

Hillingdon Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

11–14 October 2016

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Very high timely and overall achievement rates have been sustained during a period of significant growth in apprentice numbers.
- Very high quality information, advice and guidance help learners to make well-informed choices about course options, career direction and next steps.
- Study programmes learners benefit from highly individualised and productive work placement arrangements that enable the majority to gain employment.
- Leaders and managers maintain exceptionally productive collaborations with partners and employers in the healthcare sector.
- Directors set a clear direction for the company, and have made good preparations for changes to apprenticeships and for meeting the growing demand for a skilled workforce in the health and care sectors.
- Too many learners make slow progress in improving English and mathematics skills.
- Learners on study programmes do not maintain good attendance and punctuality or develop good study habits sufficiently rapidly.
- A small minority of apprentices lack confidence in applying understanding of British values to their workplace practice.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Hillingdon Training Limited was established in July 2003 as a joint venture between the borough of Hillingdon and Hillingdon Education Business Partnership to provide work-based training for residents and employers in the Hillingdon area. The company was taken over by the Netherlands-based company Calder Holding BV in May 2012. Hillingdon Training has worked with a number of subcontractors for several years, and in July this year merged with what was its largest subcontractor, Dynamic Training. Three of Dynamic Training's directors now run Hillingdon Training.
- Hillingdon Training provides apprenticeships in business and administration, health, childcare, customer service, health and social care and supporting teaching and learning, at levels 2, 3 and 4. It also provides a small number of 16 to 19 study programmes at level 2 and below from its college building in Greenford, which make up approximately nine percent of the total provision. Apprentices are mainly in the London area, but one of Hillingdon's subcontractors operates in Leeds. The company has expanded considerably since the previous inspection, with around 440 learners enrolling on apprenticeships and study programmes last year.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, managers and teachers should implement fully current plans to improve all learners' English and mathematics skills earlier in their programmes, and ensure that all learners who are able take their functional skills tests at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Leaders should improve the management of study programmes to make sure that teachers and tutors have high expectations of learners, and to ensure that learners develop strong study habits and maintain good attendance and punctuality from the start of their programmes.
- Teachers and assessors should ensure that all apprentices are confident in making links between their understanding of British values and their workplace practices.
- Leaders and managers should engage with other providers of study programmes and traineeships to identify and share good practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recent merger of Hillingdon Training with one of its main health and care apprenticeship subcontractors has very effectively strengthened the provider's capacity for making improvements to the quality of provision. Leaders and managers have identified good practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the new organisation and are adopting improved standardised approaches based on the best practice identified. Directors have made rapid progress in implementing new team structures and arranging professional development for staff to improve their skills and confidence in developing learners' employability skills. They manage the remaining subcontractors well, providing good support through a wide programme of staff development and through rigorous monitoring of learners' progress and achievements. During a period of significant growth, staff have successfully maintained the high achievement rates on the apprenticeship programmes and reversed the decline in achievement rates on study programmes.
- Performance management arrangements are robust, and draw on a wide range of evidence that gives significant weight to feedback from learners and employers and leads to specific, time-bound actions for improvement. Leaders emphasise the company culture of meeting the needs and interests of their employers and ensuring that learners are fully able to contribute to their businesses. Staff who felt unable or unwilling to accept this culture have now left the provider.
- Directors have worked exceptionally closely with health sector employers for several years to provide high-quality apprenticeships that benefit learners greatly. They use their collaboration well to meet skills shortages and provide well-planned progression routes for learners in a range of occupations in the sector.
- Staff provide good advice and guidance to learners from the start of their programmes, which ensures they make informed decisions about what to study and where they can progress for their next step.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate and clearly identifies the areas for further improvement. It draws appropriately on the outcomes of lesson observations, achievement data and learners' progress and contributes to assessing staff performance. However, observers make insufficient reference in lesson observation reports to what learners know, or can do, and to the skills they develop. The most recent self-assessment report does not reflect fully the good skills or job-related behaviours that learners develop. Managers do not set sufficiently specific targets, milestones or measures of success in action plans designed to make the improvements recommended in self-assessment or lesson observations.
- Leaders place good emphasis on the importance of learners developing their mathematics and English skills and high timely and overall achievement rates demonstrate their success. They strongly encourage apprentices to achieve functional skills above the required level for their framework. In spite of this strategy, teachers and assessors do not establish sufficiently early for learners the relevance and importance of these skills to the world of work.

