

# Future-Wize

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

1–4 March 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Apprenticeships	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Governance provided by the directors is inadequate; they give insufficient challenge to managers and staff.
- The management of the organisation's quality and outcomes is weak; directors and associate directors do not have clear responsibilities and are not sufficiently accountable for the quality of provision.
- Target-setting for improvement is weak; directors and associate directors do not use the outcomes of observations or achievement data to set clear and measurable improvement targets. They do not follow up progress sufficiently rigorously to ensure that staff meet their targets.
- Directors and associate directors do not collate or analyse data well enough to evaluate and tackle differences in achievement between groups of learners; male learners and younger learners underachieve when compared with their female and older peers.
- In the self-assessment process, managers do not take sufficient account of the views of staff, apprentices, employers and subcontractors.
- The number of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has fallen significantly over the last three years. Too many apprentices complete their qualifications late.
- Managers have not reversed the decline in apprentices' achievements.
- Managers' observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not lead to clear actions for improvement by staff. Managers do not monitor the impact of improvement activity closely enough.
- Assessors' written feedback does not provide enough detail to help apprentices improve the quality and accuracy of their work.
- Assessors do not successfully use the findings from their initial assessment of apprentices' skills to ensure that apprentices take qualifications at the right level.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Future-Wize is a small private training company based in Barnsley, established in 1999. The leadership team of the organisation comprises two directors, two associate directors and a quality manager.
- Future-Wize provides apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level across subjects in business management, administration, legal services, marketing, customer services, health and social care, and information technology and learning. The majority of apprentices are in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lancashire. The recorded jobless figures in South Yorkshire are higher than national unemployment rates.

## What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide governance training and development for the directors to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to bring about rapid improvements.
- Improve management by clearly defining roles and responsibilities so that senior managers are accountable for improving the quality of provision.
- Introduce rigorous and swift performance management systems so that all staff set clear targets to improve. Use the outcomes of observations and apprentices' achievement rates when evaluating the quality and outcomes of staff's work, so that managers can set and monitor challenging improvement targets for individuals.
- Ensure the self-assessment process is inclusive and rigorous. Seek and use effectively the views of staff, employers and apprentices to ensure that judgements about the quality of the provision are accurate and enable managers to implement effective actions.
- Interrogate data more closely to identify differences in achievement between groups of learners and ensure that learners from all groups complete their programmes and achieve their qualifications.
- Ensure that action plans have clear, measurable targets to measure progress. Directors should scrutinise these and provide sufficient challenge where staff do not complete actions or meet targets quickly enough.
- Improve outcomes for apprentices, and completion of their programmes within planned timescales, by setting clear learning targets and monitoring apprentices' progress against them. Quickly identify any apprentices who may not complete and take effective action to help them succeed.
- Ensure that assessors across all programmes provide detailed, accurate and helpful feedback to apprentices on their written work, so that they know what to do to improve. Assessors should consistently highlight grammatical and spelling errors to promote employability, and provide additional tasks to challenge more advanced learners.
- Extend initial assessment of apprentices' skills so that this process accurately measures their starting points in relation to their vocational and employability skills. Ensure that assessors use the findings to place apprentices on the correct level of study. Managers should make consistent use of the findings to monitor accurately the progress that all apprentices make in developing their skills ready for their next steps.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management

is inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to maintain the previously good standard of apprentices' achievement, or to improve the quality of apprentices' experience. Managers do not plan effectively; no clear operational plan exists for the management of apprenticeship programmes. At all levels of the organisation, managers do not recognise sufficiently or take responsibility for the sharp decline in apprentices' achievement. The roles and responsibilities of managers are not clear and accountability is poor.
- Managers do not monitor apprentices' attainment well enough; as a result, the progress of many apprentices is too slow and expectations of what they are capable of achieving are too low. Too many apprentices either fail to complete their programme or finish late. Most success rates have declined over a three-year period and those in 2014/15 were particularly low.
- Managers have not used the observation of teaching, learning and assessment effectively to improve the quality of training quickly enough. Managers fail to link apprentices' slow progress and poor achievement with the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not agree action plans with all staff after observations, thus wasting opportunities for further development; where action plans exist, they lack clarity about what assessors need to do to improve. Managers do not monitor sufficiently whether staff have implemented and evaluated actions to improve practice.
- Observations completed by newly appointed staff identify more accurately the key strengths and areas for improvement. The recent training provided to improve assessors' practice is starting to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers and staff have not evaluated and improved the quality of the provision effectively through the self-assessment process. Directors, managers and assessors have not been involved enough in identifying strengths and weaknesses. In the self-assessment report, because managers have not evaluated performance accurately they are not sufficiently critical. Managers have failed to identify many of the underlying reasons for poor performance. Consequently, actions set by managers in the quality improvement plan are not effective.
- Senior managers do not monitor quality improvement well enough. Managers review the quality improvement plan every month but, without clear targets against which managers can measure progress, the links between the quality improvement plan and action plans are unclear. Managers are therefore unable to assess progress accurately overall. Directors do not challenge staff who have not fulfilled the actions planned or met their targets.
- Leaders do not analyse data sufficiently well to inform them about the performance of the organisation. They place too much focus on the completion of qualifications instead of the progress that apprentices make in developing and improving their skills. This lack of attention to progress has resulted in nearly a third of all current apprentices not achieving their qualifications, or making expected progress, within the planned timescales.
- Managers do not evaluate the quality of staff members' work or its outcomes effectively. Through the appraisal process, they set targets to improve the work of assessors that lack sufficient detail; too often, they do not address weaknesses quickly enough. In most cases, managers keep records of performance reviews that are too brief; they do not always evaluate assessors' progress against previous improvement actions, identify specific actions to improve performance or share good practice where it exists. Consequently, improvements in assessors' practice are too slow.
- Leaders and managers do not hold assessors sufficiently to account for the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment, or for the progress that apprentices make in developing their vocational, English and mathematical skills. Managers have improved the quality of their monthly monitoring meetings with assessors; associate directors now monitor each assessor more closely to identify poor performance, including slow progress by apprentices, more effectively. As a result, some staff have left the organisation.
- Apprentices show a good understanding of equality and diversity and apply appropriate attitudes and attributes in their working environment. However, staff have not yet developed ways of promoting British values throughout the curriculum. Managers do not analyse the progress and outcomes of different groups; as a result, the lower achievement of male apprentices when compared with female apprentices, and of young apprentices compared with their older peers, have not been identified and tackled.
- Managers respond well to the needs and priorities of the care sector and have effective partnerships with a small number of local and regional care companies. These relationships enable managers to develop programmes that meet the labour market needs and regulatory requirements of the sector.
- The management of the subcontractor is effective. Associate directors regularly monitor the quality of

subcontracted provision and as a consequence the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the success rates at the subcontractor are higher than for Future-Wize apprentices.

#### ■ **The governance of the provider**

- The directors have not established suitable arrangements for governance. They do not provide sufficient scrutiny of the performance of senior leaders; they offer too little challenge, and expect too little accountability, in relation to outcomes for apprentices or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This lack of oversight has contributed to the decline in the quality of provision and the number of apprentices who complete their training.
- Directors do not require managers to tackle weaknesses quickly enough. As a result, success rates and the time taken to achieve them have fallen in the most recent year and the progress of apprentices due to complete this year is too slow.

#### ■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**

- Staff have appropriate training and take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and apprentices feel safe. Contact details for the named safeguarding officer are appropriately publicised and apprentices are aware of the action they would take if they had an issue.
- Safeguarding information in the apprentice-training handbook provides useful information. Managers have reviewed this information recently to include radicalisation, extremism and terrorism; however, apprentices are slow in developing their understanding of these themes.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **requires improvement**

- Through initial assessment, staff identify apprentices' starting points well, but do not always use this information well enough to place apprentices on the appropriate level of study or inform individualised training plans. For example, a large minority of apprentices take functional skills qualifications at a lower level than that indicated by their initial assessments; too many older apprentices work towards level 2 awards that merely confirm existing knowledge.
- Staff do not plan, record and calculate off-the-job training rigorously enough. Although the organisation meets the requirements for apprenticeships, managers and assessors are not clear about the amount of time for each component of training to ensure that staff record time spent on activities consistently.
- As a result of recent changes, staff now set more specific individual learning plan targets for apprentices, and undertake more monitoring of progress. In most cases, assessors and apprentices agree learning plans with employers that have clear deadlines for completion, so that all parties know what apprentices need to do. For example, after their reviews, one business apprentice effectively developed his business English skills in line with needs jointly identified with his line manager, and several care apprentices benefited from additional support sessions. These changes have increased the pace of progress for newly recruited apprentices; it is too early to judge whether this will improve the number of apprentices who complete within the planned timescales.
- Assessors do not always mark work completed by apprentices between their visits, and so cannot use their feedback to ensure training sessions reflect apprentices' specific development needs. Valuable time in training sessions is lost while assessors correct apprentices' work and prepare written feedback, which often lacks sufficient detail to bring about improvement.
- Assessors provide verbal feedback during training sessions which motivates apprentices well, but is too often insufficiently critical; assessors do not always correct mistakes or show apprentices what they need to improve. They pay insufficient attention to spelling and grammar in written work, thus failing to promote the standards that employers expect.
- The majority of teaching, training and assessment resources are appropriate. For the very small minority of learners in subcontracted provision, the subcontractor's staff offer learning activities that are more challenging, and demonstrate higher expectations; these greater demands on apprentices lead to good progress in sessions.
- Assessors aid progress by setting regular homework tasks and providing support between sessions. For a minority of advanced apprentices, assessors set work to complete between their visits, including extension tasks that challenge them to think independently, for example through the completion of work-related projects.
- Staff are appropriately qualified, including in English and mathematics, and have sound subject knowledge that they use to plan training, learning and assessment activities to meet individual apprentices' and employers' needs.
- Apprentices understand how their qualifications will help improve their effectiveness at work; the optional units they choose match well with their specific job roles and the roles they would like to prepare for.

