

# British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF) Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

28 June to 1 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too many apprentices do not complete their qualifications within the planned timescales.
- Training coordinators do not routinely use the results of initial assessment to plan appropriately personalised training to meet each apprentice's needs.
- Assessment feedback is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that all apprentices understand what they need to do to improve; training coordinators do not routinely set precise targets during workplace reviews that enable all apprentices to know exactly what they have to do and by when.
- Too few apprentices develop their skills in English and mathematics above the minimum expectations required by their apprenticeship programme.
- Apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity, British values, the risks of radicalisation, extremism and e-safety is shallow, as these topics are not discussed in taught sessions or reinforced during workplace reviews.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements are not used effectively; standards have declined since the last inspection.
- Leaders and managers do not use data effectively to identify or target actions to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of apprentices.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Apprentices develop good on-the-job, work-related vocational skills which are highly valued by employers in the printing industry.
- Apprentices develop quickly a very good range of personal qualities such as punctuality, positive behaviours and attitudes to learning and work; all who graduate successfully progress into sustained employment.
- Apprentices benefit from effective initial advice and guidance that aid them in the selection of an apprenticeship that meets their specific interests and career aspirations.
- Leaders at the BPIF build strong partnerships with employers that result in carefully designed programmes that closely meet the requirements of their businesses and the learning needs of each apprentice.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- The British Printing Industries Federation Limited (BPIF) is a not-for-profit organisation, which provides business support and representation for the UK print, print packaging and graphic communications industry. It provides support to printing companies located throughout the UK ranging in size from large multinationals to small companies employing less than 10 people. BPIF provides a range of lobbying, human resource and performance improvement services including publicly and commercially funded training and assessment. It provides apprenticeship training to both member and non-member companies within the industry regardless of the number of trainees or their location.
- The BPIF employs 50 full-time staff, has three locations North (Brighthouse) Midlands (Meriden) and South (London) and is governed by a national council. The BPIF's training, quality and administrative offices are located in Meriden. It has nine training coordinators based in the regions. Currently, 661 learners are undertaking apprenticeship training, of which the very large majority are adults.

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

- Increase the pace of improvement within teaching, learning and assessment and the proportion of apprentices achieving their framework within the planned time by ensuring that:
  - outcomes from initial assessment precisely inform apprentices' individual learning plans, so that all staff involved with learning have a clear and detailed understanding of each individual's starting point, in order to plan learning that matches their specific needs
  - training coordinators set clear, detailed targets which link on- and off-the-job training, monitor apprentices' progress precisely, and ensure employers are involved fully in the planning and monitoring of apprentices' training, learning and assessment, to speed up the pace of progress. Intervene swiftly if apprentices miss their agreed targets.
  - training coordinators provide concise written feedback during assessments and reviews that enables all apprentices to understand precisely what they have done well and what they need to improve.
- Improve English and mathematics provision by ensuring that:
  - training coordinators routinely develop apprentices' skills in English and mathematics much earlier in the apprenticeship programme by planning challenging learning that highlights how important these essential skills are to everyday life and work
  - training coordinators routinely mark and, where relevant, highlight errors in apprentices' written work, so that they become more self-critical about what they have to do to improve the standard of their work, thus reflecting the high standards associated with the printing industry.
- Develop and implement quickly an effective training programme to extend apprentices' understanding of British values, the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and how to be safe online. Ensure apprentices have a secure and well-developed understanding of these topics that they can confidently apply both in their workplaces and their personal lives.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the action plans following observations of teaching, learning and assessment contain challenging, but realistic, targets that focus on improving the quality of provision; regularly monitoring progress against the identified actions
  - improving the use of self-assessment and quality improvement plans to identify key areas for improvement and set challenging impact measures to enable the accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of the action taken by leaders to bring about improvement
  - ensuring members of the national council have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; ensuring that the national council holds senior managers to account for improving outcomes for learners by routinely asking searching questions regarding apprenticeship standards and performance.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management