The governance of the provider

- Directors have set a clear strategic direction for the newly merged organisation based on a thorough analysis of current and potential developments in post-16 employment and training. Their analysis ensures that programmes continue to meet local, regional and national skills priorities exceptionally well. Directors have prepared very carefully for the introduction of new forms of apprenticeship and for the expected increase in demand for highly skilled workers, particularly in the health and care sectors.
- Directors provide detailed and intensive scrutiny and challenge to managers, extending their successful activities and experience from previously subcontracted apprenticeship provision to the other programmes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers conduct thorough recruitment checks for new staff. All staff complete relevant training including how to make referrals to Channel to meet 'Prevent' duties. Company safeguarding officers have higher level, and more frequent, training and they meet as a group termly to discuss cases and reflect on their actions. They use anonymised cases very well as part of staff training activities. Managers have strong links to relevant external agencies and use these very well when they identify a need to refer concerns about a learner for more specialist action. They report diligently the attendance and progress of young people who are, or were, looked after to the local authority officer who is responsible for their care. Safeguarding measures at subcontractors are suitably overseen by managers from Hillingdon Training, and these are effective.
- During enrolment, staff complete 'cause for concern' records for learners who have additional support needs, are vulnerable or demonstrate potential safeguarding concerns such as a history of absenteeism from school. Tutors and coaches monitor these learners particularly carefully. Staff manage and monitor study programmes learners' access to the internet carefully to minimise their chances of being exposed to sites or content that are illegal or otherwise inappropriate. The learners' handbook introduces both study programmes learners and apprentices to an information technology (IT) code of practice, but does not give learners sufficiently clear guidance about actions they can take to keep themselves safe online or when using social media outside company premises.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most apprentices are lively, determined, articulate and focused; they produce work of a good standard and most are becoming independent learners and skilled employees. Apprentices' achievements are high, with the large majority achieving permanent employment or progressing into further study. Assessors have valuable recent industry experience that they use well to conduct purposeful sessions that encourage apprentices and give good insights into the employment fields they hope to enter. Taught sessions in general motivate and interest apprentices, who enjoy their learning and make good connections between their courses and their workplaces and job roles.
- The majority of assessors plan learning observations, taught sessions and reviews that meet the needs of apprentices and their employers well. Apprentices have frequent

communication with their assessors and are effectively signposted to workbooks and online resources for work between sessions. Study programmes learners are able to move flexibly between programmes to ensure they are following the most beneficial route to employment.

- Highly effective questioning and a good range of assessment activities help apprentices to develop their thinking skills and apply their learning to their job role and workplace activities. For example, childcare learners are encouraged and supported to apply their knowledge of child development theories to the behaviour strategies they would use for the children they care for.
- Assessors and study programmes tutors provide good-quality oral feedback that is supportive and encouraging, and points out clearly what apprentices and learners need to improve. Written feedback from assessors and teachers is positive and praises achievements but in a minority of cases, fails to identify how learners can improve further. Such feedback does not pay sufficient attention to the correction of spelling and grammar in learners' written work or help them develop strategies for future self-correction.
- Apprentices make valuable contributions to their workplaces, with many gaining promotion or taking on additional responsibilities because of their improved skills and knowledge. Employers support their apprentices to gain skills and recognise that apprentices are gaining in confidence; however, a minority of employers are insufficiently involved in the planning of programmes or apprentices' reviews and are not always aware of their apprentice's progress towards their qualification.
- Learners benefit highly from managers' positive relationships with a wide range of employers. Study programmes learners enjoy very good vocational activities and work placements, which help them prepare for progression onto traineeships and/or apprenticeships. Particularly strong joint working with many National Health Service (NHS) Trusts enables apprentices to gain valuable skills, employment and progression within the health sector, while meeting skills needs across the sector.
- Advice and guidance for all learners are very effective and support them to enrol on the most suitable programme, make good progress in their vocational field or go onto further learning. Study programmes learners receive very good advice and guidance to place them on the right course and select appropriate course options, and they continue to be well supported throughout their programmes. Guidance days provided for newly recruited paediatric and midwife support apprentices entering the NHS are particularly effective in setting high expectations for the programme.
- Classroom-based learning activities on study programmes require improvement. Very recent management changes to the classroom-based study programmes have yet to impact fully and improve the quality of all learners' experience. Teachers do not use results of initial assessments to inform lesson planning or target-setting sufficiently to ensure that these help all learners fully. In a minority of classes, there is a lack of challenge for learners who are most able and, conversely, a lack of support for a minority of learners who may need additional help to complete work. Teachers do not always check learners' understanding well enough and, as a result, a minority of learners make poor progress and do not always complete their qualifications successfully within the time expected.
- Teachers do not prioritise sufficiently the development of study programmes learners'

English and mathematics skills through effective individualised targets and organised and well-taught workshops and classes during the early weeks of the programmes. Learners therefore master the basic concepts and gain an understanding of the importance of good English and mathematics skills late in their courses, and this slows the development of employment skills and confidence.

