

Mobile Care Qualifications Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates	15–18 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Traineeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Managers use self-assessment and quality improvement planning very effectively, leading to increases in learners' achievements.
- Managers and staff monitor the progress of learners very closely and take swift action to support those at risk of falling behind.
- Managers and staff ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is of a high standard for apprentices.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve within their planned timescales is high.
- Apprentices make good progress in the development of their work-related skills; they develop confidence and demonstrate their learning in the workplace.
- Tutors and assessors plan one-to-one training and support sessions well so that apprentices benefit from, and enjoy, their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- A minority of tutors and assessors do not have the skills to challenge and inspire learners to make the rapid progress they are capable of achieving.
- Tutors and assessors do not identify quickly enough learners who require English and mathematics support and further skills development beyond level 2.
- Managers do not use the outcomes of the observations of individual tutors and assessors sufficiently well to improve teaching and learning rapidly.
- The quality of the traineeship programme requires improvement.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Mobile Care Qualifications Limited (MCQ) operates from three learning centres. These are in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Middlesbrough and York. Around 1,300 learners enrol each year. The vast majority are apprenticeships at intermediate, advanced and higher levels. In 2014/15, MCQ recruited the large majority of learners onto apprenticeships in health and social care with the remainder in childcare, business and customer service. MCQ also offers traineeships to around 90 learners per year.
- Unemployment rates fluctuate in the areas serviced by the provider. Pockets of high unemployment and great deprivation exist, particularly around Newcastle and in the Tees Valley area from where MCQ recruits the large majority of its learners. The unemployment rate in the north-east of England is 7.6% with Newcastle being higher at 8.6%. Both are significantly higher than the national average of 5.7%.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers should provide staff development for tutors and assessors so that they acquire the skills to enable them to challenge all learners to achieve to their full potential.
- Improve the delivery of English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that learners receive appropriate, timely and ongoing support, particularly once they have achieved at level 2
 - providing staff development to tutors and assessors so they integrate English and mathematics more effectively into vocational teaching, learning and assessment.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that managers use the outcomes from the observations of lessons to plan individual staff development to help tutors and assessors improve
 - ensuring that agreed action plans include detail of how to improve practice, and that managers closely monitor the progress made by tutors and assessors.
- Improve the quality of traineeships by:
 - reviewing the initial assessment processes and delivery strategy for traineeships to ensure that learners are on the correct pathway and receive the right support to help them progress
 - managers and staff using and analysing data effectively to ensure that learners on traineeships are making good progress in all aspects of their programme.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Directors set out their clear strategic direction through an effective business plan with ambitious, yet realistic, company objectives. Staff are well aware of the plan and know clearly how their own individual targets contribute to the company's overall performance objectives.
- Since the previous inspection, directors and senior managers have monitored programmes carefully and accurately identified groups of learners whose achievements are relatively low when compared with other groups, including those in customer service and childcare, which led to a dip in success rates in 2013/14. Managers have reduced recruitment of learners to the less successful programmes. They place a strong focus on monitoring the achievement of learners and ensure that where necessary staff provide additional support to help them achieve their qualifications. Learners' achievements have increased and are now high.
- Managers use a wealth of information on staff performance effectively to monitor and improve the provision through monthly meetings of the quality improvement group. Good target setting and performance management of staff, including annual appraisals, ensure that clear targets are being agreed and achieved.
- Managers evaluate accurately the quality of their provision through effective self-assessment, and understand the key priorities required to improve further. Managers' assessment of the quality of provision is inclusive and takes good account of comprehensive feedback from learners and staff. The quality improvement plan, which managers review quarterly, ensures that staff focus their efforts on the key areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report. Managers have successfully tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, including the promotion of equality and diversity by staff and use of e-learning resources.
- Managers work well with a range of partners to ensure that the programmes they offer reflect the region's priorities. For example, MCQ is a member of a local consortium that represents training providers and promotes traineeships and apprenticeships to young people, particularly those who are not in education, employment or training. MCQ also has very productive links with large care providers in the region and works with them very well to develop bespoke training programmes to meet their specific business needs.
- Managers and staff promote equality and diversity very effectively. Monthly topics of local interest stimulate discussion and reinforce effectively learners' understanding of equality and diversity during learners' reviews and learning sessions. Wall displays promote respect for diversity and British values well. MCQ has a very strong culture of respect and trust that underpins its work and creates a positive working and learning environment. Staff and learners are well aware of the importance of preventing discriminatory behaviour in the workplace.
- Although English and mathematics functional skills support has improved since the previous inspection, further development is needed to ensure that specialist support is provided promptly, and that English and mathematics are developed and reinforced throughout the vocational programmes. The skills of a minority of tutors require development to enable them to demonstrate good practice in their own writing.
- Managers do not use the outcomes of lesson observations of tutors and assessors sufficiently well to improve teaching and learning rapidly. Observers identify accurately the strengths and most of the weaknesses of sessions. However, agreed actions to address areas for improvement are not clear enough or implemented swiftly.
- Performance management plans for individual staff are not sufficiently helpful in informing staff how they can improve their practice. Managers provide insufficient challenge and support to a small minority of staff to enable them to improve their teaching, learning and assessment practice.
- While staff receive training to equip them with essential vocational skills and knowledge, managers do not ensure that tutors and assessors develop the more advanced training skills required to support the most-able and higher-level learners.
- Managers do not routinely collect and use information on learners' starting points, progress, achievements and destinations to manage the traineeship programme effectively.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Senior managers ensure that directors have accurate information about the provider's performance. The company director has created a strong culture of continuous improvement. Staff benefit from effective challenge and support to help them improve their skills.

