

London Vesta College Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

25–27 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders have taken effective improvement action following the recommendations at the previous inspection.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications within the planned time and progress into sustained employment or higher education is very high.
- Teachers develop apprentices' specialist information technology (IT) skills well through effective off-the-job training.
- Apprentices develop very good technical and oral communication skills that enable them to deal effectively with customers and contribute well to their employers' business.
- Staff ensure that the supportive and well-chosen employers are closely involved in the apprenticeships.
- High-quality support and monitoring of apprentices' progress ensure that they achieve and develop valued wider employability skills.
- Leaders are strongly committed to raising apprentices' awareness of fundamental British values from the start of the programme.

Full report

Information about the provider

- London Vesta College is a small work-based training provider located in Whitechapel, East London. The college offers advanced and higher-level apprenticeships to employers in the IT and telecommunications sector. Currently, seven apprentices are undertaking IT and telecommunications apprenticeships.
- The proportion of school-leavers in East London who achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is lower than the national average. Unemployment in East London is higher than the national and London average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve apprentices' written communication skills so that they match their good oral communication skills and prepare them more effectively for progression to more senior roles at work or to more demanding courses in higher education, where such skills will be needed.
- Ensure that lesson observations include enough specific detail to support judgements about the progress apprentices are making and the skills or knowledge they are able to demonstrate.
- Ensure that apprentices' understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism is continually reinforced in lessons, assessment and progress reviews, so that they can confidently apply their knowledge to their role at work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection. They continue to match apprentices and employers effectively, providing high-quality challenging training in a much-needed occupational sector. They ensure that apprentices develop good employability skills, such as how to establish and meet customers' needs, as well as achieve their qualifications.
- Provider staff have effectively implemented most of the recommended improvements since the previous inspection. In particular, the workplace development plan now ensures that the regular and frequent off-the-job training that apprentices receive is carefully linked to their job role and the training they receive at work.
- Leaders have developed a very supportive network of potential employers willing and able to offer apprenticeships in a wide variety of demanding IT specialisms. They monitor very closely the destinations of apprentices, many of whom are promoted on completion of their qualification.
- Leaders manage the performance of teaching staff and assessors effectively. Records of lesson observations demonstrate improvements in the evidence observers use to support their evaluations. They provide support and guidance to those whose work does not meet the expected standard. Where this does not produce the necessary improvement, leaders move swiftly to remove staff and find replacements. The most recent lesson observations evaluate learning and progress over time, but do not include enough specific detail to support the judgements or facilitate their moderation.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and focuses appropriately on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The accompanying quality-improvement plan provides a useful commentary on the actions taken to deal with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and the timescales for completion.

The governance of the provider

- A non-executive director provides informed external governance and oversight in regular meetings to support the executive directors. He uses his experience of vocational training well to challenge leaders to bring about the clear improvements evident since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures have been effectively revised to incorporate the requirements under the 'Prevent' duty. The accompanying risk assessment evaluates the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism well and is regularly updated. Staff understand very well that sudden or unexplained changes in an apprentice's behaviour can be an important indicator of potential safeguarding concerns. Recruitment checks for staff working directly with the apprentices meet requirements.

- Safeguarding is introduced to apprentices during induction and reinforced regularly in reviews. As a result, they know how to keep themselves safe, including online, and know how to raise any concerns that they may have. They risk-assess the jobs assigned to them and know of the potential dangers of lone working. One apprentice had the confidence to insist that a piece of equipment in a dentist's surgery should be repaired at the employer's base rather than in the surgery because of a potential health and safety hazard. In a few cases, apprentices are not able to recall details about the training received on dealing with the dangers of radicalisation or extremism.
- Leaders are passionate advocates for making apprentices aware of the importance of fundamental British values and the impact they have on their lives and workplace. Staff place a significant emphasis on ensuring that apprentices develop a sound understanding of these values. They have completed online safeguarding training covering radicalisation and extremism, supplemented by face-to-face training with staff in a linked further education college. They are provided with helpful guidance on how to introduce these values into lessons but there are no relevant displays in teaching rooms that teachers could use to introduce discussions with apprentices or reinforce their understanding during training sessions.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers ensure that the classroom-based technical training integrates particularly well with the skills development employers provide in the good-quality workplaces and meets well the principles and requirements of the apprenticeship. Apprentices undertake a variety of demanding IT tasks at work, through which they can apply their technical skills, as well as developing skills in teamwork and communicating with customers.
- Teachers are skilful in explaining and developing apprentices' understanding of topics such as how to assess the security risks to an IT system and how to prevent security breaches. Apprentices respond well to activities that require them to work in small groups and design solutions to IT problems. Teachers make good use of electronic resources to develop apprentices' independent learning skills and to provide learning opportunities outside of the classroom.
- Teachers thoroughly assess and track apprentices' performance frequently and accurately. Managers analyse the rate of apprentices' progress through their qualification in order to intervene and arrange additional support where this is judged to be too slow. One apprentice is struggling to achieve the required standards and is making very slow progress. Staff are putting support plans in place, but the significant amount of outstanding work suggests that achieving within the planned time will be challenging.
- Teachers provide good-quality feedback that is supportive and clearly indicates to apprentices what they need to do to improve submitted work. Teachers make good use of challenging questioning in lessons to assess apprentices' recall of previous learning. In a few instances, enthusiastic apprentices are allowed to dominate the responses at the expense of those who are less assertive.
- Employers value the contribution that apprentices are making and they are key partners in the apprenticeship programme. They help choose the optional units that best meet the needs of the company and provide good opportunity for the apprentices' skills

