

KTS (2002)

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

26–29 April 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too few learners on study programmes benefit from planned work experience or work-related activities to give them an insight into work and to help them develop the skills needed for employment.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality have improved but remain low, particularly for learners with a poor record of school attendance, slowing their progress as a result.
- Learners with the most complex needs are not set realistic or appropriately challenging targets, nor are their starting points clearly identified when they join the programme.
- Leaders and managers do not analyse the full range of information to monitor the study programme thoroughly enough and identify what needs to be improved.

The provider has the following strengths

- The strong, supportive, caring and calm culture creates a learning environment that promotes a mutual respect for all and reinforces appropriate behaviour.
- Very effective teaching and learning in mathematics and English ensure that the majority of learners improve their skills in these subjects and gain relevant qualifications.
- The strong and effective emphasis on safeguarding, together with good partnership working with other agencies and charitable organisations, results in learners, including the most vulnerable, feeling safe and protected.
- A high proportion of learners continue their studies in further education, training or employment.

Full report

Information about the provider

- KTS (2002) Ltd (KTS) is an independent learning provider based in Kingswood, east of Bristol. It operates from two other centres to the north of Bristol in Yate and Fishponds. Kingswood and Yate are based in South Gloucestershire, with Fishponds in the Bristol local authority. KTS receives funding from the Education Funding Agency to provide study programmes and traineeships to over 200 learners aged 16 to 18 who have low educational achievement. It provides a subcontracted programme of apprenticeships in business administration and customer service on behalf of another training provider, Reflections. This latter programme was not within the scope of this inspection.
- A very high proportion of KTS's learners live in and around Bristol, a city with a population of nearly 450,000. A larger proportion of people in Bristol have higher-level qualifications than in the rest of the South West. Bristol has areas of great affluence but also has small areas in the south and the centre that are among the most deprived in England. Many of KTS's learners live in these areas. The proportion of the population living in these deprived areas is rising. The unemployment rate for women in the area is similar to the rest of the South West, but it is significantly higher for men. In 2014/15, the proportion of school leavers in the City of Bristol achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was marginally above the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide all learners with opportunities to benefit from and be motivated by a wide range of work-related activities that develop their knowledge of different industries and help inform their career choices through work experience placements, work shadowing, visits to employers and volunteering.
- Ensure that information on learners' starting points is used more effectively to plan learning for individuals which includes challenging and realistic short-, medium- and long-term targets for each learner to achieve.
- Support learners to improve and maintain their punctuality and attendance through more robust and consistent challenge to lateness and absence.
- Ensure that managers record and analyse the full range of information available to them about learners' progress on the study programme to ensure that managers have the means to further improve learners' experiences and success.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching in mathematics and English has improved but progress to improve other weaknesses identified at the previous inspection has been slow. Managers are aware of elements of the provision which need improving, but they are not sufficiently analytical when identifying how best to make improvements. Good practice in teaching and learning which occurs in some centres and areas of work is not being shared with all teaching staff.
- Leaders and managers do not have contact with enough local and regional employers, which would help them develop work experience opportunities for learners on study programmes; consequently, staff struggle to organise sufficient and appropriate work-related activities and projects for learners. The very limited range of work-related opportunities slows learners' progress and their development of social and employment skills. A minority of learners are able to visit workplaces and other training providers in the course of their studies but most are only able to develop their employability skills within the KTS training centres.
- Managers make good use of data, which helps them track individual learners' progress while they are completing their qualification. KTS maintains good data on learners' next steps after they complete their course. However, managers do not systematically collate or analyse well enough the broader range of information available to them about the performance of the study programme.
- The study and traineeship programmes meet the needs of disadvantaged young people in the community in particular. Most learners begin their learning with significant barriers to learning, including very poor attendance or significant periods out of formal education, alcohol and drug misuse or poor mental health. Tutors are mindful of the often-disrupted lifestyles of their learners and structure learning flexibly where they can. Tutors provide good one-to-one tuition and incorporate helpful online learning materials for learners who have been absent.
- KTS has very good working relationships with the city council, local colleges, schools, community groups and wider training organisations, which has helped it to increase the educational and employability opportunities in the community and provide KTS learners with greater opportunities for progression on to further education or into employment and training.
- Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Tutors have good opportunities for professional development and updating. Managers observe teaching, learning and assessment systematically and provide feedback to staff on how to improve their performance. This has been helpful in improving the quality of the teaching, particularly for new staff.
- Staff develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity well. They challenge stereotyping and any instances of inappropriate language or behaviour. Learners visit local exhibitions to widen their knowledge of local culture and history, for example a visit to an exhibition about Bristol's involvement in the slave trade. Staff promote learners' understanding of fundamental British values well.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Directors oversee the provision and provide appropriate support and challenge to managers. There is no external body, such as an advisory board, to provide independent and impartial challenge and scrutiny of the management of the provision. External consultants are brought in to act as critical friends and provide some external scrutiny. Liaison with partner organisations provides mutual support and critical insight, particularly in providing expertise and experience in teaching, learning and assessment.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Safeguarding arrangements for KTS learners are strong. The quality director completes all required checks on staff and maintains a central register of these checks. All staff participate in annual training in safeguarding procedures.
 - Learners are safe and feel safe. They know what to do and who to contact in the event of an incident. They know how to keep themselves safe physically and online. The few potential safeguarding concerns and actual incidents which have occurred have been investigated appropriately.
 - Managers have made progress in promoting learners' and staff members' awareness of the risks of extremism and radicalisation through training in the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff and learners are all knowledgeable about the 'Prevent' duty.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are not effective enough in too many lessons, especially lessons designed to develop learners' skills for work. Teachers do not plan well enough to challenge more-able learners to work at a pace which is as demanding as a busy work environment. The high proportion of learners who are not yet ready for work experience find engagement in lessons particularly difficult.
- Teachers are good role models for learners. They create a friendly and supportive learning environment where learners start to understand the value of learning and the opportunities available to them. Teachers do not devise enough individual tasks for learners that allow them to make progress in areas in which they have weaknesses, to take greater responsibility for their learning and to engage fully in lessons.
- Assessment to establish learners' starting points has improved greatly except for those with the most complex needs. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information in their planning of lessons.
- Too few learners receive sufficiently detailed feedback on their work which tells them clearly what each must do to improve. Feedback is positive and encouraging but not challenging or constructive enough. Teachers do not direct all learners to identify and correct errors in their work.
- Teachers' use of data on learners' progress varies considerably across KTS. Staff enter details of learners' progress across all aspects of their programmes regularly into a well-designed system that is accessible to all staff. This information is not shared fully with all learners and many do not know how much progress they are making towards their goals.
- The teaching in English and mathematics lessons is very effective in improving the spoken communication of learners and their use of everyday mathematics with well-prepared resources and the use of real-life examples to make learning relevant and interesting. As a result, learners make good progress, improve their skills and confidence in English and mathematics and achieve qualifications.
- Teachers work well to include learning about equality and diversity and include matters relating to extremism and radicalisation in lessons wherever possible. For example, learners in an English class developed their writing skills based around the 'pyramid of hate', which looked at racism and prejudice. In a mathematics lesson, learners worked with interest on data about local demographics as the basis for calculations on percentages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

