

Bellis Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

31 January – 2 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Directors and managers have successfully implemented good-quality study programmes. They have taken swift actions to secure improvement when needed.
- Learners understand the importance of good attendance as a result of tutors' encouragement. This has secured much-improved attendance patterns and particularly high rates of attendance at the Redditch centre.
- Directors and managers monitor the performance of the programmes well. They have a sound understanding of the progress that learners are making and make rapid interventions to ensure that learners achieve their learning aims.
- The most able learners do not consistently make rapid enough progress. A few small groups of learners do not currently achieve in line with their peers.
- Tutors provide very effective and flexible one-to-one educational and pastoral support for learners, enabling learners to overcome barriers to learning.
- Assessment practice is good. Learners receive very detailed, regular and supportive feedback. Learners gain confidence from this and produce good-quality work.
- Learners increase personal, social and employability skills to a good level, enabling them to progress successfully to their next steps in education or employment.
- Tutors develop learners' English and mathematics skills well. As a result, the large majority of learners achieve higher levels of qualifications in these subjects while undertaking study programmes.
- Partnership working with external agencies does not consistently support Bellis Training Limited well enough in enabling learners to complete their planned programme.
- Learners' understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism lacks sufficient depth.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Bellis Training Limited (BTL) operates from three sites in Hockley, Chelmsley Wood and Redditch in the West Midlands region. The site in Redditch has been acquired since the previous inspection. These sites are located in areas which have large pockets of economic deprivation. Some 38 learners aged 16 to 18 are currently attending vocational study programmes of mixed duration leading to qualifications in 'employability' (preparation for employment) and personal development, customer service and warehousing. BTL also delivers apprenticeships as a subcontractor on another publicly funded programme, but these learners were not in scope for this inspection.
- The communities from which BTL recruits its learners are mostly White British, with a few who are of British Asian and Black Caribbean origin. Many learners are very vulnerable by virtue of their circumstances. A significant number were in receipt of free school meals and bursaries, children looked after, or have a learning difficulty or disability and/or mental health issues.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Secure improvement in the number of learners who stay in learning for the planned duration of their programme by re-evaluating partnership arrangements, so that they are more effective in supporting learners.
- Equip tutors with the skills that they need so that they can identify and prepare for the more rapid progress of those learners who are most able and complete tasks more quickly than their peers.
- Analyse why small groups of learners in functional skills courses and minority ethnic groups do not achieve as well as other learners, and take appropriate actions to rectify this.
- Enhance learners' understanding of how they can protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors and managers have managed the transition from the previous foundation learning programme to the study programme well. They have continuously reviewed arrangements and have a very good understanding of the improvements that are required. They have swiftly made changes to aspects of the programme that were initially not working well. They have addressed the initial dip in performance in 2014/15, and the large majority of learners who commenced the programme from 2015/16 were successful in achieving their learning aims.
- Directors and managers are ambitious for their learners and carefully monitor each of their learners' progress throughout the programme. They are fully involved in the weekly performance reviews of progress and guide tutors to make sound interventions to ensure that learners continue to make the progress expected of them. This process ensures that any learners who fall behind receive the support needed for them to get back on track quickly.
- Performance management is strong. Suitably qualified and experienced managers undertake frequent observations of all aspects of the study programme against clearly defined criteria. Managers soundly analyse data on performance on a very frequent basis and use this analysis to inform appraisals and staff performance reviews. This enables managers to have a very good understanding of how well their staff are developing their learners to progress through the programme and acquire the skills needed for them to be successful in achieving their learning aims.
- Directors and managers have placed great emphasis on the development of the English and mathematics curriculum within the study programme. They recognised the need to recruit suitably qualified staff and develop the skills of existing staff early in the introduction of the programme. Staff now skilfully deliver this aspect of the programme.
- Managers regularly review the effectiveness of English and mathematics classroom teaching. For example, they have reviewed the extent to which vocational subjects enable the development of learners' skills in English and mathematics and significantly increased the amount of specific teaching of English and mathematics to ensure that all learners improve their skill levels, often from very low starting points. As a result, the rates of achievement have significantly increased since 2014/15 and rates are now good.
- Managers ensure that staff are well trained and supported. Staff receive frequent training relevant to their personal needs and job role. Staff have good personal development plans, with suitable targets and timescales which are regularly reviewed by directors. Managers ensure that staff have the resources they need to deliver a good-quality study programme. Tutors who are experiencing difficulties in delivering aspects of the study programme for learners facing barriers to learning are well supported by directors and managers.
- Self-assessment is comprehensive and soundly based on a thorough analysis of management information. It is well informed by the views of staff, learners and employers providing work placements. Subsequent development planning is well considered. Action plans are regularly reviewed, are specific and have appropriate

timescales. However, they include targets that are aspirational rather than realistic; for example, the current target for attendance is 100%.

