

# West Anglia Training Association Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

13–16 September 2016

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- The proportion of apprentices and learners who complete their programmes successfully has declined over time and, although now improving, is below that of similar providers.
- Feedback on apprentices' and learners' work too often lacks detail and does not enable them to improve their work.
- Not enough teachers and assessors enable apprentices and learners to improve their English and mathematics skills sufficiently beyond the requirements of their programme.
- Managers do not make effective use of observations of teachers' and assessors' practice to improve swiftly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that all apprentices and learners have sufficient awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and managers do not set effective targets to monitor and evaluate their quality improvement actions in order to improve outcomes for apprentices and learners.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Apprentices and learners develop good practical skills and knowledge through the good practical teaching provided by highly knowledgeable and vocationally experienced teachers and assessors.
- Apprentices' and learners' attendance is very high. They demonstrate exemplary standards of behaviour and motivation at work and at off-the-job training.
- Leaders and managers work well with employers to design bespoke programmes that match individual employer requirements and regional skills priorities.
- A high proportion of apprentices and unemployed learners progress to higher levels of learning and/or purposeful employment.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- West Anglia Training Association (WATA) is a group training association established in 1976 as a charity and company limited by guarantee. Based in Huntingdon, WATA provides training for apprentices and learners across Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Bedfordshire. Apprentices follow programmes in engineering, construction, business administration, management and customer service. It also offers adult learning programmes in scaffolding. WATA subcontracts a small proportion of engineering, business administration, management and customer service apprenticeships training. Around 200 apprentices and 30 adult learners are enrolled on programmes each year. A group of trustees provide challenge and support to the leadership team. Since the previous inspection, changes have been made to the leadership and management structure and an interim chief executive has recently been appointed.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - observers of teaching, learning and assessment are trained to provide teachers and assessors with precise feedback on how well their apprentices and learners learn, make progress and are challenged to achieve to their full potential. Ensure that all recommendations for improvement are recorded and used to inform relevant staff development
  - teachers and assessors provide apprentices and learners with sufficiently detailed feedback so that they understand how to improve their work
  - assessors improve the quality of their workplace reviews to ensure they record accurately apprentices' progress and set precise time-bound targets so that apprentices understand fully what they need to do to improve their work and by when
  - managers ensure that all apprentices and learners have the opportunity to improve their English and mathematics skills beyond the requirements of their programme in order to equip them for future learning and employment.
- Train and upskill teachers to have the confidence to provide teaching that enables apprentices and learners to understand the potential threats posed by extremism and ensure that they know what to do to protect themselves.
- Improve outcomes for apprentices and learners through setting, monitoring and evaluating improvement targets rigorously.

## Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leaders and managers do not set sufficiently specific, realistic and time-bound targets to monitor and evaluate planned actions to improve outcomes for apprentices and learners. For example, they set a target for overall achievement but do not relate this to current achievement, so that high-performing programmes are not challenged to improve and those with lower achievement rates are set unrealistically high goals.</li> <li>■ Managers do not make effective use of the observation process to improve swiftly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observers do not provide staff with sufficient feedback on how well their apprentices learn, make progress and are challenged to achieve to their full potential. Recommendations for improvement do not focus sufficiently on the specific skills required to improve the quality of teaching or assessing.</li> <li>■ Leaders' judgements on the achievement of apprentices and learners in their most recent self-assessment report are over-optimistic. Their subsequent quality improvement plan is not sufficiently specific and does not make clear how intended improvements will affect apprentices' outcomes. However, leaders' and managers' regular reports to the board of trustees demonstrate that they have an accurate understanding of the achievement of apprentices and learners over time, including the decline in overall achievement in 2014/15, and evidence that precise, appropriate actions have led to improved outcomes for apprentices in the current year.</li> <li>■ Leaders have eliminated the gap in achievement between those apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those without.</li> <li>■ Leaders and managers maintain very productive links with employers, local enterprise partnerships, schools and the local chamber of commerce. As a result, they develop programmes that meet regional employer needs such as highways construction. They work effectively with local schools by providing learning pathways at key stage 4 and at post-16 transition. These pathways enable pupils and school leavers to access vocational training opportunities and apprenticeships that meet local and regional sector skills priorities.</li> <li>■ Leaders and managers work with employers to design programmes that match their bespoke needs. For example, managers have included specialist training on fabrication and welding to meet the precise needs of one engineering employer. Leaders ensure that all apprentices receive their full off-the-job training entitlement.</li> <li>■ Teachers and assessors have high levels of technical expertise and industry experience and, together with an excellent range of up-to-date industry standard resources, ensure that off-the-job practical training is very relevant to apprentices' workplaces and employment. For example, advanced electrical apprentices have access to bespoke testing rigs that enable them to develop their panel wiring skills to occupational standards.</li> <li>■ Leaders and managers now take effective action to monitor the quality of provision by subcontractors through monthly visits. Managers now provide timely professional development opportunities for assessors to help improve their assessment practice. Managers now use information about the achievement of technical qualifications and</li> </ul>	

