

LITE (Stockport) Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		30 June–3 July 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
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 proportion of apprentices achieving their learning aims and qualifications is improving and continues to be particularly high in veterinary nursing
- apprentices develop a wide range of good quality work skills and significantly develop their personal, social and employability skills and make good progress into jobs
- taught sessions are challenging and tutors are highly knowledgeable and enthusiastic with off-the-job training being very effectively supported by a variety of electronic media which apprentices and employers readily engage with and value highly
- apprentices benefit greatly from high levels of support from both staff and employers and enrichment activities are very good
- a highly effective range of networking and partnership activity supports the curriculum offered and helps meet well the needs of the sector, employers and apprentices
- managers' high levels of investment in the development and support of electronic information systems drives apprentices' progress and supports employers well
- very effective safeguarding arrangements are well monitored, regularly reinforced and highly valued by staff and apprentices.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- apprentices on horse care programmes and programmes for 16- to 18-year-olds do not achieve sufficiently well
- during off-the-job training tutors do not always sufficiently challenge apprentices through detailed checks of their knowledge and the use of well-developed questioning techniques
- best practice identified in the highest performing area is not consistently shared in programme areas that are performing less well
- equality and diversity matters are not fully discussed or recorded well at apprentices' progress reviews.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Use good practice identified in the best performing provision, veterinary nursing, in order to improve performance in programmes for 16- to 18-year-olds and apprenticeships in horse care. Use the virtual learning environment to facilitate standardisation in these weaker areas by arranging regular online meetings between employers and assessors.
- Set more effective and specific targets at apprentice progress reviews to monitor closely the progress made by each apprentice. Extend staff competence in setting targets in order to provide more effective progress reviews that encourage the apprentice to reflect upon their own performance. Provide apprentices with a complete picture of their progress through developmental feedback on their marked work.
- Develop the use of tutors' questioning and teaching techniques so that they check effectively the progress of all apprentices. Ensure tutors make more frequent checks on learning and make sure all apprentices are fully involved in learning during taught sessions.
- Encourage detailed debate about equality and diversity at apprentices' progress reviews to enhance their understanding of the full range of topics. Record in more detail the response of apprentices at progress reviews. Formally train staff so that their knowledge of equality and diversity is more current.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- LITE (Stockport) Limited (LITE) has a contract for apprenticeship programmes at intermediate and advanced levels in veterinary nursing, animal care, horse care and customer service. The largest area of provision is in veterinary nursing with animal care having the next highest proportion of learners. The number of apprentices in horse care is small and two learners are currently undertaking customer service qualifications. The number working towards advanced level apprenticeships is slightly higher than at intermediate level. The number of apprentices aged 19 or more is higher than the number of 16- to 18-year-olds.
- Overall apprenticeship success rates have consistently been well above the national rate for many years until a decline in 2013/14 when success rates were at the national rate. Apprentices' achievement in the planned time have followed a similar pattern. Performance during this year has returned to previous levels. Currently, overall success rates and achievement within the planned time are both higher than the national rate. Most apprentices are making good progress towards achieving their qualification and are expected to complete their training successfully within the planned timescales. Their progress with English and mathematics as a component of the apprenticeship programme is good. Apprentices have achieved particularly well on veterinary nursing courses, with consistently high success rates over a number of years. In horse care and programmes for 16- to 18-year-olds, apprentices achieve less well.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of good quality work skills. In veterinary nursing, good levels of laboratory practice, effective customer service skills and specific knowledge of different animals are evident. On animal care programmes apprentices have a good understanding of safe working practices, health and hygiene and the ability to respond well to animal behaviour, particularly when the animals are distressed. Horse care apprentices demonstrate a good range of practical stable management skills. All apprentices significantly develop their personal, social and employability skills. They improve their confidence, self-esteem, work ethic and ability to use their initiative and reflect upon their own practice and performance. Attendance and

punctuality to work and training are very good and apprentices demonstrate a very strong work ethic and professional attitudes.