## requires improvement

- Although senior managers have a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and take account of apprentices', staff and employers' views, these are not sufficiently articulated in the self-assessment report to aid improvement. Judgements in the self-assessment report are too descriptive and not supported by robust and detailed evidence, resulting in quality improvement plans that lack detail and specific targets to help leaders and managers to improve the provision.
- Observers of teaching, learning and assessment sessions describe the session, providing too little helpful commentary or action planning to drive improvement. Observers do not focus sufficiently on how well apprentices understand or improve their skills as a result of learning and assessment activities, or take account of their progress and achievement over time. As a result, judgements of the quality of teaching and learning are overstated. In addition, leaders do not systematically analyse the themes emerging from observations of learning to inform actions for improvement, including prioritising staff development activities.
- Managers have not devised an effective strategy that enables all apprentices to develop their English and mathematical skills beyond the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship programme. Managers are ambitious for apprentices to take on more responsibility with their employers; apprentices are developing good technical skills that employers value. However, leaders and managers have not prioritised sufficiently the extension of apprentices' confidence and skills in using English and mathematics to support their ongoing personal development and progression.
- Leaders and managers have established a very clear strategy to develop further apprenticeships within the printing sector. Business plans provide challenging targets and clear objectives to support company growth and to meet the workforce development needs of member companies. For example, managers at the BPIF are leading the development of a 'trailblazer' apprenticeship with a qualification that is intended to meet more precisely the needs of the industry and that ensures apprentices develop a wide range of valuable transferable skills associated with the print, print packaging and graphic communications industry. The views of apprentices are represented on a recently convened apprentice council, which encourages and supports them to contribute to the strategy, by working with schools to promote apprenticeships as a desirable career option. The BPIF national council is committed to these developments and has ensured that the necessary financial resources are in place.
- Training coordinators are suitably qualified and vocationally experienced. Apprentices and employers value greatly the extensive industry experience and flexibility of these staff. They tailor the provision to meet employers' specific needs and provide flexible assessment and attendance arrangements for apprentices, some of whom are based in remote locations across the United Kingdom.
- Performance management is supportive, particularly for newly appointed training coordinators, and is helping to improve the programmes. Training coordinators are required to report the performance of their apprentices at weekly discussions with their manager. Managers use data and information about apprentices' progress well to inform these discussions. As a result, the proportion of apprentices who have already achieved within the planned time in the current year has markedly improved. Training coordinators have realistic targets for improving the rate of achievement but they are not individualised to take account of differences in performance across the organisation, including narrowing achievement gaps between different groups of apprentices.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Members of the council of management and the federation chief executive use their extensive industry experience well to provide the BPIF with a clear strategic direction and specialist support to the management team to ensure the apprenticeship programme meets the needs of the industry effectively.
  - Oversight by the programme director and the chief executive is appropriately challenging and well informed through close scrutiny of the performance of training coordinators to ensure that they support more apprentices to achieve within the planned time.
  - Board reports to the council of management place too much emphasis on the analysis of the financial performance of the apprenticeship programme; they do not contain sufficient information to inform them about the progress of different groups of apprentices compared with others nationally, or to account for why performance and standards have declined over time.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - Employers and training coordinators strongly promote the importance of safe working practices in the workplace. Apprentices adopt safe practices throughout their learning programme and know how to

report any concerns they may have.

- The trained designated safeguarding officer is proactive in ensuring that all apprentices are safe. All staff who work with apprentices are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to confirm their suitability to work with young people.
- Staff have received relevant training to introduce apprentices to the concept of fundamental British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. These topics are introduced to apprentices during their induction, but they are not reinforced well enough during the rest of the programme. As a result too many learners have a weak understanding of how these aspects apply to them personally or in the workplace.

