their study programme, attend lessons irregularly, and this hinders their progress; too many learners leave their study programme before achieving their main qualification
- learners on study programmes do not always make sufficient progress in improving their English and mathematics skills, and too few learners achieve functional skills qualifications
- teachers and trainers do not always take sufficient account of learners' and apprentices' starting points or aspirations when planning their learning, or monitor their progress closely enough; in a significant minority of lessons, learning activities and resources do not inspire and motivate learners, or challenge them to extend their skills quickly
- teachers do not always prepare learners well enough for living and working in a diverse society
- self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements are not yet robust enough to ensure high performance in all centres and programme areas
- the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds who succeed on the apprenticeship programme is significantly lower than that for White British learners.

This provider has the following strengths:

- learners and apprentices benefit from good support and an inclusive and encouraging ethos that help them to overcome significant barriers to their learning quickly
- the majority of apprentices make progress quickly and achieve well
- those learners on study programmes who attend lessons regularly make good progress in improving the skills, behaviours and attitudes that they need for work
- learners on study programmes receive good advice and guidance that enables the majority to progress successfully on to an apprenticeship, into further education, or into employment
- leaders and managers work closely with employers, partners and other organisations to improve learners' skills to meet local demand in many parts of the country; study programmes contribute successfully to meeting the national priority to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of learners who complete their study programme by ensuring that learners attend their lessons regularly and benefit from high-quality teaching that motivates, inspires and challenges them to improve their skills and knowledge quickly. Ensure that rigorous performance management and relevant professional development lead to rapid improvements in the skills of teachers and trainers, particularly those whose performance is not good enough.
- Improve teachers' use of information from initial assessment to plan activities that meet the individual needs and aspirations of learners on study programmes. Ensure that trainers consistently set targets for apprentices that are appropriately challenging and encourage apprentices to make progress beyond the requirements of their qualifications. Ensure that all teachers and trainers closely monitor learners' and apprentices' progress towards achieving their targets, and provide detailed and helpful written feedback that enables learners and apprentices to know exactly what they need to do to improve their skills and knowledge further.
- Ensure that learners on study programmes improve their English and mathematics skills quickly and achieve qualifications in these subjects. Improve the skills of all teachers so that they are able to support learners well to improve their functional skills. Monitor closely the progress that learners make in improving their English and mathematics skills, and provide extra support for those making insufficient progress.
- Develop the skills and knowledge of teachers and trainers so that they are able to prepare learners well for living and working in a diverse society. Monitor closely how well teachers and trainers promote diversity, and provide additional training where needed.
- Quickly implement planned improvements to the self-assessment and quality improvement processes to ensure high standards in all programme areas and geographical locations. Improve the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is more thorough and accurate, and leads to rapid improvement in performance.
- Identify the reasons for the low success rate among apprentices with minority ethnic backgrounds, and take action quickly to remove the achievement gap.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YMCA Training provides a large apprenticeship programme at intermediate- and advanced-level, and this accounts for 70% of all learners. Study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19, mainly at foundation-level, account for 18% of the provision; 446 learners were enrolled on study programmes at the time of the inspection. Work-based vocational programmes for adults account for 12% of learners. The provider also has a small traineeship programme. ▪ The majority of learners on the foundation-level study programme begin their courses with low levels of confidence and lacking basic work-related skills. Many were previously not in education, employment or training. Learners who attend lessons regularly make good progress in improving the skills, behaviours and attitudes that they need for work. Once their work-related skills and confidence are at a sufficiently high level, they successfully extend their skills further through relevant work experience. ▪ The proportion of younger learners who leave their study programme before the end is too high, and too few learners achieve their main qualification. Attendance on the study programme has improved slightly over recent months but remains too low on the majority of courses, including English and mathematics courses; this limits the progress of the significant minority of learners who attend lessons irregularly. Too many learners whose attendance is poor leave their programme early and do not achieve their qualifications. 	