- Managers and staff monitor the progress and achievements of the different groups of apprentices closely. Apprentices aged 16 to 18 years have been less successful when compared to apprentices aged over 19. Veterinary nursing apprentices have achieved particularly well but apprentices in horse care have been less successful. The proportion of non-British learners is small. No significant differences exist in the achievement rates of female and males on the apprenticeship programmes or for apprentices with declared disabilities or in receipt of additional learning support.
- Apprentices are aware of the available progression routes and many take this opportunity to gain higher-level qualifications and develop their skills and work competence. A large majority of apprentices progress to further training or employment following the successful completion of their apprenticeship programme. Progression between intermediate- and advanced-level apprenticeships is good. Many apprentices take on additional responsibility in the workplace and others achieve promotion and job enhancements which include becoming clinical coaches in veterinary nursing, supervisors in animal sanctuaries and managers of dog kennels, grooming parlours and catteries.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected in the good outcomes for apprentices. Teaching staff and employers provide good levels of support to help ensure that apprentices complete their programme in the given time. Apprentices make good progress and are monitored throughout their studies through the effective use of e-portfolios and progress reviews. However, tutors' target-setting at apprentice progress reviews does not always support well the progress of all apprentices.
- Apprentices produce work that is of a good standard. Experiences in the workplace are effectively utilised to provide contextualisation and evidence of skill competence. Assessment records are highly effective in demonstrating apprentices' achievements. They provide detailed descriptions and photographic evidence of activities such as dog grooming for a range of breeds. Feedback on written work is not yet fully developed in some aspects of animal care. In this area feedback is sometimes too brief and often relates to the achievement of criteria and not the wider skills apprentices are demonstrating.
- Off-the-job training is good. Taught sessions are challenging and teaching staff are highly enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They use a range of resources effectively to support learning including electronic devices and specialist laboratory equipment. Apprentices gain confidence in complex skills such as using the Vernier scale and are able to evaluate the components and parameters of blood in a range of domestic animal species to a good level. In some sessions, tutors' checks on learning are not sufficiently developed to ensure that all apprentices are consistently making good progress, engaging in learning and assessing their own development.
- Apprentices experience a wide variety of enrichment activities in a range of different areas that develop a good level of knowledge and understanding of the industry in which they work. These include visits from specialist external speakers, such as expert dog groomers and expert equestrians, visits to industry exhibitions to observe high level dog grooming, visits to international dog shows and provision of bespoke animal first aid training. Apprentices have been taking part in an exciting range of outdoor activities including a tall-ships sailing experience.
- Information, advice and guidance are very effective. Apprentices receive detailed information at the start of their training programme that prepares them well for the training and assessment they are to experience to achieve their qualification. Apprentices benefit from good advice and guidance on progression opportunities that they can undertake when they have completed their training programme. Good support is provided throughout the programme to help apprentices

overcome personal, work or training related issues. Clothing and financial support are provided to ensure apprentices can take part in job interviews.

- Tutors integrate functional skills well within off-the-job training and assessment and apprentices are making good progress with their English and mathematics development. Information and communication technology skills are promoted by the successful use of social media, a virtual learning environment and e-portfolio which also enables the careful monitoring of progress for each apprentice. Access to electronic resources is supported through a loan scheme for those apprentices who do not have their own equipment. English and mathematics skills are initially assessed and apprentices' progress is monitored closely through the use of diagnostic assessment. Tutors support apprentices' progress and the advancement of their skills well through effective one-to-one sessions that also develop apprentices' confidence.
- Communication with employers is highly effective. Apprentices benefit from frequent communication between teaching staff and employers who are fully involved in their training. Initiatives within veterinary nursing recognise progress towards completion of the nursing progress log, which is recognised and rewarded. LITE is highly responsive to employers' needs. For example, to provide greater access to veterinary standardisation events, LITE offers employers the flexibility to attend an event at one of the centres or complete standardisation through the virtual learning environment; this ensures the currency of all clinical coaches. Similar models are not yet developed in the other areas of provision.
- Equality and diversity are effectively promoted to apprentices at induction and in their training centre. They display a reasonable understanding of a range of relevant issues and how their behaviour and communication can be adapted and improved to meet the needs of others. Good attention and priority are given to ensuring health and safety practice is strong. Very effective safeguarding arrangements are continually reinforced with apprentices, staff and employers.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- LITE has very clear current objectives and long-term strategies to meet the needs of the animal care industry, particularly in the skills shortage areas of veterinary nursing and horse care. Staff numbers and expertise have been increased. Plans are in place to increase the number of charitable trustees and the spread of industry knowledge in the charitable trust board to help develop both the geographical spread and the range of activity in the sectors. Managers work closely with industry bodies and awarding bodies to gather good practice and to develop staff competency and awareness of forthcoming national developments. Strong links with the local provider networks ensure awareness of current and future initiatives in the region. Staff are fully aware of the needs and objectives of the business through regular formal and informal communication with management.
- Performance management is a key priority for LITE. Managers apply procedures well through observation and monitoring of staff performance against clear and measurable objectives. This has led to staff changes and subsequent improvement in the quality of provision. Observations of teaching and learning are regular and focused. Developmental observation in place for new tutors and assessors is particularly effective. All staff are well qualified. Staff development is another priority for the organisation. Managers encourage staff to gain a higher-level teaching qualification to help improve the apprentices' experience and formal qualifications across the sectors to increase their knowledge and understanding.
- Very inclusive processes are in place to ensure the quality and accuracy of self-assessment. These are underpinned by a well-constructed quality cycle which staff understand. All staff are involved in the formulation of the self-assessment report and value the opportunity to reflect on performance and suggest the way forward for the organisation. Quality improvement planning is clearly defined and individuals are particularly aware of their own areas of responsibility. Managers monitor carefully performance and progress towards set objectives. Good examples of apprentices' and employers' feedback leading to improvements include the introduction of additional start dates each year, the use of the virtual learning environment to reduce the need

