

Gordon Franks Training

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		10–14 March 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Strong, inspirational leadership has created a highly motivated cohesive staff team that has improved learning for students on pre-apprenticeship programmes and for apprentices. The team has developed learning significantly over the last year and has substantially improved all areas requiring improvement at the previous inspection.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good across all programmes and extremely effective 'study days' enable apprentices and students to develop their skills and knowledge while working closely with their peers.
- Achievements across all programmes are now good.
- A high proportion of students make good progress in to employment, further training or education due to the development of strong work skills and behaviour from the very well designed, innovative work preparation phase of the pre-apprenticeship study programme.
- A particularly effective set of high standard work-experience placements is available to meet individual pre-apprenticeship students' needs and the availability of a consistently good range of employment opportunities for apprentices.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding.
- The pace at which pre-apprenticeship study programme students learn functional skills English and mathematics is insufficient to enable more of them to acquire qualifications if they leave early because they gain employment or fail to complete.
- Tutors do not provide the most capable students and apprentices with sufficient challenge to develop their English and mathematics skills to higher levels than that required by their learning programme.
- Written feedback on a small minority of students' work is not sufficient to show them how to improve and to make more rapid progress.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise the standard of teaching, learning and assessment by improving marking of work at advanced levels, ensuring that all apprentices continue to develop their English and mathematics skills irrespective of their entry levels, using more learning resources that are accessible electronically and making sure discussions with apprentices are more challenging to deepen their understanding of equality and diversity.
- Ensure that the now very effective observations of teaching, learning and assessment continue to cover all provision and that all tutors and assessors carry on receiving comprehensive, accurate feedback on how to maximise learning to improve more sessions from good to outstanding.
- Increase the proportion of pre-apprentice study programme students gaining functional skills qualifications by preparing them more quickly to undertake functional skills tests.
- Ensure that tutors comprehensively correct mistakes in apprentices and students' work to assist them to improve their functional skills.
- Make sure that the quality and comprehensiveness of written feedback, following and in addition to the good verbal feedback, is consistently good through appropriate emphasis of this during the regular continued professional development of tutors and assessors.
- Encourage the broader use of electronic portfolios by apprentices to enable them to take greater control of their learning and so their tutors and assessors can access and assess work more quickly to accelerate the pace of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

- Outcomes for learners are good and sound target setting by managers is highly effective at raising achievement across the learning programmes. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of apprentices successfully completing their apprenticeship has increased and is now high and the large majority complete within the planned timescales. Tutors encourage intermediate-level apprentices to aspire to and undertake additional and higher units of learning than those the framework requires.
- Students on the pre-apprenticeship study programme make good progress, many from low academic starting points. The proportion progressing from this programme to apprenticeships, employment or further education is high. Progression to sustained employment and the numbers taking on additional responsibilities in the workplace due to the apprenticeship programmes is high, but the proportion of intermediate-level apprentices progressing to advanced level is low.
- Students enjoy their learning. In taught sessions, tutors pay strong attention to attendance and punctuality, and establishing good work-place behaviour. As a result, retention and attendance are good and learners make good progress within sessions towards their learning aims.
- Managers give appropriate priority to the collection and analysis of data to ensure that all groups of learners achieve as well as each other. They take swift action where differences exist to ensure their reduction through tutors providing additional support to under-achieving learners. Gordon Franks Training (GFT) has no discernible differences in success between groups of learners with the exception of apprentices aged 19 and over whose success rates are high, but not as high as those of apprentices aged 16 to 18.