functional skills to closely monitor the progress apprentices are making. Leaders took effective action, supported by trustees, to terminate the contract of one poorly performing subcontractor.

- Leaders and managers have worked hard to widen participation and recruit unemployed learners into learning through effective partnership workings with Jobcentre Plus and the Prince's Trust. As a result, people with previously poor experiences of education have enrolled on courses providing training for skilled employment opportunities and a high proportion have progressed to purposeful employment or further accredited learning.
- Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices and learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. Emphasis is placed on teachers and assessors ensuring that every apprentice and learner works through a detailed induction workbook that challenges them to understand and identify discriminatory behaviour in the workplace; a series of stimulating activities enable them to relate the value of both equality and diversity within their employment and the wider world of work.

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

- Governance is effective.
  - Leaders ensure that trustees receive regular and accurate information on all performance. Consequently, trustees have a good understanding of current strengths and weaknesses and challenge leaders effectively to ensure that they make improvements.
  - Trustees use their skills and expertise to support leaders and managers effectively to plan the strategic direction for the company, including monitoring accurately the diminishing financial deficit.
  - Trustees took prompt, decisive and successful actions to secure stability in leadership of the company during the recent changes to senior leadership and management.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
  - Managers make appropriate checks when recruiting staff and maintain an up-to-date record of Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
  - Most staff and trustees have completed 'Channel' awareness and 'Prevent' duty training. However, teachers and assessors have yet to ensure that all apprentices and learners understand the importance of tolerance and British values.
  - Apprentices and learners say that they feel safe and know whom to report any concerns to. All safeguarding concerns are resolved promptly.
  - Employers adhere to health and safety guidelines stringently, including providing drug and alcohol tests to ensure that apprentices are safe to work.
  - Staff check thoroughly that employers have good health and safety procedures and that apprentices understand these in their workplaces.
  - Apprentices and learners have a good understanding of online safety and the appropriate use of social media.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching and assessment of theory require improvement. Sessions are often very long and lack sufficient variety to interest and motivate apprentices and learners. The majority of teachers often do not set more-able apprentices and learners sufficiently challenging tasks and, as a result, they frequently finish tasks early, have to wait for others to complete and do not make the swift progress of which they are capable.
- Not enough staff ensure that workplace reviews record, evaluate and plan accurately apprentices' progress across all parts of their programme. While assessors record apprentices' progress on their vocational qualifications effectively, too many apprentices do not know how well they are progressing in their English and mathematics qualifications and in their technical qualifications.
- The majority of engineering apprentices who commenced in 2014 made slow progress throughout their first year due to insufficient workplace assessment opportunities and infrequent assessor visits. However, since the start of 2016, the frequency and quality of assessor visits has improved significantly and, as a result, apprentices are now making good progress.
- Assessors provide apprentices and learners with a good level of verbal feedback, but written feedback on apprentices' work too often lacks detail and does not enable them to improve their work sufficiently.
- Not enough teachers and assessors challenge apprentices and learners sufficiently to improve their English and mathematics skills beyond the minimum requirements of their programmes. Too many teachers pay insufficient attention to enabling apprentices and learners to acquire the English and mathematics skills essential for future careers and further learning. Not enough teachers and assessors promote the value of English skills in off-the-job training sessions or reviews of progress.
- Teachers use good sector knowledge and questioning techniques to check, develop and extend apprentices' and learners' practical skills, knowledge and understanding. Employers value these skills and the enhanced roles that apprentices and learners provide in the workplace. For example, a second-year engineering apprentice worked independently and effectively to create a complex loaded hip joint for crash testing from working drawings.
- Assessors work well with employers to ensure that apprentices develop the practical skills and have the assessment opportunities they need to demonstrate their competence at work. For example, a business administration apprentice has responsibility for creating a weekly data report to managers that involves the extraction, manipulation and sorting of data into a series of worksheets using spreadsheet software. The apprentice produces work of a high standard that is valued by staff and managers.