- Learners are respectful of each other and the people they work with. Apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity in their workplaces and work roles are good. Recent training for assessors on British values and the 'Prevent' duty has increased their awareness and confidence in these areas, but most currently lack the confidence to support apprentices in making links between the topics covered during induction and their working practices.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices attend well, are punctual, courteous and enjoy their learning. The vast majority make good progress because they have very clear understanding of the course and career options open to them as a result of the very high quality information, advice and guidance they receive when enrolling and undergoing induction for their courses.
- Apprentices are courteous, respectful, behave well, and grow in confidence. Many present maturity that clients, children in their care, parents of children and customers find reassuring and encouraging; employers value apprentices for these attributes. Apprentices at all levels contribute well in their own work settings, often achieving additional responsibilities and promotions early in their careers.
- At workplaces, apprentices are safe, understand how to keep themselves and others safe, and have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Apprentices in childcare and health settings have a particularly good understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people in their care.
- Study programmes learners enjoy their engagement with one another, and often develop strong and valuable new social and personal skills during their courses. At the provider's college site, they are safe and understand how to protect others from harm. Most make good skills gains during work placements and the majority progress into employment following the highly individualised work experience periods that form the core of their programme. However, some teachers have insufficiently high expectations of learners, and they do not challenge sufficiently any poor attendance or punctuality in the early weeks of the programme.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Apprenticeship achievement rates remain high and are well above national rates and those for similar providers, despite a considerable growth in apprentice numbers across the past three years. The large majority of apprentices at all levels and in all age groups complete their programmes in a timely manner. Apprentices currently make up around 91% of learners at the provider.
- Apprentices develop a good range of sector-specific skills, which serve them well when seeking permanent employment, posts of responsibility or promotions. The vast majority

of apprentices remain with their original employers, and many make good progress in their companies. Employers value very highly the skills that apprentices develop, and appreciate the care and attention that assessors exercise in helping apprentices understand their work and the changing nature of the health and care sectors.

- Achievement rates for 16–18-year-old learners on study programmes require improvement. During 2013/14, achievement rates declined very sharply, and were inadequate, but following improvement actions, have risen equally sharply in the past two years, and are now a little below national rates and those for similar providers.
- The majority of learners on study programmes develop a good range of personal and employment-related skills, and the majority are successful in gaining employment. They benefit especially from thoughtfully designed and carefully monitored work placements that allow them to develop a good range of skills and attributes that employers appreciate.
- No significant gaps in achievement or retention exist between identifiable groups of learners, and managers carefully monitor retention, progress and achievement by age, ethnicity and gender, and work swiftly to deal with any developing negative trends. Programmes continue to attract more women and girls to traditionally female occupations; managers are seeking ways to attract more male applicants, but have had limited success to date.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Hillingdon Training provides a small number of study programmes between entry level and level 2. These provide a good range of employment-focused modules in childcare, construction, hair and beauty, business and administration and ITC, together with extensive and carefully tailored work experience for each learner. Many learners have experienced incomplete, disrupted or poor learning experiences prior to enrolling with Hillingdon Training.
- Despite significant improvements to achievement rates over the past two years, these remain just below national rates and those for similar providers. The management of the classroom-based, theoretical elements of the programme require improvement, while vocational elements and work placements provide a good range of skills development opportunities for learners. Teaching in the classroom-based employability and the personal and social development classes does not respond sufficiently to the needs of all learners. For example, learners with a wide range of abilities often complete the same tasks in lessons. As a result, the most able learners do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not always make effective use of individual target-setting within these classes to promote rapid progress. Managers have planned a range of additional activities, events and volunteering opportunities for learners, but these have yet to be fully implemented.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their learning goals in English and mathematics in a timely fashion has improved but remains too low. Teachers do not always challenge learners sufficiently early to make rapid progress in the development of these skills. Teachers' feedback on learners' written work does not always carefully identify mistakes

made by learners in their use of English. In a minority of classes, learners receive insufficient support to improve their English and mathematics skills. The English and mathematics classes fail to interest and motivate learners sufficiently to participate actively.