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

## **requires improvement**

- Training coordinators do not use the outcomes of initial assessment to set clear and stretching targets for each apprentice, or to develop individualised training plans that ensure links between theory and practice are developed. As a result, apprentices make slow progress through their programmes.
- Most apprentices are not challenged to improve their skills in the use of English and mathematics beyond the minimum expectations of the apprenticeship programme; too many complete these essential qualifications late in their course. Training coordinators do not routinely highlight or correct mistakes that apprentices make in their spelling, use of grammar or mathematical calculations. As a result, they make the same mistakes throughout their learning.
- During regular visits to the workplace, training coordinators do not routinely set ambitious and challenging targets, which link on- and off-the-job training and enthuse all apprentices to work to their full potential, make consistently good progress or achieve within the planned time. A small minority of employers are not sufficiently involved in the review process for their apprentices and do not actively contribute to planning for their next steps in learning.
- Feedback from training coordinators to apprentices on the standard of their assessed work and performance is often superficial. Apprentices receive good oral feedback about their work following assessments and within progress reviews. The majority of written feedback either confirms receipt of assessed work or that standards have been met, lacking evaluative comments to confirm what apprentices have done well or to identify what they must do to improve. As a result, apprentices are unable to refer back at a later date to a permanent record of what they need to do to improve their performance.
- Apprentices' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity, e-safety, British values and the dangers posed by the risks of radicalisation and extremism are not developed or reinforced well during the apprenticeship. Some of these essential aspects are introduced to apprentices during induction, but their recall of these themes is weak and too little is done to re-affirm or extend their knowledge and understanding throughout their programme.
- Apprenticeship programmes are well planned to meet the needs of apprentices and their employers. The large majority of employers support their apprentices well by ensuring they have regular opportunities to experience different areas of their companies in order to develop a wide range of on-the-job skills. Training coordinators use their extensive knowledge of the industry to provide good guidance and support regarding the selection of optional units, which ensure qualifications match business requirements, apprentices' job roles and their career aspirations. Many employers take an active role in identifying suitable projects for apprentices to complete that are relevant to work and their personal development. Highly experienced workplace mentors take pride in passing on their extensive knowledge of the print industry to apprentices in their care.
- The quality of apprentices' work is good; for example, one apprentice demonstrated the ability to use thermal and digital printing techniques to a high standard to produce a range of high-quality labels used by major retailers. Employers comment positively on the technical skills their apprentices gain throughout the programme.
- Training coordinators develop well apprentices' vocational vocabulary and understanding of key terminology, so that they become more confident in using appropriate technical language in the workplace. For example, print production apprentices develop a good understanding of technical language such as 'burst perfect binding', 'colour separation' and 'film laminate'. They use these terms accurately both when communicating with external customers and liaising with colleagues and supervisors.
- Apprentices receive good and very flexible support from highly skilled and experienced training coordinators, with many benefiting from extra help by telephone or email between training and assessment sessions. Training coordinators support well apprentices at risk of redundancy and with

personal barriers to learning. This support has contributed towards them staying on programme and an increasing proportion successfully completing their apprenticeship.

- The large majority of apprentices successfully develop their skills in the use of information and communications technology. They frequently use digital technology in the workplace to manipulate the layout of graphical images and text prior to starting printing operations. However, few apprentices make use of the BPIF virtual learning environment materials to further their knowledge and develop independent learning skills when away from the workplace. This restricts their progress and skills development.
- Apprentices' understanding of health and safety is rightly prioritised and rigorously reinforced by employers and training coordinators. Apprentices feel safe and are well aware of their responsibilities to protect themselves and others from harm. They work safely.

