

WEBS Training Limited

Not-for-profit organisation

Inspection dates

7–10 March 2017

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		Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Most apprentices successfully complete all elements of the apprenticeship framework within the planned period, and almost all continue to work for their employer after they have completed their studies.
- Many apprentices take on more responsibility in the workplace over time and several are now supervisors or managers.
- Attendance and punctuality are good; apprentices are well behaved, know how to stay safe and show respect for each other in training sessions and at work.
- Trainers and employers ensure that apprentices develop very good practical skills that prepare them well for work.
- Employers contribute significantly to learning by providing resources that ensure that training and assessments are of high quality, and reflect the standards found in the sector.
- Leaders and managers have taken decisive action to resolve most of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection.
- Leaders and managers have established excellent working relationships with furniture manufacturers across the region, which benefit apprentices.
- Board members have significant industry expertise and credibility, which they use well to provide a clear strategic vision and direction for WEBS Training.
- Trainers do not sufficiently promote apprentices' personal development, or their English and mathematical skills, to enable them to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their work and studies.
- In a few cases, managers do not provide detailed enough feedback to trainers following observations about how they can improve their practice.
- Managers have implemented a number of improvements to secure better outcomes for the few learners aged 16 to 18 on the study programme, but it is too soon to judge the impact of these measures.

Full report

Information about the provider

- WEBS Training Limited (WEBS), founded in 1968, provides training to the furniture industry. Its training centre is in Beeston near Nottingham. Most of its 150 apprentices work in small- and medium-sized enterprises. Most learners study at level 2, in cabinet making, upholstery, kitchen installation, polishing/finishing, component manufacture, and wood machining. WEBS also has a small study programme for learners aged 16 to 18 but managers have decided to discontinue this provision after the current group of learners complete their studies. As a result, inspectors have not produced a provision-type report for the study programmes.
- Most of WEBS' learners live and work in and around Long Eaton, which is the location of a large number of specialist furniture manufacturers. The percentage of school leavers in the East Midlands with five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, is slightly higher than the national figure. Unemployment in the region is slightly lower than the national average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- In addition to helping apprentices develop good technical and vocational skills, ensure that trainers also promote apprentices' personal development so that they reach their full potential in all aspects of their work and studies. To do this, trainers should:
 - provide opportunities for apprentices to participate in enriching and rewarding personal development activities; these may include community activities, skills competitions and team sports
 - routinely develop apprentices' skills in English and mathematics throughout their programmes; provide learning in these skills that challenges learners, and highlights how important they are to everyday life and work
 - provide constructive feedback on assessed work that encourages apprentices to work towards the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Improve the rigour, effectiveness and monitoring of the observation of teaching and learning; to do this, ensure that observers produce sufficiently detailed post-observation feedback to trainers, and action plans that clearly identify what trainers have to do to improve their practice within a specified time.
- Implement in full the range of improvement actions already identified by managers, to ensure that learners on the study programme complete their studies and progress to further education, training or employment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the company and set high expectations for learners and staff. As a specialist provider of high-quality training in furniture design and manufacture, the company is highly regarded in the sector and is a training provider of choice for the large majority of furniture companies in the East Midlands.
- Leaders and managers have taken decisive action to resolve most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection; they are aware of the company's few remaining areas for improvement. As a result, apprentices continue to achieve well at all levels and within the planned period.
- Managers review effectively the quality of individual trainers' work and the progress and outcomes of their learners. Leaders have applied robust procedures for identifying and, where appropriate, removing staff who consistently underperform. Regular performance review meetings between managers and trainers ensure that trainers monitor individual learners' progress more closely, and that where appropriate they make timely interventions, resulting in better progress by learners.
- Training staff are highly qualified and experienced in all aspects of furniture making, including in several very specialised areas. They hold appropriate training qualifications and receive good-quality continuing professional development tailored to their individual strengths and areas for improvement. As a consequence, they are able to deliver high-quality learning sessions that apprentices value. Trainers are passionate about their craftsmanship and enthuse apprentices with their skill and attention to detail.
- Leaders and managers have established excellent working relationships with a wide range of small- and medium-sized employers in the furniture manufacture sector across the East Midlands. Employers work with WEBS trainers and managers to ensure that the design of the apprenticeship programme closely meets their specialist needs, as well as those of their apprentices.
- WEBS' leaders, including its directors, have made good use of their specialist knowledge, experience and links with the sector to develop a good understanding of forthcoming changes to apprenticeship provision. As a consequence, the company's leaders are very well placed to implement the government's planned changes to the funding, delivery and assessment of apprenticeship training. They have taken an active role in developing new standards for the sector scheduled for May 2017.
- Managers have implemented effective arrangements for improving the quality of provision. They use the results of their observations of teaching and learning to help trainers improve. As a result, the quality of off-the-job training is mostly good. However, in a few cases, observers' feedback to trainers is insufficiently detailed and does not identify clearly enough how trainers can improve further.
- Managers use the results of learner and employer surveys to make improvements to the apprenticeship programme. They assess the quality of their provision rigorously and include all relevant stakeholders in this process. Leaders have clearly articulated the company's main strengths and areas for improvement in their self-assessment report, and they use data well to support key judgements.