- Directors and managers have aligned their programme closely to the economic priorities of the local areas in which the provision operates. Vocational subjects are offered which support the work-experience offer and local job opportunities. They use the opportunities arising from the subcontracted apprenticeship provision well to complement study programmes. As a result, learners are well prepared to progress to employment.
- Directors and managers have established a culture of open-mindedness and respect. They ensure that all staff are enabled to meet the diverse and complex needs of learners and that all have an equal opportunity to be successful in their learning. As a result, the differences in achievement across the provision are small.
- Directors and managers understand the importance of increasing the proportion of learners who stay in learning. They have established appropriate partnership working but this is not fully effective for the most vulnerable learners, for example learners who have education, health and care plans under the control of other agencies. As result, despite best efforts, the rates of retention are not improving enough for these learners.

The governance of the provider

- Governance is effective.
- Until very recently the governance of the provision was provided by the BTL directors and a senior manager who is the designated safeguarding lead. This team has undertaken governor training, participated in networks to enable them to benchmark the provision and employed a consultant to advise them on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements. They effectively challenge and hold each other to account on the strategic direction the programme should take, its performance and to ensure that learners are well protected from risk and harm.
- The governance team recognised that governance of the provision would significantly benefit from external scrutiny and challenge. However, this oversight to the provision has only just been implemented and therefore it is too early to see any impact.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Directors and managers have established sound systems to ensure that staff are suitably recruited and appropriately checked so that they do not present a risk to learners. All staff have received training in how to protect learners. This includes training to ensure that learners are protected from the risks of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and terrorism.
- At the start of the programme, managers and tutors undertake a thorough analysis of the safeguarding risks surrounding their learners. They make sound plans to minimise risks to learners at the centre and during work experience.
- Directors recognise that their computer system does not restrict inappropriate internet searches by learners. To overcome this, all learners are supervised by staff while using the BTL computer systems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- At present, 38 learners are following a range of vocational study programmes from entry level to level 2. Almost all learners follow a course in personal development and preparation for employment, with an additional course in either customer service or warehousing.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Tutors use their experience and learning from a wide range of staff development activities to improve, plan and evaluate their lessons and share good practice. As a result, learners previously disengaged from learning, those leaving care and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate in good, individualised activities which meet their specific needs.
- Learners gain confidence and useful life skills as a result of tutors using probing questions that challenge their thinking and relate theory into everyday working life. Learners of different abilities that join the programme at different points in the year are thoroughly and carefully integrated within lessons. Consequently, the vast majority of learners make good progress towards achieving their qualifications and developing skills for sustained employment.
- Learners benefit from very effective and flexible one-to-one coaching. Tutors use imaginative support strategies to help them progress and overcome significant barriers to learning. Learners who had previously struggled with mathematics improved their skills through 'study buddy' groups, where more skilled and experienced learners offer support and guidance.
- Tutors use appropriate and reliable methods to assess learners' starting points. They use the information well to identify learners' English and mathematics skills needs as well as any barriers to learning and social issues. Tutors keep detailed and informative records which they use well to plan effective learning programmes and work experience placements.
- Managers and tutors accurately monitor how well learners are progressing and the factors that may be causing a few to fall behind. Consequently, tutors take swift action to remedy slower progress and provide individual learners with carefully planned support to enable them to get back on track. Employers and parents are kept informed regularly of learners' progress and how they can further support this.
- Assessment practice is good. The majority of learners receive very detailed, regular and supportive verbal and written feedback. Learners receive constructive yet sensitive advice with regard to their interpersonal skills and personal appearance, to ensure that they understand how to present themselves well for future interviews. Tutors and employers accurately assess learners' current performance including their development in English, mathematics, vocational and employability skills, such as communication and team-working. Learners agree challenging targets with tutors and employers, helping the large majority of learners to make good progress.
- Teachers use the well-equipped teaching spaces effectively to enable learners to make progress according to their potential and make learning sessions interesting. Plans for the introduction of an electronic learning portal to ensure swifter marking of learners' work and provide further enrichment opportunities are well advanced.
- Learners develop a good understanding of safeguarding topics and how to keep

themselves safe. Tutors use a good range of relevant activities that have been cleverly integrated into teaching sessions. Learners become tolerant, patient, behave well and are able to speak confidently about keeping themselves healthy and safe.

