

T2 Business Solutions

Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates		22–26 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement -3
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- arrangements to safeguard learners and vulnerable adults require improvement; one manager failed to follow the organisation's own procedures for recruitment; they have not overseen the management of suitable pre-employment checks on some new staff
- the designated safeguarding officer and team failed to carry out their roles effectively.

This provider has the following strengths:

- outstanding employability provision
- learners acquire excellent employability skills, including increased self-confidence, relevant knowledge and vocational expertise
- learners have good access to very high quality, well-structured work placements and good employer training
- most learners successfully progress to higher-level apprenticeships, employment, or to more senior job roles as a result of promotion
- assessors and trainers are particularly good at supporting learners with barriers to learning
- learners receive very good information, advice and guidance, which ensure they are recruited on to an appropriate course, in line with their career aspirations
- staff promote equality and diversity well to learners, which helps them show respect and understanding of others
- managers ensure that the curriculum continues to evolve to meet the differing needs of learners and employers, and regional and local priorities.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Implement fully the organisation's own procedures on promoting safeguarding.
- Managers should ensure suitable pre-employment checks are completed for all existing and new staff, including, where necessary, obtaining disclosure and barring checks and taking up references.
- Ensure the designated safeguarding officers have the appropriate expertise and receive suitable training to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
- Increase the proportion of timely framework completion for apprentices by reducing those factors that slow the progress of learners.
- Improve the confidence and skills of assessors to promote the development of numeracy to apprentices.
- Assessors should exploit the full benefits of good employer training, and ensure learners reflect on and record their growing knowledge and skills from this training as part of their apprenticeship assessment.
- Develop greater consistency of assessment practice and skills of assessors across all regions as the business grows.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- T2 Business Solutions delivers around 7,500 apprenticeships nationally, over 90% of which are in health and social care, with a small minority in children and young people's workforce development, business administration and customer service. The majority of learners are taking intermediate apprenticeships, with a smaller proportion undertaking advanced-level programmes, and a small minority on higher-level programmes. The majority of apprentices are adults. The organisation has significantly more female learners than male learners. The company also runs a centre in Bristol where it delivers employability, traineeships and study programmes to around 170 learners in the current academic year.
- Outcomes for learners are good. In the most recent academic year, the proportion of learners who achieved their apprenticeships by the planned end date increased and is above national rates. The proportion of learners who achieve their apprenticeships eventually, although not by the planned date, is considerably higher and substantially above national rates. In the current academic year, data from the provider indicate that the completion of apprenticeship frameworks remains high. The significant majority of learners who undertake traineeships and classroom-based study programmes also successfully complete their programmes. Most learners who undertake qualifications in functional skills English and mathematics achieve successfully.
- Certain groups of learners achieve slightly less well than others. For example, male learners on apprenticeship programmes do not perform quite as well as female learners. Fewer students aged 16 to 18 successfully complete their apprenticeship in comparison to adults. Conversely, a smaller proportion of adults on employability programmes successfully complete their courses relative to learners aged 16 to 18.
- Teachers and assessors are particularly adept at developing the confidence, personal and social skills of learners, both in workplace settings and in the classroom. They support learners very well and assist them in acquiring a broad range of skills that prepares them well for employment or progression within their existing job roles to more senior positions. Assessors do not always provide enough challenge to stretch the most able learners, resulting in those learners not achieving their full potential sufficiently quickly.

- Learners generally develop good literacy; however, the promotion of numeracy to apprentices is less consistently effective. A minority of assessors lack confidence and expertise in this area and, as a result, learners are slower and less assured in developing their numeracy.
- Learners on employability programmes have outstanding opportunities to undertake very beneficial work placements. Staff work closely with each learner to ensure they select a work placement that will engage the interests of the learner; they liaise very closely both with learners and with the employers to ensure learners are able to gain maximum benefit from the work placement.
- Most learners, both in classroom settings and in the workplace, are self-motivated, keen to develop their knowledge, skills and expertise, and to make progress. Assessors provide good support and guidance to help learners succeed. Learners' attendance and punctuality are generally good in classroom-based activities; however, too often apprentices cancel or rearrange assessment sessions at short notice. This tends to slow learners' rate of progress.
- On completion of their programmes, a very high proportion of learners successfully progress to the next stage, for example to further study, to a higher-level apprenticeship, to employment or to a more senior job role.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, resulting in high success and progression rates for learners. Learners benefit from very knowledgeable and enthusiastic assessors and trainers who have good industry experience. Teachers and assessors inspire and challenge the great majority of learners to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding, helping them progress in their job roles or into employment from the study programme.
- Many learners gain useful additional qualifications through strong encouragement and support from their assessors and employers. However, a few health and social care assessors do not always use sufficiently searching questions or challenging tasks to stretch the more able apprentices.
- Learners generally have access to good learning resources, although a small minority of the paper-based resource materials are of poor quality. Workplace- and classroom-based learners take advantage of a wide range of useful online resources; however, staff do not develop learners' knowledge and understanding of e-safety well enough.
- Assessors use their skills and expertise well to plan and deliver programmes to meet learners' individual employment needs. Tutors very carefully and successfully design study programmes that meet learners' aspirations. Apprentices develop good independent learning skills.
- Employers in health and social care offer comprehensive and effective training to their learners, for example in manual handling, dementia care or incontinence management. However, too often assessors do not discuss in sufficient depth the training that apprentices have received from their employer. As a result, learners miss the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding fully.
- Staff measure learners' starting levels well and develop good individual learning plans with them. Assessors and trainers are particularly good at supporting learners with barriers to learning. Study programme learners requiring additional learning support also benefit from particularly effective help and support from staff.
- Learners benefit from good assessment practice. Assessors visit regularly and are flexible to the needs of the learners' employment. Assessors use individual learning plans well in assessment to monitor learners' progress and set challenging targets. Most assessors use technology well in assessment. Assessors upload digitally recorded evidence and review documentation to a central database, ensuring safe storage and immediate access for quality checks.
- Reviews in classroom-based study programmes are particularly effective, well managed and constructive. In health and social care, assessors incorporate the views of employers in apprentices' learning reviews, noting progress and commenting on learners' performance. The