- Communication between apprentices, assessors and employers is effective; apprentices value and enjoy the support they receive. Discussions between apprentices and assessors are productive; a minority of assessors use these discussions well to check understanding of wider topics such as diversity and health and safety in the workplace. More recently, assessors and employers have built better links between the apprenticeship and employer-provided training to increase the relevance of all training to the workplace.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

## **requires improvement**

- Progress is too slow for too many apprentices. The development of English and mathematical skills by the end of the apprenticeship is good but, for many apprentices, achievement of these vital qualifications comes too late in their programme and stalls their achievement.
- Too many older apprentices take qualifications that do not challenge them; their apprenticeships confirm that they have the knowledge and skills for their work but do not sufficiently enhance their abilities to work at a higher level.
- Most apprentices have jobs before they start their apprenticeships. They get a limited range of independent information, advice and guidance to inform their career plans. Consequently, the majority of apprentices do not know enough about the wider career opportunities they have within the health, care, legal or commercial settings in which they work.
- Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe in and out of work. They know what they should do if they have concerns about bullying and harassment. They show respect and tolerance for their colleagues, customers and clients. Those working in health and social care settings understand clearly their responsibilities for keeping vulnerable children and adults safe. They are aware of safety issues facing the care industry and behave appropriately. Following recent training for staff about radicalisation and extremism, assessors have begun to promote awareness of these themes in teaching sessions and assessment reviews; apprentices are not yet sufficiently aware of how these issues could affect them or how they should respond in order to protect themselves or others.
- Opportunities for apprentices to consider personal, social or ethical issues are limited. Although staff make clear reference to British values during induction, they do not ensure that training and assessments enable apprentices to think deeply about their rights and responsibilities beyond those they have as employees.
- Apprentices know and understand the requirements of their apprenticeships and their employers' expectations. They conduct themselves well and behave professionally. They have good attitudes to work and enjoy their learning. They turn up to work on time. When apprentices cancel assessment and training sessions due to changes in shift patterns or staff illness, assessors, apprentices and employers rearrange them quickly. Most apprentices gain confidence in their job roles and so develop the readiness to take on roles that require greater responsibility.

## **Outcomes for learners**

## **are inadequate**

- The number of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has fallen significantly over the last three years. In 2014/15, four in every 10 apprentices aged 16 to 23 did not complete their qualifications. The majority of apprentices are over the age of 24; although more of these older apprentices completed their qualifications, three in every 10 were unsuccessful. Intermediate level apprentices in 2014/15 did not achieve as well as advanced level apprentices.
- Apprentices benefit from a review of their previous qualifications and detailed initial assessments in English and mathematics as they begin their training and development. Despite these assessments, many apprentices capable of working at higher levels are on programmes that do not challenge them sufficiently. A large majority of apprentices do well in their functional English examinations; however, in mathematics almost half do not pass their level two examinations first time.
- A large minority of those apprentices coming towards the end of their programme at the time of the inspection were not making the progress expected of them. Too many were behind their targets for completing on time. More than one in every 10 were studying well beyond the time allocated to them. Managers review the number of apprentices whose progress is too slow, but do not sufficiently challenge assessors to improve the speed at which apprentices work towards finishing their qualifications.
- Female apprentices achieve at a higher rate than male apprentices. When outcomes declined in 2014/15, the large difference between the success rates of male and female apprentices, apparent three years previously, remained evident and has increased further for current apprentices. The difference between the success rates of younger and older apprentices is also too wide, with older apprentices enjoying

greater success. The numbers of apprentices with identified learning difficulties or disabilities, or from minority ethnic groups, are too small for meaningful analysis.

- In their jobs, apprentices develop and sustain the vocational and technical skills they need. The majority of adult apprentices confirm skills they already have and use these well to demonstrate the competences needed in their units of study. Too often, assessors do not sufficiently encourage apprentices to show that they are able to apply new or more challenging skills to their work.
- The large majority of apprentices who complete their programmes remain in employment; most of these apprentices gain extra responsibility, promotion or an increase in their pay. Most 16–18-year-old apprentices who complete their apprenticeship gain permanent employment or move into higher-level qualifications.

## 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	192
Principal/CEO	David Corbridge/Neil Sherman
Website address	<a href="http://www.future-wize.co.uk/">http://www.future-wize.co.uk/</a>

## 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	
	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
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	9	92	5	107	N/A	N/A		
	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age								
Number of traineeships								
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Funding received from								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Chris Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Judith Hamer	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the associate director, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. 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 students 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.



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