- Just before the previous inspection, leaders introduced a 20-week study programme designed to provide disaffected young people aged 16 to 18 with structured employability training leading to an apprenticeship. A minority of learners who successfully completed the programme progressed to an apprenticeship or further training. Too many learners failed to attend lessons, and many left early without completing their studies, indicating that the provision required improvement. In February 2017, WEBS' directors decided to discontinue the study programme after the current group of learners complete their studies. Managers have implemented a number of improvements to ensure better outcomes for this group, but it is too soon to judge the impact of these measures.

The governance of the provider

- Since the previous inspection, the company has strengthened its governance arrangements. WEBS' board now includes new members with specialist knowledge of vocational training and quality improvement. Board members now require managers to provide them with accessible and appropriately detailed management reports on all aspects of the company's performance. As a result, they have been able to scrutinise much more effectively data relating to the recruitment, retention and achievement of learners. WEBS' managers are also now much more accountable to the board for the impact of their actions on the quality of provision.
- The board represents the regional furniture industry well. Members include highly successful businessmen and women who own and manage well-known, local furniture-making companies. As a result, board members have significant expertise and credibility within the industry, which they use well to provide a clear vision and direction for the future of WEBS Training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have established a culture where learners feel safe. Learners know what to do should they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. Learners, many of whom are vulnerable, say that they feel able to raise concerns with managers. Managers provide them with tailored pastoral support, help them to overcome difficulties that prevent learning, and ensure that they progress well.
- The company's two designated lead members of staff for safeguarding are well trained and knowledgeable in all aspects of safeguarding. They are clear about their responsibilities and have established effective practices for safeguarding learners. Training officers are confident in referring potential concerns. Safeguarding leads investigate and record individual cases well. Managers ensure that learners made vulnerable by their circumstances receive support and guidance to help them stay on their programmes and achieve.

