

DMT Business Services Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates 5–8 July 2016

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is weak because learners do not receive sufficient training to develop their skills and understanding of how to improve their job roles and future employability.
- The quality of the traineeship provision is very poor because learners do not acquire new skills. They leave the programme early and few progress into employment or further education or training.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship on time is low and has declined over the last three years.
- Staff expectations of what each learner can achieve are too low. As a result, they do not challenge learners to reach their full potential.
- The company has no governance arrangements in place and few industry links to provide suitable support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Senior leaders and managers do not have a clear vision or strategic plan to develop the company for the benefit of learners or local employers.
- Managers do not monitor learners' progress sufficiently well to remedy slow progress in completing the apprenticeship.
- Managers do not identify weaknesses in, or take sufficient steps to improve, the quality of training.

The provider has the following strengths

- Assessors provide helpful additional pastoral support to learners.

Full report

Information about the provider

- DMT Business Services Ltd (DMT) is a regional independent training provider based in Redruth, offering apprenticeships and vocational qualifications in health and social care and business administration across Cornwall. The company also offers traineeships for 16–18-year-old learners, some of whom have significant barriers to learning, in association with Cornwall Community Action Network (CCAN), a social enterprise initiative set up by DMT.
- Due to a decline in the number of learners in recent years, DMT has reduced in size and the number of its centres across Cornwall. It is currently intending to refocus its training on adult apprenticeships rather than traineeship provision.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that learners make better progress by:
 - providing more training for apprentices
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of what their learners can achieve
 - raising the quality of, and the level of detail in, the feedback to learners so that they understand how to improve their work
 - setting clear milestones for learners' timely completion of their programme and ensuring that all staff and supervisors involved are aware of them
 - ensuring that learners have regular, comprehensive reviews that identify the progress they are making and set clear and challenging targets for their next steps
 - taking prompt action to support any learner identified as not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve completion rates for apprentices within the planned timescale by ensuring that all apprentices and employers commit to the completion of the apprenticeship and are fully aware of its demands and their responsibilities.
- Review the arrangements for governance and establish a clear strategic direction for the company for the benefit of learners and local employers.
- Establish links with practitioners in the apprenticeships offered so that managers can develop their own expertise and ensure that training meets the needs of learners and employers.
- Set clear targets for managers and teachers, linked to key performance targets, to ensure individual accountability for improvement.
- Introduce more effective quality improvement processes to raise the quality of provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is inadequate

