

# Wincanton Group Limited

Employer

## Inspection dates

28 June – 1 July 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Apprentices' achievement rates, including those for functional skills, are high.
- Apprentices make good progress against their starting points.
- Apprentices enjoy learning.
- Trainers plan sessions well to reflect the needs of apprentices.
- Trainers and assessors are well qualified and experienced, and this motivates apprentices.
- Apprentices benefit from the strong focus on English and mathematics early in the programme that supports the high standard of work that they produce.
- Apprentices feel safe and work safely.
- Managers ensure that apprentices are well informed about maintaining healthy lifestyles.
- Apprentices gain good employability skills and become much more confident.
- Managers at all levels value the benefit that apprentices bring to the company.
- The self-assessment report is accurate and evaluative.
- Managers have designed programmes well to increase recruitment of young people into all aspects of the logistics industry.
- On completion of their apprenticeships, most apprentices move to posts of greater responsibility or gain promotion, and agency employees are enabled to move into permanent posts.
- Apprentices treat each other with respect and many benefit from training designed to help them learn how to treat people in a courteous and effective way.

### It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Assessors do not routinely set targets to support apprentices' development of personal skills.
- Managers and trainers do not ensure that apprentices understand how to protect themselves from extremist views.
- Managers do not observe training and assessment in subcontracted provision sufficiently frequently to identify good practice so that it can be shared across the provision.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Wincanton Group Limited is one of the largest British logistics companies and operates from over 200 sites throughout the United Kingdom. It has around 18,000 employees. The previous inspection was of Train to Gain. The apprenticeship training team consists of a head of operational training, a training manager, three administrators, six assessors, with 12 more in training, and two internal quality of assurance staff, with four more in training.
- Its apprenticeship programme includes direct delivery of intermediate apprenticeships in traffic office and driving goods vehicles, with 41 apprentices currently. It also has two subcontractors: one offers intermediate apprenticeships in improving operational performance with 66 apprentices; the other offers intermediate and advanced apprenticeships in warehouse and storage, logistics operations, customer service and business administration to some 61 apprentices.

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

- Increase the effectiveness of target-setting by:
  - providing further training for assessors in how to set specific targets that support all aspects of apprentices' work
  - monitoring apprentices' progress against these targets regularly through quality audit visits, to ensure that targets are specific, challenging and support apprentices' work-related development, and that they complete their qualifications
  - involving all employers in reviews so that they understand the targets being set and can inform assessors about apprentices' progress and success in the workplace.
- Increase the number of observations of training and assessments in order to identify the good practice, share it across the provision and develop further the skills of all assessors and trainers.
- Ensure that all training staff receive regular training to update their understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and use this knowledge to:
  - reinforce apprentices' awareness of how to protect themselves and others from extremist views and radicalisation
  - explain to apprentices how they can refer any concerns about this, so that they can better safeguard themselves and their colleagues.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior managers, assessors and trainers have high ambitions for apprentices to succeed. Managers at the highest level support apprenticeships as an important strand in their commitment to training and staff development throughout the company. Particularly, they understand how apprenticeships benefit the company through increasing recruitment and contributing to a diverse workforce, which develops suitable skills to improve the business and adapt to change.
- Assessors and trainers, in the directly delivered provision and with subcontractors, receive good professional development, which enables them to maintain up-to-date industry knowledge and motivate apprentices. The new assessors and internal quality assurance staff currently being trained learn how to use techniques to help apprentices overcome barriers to learning. They use these skills well to allay the fears of apprentices, many of whom have not been in education recently. Subcontractors' staff have very good industry experience, which they use to make training relevant to the company.
- Managers understand the importance of improving apprentices' English and mathematics, and chose to move the training for functional skills from the end of the programme to the beginning. As a result, apprentices are able to complete more complex presentations and assignments, and the first-time pass rates for functional skills are very high.
- Senior managers are particularly responsive to the national need to recruit new drivers and administrators into the logistics industry. To achieve this successfully, they have created a clear progression route into further training and development within the company. All employees who declare an interest in training are given the opportunity and are well supported to succeed.
- Managers have carefully designed their own apprenticeships in driving goods vehicles and traffic office. These enable young people, including those who have been unemployed for a long time and are referred by Jobcentre Plus, to train, achieve their licence to drive heavy goods vehicles and gain wider experience within the company. They choose qualifications that reflect the needs of the logistics industry, while helping apprentices to gain transferable skills, such as research and managing people skills, which help them adapt to new employment situations.
- Managers carry out formal and rigorous interviews in order to ensure that apprentices are guided to programmes that suit their needs. For example, employees with considerable experience of warehousing through their job roles are encouraged to extend their understanding through the improving operational performance apprenticeship. The vast majority of apprentices benefit from good advice on opportunities to develop into new or promoted roles within the company.
- Managers monitor the progression of apprentices well. Most apprentices move to posts with greater responsibility or gain promotions. Employees on zero hours contracts benefit from apprenticeships and these often lead to permanent employment.
- Managers' commitment to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity is evident throughout the organisation. Most learners with additional needs are well supported, for example trainers adapted handouts for an apprentice with deteriorating eyesight so that she could succeed. Apprentices treat each other with respect and many benefit from training designed to help them learn how to manage people in a courteous and effective way. Managers advocate tolerance, rule of law and democracy implicitly through training materials and company expectations, but do not make it explicit enough to ensure that apprentices are aware of the importance of these concepts to their success in employment and life in Britain.
- The self-assessment report is accurate and evaluative; it identifies most of the weaknesses found by inspectors because training managers know the provision well. However, when reviewing the quality of provision, managers do not make sufficient use of the views of apprentices, their site managers or subcontractors. The quality improvement plan reflects the findings of self-assessment, and managers have successfully improved all areas of concern identified in the previous inspection report.
- Managers do not observe teaching, learning and assessment in the subcontracted provision sufficiently. Subcontractors' managers carry out thorough observations and quality audits of their own staff, but Wincanton's staff have only recently begun to do their own observations of subcontractors. Those done to date are accurate and detailed, but managers do not yet have sufficient information from these visits to develop further support for trainers and assessors by sharing the good practice inspectors found across the provision.