- Learners on the study programme do not have enough work-related activities or assignments to develop their knowledge of different industries, career choices or employment options. Tutors do not provide learners with work or assignments tailored to improve their understanding of particular career options. A plan to encourage learners to use social media to explore job information is in its early stages but it is too soon to judge the impact on learners.
- Work experience is integrated well into traineeships, with learners spending a large proportion of their time on work experience or developing work-related skills. A learner nearing the end of their traineeship, for example, successfully completed a work placement in a small furniture manufacturer and was offered an apprenticeship with the same employer.
- Learners have too few opportunities for additional activities such as trips, visits or community involvement to give them new experiences, develop their personal skills and expand their horizons about future work or study. They enjoy and benefit from the small number of opportunities currently on offer, such as recent fund-raising activities for Sport Relief.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality have improved. Learners with records of very poor or no recent participation in education now attend regularly unless a personal or domestic problem arises. Staff contact learners and their parents quickly if they do not attend, but fail to challenge those with persistently low attendance rates. A minority of learners miss too much time on their course and disrupt others when they try to catch up following lateness or absence; those who attend regularly enjoy their studies and make sustained progress.
- Monthly information, advice and guidance meetings with visiting careers staff help learners to plan for their next steps. They receive good independent advice on the wide variety of possible progression routes.
- Staff create a caring, calm and supportive atmosphere in which learners behave well and show respect for tutors and each other. Staff are skilled and generally successful in supporting learners to manage their emotions and improve their behaviour. Teachers support learners well with their personal and social problems through effective liaison with other agencies.
- Learners value the small size of their learning groups very highly. They feel safe and develop a good rapport with teachers, which adds to their sense of being young adults.

- Learners feel safe and develop positive relationships with staff. They are confident that any concerns will be dealt with quickly and have good support from staff and external agencies when required. Learners are clear about how to protect themselves from a range of risks and understand well their roles in modern Britain.

Outcomes for learners

require improvement

- Learners struggle to develop their skills in information technology and the pass rate is low.
- Since the previous inspection, more learners now progress to positive destinations and achieve mathematics and English qualifications, but for too many it takes too long to do so.
- More learners than at the previous inspection achieve qualifications in mathematics and English. The proportion of learners who achieved level 2 English and mathematics functional skills in 2014/15 was almost twice that in 2013/14. In 2015/16, learners are making good progress towards achieving these qualifications.
- Most learners, including those with poor previous experiences of education, now improve their functional skills. For example, they apply their skills in mathematics usefully in everyday life, such as understanding the risks of debt and high-interest short-term loans. A significant number of learners return to KTS and take the next level of mathematics and English qualifications.
- Despite the increasing complexity and multitude of barriers to success faced by a significant number of current learners, the proportion of learners progressing from KTS to further education, training or employment has improved since the previous inspection. The well-directed personal support helps many young people overcome complicated personal circumstances that have hindered their learning. Where learners do not progress, staff at KTS know the reasons and keep in contact with learners to offer ongoing support in finding courses or jobs after they have left.
- There are very few gaps in the outcomes of different groups of learners, with the exception of learners with disability, who achieve at a higher rate than their peers as a result of the good support.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	217
Principal/CEO	Andy Haynes, managing director
Website address	www.ktstraining.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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	15	0	25	0	0	0	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	3		0		3			
Number of learners aged 14-16	12							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ None							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Kathryn Townsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Pippa Wainwright	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector

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

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