- The good development of English, mathematics and functional skills in the pre-apprenticeship study programme during 2013/14 is increasing achievement to levels around those achieved nationally. However, of the learners who do not progress to employment, training and further learning only about a quarter improve their skills and qualification levels. Managers recognise that this is too low and have set appropriate improvement targets.
- The number of apprentices achieving level 2 functional skills and technical certificate are high. However, at other levels managers and staff had difficulty with the initial introduction of on-line testing. They have overcome these problems and the number of apprentices achieving qualifications for all functional skills is increasing.
- Managers, tutors and assessors develop learners' employability skills well. In particular, students on the study programme make strong gains in confidence and preparation for work. Managers, tutors and assessors achieve this through the work preparation phase of the programme and a significant period of work experience. This enables the majority of these students to progress to apprenticeships or jobs. In administration apprenticeship programmes, learners are developing good office and computer literacy skills which are improving their team working, productivity and efficiency.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which is reflected in the good achievement of a high proportion of students and apprentices and the good development of their skills and confidence. Tutors and assessors have good subject knowledge and vocational expertise, which they use effectively to enable students and apprentices to apply their new knowledge and skills in their everyday lives and in the workplace. They also have high expectations of students and apprentices and provide them with good support, which helps them to make good progress.
- In the majority of learning sessions, tutors fully involve and encourage students and apprentices to participate in discussions or tasks, and they assess learning thoroughly at each stage. These sessions are exciting and stimulating, well planned and appropriately paced to meet the needs of all students and apprentices. The use of information and learning technology is mostly good. Good quality learning materials and workbooks stimulate students and improve learning. However, access to electronic resources is insufficient to enable apprentices to develop independent learning skills. The underdeveloped use of electronic portfolios is preventing a minority apprentices from taking greater control of their learning.
- Attendance is high at well-planned study days for apprentices and students. They appreciate these days and make the most of their time discussing topics with their peers and in learning new skills which extend their abilities and knowledge. Most tutors are highly qualified, enthusiastic and experienced in their vocational area, and provide good role models, particularly for younger students. The quality of teaching and learning on study days is mostly good, although the planning and promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is variable.
- Very effective management of behaviour enables students to participate fully in all activities and to develop the self-awareness to manage their own behaviour. This results in improved support arrangements as students develop appropriate coping skills. Highly committed and skilled tutors and assessors provide strong pastoral support. Students and apprentices enjoy their learning, speak highly of the support and teaching they receive, and indicate how these have improved their confidence and competence in their jobs and personal lives.
- Assessors' frequent well-planned assessments visits to the workplace fully meet the needs of both apprentices and employers. Detailed assessment outcomes provide apprentices and employers with clear information on further learning needed to ensure workplace skills are of the highest standard. However, assessors and tutors' comments on marked work of a minority

of advanced apprentices does not provide sufficient information for them to develop more quickly and to reflect on their progress.

- Well-qualified tutors provide mostly good tuition for English and mathematics. Specialist tutors provide additional support for functional skills in the workplace so that apprentices are able to achieve their best, but action is insufficient to help learners improve their functional skills beyond the level required for their apprenticeship framework. Tutors and assessors provide very good oral feedback. However, written feedback does not always contain sufficient information to enable students and apprentices to know how to improve or whether their work is of a high standard.
- Information, advice, guidance, and support are good. Planning starts early in students' programmes and incorporates regular discussions to help them progress towards their main goals. Work experience placements, with a wide range of local employers, ensure that students have good opportunities and appropriate support to develop the skills they need for future employment and life. However, where apprentices are not in job roles, support is insufficient during the last few months of their programme to enable them to progress.
- Tutors and assessors introduce equality and diversity very effectively during induction. Students and apprentices work in diverse groups and they respect and value differences. Assessors working with apprentices and students discuss equality and diversity topics at every assessment visit and progress review. However, opportunities are underdeveloped to extend knowledge in teaching and learning sessions and during progress reviews in the context of students and apprentices working environments.

Employability study programme

16-19 study programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this supports the development of good work related skills and, for a high proportion, the achievement of learning goals and qualifications. Students develop good personal, social and employability skills. They increase their confidence in working as part of a team, relating well to others. In particular, they enjoy the challenge of learning new skills and developing their knowledge and understanding of their career choices. Most gain a greater sense of direction and learn to take responsibility for their development. Work experience placements effectively prepare students for progression. Reviews have a clear focus and provide purposeful work-related development opportunities required to be a competent employee.
- Reviews are regular and clearly focus on students' progress towards the completion of their programmes. The motivational feedback students receive encourages them to improve their performance. Highly effective individual coaching supports the development of their social and employability skills. Students take part in mock interviews, which clearly support development of their communication skills and confidence in preparation for job interviews.
- Verbal feedback is good and provides students with detailed and clear guidance that assists them to progress with their qualification. However, written feedback in functional skills sessions does not develop students sufficiently to challenge them to reflect on their progress and to support swift improvement.
- The majority of those on study and apprenticeship programmes achieve English and mathematics qualifications. Tutors are well qualified and plan learning sessions effectively. Students are clear about what tutors expect of them and this motivates them to make good progress. Attendance is good and tutors robustly promote punctuality as important employment behaviour.