- The large majority of learners who complete their study programmes progress successfully into further education, apprenticeships, or employment. Managers gather robust information on learners' destinations following completion of their study programmes and vocational courses. They know the destinations of a high proportion of learners who complete study programmes. Guidance staff work well with other agencies to ensure that a high proportion of learners who leave their study programme early find alternative training or education, including courses with other providers to improve independent living skills.
- Apprentices make good progress in improving their occupational skills, and achieve well. The proportion of apprentices who achieved their qualification within the planned time increased significantly in 2013/14, and is higher than the rate for similar providers. On the intermediate-level apprenticeship programme the success rate is very high, whilst on the advanced-level programme the proportion of apprentices who complete their programme successfully is in line with the national rate. A high proportion of apprentices progress successfully from intermediate- to advanced-level programmes. The proportion of adult learners on work-based vocational programmes who achieve their qualification is high.
- On the small traineeship programme, trainees make good progress in improving the skills that they need for work through participating in a wide range of relevant and supportive work-related activity including work experience. The majority of trainees progress to an apprenticeship programme or into employment at the conclusion of their traineeship.
- Learners on study programmes make insufficient progress in improving their English and mathematics skills on their vocational courses. Too few learners achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Apprentices and learners on traineeships improve their English and mathematics skills well, and achieve qualifications at an appropriate level.
- Gaps between the achievement of male and female learners have reduced significantly in the current year as a result of managers' actions to improve the quality of provision across all subject areas. In 2013/14, apprentices with learning disabilities and/or difficulties performed less well than other apprentices. This group of learners now receive extra help with their training, and this has resulted in a significant improvement in their performance. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds who succeed on the apprenticeship programme is significantly lower than that for White British learners. Managers have not taken action yet to remove this achievement gap.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The subject areas reported on represent a sample of the provider's most significant provision. Inspectors looked in depth at employability training on the foundation-level 16 to 19 study programme and at apprenticeships in administration and in early years and childcare. The sample included provision offered in centres across England. Inspectors also reviewed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in other programmes and subjects.
- Learners and apprentices benefit from good care and support. Many learners begin their study programmes and apprenticeships following negative experiences in education earlier in their lives. Teachers successfully support learners and apprentices to develop a positive attitude to learning, overcome the barriers to learning that they face and improve their self-esteem and confidence. They successfully provide extra help for learners and apprentices who have specific additional needs or who are falling behind with their work. As a result, the majority of learners who attend regularly and most apprentices make good progress in improving their skills and understanding, and become better prepared for employment.
- A significant minority of lessons do not inspire and motivate learners. Teachers do not always challenge learners sufficiently to develop the skills they need to learn independently. They make insufficient use of learning technology to support and extend learning. As a result, learners often miss lessons and too many leave their study programme early. Leaders and managers recognise this and have introduced, recently, a wide range of measures to improve the quality of provision. However, too much teaching, learning and assessment, particularly on the study

programme, is still of an insufficiently high standard to enable all learners to make good progress.