- Learners benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that improve their confidence and their understanding of potential careers and support the development of their employability skills. Engaging presentations from the uniformed services and local businesses inspire learners to reach for and achieve their career aims.
- Tutors integrate equality and diversity topics well within lessons, such as awareness of different cultures or beliefs. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities as learners and, where appropriate, as employees. Learners have a good understanding of the conduct and behaviour expected of them.
- Tutors do not always plan for learning to meet the needs of all abilities, in particular the most able learners, who complete activities well before the rest of the group. The most able learners do not, therefore, make quite as much progress as they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. This is demonstrated by their good levels of motivation, concentration in lessons and productive use of time. Learners display good behaviours in class; tutors quickly challenge any inappropriate behaviour. Learners respect each other and disruptions in class are minimal.
- The very large majority of learners attend their courses well. Attendance rates at the Redditch centre are high. Learners have significantly improved their collective attendance by using an attendance record challenge, promoting rewards and recognition for improved behaviour.
- The large majority of learners currently benefit from work experience, with good support from tutors to help them to have access to work experience placements. Work experience is well matched to the vocational subjects undertaken by learners and vacancies in the local labour markets.
- Tutors give a strong focus to the development of learners' employability skills in lessons and enrichment activities such as interview preparation, identifying appropriate body language at work and compiling or updating CVs, and skills for future workplace settings, such as handling complaints from customers in a retail environment. The good development of learners' personal and social skills increases self-confidence. Their improved communication skills are enabling learners to give presentations and undertake and complete individual projects on exploring preferred career choices.
- Learners benefit from particularly effective development of their English and mathematics skills. Learners develop and improve these skills well when they had previously failed to do so at school. In addition to group sessions, learners receive personal tutorials when they have difficulties understanding concepts, such as a recent session on solving quadratic equations.
- Learners are aware of the progress they are making on their vocational courses as a result of feedback from teachers, such as comments on marked assignments advising them about improvements that they can make. They develop their skills of reflection and evaluation, as they are often asked to take part in self-assessment of their own

performance or achievement.

- Tutors provide responsive and impartial information, advice and guidance. Learners receive good-quality and timely information to develop plans for their future career progression, such as courses provided by external providers and further and higher education opportunities. Pre-course guidance is clear and informs learners well about the content of the study programme and the expectations regarding behaviour and conduct.
- Learners feel safe and are aware of how to protect themselves and report any issues or concerns that may arise. They understand the potential risks when using the internet and how to work safely online. Learners are encouraged to deepen their understanding of safety topics, for example by devising wall posters on the dangers of social networking. However, the development of learners' awareness and understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and the threat posed by radicalisation or extremism lacks depth and requires further development.
- Tutors promote British values well. Learners treat others with respect and understand how to participate successfully in the wider community. They demonstrate their knowledge about the rule of law, democracy and voting practices.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The rates of achievement of qualifications after the introduction of the study programme dipped in 2014/15 from the previous year to around the low national rates of similar providers. Since this time, rates have improved. During the current year rates are good. A key improvement since the previous inspection is the significant increase and now good achievement of English and mathematics functional skills qualifications for the large majority of learners. Pass rates are high and achievement of qualifications within the planned duration of the programme are good for those learners who stay in learning.
- Learners acquire particularly good skills such as in communication and team-working – and in English and mathematics. Tutors place significant emphasis on development and acquisition of these skills from the outset of the programme. Skills development is carefully aligned to those required for successful work placement and career progression that matches local opportunities.
- Learners make good progress while on their programme, particularly those who have significant barriers to overcome to stay in learning. Since the introduction of study programmes, the number of learners progressing to further education or employment has only marginally increased each year. Currently around 75% of learners progress from their study programme, but this number is affected by learners who leave the programme early due to factors outside of the control of BTL, for example children looked after who are moved to other geographical locations.
- BTL introduced GCSE English and mathematics courses in 2015/16. Only one learner took the examination in the first year. Currently, 11 learners are undertaking GCSE courses and they are making at least the progress expected of them to achieve a grade A* to C in these qualifications.
- Learners' work is of good quality and supported by the development of independent learning skills valuable for their progression into further study or employment. Learners take pride in their work, support their peers in project tasks and produce work to industry

standards, which significantly improves their progression from study programmes.

- A small minority of learners do not achieve as well as the main groups of learners in functional skills English at level 1 and mathematics at entry level 3. The rates of achievement at other levels require improvement as they are not yet high enough to be good. The small number of Asian and Black Caribbean learners do not achieve as well as the White British learners.
- Consistently since the previous inspection, a small minority of learners do not stay for the full planned duration of the programme. Taking into account learners who leave due their personal circumstances or leave to get a job, the underlying numbers of learners leaving early is only marginally improving. The early leavers are not achieving all aspects of their study programme and their ability to acquire the skills and qualifications to aid their progression is significantly hampered.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50656
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16 to 18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	68
Principal/CEO	Mrs Elizabeth Sheppard
Telephone number	0121 233 3362
Website	www.bellistraining.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)	10	–	28	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
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							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	–							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the business director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report, development plans and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, visits to employers 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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