assessment practice is flexible and effective in ensuring learners progress steadily throughout the programme. However, too many employers report disruption and some delayed progress because of a high turnover of assessors. Tracking systems ensure that learners and employers understand progress made by learners.

- The majority of assessors promote and develop learners' literacy and numeracy well, particularly on classroom-based study programmes. Many assessors correct spelling and grammar in learners' work well and promote the importance of literacy and numeracy in learners' job roles. A few health and social care assessors do not yet have sufficient skills or confidence to deliver high quality numeracy support.
- Learners receive particularly good information, advice and guidance, which they value greatly. This advice is outstanding in study programmes. Specialist staff give learners a well-planned and thorough induction. They carefully and closely match unemployed learners to vacancies and all learners benefit from easy access to a wide range of online advice and guidance, complemented by assessors' good knowledge and expertise.
- Staff promote equality and diversity exceptionally well to learners at every stage of their programme. For example, on a study programme, a discussion of song lyrics stimulated a very good discussion on slavery and apartheid. Learners have high regard for the respect offered by assessors and clearly demonstrate great respect for others.

Health and social care

Apprenticeships

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are good because:

- most apprentices successfully complete their qualifications; they enjoy their learning, produce work of a high standard and develop the skills required to make good progress in their learning
- progression rates are high; on completion of their programmes, many apprentices successfully gain promotion
- assessors are sensitive to the demands of the care environments in which they work and meet the needs of individual apprentices well; for example, they structure assessment opportunities around apprentices' varied shift-work patterns
- assessors have very good knowledge and experience of the care sector; most use careful questions and real-life examples to stimulate thinking and extend learning, for example by using apprentices' experience of working with clients with dementia to discuss effective communication strategies
- strong partnerships with employers provide apprentices with good opportunities to practise and demonstrate their skills
- the majority of assessors provide clear verbal and written feedback and mark apprentices' work frequently, providing effective guidance on spelling and punctuation; as a result, apprentices know what they have done well and how it contributes to their overall qualification
- apprentices receive very good support from assessors and employers; they have good access to up-to-date resources and benefit from the wealth of knowledge shared by assessors and employers on the best ways to care for clients
- assessors promote equality and diversity extremely well; apprentices develop a very good understanding of their clients' individual needs and the diversity within their communities and workplaces
- advice and guidance are good; assessors skilfully guide apprentices to choose units which match their interests, abilities and the care home environment in which they work.

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are not yet outstanding because:

- assessors do not always provide enough opportunities for apprentices to reflect on the training provided by employers or on the development of their personal learning and thinking skills; learning off-the-job is not integrated into the training programme
- assessors do not always stretch more able apprentices sufficiently to enable them to achieve their full potential in a timely manner
- not all assessors have good enough numeracy skills to support apprentices to achieve their mathematics qualifications; as a result, apprentices are not always getting the benefit of good preparation before formal mathematics assessments
- the overall quality of assessment procedures across geographical areas is too variable, with stronger practice in the South West and less well embedded practices in the South East.