- The skilfully planned learning sessions meet students' individual needs and help them to develop a wide range of work skills relevant to their choice of employment. Tutors use their expertise and subject knowledge of English and mathematics well. This enables students to appreciate the value these skills in the workplace. Teaching includes activities that encourage students to work independently and collaboratively, developing skills to enable them to progress to employment and further learning. Tutors make good use of resources to support students' development.
- Staff set targets for students based on comprehensive assessment at the start of their learning programme. However, they miss opportunities to fully integrate outcomes from vocational assessment and use this in English and mathematics learning. Regular progress reviews provide students with constructive feedback. Students appreciate the good support they receive from highly motivated tutors, which enables them to focus on their learning and develops their confidence.
- Tutors clearly explain the language of mathematics and explore concepts through skilful questioning. Activities promote independent students who can also work in teams to solve problems and share the responsibility for learning. Tutors organise tuition for English functional skills particularly effectively and regularly reinforce learning well. Students receive effective individual support with spelling and grammar when completing employability skills activities.
- Advice, guidance and support are effective in enabling students to make choices about their career. Staff carefully plan placements to match to students' aspirations. They place a high value on personal and social learning and how this improves students' employment prospects. For example, a student who now better understands the need to respect people in authority, and the responsibility that comes from being an employee, has improved his employment prospects and successfully progressed to an apprenticeship programme. Managers and staff work with a very good range of local employers to identify meaningful, high standard, work experience opportunities and promotes positive progression into employment or further training.
- Tutors introduce equality and diversity at induction. Students work in diverse groups and they respect and value differences. However, opportunities are underdeveloped to extend knowledge in teaching and learning sessions and apply particular situations to the workplace to extend understanding of equality and diversity at work.

Business management and administration

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which reflects in the good outcomes for learners. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Apprentices receive good one-to-one support in their work place, which focuses strongly on progress towards the successful completion of their framework.
- Tutors use their good vocational skills and experience to provide effective support for learners. They have a good understanding of the high-standard local employers in which apprentices are employed which tutors use to the benefit of apprentices when planning coaching and assessment.
- Strong involvement and support from employers, helps apprentices develop good employability skills including increased self-confidence. They improve their skills in a wide range of administrative and management tasks, such as more effective supervision, using a range of computer applications including complex spreadsheets and negotiating better prices from suppliers, preparing career displays, fact sheets and packs for school leavers. An apprentice in an optician also received specialised training in the use of Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) substances.

- Assessors plan assessments well and they are flexible in meeting the needs of apprentices and employers. Assessors provide good oral feedback to encourage and support further development of apprentices' skills. However, in a minority of cases the standard of marking for work at advanced level requires improvement, because assessments do not require learners to extend their answers sufficiently well, or to include examples from business.
- Managers and tutors have not encouraged sufficiently a minority of students to use the electronic portfolio to help them take greater control and improve their learning. For the majority of the apprentices that use electronic portfolios its use has helped them and their tutors to quickly access and assess their work, to show progress graphically and enable tutors to stretch and challenge apprentices to improve their performance and develop new skills.
- Employers provide appropriate support for their learners to develop good vocational skills. A significant number of apprentices have taken on additional responsibilities or received a promotion. Employers highly value the support apprentices receive from assessors as this enables their staff to gain qualifications and develop their knowledge and understanding and to improve their skills.
- Most resources to support learning are good. Tutors use worksheets, video clips and internet search engines to provide a wider range of materials. Managers have begun to implement the use of a virtual learning environment, to make learning more interactive and accessible for apprentices and tutors. However, currently electronic access to learning resources is insufficient to support independent learning.
- Assessment at the start of apprentice's training effectively identifies what further support they need and staff put this in place quickly. Tutors with apprentices set and record appropriate long-term targets on individual learning plan. These goals help improve learners' progress towards achievement more quickly. Assessment and action plans in addition to thorough progress reviews contribute significantly to the good progress apprentices make.
- Staff do not support or sufficiently challenge apprentices who already have English and mathematics qualifications at the required level for their framework to improve further. While apprentices receive support to help them achieve qualifications in mathematics and English, action is insufficient action to help them improve their spelling and grammar.
- Apprentices receive good information and guidance at induction. Assessors discuss opportunities for progression with apprentices to support them to make informed choices about further study and career progression. However, where apprentices may not be in an on-going job role with their company, job search support is insufficient during the last few months of their programme.
- Apprentices have a well-developed understanding of equality and diversity and their relevance to the workplace and beyond. They understand how to address a diverse range of clients in a friendly but professional manner. During reviews, discussions between apprentices and assessors on equality and diversity are not always sufficiently challenging.