- Senior leaders have not maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection and do not ensure that programmes are of a high enough quality. Senior leaders have attempted to arrest the decline in the number of learners in recent years, particularly those aged 16 to 18, by introducing initiatives that are no longer relevant to the needs of learners. For example, senior leaders developed a social enterprise, Cornwall Community Action Network (CCAN), which offers traineeships and employs apprentices to provide services to DMT and local communities. CCAN is no longer recruiting learners. In 2015/16, CCAN did not provide apprentices with the training or work-related learning that they need to embark on a career.
- The reduction in the number of learners has also led to reduced funding. Senior leaders have successfully taken action to reduce overheads in both physical resources and staffing, but have not developed a strategic plan for securing high-quality training for their learners. The responsibilities and accountabilities of the management team are poorly defined and leaders are not held to account for their areas of agreed responsibility. Currently, the members of the management team lack the skills, knowledge and experience to make the necessary improvements in the quality of provision, and are not taking sufficient steps to develop their skills.
- The apprenticeships in information and communication technology (ICT), care and business administration offered by DMT are inadequate. The management team lacks knowledge of, and expertise in, these sectors. They have yet to build links with practitioners to ensure that they are meeting the needs of employers. Assessors provide some insight into these sectors but senior leaders do not use this systematically to improve provision.
- Senior leaders do not set clear expectations for the quality of provision. They do not monitor closely the progress of learners, check that reviews are taking place regularly or monitor learners' attendance at training.
- Assessors are suitably qualified and experienced in their vocational area and they ensure that their assessment practice meets most of the awarding organisations' requirements. However, their ability to plan individual programmes for their learners and to deliver training is not sufficiently well developed. Managers do not set clear performance targets for the assessors. They appraise their performance with little reference to the impact of their work on learners. Managers' lack of knowledge and experience as trainers or teachers hampers their ability to advise trainers on how to deliver high-quality teaching and training.
- Managers' evaluation of the quality of provision does not recognise the serious weaknesses that exist or the decline in the quality of provision since the previous inspection. They do not identify with sufficient precision the causes of weaknesses in the quality of training provided to learners. As a result, the quality improvement plan does not identify the actions needed to tackle weaknesses. Managers do not consider learners' and employers' views when reflecting on the quality of provision.
- Employers are very positive about the service they receive from DMT. They are pleased with the frequency of visits by assessors and the regular communication from the company. However, many do not play a sufficiently active role in their employees' apprenticeships. A small number do not provide enough time for their apprentices to study. The information, advice and guidance for learners and employers are insufficient. A small number of employers are not aware that their employees are on a full apprenticeship programme and around half the apprentices do not realise that they are on an apprenticeship programme.
- Staff understand their role in promoting tolerance and respect. Many staff help learners to improve their understanding of equality and diversity well. Managers have taken their responsibilities to prevent radicalisation and extremism seriously. Managers provide comprehensive and useful information about this to learners and have trained staff well.
- Senior leaders have supported staff to improve their ability to teach functional skills in English and mathematics. Staff have completed training and a member of staff is providing teaching for learners who need help with improving their English and mathematics. It is too early to judge the impact of this work.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - No governance arrangements are in place to provide support and challenge to leaders. Managers do not have access to external industry sector expertise to advise and support the design and delivery of the training.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Learners feel safe and work safely as a result of the strong commitment from staff to promote safe working practices, both in the workplace and in training facilities. When they start their programme, learners receive useful contact details for the safeguarding officer with whom they can raise concerns.
- The designated safeguarding member of staff is appropriately trained and has appropriate contact with local safeguarding bodies. She uses these well to secure guidance and support when dealing with the small number of safeguarding concerns raised by learners. Managers carry out appropriate checks on new staff quickly when they are appointed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is inadequate

- The planning and delivery of learners' programmes fails to meet learners' needs. Many learners are on courses that fail to provide them with sufficient challenge and do little more than accredit their existing skills and knowledge. Assessors do not provide appropriate guidance to ensure that the courses on which learners enrol help them to develop new skills and understanding.
- Assessors provide insufficient training. For example, apprentices on health and social care courses do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the new skills they require for career progression. The training they receive is often limited to monthly assessor-led sessions with little reference to skills development. Assessors rely too much on textbooks to develop learners' subject knowledge. (ICT) apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to undertake technical support tasks, such as configuring computers and networks, to prepare them for employment.
- The design and implementation of the traineeship programme is poor. Learners receive too little vocational training and insufficient meaningful work experience, and they do not have the opportunity to gain qualifications in English or mathematics. Trainees do not acquire job search skills or receive any meaningful guidance on progression.
- Employers of health and social care apprentices value the contribution that their learners make to their business, but most employers are not sufficiently involved in planning learning or setting targets for their apprentices. Employers are not clear about the progress their learners are making. Most learners in care settings benefit from statutory training provided by employers on topics such as manual handling, dispensing medicines and understanding dementia.
- The assessment of learners' skills is weak. Assessors ensure that learners gather appropriate evidence to develop portfolios that meet awarding organisations' requirements and provide helpful verbal feedback on learners' written work. However, the written feedback on assessed work is not sufficiently evaluative to indicate how learners might improve.
- Assessors' use of target setting is weak. Targets are not sufficiently challenging and make little reference to learners' skills development. The system for tracking and monitoring learners' progress is underdeveloped. As a result, staff are not able to intervene in a timely manner if learners are falling behind their scheduled progress.
- Learners do not receive adequate support to develop their English and mathematics skills. Assessors correct spelling errors in learners' written work appropriately, but pay insufficient attention to improving learners' weak grammar and written work.
- Learners' understanding of health and safety and safeguarding are promoted well by assessors through analysis of case studies and discussions in progress reviews. Learners are very clear about whom to contact in the event of any concerns that they may have, and understand the whistle-blowing procedures to use if required.
- Assessors promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity well during reviews. For example, learners in care settings are encouraged to appreciate the importance of meeting the individual needs of their clients.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

- The comparatively small number of learners aged 16 to 19 on the traineeship programme acquire very little new knowledge and few additional skills from the programme. Until recently, staff placed the significant majority of trainees with CCAN, a partner organisation to DMT. None of the learners interviewed during the inspection were aware that they were on placement with this company.

