

ProVQ Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		2–5 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- the model of apprentices attending for intensive two-week blocks at the training centre four times each year and regular assessor visits to their workplaces facilitates the good coordination of on- and off-the-job training
- apprentices respond well to meet the high expectations that managers and staff at all levels have for them
- employers are fully engaged and they are particularly effective at shaping and influencing the apprenticeship programmes which meet their needs very precisely
- ProVQ's training centre provides apprentices with outstanding industry-standard equipment and resources which they use very effectively
- staff from ProVQ and employers successfully help apprentices to develop their confidence and good communication skills enabling them to interact with customers in a professional manner
- safeguarding arrangements are outstanding.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- staff do not sufficiently develop and reinforce apprentices' understanding of the importance of the culturally diverse backgrounds of their customers; a minority of the material available to apprentices is narrow and outdated
- other than for teaching and learning sessions, no formalised observation system is in place to cover the apprentices' experience of the provision including induction or reviews, and consequently managers do not identify and share areas of good practice sufficiently
- managers and staff have not sufficiently developed the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support independent learning away from the training centre, or for apprentices to readily access materials to consolidate learning or prepare for new tasks.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve staff awareness, confidence and their own knowledge to enable them to develop apprentices' understanding of equality, and particularly diversity, fully within the context of their work environment. Ensure that any relevant learning resources staff use reflect the latest legislative changes.
- Extend the quality improvement arrangements to all aspects of the provision in order that managers identify and share best practice to improve provision continuously for apprentices.
- Develop remotely accessible resources to support apprentices' independent learning and enable them to continue their learning outside the training centre, and for ProVQ staff to monitor how frequently and well apprentices use them.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- ProVQ provides apprenticeships in transport operations maintenance for employers throughout the United Kingdom at intermediate and advanced levels in motor vehicle maintenance and repair. The apprenticeship provision represents about one third of the provider's business.
- Success rates are good and the proportion of apprentices completing their apprenticeships on time is high. ProVQ's detailed in-year data indicate that predicted success rates for apprentices are currently better than for previous years. Almost all current apprentices make better than expected progress given their starting points. Very few differences exist in the performance of groups of apprentices.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and develop high-level employability and specialist technical skills. For example, one apprentice had removed the gearbox and drive shaft from a vehicle to replace a damaged rear seal. In another example, an apprentice was carrying out diagnostic tests on an alternator. A third apprentice was working on a rare, specialist vehicle worth around £300,000. Employers value the knowledge and skills apprentices acquire during training and appreciate the effective contribution they make in the workplace.
- Apprentices develop relevant technical English and mathematics skills that enable them to communicate effectively with customers and their peers in the motor industry. Functional skills pass rates are high. Intermediate apprentices take functional skills at a higher level than that required of the framework in preparation for moving onto advanced apprenticeships.
- Apprentices are confident and develop good team-working skills and positive attitudes. As a result, their timekeeping and attendance, particularly at the training centre, are very good. The majority of apprentices make good progress in the training centre and workplace.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of career opportunities and progression routes. A high proportion of intermediate apprentices move on to advanced-level programmes. Progression rates into permanent jobs and higher-level qualifications are good. Most apprentices develop useful social and work-related skills that aid their development at work, allowing them to move more quickly into positions of trust and responsibility.
- The range of additional qualifications that apprentices complete improves their knowledge and skills and enhances their employment opportunities. These include for example, the Automotive Technically Accredited 'F' Gas certificate. The majority of apprentices also complete a unit on

motor vehicle hybrid technology as part of the advanced framework. These additional units specifically meet the needs of the apprentice and employer.