### ■ The governance of the provider

- Directors actively promote the value of apprenticeships as a part of a much wider company policy on developing and growing its own workforce.
- The board of directors includes a director with responsibility for training, who works closely with the head of training operations to monitor and improve provision.
- The board receives monthly reports about apprenticeships but does not get sufficient data on achievement rates to challenge and support the training team when improvements are needed.

### ■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Managers and trainers are diligent in ensuring that apprentices work safely.
- They know the apprentices well and offer them good support as well as advice on healthy lifestyles.
- Staff and managers do not have sufficiently regular training to update their understanding of safeguarding.
- Most assessors and trainers are trained in the 'Prevent' duty, but, although apprentices have details of what this means in their workbooks, most do not remember it.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Well-qualified trainers and assessors have high expectations of apprentices and help them make good progress. Apprentices enjoy participating in sessions that are well planned and well taught. Trainers have very good vocational skills and relate the content of lessons closely to apprentices' work activity. They work together to solve real workplace problems. For example, trainers encourage apprentices to reflect closely on their everyday work practice, which informs their detailed research into possible efficiency gains in the workplace.
- Assessment is good. Assessors frequently observe apprentices at work and, where appropriate, they take photos, videos or voice recordings to capture examples of apprentices' competences. They ask searching questions to ensure that apprentices have a good understanding of what they do and check that they are able to apply their learning to a variety of situations.
- The vast majority of apprentices receive good-quality feedback on their written and practical work. Assessors grade the work accurately and highlight what each learner needs to do to improve. In nearly all cases, assessors consistently and accurately correct errors in spelling and grammar. In a very few instances, trainers give insufficient written feedback on work in apprentices' portfolios to help them to improve further.
- Trainers develop apprentices' functional skills well. They check apprentices' knowledge of mathematics and English thoroughly at the start of their programme. Trainers offer good support to those apprentices who need to achieve the levels of functional skills required for their framework, who have additional needs or who speak English as an additional language.
- Trainers and assessors consistently reinforce the importance of good English and mathematics skills throughout the programme. Many apprentices who are exempt from functional skills, the majority of whom are adults who have been out of education for a long time, choose to do the qualifications in order to improve and refresh their skills. Trainers develop apprentices' English and mathematics beyond the level required for their qualification through setting them complex assignments.
- Managers support apprentices well in their training, and benefit from the new skills and confidence apprentices develop on the programme. Managers readily release apprentices for training and assessment sessions. In many cases, employers assist apprentices to select work-based projects with the aim of improving production or reducing costs. As a result of this support, along with an increase in confidence and the high quality of tuition, many apprentices undertake projects that have saved the organisation significant amounts of resources. For example, one apprentice refined the process on a production line, which allowed workers to concentrate on specific tasks. This increased production, led to increased worker satisfaction and resulted in significant financial gains for the company.
- Target-setting requires improvement. The majority of progress reviews do not focus enough on the personal skills apprentices develop throughout the programme. Many of the targets set are not sufficiently specific. Managers are not routinely involved in progress reviews. The result of this is that they are not always aware of the targets set and assessors do not always hear about apprentices' improvement in self-confidence and personal effectiveness in the workplace. However, assessors review apprentices' progress frequently. These reviews have a clear focus on the achievement of units or the generation of evidence towards qualification achievement.