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

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders set clear learning focussed strategic objectives for GFT and have the highest expectations for students and apprentices. The business improvement and quality improvement plans reflects this strategic focus. Managers, assessors and tutors are passionate about their work and lead by example through smart dress and professional and inclusive behaviour. Learners make good progress irrespective of their previous achievement. Senior leaders and staff celebrate apprentices and students' success well.
- Tutors and assessors benefit from regular professional development that focuses on improving provision further and sharing good practice. Very thorough quality assurance processes highlight areas for improvement. Managers regularly observe and grade tutors and assessors and this

helps them understand how they can continue to improve. As a result of introducing a greater emphasis on learning rather than teaching in the observation process, provision has significantly improved since the previous inspection and most is now good or better.

- Leaders and managers have an accurate picture of the quality of learning across all of their programmes. This reflects the strengths of the provision, its areas for further improvement and is consistent with the judgements made by inspectors. Self-assessment captures the views of all staff. Managers take account of the views of employers, students and apprentices, but this is not a formal part of self-assessment. A strong culture of continuous improvement is in place at all level within GFT. Staff feel very engaged in developing and improving the learning experience for students and apprentices. Monthly meetings, which include discussion on progress and further areas for improvement, support this strong improvement culture.
- Since the previous inspection, managers, through good planning and careful monitoring have strongly improved teaching learning and assessment, attendance and punctuality and the timely completion of apprenticeship frameworks.
- Managers and staff have very effectively developed the pre-apprenticeship study programme during the last year of foundation learning to meet the requirements of students. The six-week work preparation phase prepares students extremely well for their work experience placements. The programme includes innovative elements including the use of an 'employability wheel', which very effectively enables students to self-assess, and for tutors to monitor their progress in improving a wide range of employment related skills. This phase of the programme also includes very effective sessions in 'mindfulness', which enhances students' self-awareness and a final group presentation which celebrates individual progress and achievement. Students then benefit from further development of their skills during substantial work experience with good local employers.
- Good links with local small and medium size businesses in particular, ensure a good range of high-standard work placements is available to meet all students and apprentices' needs and support them move to employment. Managers and staff also have well developed good links with local schools, which helps students and apprentices find the right programmes to meet their needs.
- GFT has a strong inclusive environment. Staff cover equality and diversity well at induction and reviews, but opportunities to develop understanding and awareness are missed during learning sessions and assessments. Since the previous inspection, managers and staff have minimised the gaps in achievement between different groups.
- GFT provides a safe learning environment where students and apprentices can focus on and enjoy their studies. Managers and staff place a high priority on safeguarding in the selection of employers for both work experience placements and apprenticeships. Managers have excellent links with local agencies to enable them to provide good support for students and apprentices whatever issues they may be facing. GFT meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Gordon Franks (Training & Personnel)

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-19 study programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Employability Training	2
Business	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 77								
	Part-time: 377								
Principal/CEO	Sue Fielding								
Date of previous inspection	21 October 2011								
Website address	www.gordonfrankstraining.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+	
Full-time	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Part-time	108	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19			19+		Total			
	N/A			N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	53	40	4	24	N/A	N/A			
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	108								
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

GFT, established in 1983, provides employability (pre-apprenticeship) study programmes, apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. Most students and apprentices are from central Birmingham or adjacent areas with significant deprivation and high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training and long-term unemployment.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Mark Shackleton HMI
-----------------------	---------------------

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the managing director as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