- Most apprentices produce work of a high standard. Job cards and 'write-ups' demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and practical application of vocational skills. The evidence they collect for their qualification is detailed and wide-ranging and often exceeds the framework requirements.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is a result of sustained and concerted efforts by managers and staff to provide a high-standard apprenticeship programme and reinforced through self-assessment and quality improvement. Consequently, outcomes for apprentices are good. Apprentices benefit from good training and individual guidance. This increases their confidence and supports the development of good employability, personal and social skills which meet the high expectations of their employers. Apprentices quickly take on additional responsibility and make valuable contributions in the workplace. Examples include demonstrating good customer service skills within their service centres and working on luxury cars owned by very discerning customers.
- Apprentices are motivated and readily engage in their learning as a result of the high expectations of trainers and assessors. This enables them all to make good progress with a few apprentices significantly ahead of their planned deadlines. Trainers, assessors and managers provide particularly good tuition and support in the training centre and workplaces to develop apprentices' practical skill to a high level. They ensure apprentices work confidently, responding to the customers' expectations well, paying a high regard to health and safety and working with accuracy and care.
- In the training centre, knowledgeable and enthusiastic trainers plan learning sessions well. Their use of a variety of high-standard learning resources, including handouts, practical activities and information learning technologies motivates apprentices and as a result, they gain knowledge quickly. Trainers regularly plan the use of extension tasks for the more-able apprentices as well as supporting those who need more time to assimilate and understand information. Apprentices are attentive and confidently offer answers when trainers question them. Trainers use a wide variety of activities such as directed questions, quizzes and small-group activities which check and consolidate learning particularly well.
- Assessment practices are good. Assessors make frequent and regular visits to the workplace observing and confirming competence for all aspects of the vocational training. Assessors keep employers well informed and involved in the development of review targets.
- Trainers and assessors provide thorough, detailed and constructive written and verbal feedback, ensuring apprentices are clear about what they do well and where they can improve. Managers monitor apprentices' progress well. They effectively share this information with trainers, assessors and employers.
- The resources supporting learning in the training centre are outstanding. ProVQ has ample provision of high-standard vehicles, specialist up-to-date diagnostic equipment, spacious workshops and specialist tooling, which apprentices use regularly. Employers value the vehicle and diagnostic equipment which matches that in use in the workplace. Trainers support classroom-based learning with good-quality learning materials, accommodation, and interactive learning resources. Apprentices value highly all these resources and they comment positively on the training in the centre.
- The VLE is underdeveloped and apprentices' ability to access technical information is limited to that provided by manufacturers or their employer and therefore does not include all that the framework requires. Staff provide apprentices with computer memory sticks and CDs containing course handouts, presentations and NVQ evidence. However, there is little evidence that

apprentices use them in the workplace or develop understanding and knowledge between training sessions or assessors' visits, and such use is difficult for trainers and assessors to monitor.

- Initial assessment of apprentices' prior knowledge and experience is timely and very effective. Trainers and assessors provide good support for apprentices, know the apprentices well, providing appropriate challenges for the ranges of skills and abilities identified. Apprentices have clear, appropriately challenging targets which assessors and managers monitor closely. ProVQ staff are adept at supporting apprentices who experience a range of personal challenges to the continuation of their study. Sympathetic and supportive arrangements result in these apprentices being able to resolve the issues and complete their programme.
- Initial advice and guidance are outstanding. Initial preparation and induction give clear advice, guidance and information that enable apprentices to understand the requirements of the apprenticeship, what staff and employers expect of them and what they can expect from ProVQ. Most are ambitious and talk confidently about their aspirations to become a manager or master technician in the future.
- Staff identify apprentices' English and mathematics skills effectively during their initial assessment. They establish what level of support an apprentice requires and include this in the apprentice's study programme. All apprentices complete English, mathematics and information and communications technology modules throughout their study with most completing activities at level 2, above the initial requirement of their apprenticeship at level 1. All attend training sessions in training centres appropriate to their need and complete additional independent study in the workplace with support from the vocational assessors.
- Apprentices develop a strong understanding of equality and diversity during induction and staff reinforce this during their training. However, during workplace visits, apprentices receive insufficient challenge about equality and diversity, with assessors placing an over-reliance on standard questions rather than using relevant examples from the workplace. Most learners work in areas of significant cultural diversity and regularly deal with customers from a range of backgrounds. However, staff are not always effective at developing apprentices' understanding of the customers' diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have high expectations of what learners can achieve and insist on standards of work well beyond that required to achieve their frameworks. Directors and senior managers have an ambitious vision for the organisation, which is evident in its rapid growth, plans for further expansion and the organisation's investment in premises and resources.
- Effective governance is exercised directly by the two company directors and indirectly through the high expectations of the employers who use ProVQ to train their apprentices. However, ProVQ does not have non-executive directors or others with appropriate experience or skills to hold the senior management team to account for the quality of the provision ProVQ provides apprentices.
- Over the last year, senior managers have established a wide variety of useful monthly reports which they use effectively to monitor the performance of trainers and assessors and different groups of learners. Trainers and assessors have a good understanding of the data in these reports, which indicate when interventions are appropriate, but also motivate them to meet and maintain organisational and individual targets.
- Managers recognised their previous arrangements to observe teaching and learning were insufficiently rigorous. Over the last year, they have introduced arrangements which accurately assess the quality of teaching and learning and provide trainers with constructive action points