- Senior managers effectively monitor staff targets and review carefully those learners at risk of not achieving their qualification.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**

- Staff undertake appropriate training in relation to their safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty responsibilities. Managers ensure that all staff who have contact with learners undergo a comprehensive check upon recruitment.
- Managers deal promptly and effectively with any safeguarding concerns that arise. Learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online, and know whom to go to if they have any concerns. While staff receive training on how to promote safety in relation to radicalisation and extremism, not all are confident yet in conveying this to learners.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Apprentices benefit from well-planned one-to-one training and support sessions and enjoy their learning. Assessors plan effectively to ensure that the specific development needs for individual apprentices match their abilities and aspirations. Classroom sessions for the trainees and functional skills sessions do not always offer the necessary challenge to promote learners' rapid progress.
- Learners undertake an effective online initial assessment of their English, mathematics and vocational skills and knowledge. This accurately identifies their starting points. Learners value the detailed feedback they receive on the results of their initial assessments, which results in their being clear about what they need to do to improve their skills. The assessment of, and support for, learners' information and communication technology (ICT) skills is less effective.
- Employers contribute well to the planning of apprentices' and trainees' learning, ensuring that assessors and tutors are clear about learners' training needs in relation to their current job roles or work placements: for example, by identifying that new entrants to the care sector need help to improve their confidence and skills. The majority of employers also contribute valuable information towards the reviews of learners' progress. This is particularly good from one large care provider.
- Assessors rigorously monitor all elements of the apprenticeship programme to ensure that apprentices' work is of good quality and meets industry standards. Assessors support apprentices well to ensure that assessment is flexible and reflects their personal and work needs. Tutors and assessors do not routinely correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' work. As a result, learners are not always clear about how to make improvements.
- The majority of learners receive good verbal and written feedback that clearly identifies how they can improve their technical skills and knowledge. In a small minority of cases, this is not always detailed enough to support rapid progress, especially for learners on traineeships, and consists of generic comments such as 'Good work'.
- The large majority of learners are very clear about the progress they are making towards their qualifications. Tutors and assessors closely monitor learners' progress and take swift action to provide additional support to learners when they fall behind in their work. A minority of learners make slow progress due to missing planned sessions with their assessors. However, assessors quickly reassess targets to enable learners to catch up quickly.
- Assessors effectively support functional skills development for the majority of apprentices through using targeted online resources. Support for functional skills for learners on traineeships is less effective and does not support them to improve their English and mathematical skills quickly enough.
- Assessors are effectively linking functional skills assessments to the learners' vocational programme where possible. For example, assessors use vocational topics well to develop and assess learners' writing skills. Specialist tutors are providing effective additional support when learners' progress towards functional skills is slow or they need extra help. In a minority of cases, assessors and tutors are too slow in identifying additional support needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- Current apprentices make good progress in the development of their work-related skills. They develop confidence and demonstrate their learning in the workplace. For example, health care apprentices are confident and communicate well with their clients who have mental health needs. Apprentices develop good teamwork skills and build good working relationships with colleagues.