- Managers have developed good partnerships with employers to enhance apprentices' off-the-job training resources. For example, two large highways employers have worked with leaders to create a full-size section of dual carriageway, replicating the nearby A14, that provides apprentices with the opportunity to practise their electrical wiring skills on power outputs such as lamp posts and road matrix signs. Consequently, apprentices develop good industry-specific, practical skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- The majority of apprentices and learners have insufficient understanding of the dangers of extremism, and do not demonstrate awareness of the relevance of such an issue in the workplace and when working with customers. However, apprentices who have started their programmes very recently are able to identify and analyse clearly the importance of British values through a revised induction programme that places good emphasis on tolerance and the dangers of radicalisation.
- Apprentices and learners develop a good standard of work-related practical skills. They exhibit high levels of confidence and motivation to develop their industry skills well. For example, one learner worked swiftly and competently with a minimum of supervision, using two different pieces of high-specification engineering equipment, including a sliding head lathe, to produce high-standard bespoke machinery components to meet customer requirements.
- Apprentices' and learners' attendance during all parts of their programmes is very high. Teachers and assessors monitor attendance and punctuality rigorously and any concerns are quickly reported to employers and resolved. Apprentices and learners benefit from additional training, for example in slinging and lifting, to meet their employers' requirements.
- Apprentices and learners display very good standards of behaviour when attending off-the-job training; they develop a good work ethic, become very self-assured and articulate, and demonstrate a firm commitment to learning. Apprentices are proud of the work they produce. For example, apprentices working on a dual carriageway road section are able to develop and test their electrical wiring skills and, as a result, are able to competently and efficiently carry out repairs on operational highways.
- Apprentices and learners have a good understanding of health and safety and feel safe. They know to whom and how to report any concerns for their safety. They are confident any issues will be resolved promptly.
- Apprentices benefit from good initial career advice and guidance that enable them to select the most appropriate apprenticeship training route that meets their needs. Before starting their programme, apprentices complete a series of initial assessments, with additional specialist assessments designed by employers to ensure that they commence on the right programme at the right level. For example, engineering apprentices complete mathematical reasoning and visualisation tests as well as assessments to assess colour deficiency. Apprentices and learners benefit from ongoing career advice and guidance that enable them to acquire a well-informed understanding of progression routes to higher-level programmes and promotion opportunities in the workplace.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- The proportion of apprentices who complete their programme successfully has declined over time. In 2014/15 just two thirds of apprentices were successful and a half achieved their apprenticeship in the planned timescale.
- Leaders' data indicates a further decline in overall apprenticeship achievement rates for leavers in 2015/16. However, leaders' data indicates that current apprentices and learners

who commenced their programme since August 2015 are making at least the progress expected and the majority, good progress. Most apprentices achieve their English, mathematics and ICT functional skills qualifications at the first attempt.

- In 2014/15, the small number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fared less well than their peers. However, leaders' data for 2015/16 indicates that a similar proportion of apprentices and learners with such needs achieved in line with their peers.
- No current apprentices or learners have experience of local authority care. Leaders do not record the impact of their provision on this cohort.
- Leaders' data indicates that achievement rates for engineering apprentices studying at one of the subcontracted providers were particularly high in 2015/16.
- Leaders' data over time indicates that a high proportion of apprentices progress to permanent employment, often securing promotion in the workplace. A significant proportion of engineering apprentices stay in employment and progress onto a level 4 qualification. A high proportion of unemployed learners, often with previously poor experiences of education, progress to purposeful employment.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	55306
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	240
Principal/CEO	Jacqueline Hall
Telephone number	01480 435544
Website	<a href="http://www.wata.co.uk">www.wata.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	23	42	73	69	-	9		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Vogal Engineering Marshall Aerospace Cambridge Regional College West Suffolk College Peterborough Regional College Bedford College							



## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeships and employability contracts 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.

### Inspection team

Mary Aslett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Hawkesford	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Bealey	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Masterson	Ofsted Inspector

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