Employability training

16-19 study programmes
19+ learning programmes
Traineeships

Outstanding

Teaching, learning and assessment in employability training are outstanding because:

- a very high proportion of learners make exceptional progress in the development of personal, social and employability skills; their progression into work, apprenticeships or further education is outstanding
- the matching of learners' individual aspirations to relevant and constructive work experience is outstanding; staff have developed positive and well-established partnerships with a wide range of employers; they use these to create excellent work placement opportunities for learners, frequently resulting in full-time work or apprenticeships for the learners on completion
- study programmes are outstanding; skilfully-managed activities are carefully designed to meet individual learners' needs very well; learners enjoy their learning and attendance and punctuality are good
- well-qualified teachers develop to an excellent level learners' ability to work collaboratively in lessons
- learners use interactive learning technologies effectively to research; for example, a group of learners thoroughly researched topics on the impact of equalities legislation in the workplace, for discussion with their peers in lessons
- staff support learners very well, many of whom have experienced long-term difficulties or disruption to their lives; extended and continuous support from staff has transformed the lives of some learners experiencing multiple long-term issues, and helped provide them with greater stability and a fulfilling job
- initial advice and guidance for learners are outstanding; parents, carers, schools, and agencies working with young people value the extended guidance given by staff supporting and encouraging young people to re-engage with learning; learners' interviews clearly spell out the respective expectations of the provider and potential learner; as a result, retention is good and most learners stay on programme
- staff assessment of learners' progress through qualifications is good; regular reviews contribute to a clear focus on the success of individual learners; learners receive good constructive written feedback in reviews and good verbal feedback in lessons, helping them to improve and make good progress
- learners develop good English and mathematics; they develop their speaking and listening skills well; they become more confident speakers and consequently conduct themselves well in

practice external interviews; the standard of learners' written work and handwriting, particularly for 19+ learners, is good.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that learners on study programmes who previously achieved a D grade in their GCSE English or mathematics have the opportunity to work towards GCSE at grade C or above.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders and managers have a clear vision for improving their provision; however, the large growth of the organisation has resulted in areas of non-compliance in recruitment processes and, prior to inspection, managers were unaware of these issues.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners and vulnerable adults require improvement. One manager failed to follow the organisation's own procedures with regard to staff recruitment. The organisation had failed to carry out disclosure and barring services (DBS) checks for some new staff and too many of them did not have a current DBS check in place prior to inspection. Managers ensured that these staff did not have unsupervised access to young people as soon as this was identified. The designated safeguarding officer and team who would routinely have access to sensitive information have not completed an accredited training programme leading to a qualification or appropriate DBS checks to ensure that they can carry out their role effectively. Human resource managers do not complete all pre-employment checks in a timely manner.
- All learners explore British values comprehensively as part of their programme. Managers are currently preparing a detailed action plan to promote to learners the expectations of the Prevent Duty Guidance including extremism, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.
- The board sets clear aspirations that learners will complete their qualification to a high standard. The board meets daily and reacts promptly to suggestions for improvement from senior managers. As a result, learners receive a good service from front-line delivery staff.
- The self-assessment and quality processes are generally good; however, the documentation that underpins the quality processes is at times too descriptive and lengthy. Managers have identified these issues, and are planning a more concise and focused improvement plan with targets that are more time-limited and specific.
- Performance management systems are effective. Managers offer all staff good personal development to keep them up to date and create valuable opportunities for staff to share best practice. Managers identify and support under-performing staff to improve, through a programme of individual coaching sessions. As a result, most staff are confident and carry out their work to a high standard.
- Managers place a strong emphasis on the promotion of equality and diversity, which was a weakness at the last inspection; this is now outstanding. Managers identify what strategies work best with learners and share these with all staff each month. Learners have access to a good range of learning materials on equality and diversity themes that staff use well to help raise learners' awareness.
- Managers have invested wisely in resources since the last inspection and assessors use them effectively to support independent learning. Classrooms in Bristol are bright and airy and are a positive learning environment, which helps encourage learners to work hard and develop new skills.
- Managers ensure that the curriculum meets the evolving needs of employers, learners and the local enterprise partnership priorities, in particular around reducing youth unemployment. Managers have monthly discussions with employers to discuss the progress of current apprentices and to help identify future training needs. For example, managers have recently introduced level 5 management qualifications in response to requests from care home

managers, and also level 2 care support services qualifications to help address better the developmental needs of young people entering the care sector.

- Managers work well with most employers to deliver the apprenticeship programme. Employers provide good off-the-job training that supports apprentices in obtaining essential skills. However, assessors do not always link this sufficiently into the apprenticeship. Managers have an over-reliance on employers to deliver training that is fundamental to the apprenticeship programme.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

T2 Business Solutions

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Employability	1

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,900								
Managing Director	Robert Marr								
Date of previous inspection	March 2012								
Website address	www.t2business.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+	
	14	-	14	3	-	-	-	-	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	397	3945	101	2782	-		433		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	22		18		40				
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	-								
Part-time	-								
Number of community learners	-								
Number of employability learners	-								
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

T2 Business Solutions was founded in 1996 and offers a range of apprenticeships, predominantly in the health and social care sector, as well as a comparatively small amount of employability provision. The company headquarters are in Cardiff. Originally, the company provided training primarily in the South West and Wales. Over the last few years, the company has expanded significantly and now holds national contracts to deliver apprenticeships and employability training across England and Wales. The provision in Wales was out of scope of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Peter Nelson HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Quality 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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