- Current learners enjoy their apprenticeships, and are very motivated and committed to learning and progressing in their job roles and careers. Apprentices and trainees demonstrate high standards of behaviour at work and become highly valued employees. Apprentices receive high levels of support, care and attention from both their employers and MCQ, which they value highly. Attendance is good for the majority of learners.
- The majority of apprentices are making at least the expected progress and many make good progress in achieving their qualifications. Apprentices produce a good standard of work, both in their job roles and in their electronic portfolio. However, there is no clear plan to ensure that they develop the required English and mathematical skills for progression into more demanding roles once they have achieved at level 2.
- Apprentices develop good skills well matched to their level and ability. The very large majority of assessors and employers work well together to plan apprentices' skills development and to identify any gaps so that they can arrange specific additional training if required, for example in dementia care. Employers speak positively about how the skills and confidence of their apprentices have improved.
- Apprentices and trainees feel very safe both in the training centre and at work, and develop a good understanding of safe working practices. MCQ and employers have robust health and safety policies, carry out regular reviews of safety that involve employees and learners, and ensure that all learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required. Learners have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, harassment, radicalisation and extremism, and know what to do should they have any concerns.
- Tutors' effective planning of traineeships results in learners gaining the skills and confidence they need to progress into employment or onto an apprenticeship. For example, learners are developing the skills they need to write curriculum vitae and to take part in a job interview. Learners use information learning technology well to research for jobs on the internet and they build their self-confidence by taking part in group presentations.
- Assessors and tutors have recently started to develop learners' understanding of life in Britain. They are developing their understanding of how to respect and consider cultural values and differences in their workplace. Tutors and assessors promote learners' general understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace effectively.
- Initial information, advice and guidance provided for prospective apprentices at the start of their programme, and career guidance to plan the next steps of their programme, are good across all subject areas. This results in apprentices being effectively matched with employers and remaining in employment. In a minority of cases, tutors' advice to prospective trainees does not reflect their prior attainment, resulting in a minority of learners' programmes not being challenging enough.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- MCQ currently has around 800 apprentices and 40 trainees. The vast majority of apprentices, nearly nine out of 10, are on health and social care frameworks, with the remainder on childcare, business and customer service frameworks.
- The majority of apprentices and trainees make at least the progress expected and many apprentices make good progress taking into account their relatively low starting points. All learners gain relevant and valuable personal and social skills that help them to grow in confidence and deal effectively with their colleagues and the clients with whom they work.
- Data for 2014/15 indicates that the proportion of apprentices who now successfully achieve their apprenticeship within the planned time has risen significantly since the previous year when it declined. It is now high, and higher than for similar providers nationally.
- In health and social care, the proportion of apprentices who complete within their planned time is high at intermediate and advanced level and high at advanced level in business where around three-quarters achieve in their planned time.
- The progression rates to employment for learners on traineeships have improved recently from a low base. Seven out of 10 learners now progress to employment, which is in line with that of similar providers.
- Apprentices and trainees develop good vocational skills and knowledge through effective planning of on-the-job training and, as a result, they make good progress, become more able to evaluate their own performance accurately, and are aware of how they can improve the quality of their work and their working practices.

- Apprentices demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect their peers, clients, employers and assessors. They develop appropriate skills in English, mathematics and ICT. In most cases, assessors provide good levels of support for apprentices who need to gain qualifications in English and mathematics up to level 2. This helps develop their skills and confidence and facilitates their progress.
- All apprentices follow an individual training programme that meets their needs and aspirations and prepares them well for employment. Almost all apprentices gain permanent employment. A minority of apprentices progress onto higher levels of learning, such as higher apprenticeships in health and social care, and a few secure early promotion.
- Managers have successfully closed the achievement gap that existed in 2013/14 between male and female apprentices. However, in 2014/15, the small number of apprentices with a learning difficulty and/or disability had lower success rates than their peers and this requires improvement.
- The success rates on intermediate childcare and customer service and on the higher-level health and social care apprenticeships are too low and the time taken to complete is too long. However, this has improved for the most recent apprentices.
- For apprentices who are already qualified to level 2 in English and mathematics, assessors fail to challenge them to develop their skills further, which hinders their progress in taking on more demanding roles at work.

Types of provision

Apprenticeships

are good

- MCQ delivers apprenticeships across the north-east of England and Yorkshire and currently has 800 apprentices. The significant majority of apprenticeships are in health and social care at intermediate, advanced and higher level, and a very small minority are in childcare, business and customer service.
- The large majority of assessors are well qualified and experienced. Assessors use their industry experience effectively to plan a good range of meaningful on- and off-the-job learning activities that meet both apprentices' and employers' needs. For example, in health and social care, assessors have designed bespoke programmes with employers. Apprentices understand the needs of clients with dementia and are able to communicate with them effectively.
- Apprentices benefit from assessors involving employers effectively in the planning of their programme. Assessors work closely with the employers to develop on- and off-the-job learning that helps apprentices to improve the skills they need for their job role, while also meeting operational requirements. Apprentices gain valuable feedback because assessors involve employers effectively in their reviews of progress and in setting new targets. The majority of apprentices make at least their expected progress and a minority make rapid progress.
- Assessors provide apprentices with good written and verbal feedback on their work. The feedback helps apprentices to make improvements to their work. Assessors use effective strategies to assess learning and to enable apprentices to demonstrate deeper understanding, for example by using probing questioning.
- Assessors provide good personal support for apprentices through the effective relationships they make. They provide effective coaching and mentoring skills that develop apprentices' confidence in the workplace. They visit apprentices regularly in the workplace, often on a flexible basis, and more frequently when apprentices require additional support to help them to catch up.
- Apprentices benefit from a comprehensive induction that prepares them well for their programme. Assessors provide good information, advice and guidance about the requirements of their programme and the potential for further learning and career progression.
- Apprentices develop good skills in the workplace that help them to become valued employees. They develop in confidence and conduct themselves well both at work and at MCQ; a minority gain promotion or take on extra responsibilities at work. For example, customer service apprentices gain in confidence and in the skills needed to deal with challenging customers. Health and social care apprentices new to the industry gain new skills and knowledge and link theory to practice well, particularly related to legislation and using equipment. A high proportion of apprentices, particularly 16–18-year-olds, gain sustained employment.
- Apprentices develop a good understanding of British values and the 'Prevent' duty. They complete assignments and presentations as part of their programme and are able to recognise how both fit into their work role. For example, childcare apprentices have discussed how to introduce respect among the children in their care.