for further improvement. Although observers are consistent in their judgements, no formal moderation of their findings takes place and observations do not cover areas such as induction or reviews. As a result, managers cannot readily identify best practice to share with staff and they had not recognised some areas for improvement which inspectors identified.

- Self-assessment is robust and uses the views of all stakeholders. The resulting report is self-critical and largely accurate. Actions based on the associated quality improvement plan have resolved all the areas for improvement recorded in the latest self-assessment report.
- The provision meets the needs of both employers and learners very well. Apprentices achieve frameworks and additional units and qualifications that their employers consider will best prepare them for the particular job roles in their organisations and enable them to provide the service their customers need. The frameworks, training and qualifications are not specific to particular makes of vehicle and prepare apprentices well for wider employment within the industry. Employers value highly ProVQ's recruitment and selection procedures, which present them with a shortlist of suitable candidates for each apprenticeship place.
- Directors, managers and staff are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and treat all staff and apprentices fairly. In the past ProVQ has had no female learners and very few from minority ethnic groups. Early indicators show that new innovative methods, including social media, are beginning to attract and engage potential apprentices from under-represented groups. The learner handbook uses accessible language to cover equality and diversity, and the employee rights and responsibilities workbook has a clear focus on the motor industry. However, staff issue out-of-date booklets on equality and diversity to apprentices and managers have not recently reviewed the equality and diversity policy.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Directors and managers from ProVQ strongly and successfully contested the interpretation that, as a work-based learning provider, its employees would not be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. All those employees, whose job roles involve significant contact with apprentices aged less than 18 attending two-week training blocks at the training centre, are subject to the checks. Senior managers use safe recruiting practices stringently. Designated safeguarding staff and tutors stay in the same hotel, which ProVQ uses to accommodate the younger apprentices. They have good communications with the hotel staff so that they report all incidents that could possibly have safeguarding implications. Older apprentices stay in a different hotel. The designated safeguarding officers' recording and investigation of possible safeguarding issues is thorough. When necessary, the designated officers inform and consult the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board where the apprentices are based using their good contacts at the Shropshire safeguarding board. Designated safeguarding officers and other staff regularly undergo appropriate levels of training.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

ProVQ Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2						2		
Outcomes for learners	2						2		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2						2		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2						2		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Transportation operations and maintenance	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	215								
Managing Director	Julian Lloyd								
Date of previous inspection	N/A								
Website address	www.provq.com								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	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+		
	126	7	47	35	0		0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	NA								
Part-time	NA								
Number of community learners	NA								
Number of employability learners	NA								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA 								

Contextual information

ProVQ Ltd was incorporated in September 2005 and it has held its own SFA contract to provide apprenticeship training since October 2012. Prior to that, it was involved in apprenticeship training as a subcontractor, and continues to subcontract from Toyota GB and the Three Counties Consortium. In 2013, it merged with its sister company ProAuto Ltd, which had provided commercial training for adults in the automotive industry. Apprentices are widely distributed throughout England and Wales and are employed by a variety of organisations, including national chains and small and medium enterprises. They attend ProVQ's training centre for fortnight-long training blocks four times per year. ProVQ assessors visit the apprentices in their workplaces to carry out assessment activities.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Clifford Rose HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three 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. 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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