development. Employers are kept well informed about the progress their apprentices are making. They are fully involved in the regular reviews of apprentices' progress, where they provide valuable feedback on the skills apprentices have developed at work.

- Teachers are successful in helping apprentices to improve their mathematics and English skills. They help apprentices to develop a good technical vocabulary but they do not routinely correct the few English errors that apprentices make within their written assignments.
- Teachers provide apprentices with good pastoral and academic support to help them to complete their programmes. In case of any difficulty, a member of staff is available 24 hours a day. Staff provide good advice and guidance which help potential apprentices to select and apply for appropriate jobs through which they can further develop their skills and meet their career aspirations. The induction to the apprentices' programmes gives them a good understanding of the requirements and demands of the qualification, as well as employers' expectations.
- Apprentices from diverse backgrounds work well together and teachers ensure that apprentices develop a good understanding of the importance of dealing with their very varied range of customers sensitively, particularly with those who may have little IT knowledge or confidence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices are confident, articulate and enjoy their apprenticeship. Their attendance and punctuality are good. The high standard of apprentices' work, coupled with their attitude and professional approach to their job role, meets the needs of their employers well. They work well together when they attend training sessions in the provider's centre.
- Apprentices on software development apprenticeships write code confidently in a range of programming languages that meet the business needs of their employers. Apprentices on hardware apprenticeships install and support computer networks and enhance the security of IT systems. One apprentice has written code used by the company of a family member to select relevant data, so that a large system can now be used much more efficiently than was previously possible. A task that used to take many hours can now be completed in minutes.
- Apprentices communicate well with customers and explain technical details clearly. They participate well in classroom discussions and scrutinise their peers' answers to technical tasks well. Apprentices' written English skills meet the requirements of their current job roles but, in a few cases, the quality of their written English lacks the level and precision required for their further professional development.
- Managers analyse attendance records at the training centre and take effective action where individual apprentices are absent or late without reason. They involve employers and parents, where appropriate, in discussions and action plans for improvement. They do not routinely analyse reasons that apprentices give when they are late or absent to look for possible patterns or underlying external causes that might affect more than one apprentice, such as transport disruption.
- Apprentices have a clear understanding of the value of the apprenticeship, the

progression routes available and how their careers may develop. They are able to make informed choices about applying for promotions when they achieve and they benefit from support from teachers and assessors to prepare for interviews, even after they have completed their apprenticeship.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Apprentices' achievement of their qualification and subsequent progression at work or into further studies is very high. All apprentices who left in 2015/16 achieved their qualification within the planned time. Almost all apprentices who left in the previous year gained promotion or progressed to higher education. Just under half of the completed apprentices subsequently enrolled on a higher apprenticeship.
- The qualifications that apprentices achieve and the skills and standards of work they produce meet national priorities for developing a highly skilled digital workforce. Employers readily acknowledge the value to their business of the skills that apprentices develop at work and through the training sessions in the centre.
- Apprentices demonstrate good knowledge and confidence in discussing tasks and challenging their peers to explain complex topics. Most of the current apprentices make good progress and are on track to complete their qualification within the planned time.
- Just over half of the apprentices pass all their required functional skills tests at the first attempt. Managers analyse well the reasons why the others do not and provide effective support for individual apprentices to prepare them more carefully for their next attempt. The remaining apprentices pass their tests at the second attempt.
- The numbers of apprentices from individual minority ethnic heritage groups are very small. Nevertheless, managers monitor their achievements closely to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and there are no noticeable gaps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59157
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	19
Principal/CEO	Dr Nathan Vela
Telephone number	020 7377 0731
Website	www.vestacollege.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
			4		1	2		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of education and training 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

Nick Gadfield, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector

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