- Learners on study programmes and traineeships improve their skills and their readiness for work through a wide range of work-related activity, including work experience. Teachers plan work placements carefully and take good account of learners' readiness for work and their vocational interests and aspirations. Learners carry out visits to workplaces early in their programme to improve their confidence, and then attend a supportive work placement once they have acquired the personal and social skills that they need to carry out the placement successfully.
- The majority of apprentices and adult learners on work-based vocational courses benefit from good coaching and support from well-qualified trainers who have significant experience in their occupational area. As a result, they rapidly improve their confidence and acquire the skills they need to be successful in their job roles. Trainers provide additional intensive support for apprentices who need extra help or who have specific learning disabilities. This ensures that the majority of these apprentices overcome barriers to their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers do not always take sufficient account of learners' starting points or aspirations when planning their study programmes. Although initial assessment is thorough and results in a detailed and helpful individual plan with clear targets, teachers do not use the targets consistently well when planning learning activities. As a result, a minority of learners carry out tasks that are insufficiently challenging or that they find too difficult, which demotivates them and hinders their progress. The majority of apprentices have appropriately demanding training programmes that help them to achieve their targets and aspirations quickly. However, a small minority of apprentices have targets that are insufficiently challenging and do not encourage them to make progress beyond the requirements of their qualifications. Teachers and trainers do not always check with sufficient rigour the progress that learners and apprentices are making towards achieving their targets.
- Learners on study programmes receive helpful verbal feedback from their teachers about the progress that they are making on their courses and on work placements. Apprentices have regular reviews at which trainers give constructive and supportive verbal feedback. The written feedback that learners and apprentices receive is not always sufficiently detailed and, in a few instances, does not provide learners and apprentices with clear information about what they need to do to improve further.
- Teachers do not always develop learners' English and mathematics skills quickly enough on all parts of their study programme. As a result, learners often make slow progress in developing their skills, and too few achieve functional skills qualifications. Inaccurate English in learners' written work often remains uncorrected and, in a minority of lessons, teachers' own writing contains errors. Trainers support apprentices and trainees well to enable them to make good progress in improving their English and mathematics skills and achieve functional skills qualifications quickly.
- Learners, apprentices and trainees benefit from good advice and guidance to enable them to progress once they have completed their programme. Teachers provide clear and informative guidance to learners on study programmes and traineeships about progression opportunities including apprenticeships, further education and employment. This enables a high proportion of learners to progress successfully at the end of their programme. Apprentices receive helpful guidance about job roles in their occupational area and opportunities for promotion.
- Teachers and trainers successfully promote a supportive and inclusive ethos, and learners and apprentices from different backgrounds, and with a wide range of individual needs, work well together and show high levels of mutual respect. Apprentices in early years and playwork develop a good understanding of the importance of adapting their practice to meet the needs of clients from a wide range of backgrounds. However, teachers and trainers do not always prepare learners and apprentices sufficiently well for living and working in a diverse society. They do not make sufficient use of activities and resources that reflect the diversity in local communities.

Early years and playwork

Good

Apprenticeships**Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are good because:**

- apprentices make good progress and a high proportion complete their training programme within the planned time; they enjoy their learning and many use their new skills to progress well in their employment by, for example, being promoted to supervisory roles
- apprentices quickly develop skills and knowledge that are essential for working with children, such as understanding and complying with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and promoting equality and diversity
- well qualified and experienced trainers and assessors support apprentices well to improve their confidence as their knowledge and skills grow; as a result, apprentices manage their time effectively, organise their work well and work successfully with children and their parents and carers.
- trainers and assessors monitor closely and frequently the progress that apprentices make in developing their skills in the workplace; they act quickly to provide extra support to enable apprentices who are falling behind to catch up and complete their programme within the planned time
- apprentices with complex additional needs receive good individual support, which enables them to progress quickly, sustain employment and become valued members of staff teams
- trainers and assessors develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills well; they improve learners' skills during theory lessons, provide additional lessons for apprentices who need extra help to improve their skills and consistently correct inaccuracies in apprentices' written English
- apprentices benefit from good advice and guidance; tutors provide apprentices with a wide range of opportunities to explore potential careers available to them locally and further afield
- trainers and assessors help apprentices to gain a thorough understanding of their responsibility and duty of care to ensure children's safety and well-being in their work setting; for example, apprentices understand how to minimise risks and ensure children's safety in play environments.

Teaching, learning and assessment in child development and well-being are not yet outstanding because:

- trainers and assessors do not always encourage apprentices to carry out independent research that would extend their understanding beyond the requirements of the qualification
- targets that trainers and assessors set for apprentices do not always challenge learners sufficiently; too often targets refer only to completing specific units of the qualification, and take little account of apprentices' broader needs or their longer-term goals and aspirations
- written feedback is not always sufficiently detailed to enable apprentices to understand how their work meets the required standard and how they could improve their work further.