- Most learners on traineeships do not acquire the skills they need to help them prepare for, or find, employment or further suitable training programmes. The quality of advice and guidance for trainees is poor. Only a small minority of those who undertake the programme progress onto an apprenticeship programme, employment or further study.
- Managers do not monitor apprentices' attendance at assessment visits centrally and cannot confirm the proportion of sessions that are either cancelled or postponed.
- For the majority of apprentices, their programme does not provide sufficient opportunities for them to acquire new knowledge or skills. For example, intermediate ICT apprentices spend a disproportionately high amount of their time on jobs unrelated to their main learning goals, such as shredding documents, clearing and tidying workshops, and cleaning.
- The quality of initial information, advice and guidance is poor. Assessors recruit too many learners on to programmes where they already possess a high proportion of the competencies required to achieve the apprenticeship. While learners speak positively about how the qualification enables them to gain confidence, and recognition for their prior skills, many learners acquire only little new expertise from the programme.
- Visits by assessors focus too much on assessing prior learning and assessors do not have suitable plans to extend the skills of the apprentices sufficiently. Assessors rely too much on apprentices discussing with them the skills they have acquired and do not create enough opportunities for apprentices to demonstrate their skills. For example, an apprentice nearing the end of the programme had yet to have their practical skills assessed in the workplace.
- Staff do not create enough opportunities for apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills. While the majority of those learners who have not achieved a suitable qualification in English or mathematics successfully gain their functional skills qualification, the high proportion of learners who have already achieved the required standard receive very limited support to develop their English or mathematics to a higher level.
- Assessors develop a supportive rapport with apprentices, who speak very positively about the willingness to provide additional help with personal difficulties or barriers to learning outside the main schedule of visits. Assessors place a suitable focus on developing learners' insights into health, safety and well-being at work. They help to raise learners' awareness of issues associated with equality, diversity, British values, and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Learners feel safe, are safe and have a suitable understanding of whom to contact if they wish to raise any concerns.

Outcomes for learners

are inadequate

- Too many apprentices fail to complete their apprenticeship programme within the planned timescales. The proportion completing their apprenticeship in the time allocated has declined significantly over three years and only half are due to complete on time in the current year. Most learners achieve their apprenticeships but the process takes too long, given their previous experience and starting points.
- Learners on traineeships do not have a coherent study and training plan. As a result, too many leave the programme early and too few learners go on to employment or apprenticeships.
- Managers have not analysed learners' progress and achievement data closely enough to determine which groups of learners are underperforming. They have not identified that 16–18-year-old learners perform significantly less well than adults, or that females achieve better than their male counterparts. Managers do not record or analyse the performance of health and social care learners. As a result, there are no active plans to increase the completion rates of underperforming groups.
- Few apprentices improve their English or mathematics beyond the minimum necessary to perform their job. Those apprentices who need to improve their English and mathematics skills successfully achieve the minimum qualification, but few are encouraged or challenged to do more.
- Managers do not have detailed records of the progression of learners on completion of their apprenticeships. According to their limited records, a small proportion of intermediate apprentices progress successfully to advanced programmes. In addition, a minority of learners gain promotion, enhanced responsibilities or pay rises on completion of their advanced apprenticeship. A small minority of health and social care and business apprentices continue learning at a higher level, for example in nursing or management training.
- Almost all learners remain with their employer having completed their qualification. Those health and social care apprentices who work with challenging client groups in complex situations develop appropriate skills in the workplace. For example, they understand the duty of care, manage and dispense medicines with care and diligence, and treat clients with dignity and respect.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	350
Principal/CEO	Daniel Barker
Website address	www.dmtbs.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+
				12				
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	7	52		80				
	16-19		19+		Total			
	3				3			
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

Martin Bennett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Nelson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Laurie Brown	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the training 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.

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