for clinical coaches to attend the training centre and more practical workshops for apprentices. Standardisation and sharing of good practice activities are well focused and controlled by managers. However, some of the good practice in the better performing areas is not yet in place in horse care and in the provision for 16- to 18-year-olds.

- The curriculum is very effectively managed and resourced. Employers are fully aware of their responsibility and ability to ensure apprentices achieve well. A key focus of the organisation is to ensure that skills acquired by apprentices lead to sustainable employment. Some employers are former apprentices and now train their own apprentices through LITE. A major investment in a range of social media developments and the development of virtual learning resources along with electronic portfolios has been influential in recent improvements in apprentices' performance. Apprentices are particularly enthusiastic about the social media development which is used well for remote communication between employers, staff and apprentices. Management reports provide a detailed range of performance information for staff, managers and trustees which is discussed and reviewed at regular staff and management meetings.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is a priority for LITE as they operate in some particularly socially deprived areas. Staff and apprentices treat each other with high levels of respect. Innovative marketing materials, with an animal focus, positively encourage the participation of apprentices from under-represented groups. A recent incident of discrimination in the workplace was investigated thoroughly and managed particularly well. The apprentice was supported effectively and protected and the workplace concerned was removed from LITE's employer database. Apprentices have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity. However, discussions at progress reviews are not recorded well; assessors do not take advantage of the opportunity to discuss and debate recent development and events. Staff have not received recent formal training in promoting equality and diversity.
- LITE's safeguarding of all apprentices is good. All staff have recently received training to make sure they are aware of the governments Prevent agenda. E-safety is well understood by both staff and apprentices. This is an over-arching priority for the organisation because the use of social media and virtual learning feature very strongly in the delivery of training programmes. Good links are in place with the local children's safeguarding board and members help with staff development and training at LITE. Health and safety in the workplace are monitored and managed well as the majority of the apprentices are in high-risk environments while working with a range of animals, chemicals and drugs. Staff monitor workplaces rigorously before apprentices are placed and frequently during the training programme.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

LITE (Stockport) 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	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A

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

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	208							
Principal/CEO	Manager - Jackie Shopland-Reed							
Date of previous inspection	March 2008							
Website address	www.liteltd.co.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	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+		
	36	20	23	52	N/A		N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		131			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 							

Contextual information

LITE (Stockport) Ltd was established in April 2003. The company provides training in veterinary nursing, animal care and horse care throughout Greater Manchester, and parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire. LITE works in partnership with LITE Ltd based in St Helens which is a charitable trust delivering programmes throughout Greater Merseyside and parts of Lancashire. LITE (Stockport) Ltd became the skills funding agency's contract holder with the introduction of minimum contract levels. Apprentices have the option of attending the Stockport or St Helens centre. In addition to the manager, eight full-time staff and a range of part-time staff work in the organisation. Premises are located in the town centres of Stockport and St Helens and both contain administration and training facilities. Much of the apprentice training and assessment is provided in the workplace.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tim Hanson

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