- Tutors and assessors do not integrate English and mathematics into apprentices' programmes sufficiently. Assessors expect apprentices to meet the minimum English and mathematics qualification standard for their apprenticeship. Apprentices, who already meet the standard on entry, are not required to reinforce or develop further their English and mathematical skills. Assessors do not routinely highlight common spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in apprentices' work. As a result, apprentices do not improve their English skills sufficiently to apply them to their work role.
- Assessors do not extend apprentices' learning sufficiently beyond the minimum standards of their programme. Apprentices who could make swifter progress are not extending their learning because assessors do not give them sufficiently challenging work and tasks. A minority of apprentices in health and social care do not develop a deeper understanding of health and safety as the work assessors set is insufficiently demanding. A minority of apprentices are not improving their skills to enable them to progress to the next level in their career.

Traineeships

require improvement

- A small minority of learners, around 40, are on traineeship programmes to prepare them to work in the health and care sector. Managers and tutors plan traineeships effectively so that learners undertake individualised programmes of learning linked to their intended progression routes. Managers ensure that the programmes meet the requirements of traineeships including work preparation training and work experience.
- Managers do not sufficiently and routinely use and analyse data to ensure that all trainees, particularly the most able, make good progress relative to their starting points. Managers have recently implemented new processes to monitor more closely trainees' progress on individual components of the traineeship. Once on their programme, trainees understand the progression options available to them.
- Functional skills outcomes on traineeships are low with the large majority not achieving a qualification before completing their traineeship. However, trainees complete their programme early and continue their study of English and mathematics in employment or during their apprenticeships. Effective initial assessment identifies any support needs and trainees value the support they receive.
- Tutors' planning of teaching, learning and assessment does not always ensure that they consider individual trainees' needs, with insufficient challenge for the most able. A minority of tutors make insufficient checks on learning. This limits trainees' progress in lessons. Tutors ensure that trainees develop the correct use of vocational terminology and link this with their workplace practice.
- Tutors' subject knowledge is good and the learning resources they use are of a good standard. On occasion, work produced by staff contains spelling errors. Written feedback to trainees does not take place often enough and is insufficiently detailed to bring about improvements in their work, including the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the development of mathematics and ICT. Tutors provide effective and motivational verbal feedback, which gives encouragement to trainees and ensures that they remain motivated to learn.
- Trainees develop self-confidence because of effective lessons. For example, trainees identified and shared their own personal strengths and those of other group members, developing self-reflection and analytical skills well. Tutors prepare trainees well for work in the health and care sector; tutors ensure that they learn how to apply the first aid skills they have learned in the workplace.
- Well-established partnerships benefit trainees by providing good-quality work experience. Trainees gain knowledge of the care sector and develop practical care skills and confidence in communicating with their clients.
- Trainees conduct themselves well and in the vast majority of cases, tutors challenge any poor behaviour appropriately. Attendance and punctuality are good. Tutors' planning of activities ensures that trainees develop their personal, social and employability skills effectively in the majority of lessons.
- Trainees are safe and feel safe on MCQ's premises and in their work placements. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work. Tutors link health and safety effectively to the work context and to their trainees' work experiences. Tutors promote an inclusive and mutually respectful learning environment where everyone is welcome.
- A significant majority of trainees now progress to an apprenticeship or employment with training. The proportion of learners on traineeship programmes who successfully progress onto apprenticeships, employment or further study is significantly improving. Last year only five out of 10 progressed, whereas in the current year this is seven out of 10, which is in line with that of similar providers. A significant minority of recent trainees also complete their traineeships ahead of their planned end date.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16-18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,300
Company director	Andrew Lister
Website address	www.MCQ.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+		
	37	347	16	316	N/A	84		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	22		20		42			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Andrea Machell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Pat Hornsby	Ofsted Inspector
David Longworth	Ofsted Inspector
Kath Townsley	Ofsted Inspector
Jonny Wright	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the quality improvement manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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 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



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

To find out more go to www.employerview.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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and 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 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