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

## **require improvement**

- Targets set by training coordinators are too focused on meeting qualification criteria rather than on developing apprentices to reach their full potential. For example, action plans set by training coordinators require apprentices to collect evidence of existing skills and practice, but do not always encourage them to investigate and demonstrate how they are developing new workplace skills. Training coordinators do not routinely capture and formally record this wider aspect of learning.
- Training coordinators' feedback to apprentices lacks detail and is instructional rather than developmental. It is too often confirmation of a job well done. Most apprentices do understand what they need to do to complete their programme, but too many do not have a precise understanding of their progress to date or the timescales by which they need to complete.
- The majority of apprentices do not develop their English and mathematics skills fully during their learning. Those that have achieved their functional skills or have achieved GCSE A\* to C in English and mathematics receive insufficient development to extend their existing skills and knowledge. Spelling and grammatical errors are rarely identified in apprentices' written work. Support to pass functional skills tests mostly consists of completing practice papers. As a result, apprentices do not develop their confidence or fully appreciate the importance of these essential skills in everyday work activities.
- Apprentices have a basic understanding of equality and diversity, although opportunities to reinforce this are often not identified. Apprentices do not sufficiently understand aspects such as radicalisation, extremism and British values. Training coordinators do not explore or assess these aspects during the frequent progress reviews undertaken in the workplace. However, apprentices do develop a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work and of other matters relevant to their employment.
- Apprentices enjoy their training; they value the support provided by training coordinators during their regular visits. They enjoy off-the-job training sessions with knowledgeable trainers. Attendance rates for the large majority of apprentices are high. They are punctual at work and to lessons. They enjoy learning new technical skills and putting them into action in their jobs. Apprentices are well motivated, work well with colleagues and demonstrate high levels of practical and technical skills in their job roles.
- Apprentices develop good work-related skills and attitudes required for employment, and all progress to sustainable employment. Employers value the high standard of apprentices' practical skills and most are enthusiastic about supporting their skill development. For example, one employer sent their apprentice to Barcelona to learn how to operate a state-of-the-art digital printing press the company had recently purchased. On their return the apprentice shared this training with other colleagues in the workplace.
- Apprentices gain confidence quickly in their abilities as a result of the support they receive from their training coordinators, workplace mentors and supervisors. They develop valuable workplace skills including planning and organising print schedules, working with others, problem solving and working to demanding print production deadlines. These attributes help apprentices to become more effective in their job role and in their personal lives.
- Apprentices feel safe and adopt safe working practices. Reinforcement of this topic is frequent. Apprentices fully understand the importance of health and safety in the workplace, but their awareness of e-safety is shallow. Apprentices know they can report any concerns to their line managers.
- Apprentices benefit from detailed information, advice and guidance provided by training coordinators. They use their extensive knowledge of the printing industry to aid them in the selection of an apprenticeship that meets their specific interests and career aspirations. However, few apprentices are aware of their progression options once they complete their apprenticeship. This is reflected in the small number of apprentices who progress to the next level of learning.

- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of apprentices gaining their qualifications has declined from being high, to now being around that of other similar providers. Just over a quarter of all apprentices successfully complete their course within the planned time. Provisional data for 2015/16 indicates that the majority of apprentices are now making the progress expected of them. Their achievement within planned timescales has improved significantly, but is still too low. It is too early to judge the sustainability of this recent trend over time.
- Apprentices' success in staying on their programmes and achieving their qualifications in print-related trades such as machine printing, digital printing, and print finishing and binding are improving over time. These apprentices now make the progress expected of them and the standard of their work is generally good. However, too many apprentices, particularly those in non-print-related trades such as customer service, team leading and management, do not achieve their qualifications. Performance for these apprentices has declined sharply.
- Apprentices are enthusiastic about their training and value the good support they receive from their employers and the regular visits by their training coordinators, which help them work towards completing their apprenticeship programme.
- The extent to which different groups of apprentices achieve is too variable. Older apprentices, who make up the largest single group of learners, do not achieve as well as those aged 16 to 18 and the gap is increasing over time. The large majority of male apprentices consistently perform around four percentage points lower than their female counterparts. Female apprentices perform in line with their peer group nationally, but the large majority of male apprentices do not. There are too few learners from minority ethnic groups or with declared additional learning support needs to enable any useful comparison.
- Apprentices who join the apprenticeship programme without a GCSE at grade A\* to C in English or mathematics successfully achieve their functional skills qualifications at the first attempt. Achievement rates on foundation-level qualifications in English, considering some apprentices' low starting points, are good, but are too low in mathematics. Few apprentices complete higher-level qualifications in these subjects. Too many are not challenged to develop further their abilities in these essential skills beyond the minimum requirement of their qualifications.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of vocational and technical skills which they use particularly effectively in different work settings. Due to their well-developed job skills, all apprentices gain permanent employment with corresponding increases in levels of responsibility.

## 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	661
Principal/CEO	Ursula Daly
Website address	<a href="http://www.britishprint.com/">http://www.britishprint.com/</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+
	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	45	179	103	281	0	51		
	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
	n/a							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
	None							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								



## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Victor Reid, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Masterson	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the programme director, 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 apprentices 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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