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

- Apprentices are very well motivated to succeed in their roles and have a high level of commitment to their programmes. They are positive about their training, behave professionally and produce work of a good standard. They have a justifiable expectation that achieving qualifications will help them to progress to more responsibility at work and, if they choose, pursue higher-level qualifications. Many gain promotion following completion of the programme. For example, a former apprentice on the improving operational performance programme became the planning manager for his site and now contributes to delivery of the same training programme.
- Apprentices improve their confidence throughout the programme. They make presentations to their peers and managers, working together in small teams to research innovations and discuss solutions to everyday issues at work. Research also enables apprentices to appreciate the respective roles and responsibilities of their colleagues better. In one notable case, a learner whose first language was not English gained sufficient confidence to be able to speak to customers on the telephone. This would have been unthinkable prior to receiving good support in spoken English through the programme.
- Apprentices clearly benefit from developing their English and mathematics skills. Tutors effectively relate these subjects to the workplace, highlighting where apprentices use English and mathematics in their everyday work. Most apprentices, many of whom did not succeed in formal education, go on to achieve functional skills qualifications at the first attempt and a few successfully gain qualifications at a higher level than that required for the apprenticeship framework.
- Apprentices feel safe. They wear appropriate personal protective equipment and adhere to safe working practices in working environments that are often potentially dangerous. Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and environmental issues. They give relevant and current examples of bullying and discrimination that they have seen outside the workplace and they know what to do should they see such incidents at work.
- Trainers and managers ensure that apprentices develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy and the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles in their jobs, which in many cases are sedentary. They appreciate the importance of regular exercise breaks, the need to remain hydrated and the way in which exercise can assist their own well-being, as well as benefiting the company.
- Apprentices have a poor understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and British values. After brief coverage in the induction and in the induction workbook, assessors and trainers do not reinforce and extend apprentices' understanding of these themes sufficiently throughout the programme. As a result, apprentices do not remember what the terms mean. In the majority of cases, apprentices were unable to give examples of British values, and had little or no knowledge regarding minimising the threat of radicalisation. However, along with other employees, they contribute to charity fundraising and activities both nationally and in their local areas.

## **Outcomes for learners are good**

- Achievement rates are high across all apprenticeship frameworks, with the vast majority of apprentices due to complete in 2015/16 having done so successfully. Achievement rates for warehousing intermediate apprentices were very high in 2014/15.
- Managers reacted rapidly to address the substantial dip in timely achievement rates for the improving operational performance intermediate apprenticeship in 2014/15. They identified a range of factors that contributed to this, the most significant being the late claiming of certification of apprentices who had completed in time. This was largely due to funding arrangements that led to the subcontractor waiting for all apprentices in the cohort to complete before certificates were claimed. They put appropriate measures in place with their subcontractor. This year, achievement rates have risen substantially.
- Apprentices make good progress against their starting points. They work at a higher level than that required by the framework, and they gain very good employability skills that increase their motivation and ability to make a positive contribution to the business.
- Apprentices enjoy learning. They become confident in their ability to succeed, to express their ideas to managers and to work successfully with colleagues and customers. For example, they present realistic and useful business improvement ideas skilfully to their managers, and they are ready to take on greater responsibility and gain promotion.
- The vast majority of apprentices achieve their functional English and mathematics at the first attempt. A

few apprentices take up the offer of taking functional skills at a level higher than that required by the framework, but for those that do not, the challenge in assessments ensures that apprentices develop skills, in particular presentation skills, at a higher level.

- Managers do not monitor the achievement of different groups sufficiently to take prompt action if there are discrepancies. However, managers and trainers ensure that all apprentices have an equal opportunity to achieve, and there are no significant gaps in the achievement rates of different groups of learners.

## Provider details

Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	153
Principal/CEO	Mr Adrian Colman
Website address	<a href="http://www.wincanton.co.uk">www.wincanton.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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	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+		
	0	163	0	5	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ Glas Business Solutions Ltd							
	■ Betaris Training							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Pauline Hawkesford, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barrett-Mold	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Williams	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the training manager, operations, 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 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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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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