Employability training

Requires improvement

16-19 study programmes**Teaching, learning and assessment in employability training require improvement because:**

- the proportion of learners who leave their study programme before the end is too high and not enough learners achieve their qualifications; attendance in lessons is too low

- tutors do not always plan learning sufficiently well to meet learners’ different needs and abilities, and do not always challenge learners well enough to develop independent learning skills; as a result, a minority of learners do not progress as quickly as they should
- in a significant minority of lessons, learning activities do not inspire and motivate learners; the resources that teachers use in these lessons, including worksheets, are often dull and do not always maintain learners’ interest, and learning technology is not used sufficiently to extend learners’ skills and understanding
- the targets that teachers set for learners do not always state clearly what learners need to do to improve their skills and understanding; learners do not always receive sufficiently detailed written feedback about their progress towards achieving their targets
- learners do not always receive sufficient support to help them to improve their English and mathematics skills quickly; as a result, learners’ progress in improving their skills is often too slow
- teachers do not pay sufficient attention to developing learners’ understanding of diversity within society.

Employability training has the following strengths:

- the majority of learners who attend lessons regularly make good progress; they gain in confidence and improve the skills and behaviours that they need for employment
- learners benefit from good individual and personal support to help them to improve their self-esteem and achieve their potential; learners who need extra help receive good additional support to help them to overcome barriers to learning and make good progress
- supportive work placements and a wide range of other work-related activity enable learners to gain a good understanding of the world of work and the range of career options available; learners gain work experience in a wide range of occupations including floristry, retail and childcare, and develop good work-related skills
- learners receive detailed and supportive verbal feedback during lessons about their progress; this helps learners to understand how they can improve further
- teachers provide learners with very good advice and guidance about the requirements for working in different occupational areas and about progression opportunities; as a result a high proportion of learners who complete their study programmes progress on to an apprenticeship programme, on to a further course, or into employment
- teachers provide a safe and inclusive learning and working environment; learners work well together and show a high level of mutual respect.

Administration	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration require improvement because:

- the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme in the planned time is slightly lower than the rate for similar providers; the success rate among apprentices aged between 19 and 23 years is low
- the targets that trainers and assessors set for apprentices are not always sufficiently challenging, and do not always focus on identifying the most important short-term goals that will enable apprentices to improve their skills quickly; as a result, the progress of a significant minority of current apprentices is not rapid enough
- trainers and assessors do not always monitor apprentices’ progress closely enough; assessment practice is insufficiently standardised and, in a small minority of instances, the assessment of apprentices’ progress is inaccurate

- written feedback on apprentices' assignments is not always sufficiently detailed; as a result apprentices are not always clear about what they need to do to improve further
- apprentices have insufficient opportunity to discuss and consider topics relating to diversity, and are not fully prepared for living and working in a diverse society.

Administration has the following strengths:

- employers provide good job-specific training and support in, for example, using a range of computer software, telephone skills, health and safety, and product knowledge and, as a result, apprentices develop good work skills; apprentices quickly gain the confidence to communicate professionally with customers and suppliers, take on additional responsibility and work without supervision
- apprentices receive good individual mentoring support, which enables them to overcome barriers to learning and improve their personal and social skills; as a result apprentices are highly motivated and quickly develop positive and professional attitudes towards work
- trainers, assessors and employers develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills well in the workplace; apprentices write accurate letters, emails and internal memoranda, and produce complex data spreadsheets and customer invoices
- apprentices receive good advice and guidance that enables them to make well-informed decisions regarding their future prospects and careers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the merger of YMCA Training with YMCA Central in December 2013, the trustees acted decisively to produce a clear and well-considered strategy to guide the future development and success of YMCA Training. Trustees and the senior leadership team are making good progress in implementing the first stage of this strategy, which aims to put the organisation on a sound financial footing and to strengthen the structure and working practices of the organisation. Trustees hold senior leaders and managers to account well and monitor performance rigorously through frequent board meetings.
- A new senior leadership team has enabled the trustees' vision to be put into practice. Leaders and managers are changing the culture of the organisation rapidly through a strong focus on improving the performance of the organisation and helping young people and adults to improve their skills and to gain employment. However, a few of the planned changes are taking longer to complete than managers anticipated. For example, a significant restructuring of roles and responsibilities is not yet fully complete and this has inhibited the speed of progress in making improvements to the quality of provision across all centres.
- Self-assessment enables leaders and managers to identify clearly key areas for improvement. The provider's overarching self-assessment report accurately highlights many areas for improvement and provides a good basis for improvement planning. Managers at each centre produce a local self-assessment report and a detailed quality improvement plan that they monitor frequently. However, local reports and plans are not yet of a consistently high standard.
- Leaders and managers have not yet made sufficient progress in ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good across all centres and programmes. They have introduced more rigorous arrangements for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and have carried out extensive training with staff on the new system. They have given local managers increased autonomy to intervene quickly to improve poor-quality provision. However, the new system is not yet fully in place across all centres. Lesson observations carried out so far this year have enabled managers to identify many areas for improvement, but too many observers make inaccurate and often over-generous judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and about the progress and attainment of learners.