- Teachers monitor learners' attendance well, but this has not yet improved all learners' attendance adequately. A minority of learners arrive for classes late, and some are not sufficiently prepared for learning. Such learners often arrive without pens or paper and rely on teachers to provide these. In a minority of cases, learners do not remove outdoor coats and participate fully in the lesson. The poor behaviour of a small minority of learners disrupts learning in a minority of classes and teachers do not challenge this effectively.
- Learners benefit from detailed, high quality, information, advice and guidance throughout their programme. A team of advisers fully informs learners of the options available to them before starting their programme. Learners attend a range of taster sessions to help inform their choice of vocational area to study. Teachers work hard with learners throughout the programme to provide a range of continuing information, advice and guidance that help ensure that learners continue to participate in their study programmes. Staff give learners impartial advice for progression when completing their study programme. The majority of learners do progress to further study, apprenticeships or employment.
- Learners benefit from a highly individualised work experience which leads to a majority gaining employment or starting apprenticeships. Managers and staff work very effectively with a range of employers to offer learners work experience opportunities in line with their career aspirations and abilities. For example, the provider aims to challenge the most able learners to 200 hours of work experience but recognises this is not appropriate for all learners. Work experience is introduced to learners' programmes as they develop the required levels of personal and employability skills to be able to benefit from this.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Assessors and tutors have good vocational knowledge and experience that they use well to aid apprentices' progress. The vast majority of apprentices develop a good understanding of their vocational subject and apply practical skills competently and confidently in their workplaces. For example, in childcare, apprentices can describe safe practices in medication for children.
- Managers have developed a wide and growing range of good-quality workplace opportunities for apprentices, with highly supportive employers. For example, many apprentices are placed in large NHS hospitals and trusts including internationally renowned teaching hospitals that provide them with very good opportunities across health and allied careers, alongside smaller organisations, such as nurseries and schools.
- Links with employers are very strong and these aid apprentices' progress. Joint working with the wide range of NHS providers linked to clinical and non-clinical activities is particularly strong. The vast majority of employers value the close links and support from managers and assessors and the majority receive frequent updates on apprentices' progress. However, a very small minority of employers in childcare do not feel that they receive sufficiently frequent updates on their apprentices' progress.

- Apprentices value the good support they receive from assessors in and between workplace visits and off-the-job sessions, and they make good progress as a result. Apprentices are signposted effectively to workbooks and online resources for work between sessions that aid the pace of progress and standards of their work. For example, new learners were signposted to useful online resources to practise functional skills during a comprehensive information, advice and guidance session jointly delivered by the tutor and assessor at the Royal London Hospital. At the session, suitably clear, high expectations were set, and assessors outlined the learner risk referral processes. Apprentices on the supporting teaching and learning in schools programmes receive good support from school staff and very effective individual teaching from their assessor and make very good progress as a result.
- Assessors in the majority of workplace reviews and off-the-job training sessions use effective questioning techniques to probe and check understanding. For example, one business apprentice was asked to talk about three care service user groups at risk of radicalisation and outline why this was the case. The apprentice was encouraged to apply understanding to her workplace and service users well. Observations carried out by assessors in the workplace are evaluative and linked well to apprenticeship standards.
- Oral feedback for improvement is detailed, clear and constructive, aiding apprentices' understanding and progress. Written assessments are demanding and apprentices respond well to these. Assessors give supportive and sometimes challenging feedback on what apprentices need to do to improve their assessed work, and frequently provide individual coaching to help individuals understand ideas. However, not all written feedback corrects learners' spelling and punctuation sufficiently rigorously.
- Most apprentices have clear targets that challenge them well to succeed in the short and medium term. In one-to-one reviews and assessments, apprentices talk enthusiastically about their practice and make good links between the various theoretical aspects of their frameworks. However, a minority of apprentices lack clear targets to improve their English, mathematics and information technology skills sufficiently rapidly from their individual starting points.
- The vast majority of apprentices develop English and mathematics skills well. However, assessors and managers give insufficient attention early in the programme to the importance of functional skills to aid apprentices' work and life skills. For example, apprentices on various programmes at a local NHS hospital trust are nearing the final months of their programmes and have yet to sit their tests in English and mathematics. Managers are aware of these problems and have recently appointed a new staff member to support apprentices' skills development; this is beginning to show some beneficial impact for the minority of current apprentices who have yet to sit tests.
- Apprentices' understanding of British values, radicalisation and extremism are good in the majority of cases, though underdeveloped for a small minority, and work continues to develop and embed concepts more fully. Apprentices' induction provides a good level of training and discussion in these topics, but a minority of apprentices are not yet able to apply understanding to their service users and work settings.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52212
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	440
Principal/CEO	Emma Lambert
Telephone number	01642 266166
Website	www.hillingdontraining.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	20	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	83	39	27	69	-	4		
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:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Aire Diva Dynamic Training Ltd Time							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality 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

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Stephen Masterson	Ofsted Inspector
Tricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector

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