- Leaders and managers have taken early and decisive action to tackle particularly poor performance, and this has resulted in an improvement in standards. However, they have not yet implemented fully their plans to improve performance management by using the outcomes of lesson observations when appraising the performance of teaching staff and identifying their professional development needs. Management of the performance of the one subcontractor is effective.
- Management information is accurate, and managers use data well to monitor attendance, retention and achievement at both national and local levels. For example, managers are aware of the unacceptably low attendance rates on study programmes, and they have tried innovative approaches to improve attendance such as providing support for homeless young people in other locations if they have difficulty in attending the local YMCA Training centre.
- YMCA Training responds well to the needs of learners, employers and other organisations. The majority of its provision is located in town centres and is easily accessible. Managers successfully recruit learners who have encountered significant difficulty previously in succeeding in education, training or employment. Very effective partnerships with large employers, local authorities and employer groups, close links with local enterprise partnerships across the country and strong local links with smaller employers enable YMCA Training to respond well to a wide range of needs. For example, it stepped in to provide an apprenticeship programme in motor vehicle engineering in Oldham to meet an identified need. Managers successfully introduced apprenticeships in health and social care in Hull following discussions with local agencies about skills shortages in the city.
- YMCA Training very successfully provides opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in education and training in welcoming and inclusive environments. At the last inspection, YMCA Training needed to improve further its arrangements for staff training in relation to equality and diversity. This continues to remain an area for improvement. Managers have plans in place to ensure that teaching staff develop their skills and use activities and resources well to promote diversity in their lessons, but they are still in the early stage of implementation.
- Managers are aware of gender imbalances in participation rates in subject areas such as motor vehicle engineering and child care, and have had success in encouraging female learners on to motor vehicle programmes. Managers have identified a number of gaps in achievement among different groups of learners and reduced many of these gaps successfully. However, they have not identified or taken action to address the relatively low achievement rate for minority ethnic learners on the apprenticeship programme.
- Managers have recently improved the arrangements to ensure learners are safe, and safeguarding is good. The majority of staff have received recent updating on safeguarding issues through a bespoke online training programme, and good attention is paid to safety and safeguarding in local centres and in workplaces. The trustees have recently appointed a board member with professional expertise in safeguarding, and managers have updated policies and procedures this year. YMCA complies with its statutory duties and maintains an appropriate single central record of clearances from the Disclosure and Barring Service. Trustees and senior leaders are aware of the need to prevent radicalisation amongst learners and are beginning to take action to ensure that they adequately protect learners fully from radicalisation and extremism.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

YMCA Training

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	3	2	2	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	3	N/A	N/A	3	2	2	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	N/A	N/A	3	2	2	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	N/A	N/A	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Early years and playwork	2
Employability training	3
Administration	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Not for profit organisation							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,576							
Managing Director	Andree Deane							
Date of previous inspection	May 2010							
Website address	www.ymcatraining.org.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	416	263	17	86	N/A	13	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	262	702	128	760	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	20		12		32			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractor:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YMCA Fairthorne Manor 							

Contextual information

YMCA Training is a registered charity in England. Its aim is to inspire individuals to develop their talents and potential and so transform the communities in which they live and work. YMCA Training operates from 22 community venues across England. Study programmes for 16 to 19-year-old learners, predominantly at foundation level, and a large apprenticeship programme make up the vast majority of the provision.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Steve Hailstone HMI

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