- All staff receive appropriate background checks where their roles warrant this. Managers ensure that trainers receive appropriate training in safeguarding, including how to keep learners safe from radicalisation. Learners are able to articulate clearly their understanding of safeguarding and they have a basic awareness of how to stay safe from the dangers of radicalism and extremist ideas. Trainers promote British values well during learning sessions, where appropriate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Trainers ensure that WEBS' apprenticeship programme meets in full the principles and requirements of good-quality apprenticeship training. They provide good support and guidance to apprentices. Trainers have extensive industrial experience and work closely with employers to ensure that programmes match apprentices' workplace needs and aspirations. Apprentices enjoy their learning and value the skills they attain in the training centre and the workplace, and they become very well equipped to succeed in the furniture-making industry.
- The high-quality of furniture manufacturing machinery and hand tools at WEBS' training centre replicates those found in the sector; as a consequence, resources support learning well. Apprentices are keen to learn and gain the skills to operate specialist machinery and hand tools confidently and quickly. As a result, they contribute well to their employers' businesses, and many go on to supervisory or technical roles.
- Trainers help to develop apprentices' vocational skills well. They use their industry experience to check, develop and extend apprentices' practical skills, knowledge and understanding and prepare them for their next steps. They use the results of initial assessment well to identify apprentices' starting points and needs, and build on previous learning to extend knowledge and understanding. Employers value these skills and the enhanced roles that many apprentices are quickly able to perform in the workplace. For example, one apprentice skilfully upholstered a double sofa, ensuring that they aligned all patterns and that arm pleats were even and consistent across both arms.
- Apprentices enjoy their work and studies. They become highly confident and are proud of their achievements. Many apprentices improve their standard of work quickly and are able to work at a commercial pace, which employers acknowledge and value. A few apprentices develop particularly specialised skills. For example, one advanced apprentice was able to demonstrate technically challenging skills in deep-buttoning in a particularly thick, hand-crafted leather sofa.
- Trainers provide valuable guidance when they set apprentices challenging workshop projects. They intervene promptly when necessary to develop apprentices' understanding of when and how to cut expensive fabric, thus ensuring that apprentices do not make errors that may be costly to their employer. Trainers encourage more confident apprentices to provide peer support to help develop the confidence of other apprentices who require it. As a result, the significant majority of apprentices make good progress, which enables them to complete advanced projects that enhance their vocational skills.
- Assessment is well planned, challenging and robust. Trainers plan assessment well and

involve apprentices in the process to ensure that they make sustained progress. Employers ensure that assessment opportunities are available to suit the needs of individual apprentices, and they contribute additional resources to support their assessments where appropriate or necessary. For example, one employer provided wooden furniture frames and material at no cost to the apprentices to help them complete their final assessments.

- Apprentices respect their peers and are able to communicate well with business clients. They respect the views of others and use appropriate language in learning sessions. Trainers promote equality of opportunity and an awareness of diversity during learning sessions, and treat all apprentices fairly, which they value.
- Although apprentices achieve well in their functional skills tests in English and mathematics, trainers do not sufficiently support the development of learners' skills in these subjects. Trainers place too much emphasis on achieving qualifications rather than on the development of English and mathematical skills to increase effectiveness at work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices produce very good standards of work and become invaluable to their employers. They take pride in their work and are committed to developing further their specialist skills. Many apprentices take on more responsibility in the workplace over time, and several are now supervisors or managers. Employers recognise the many benefits that apprentices bring to their businesses and they often use former apprentices to mentor and support those newly recruited.
 - As a result of good support from their employers and the high quality of off-the-job training, apprentices quickly develop confidence and expertise in their chosen specialisms. They develop an ability to deal confidently with the wide range of people they meet during the course of their employment. Work peers hold apprentices in high regard.
 - Learners receive good-quality, impartial advice and guidance, enabling them to make informed choices about their future work and study options. The majority move into sustained employment within the sector after completion of their apprenticeships. Trainers provide appropriate advice and guidance on their next steps for the few apprentices who decide on a different career path.
 - Apprentices' attendance and punctuality are good. Apprentices are well behaved and show respect for each other and their peers within training sessions and at work. Classrooms in the training centre have clear displays and notices that identify the company's expectations for behaviour and attendance; trainers reinforce these in learning sessions.
 - Apprentices have a good understanding of health and safety when they are working in the company's training centre and when they are with their employers. They demonstrate safe working practices and wear appropriate personal protective equipment when required.
- Apprentices demonstrate an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe

online, including when using social media. Trainers provide useful advice and guidance to help learners stay safe, and how to demonstrate respect and good behaviour in the workplace, especially when dealing with colleagues and business customers.

- A good range of posters and displays in classrooms reinforces British values well. The large majority of apprentices have an appropriate understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. They understand why they should be tolerant and respectful of different cultures. WEBS' trainers have responded well to the 'Prevent' duty and, as a consequence, learners are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Trainers rightly place considerable emphasis on developing apprentices' practical and technical skills. However, they provide apprentices with few opportunities for personal development, to help them become even more effective in all aspects of their work and studies. The company provides few enrichment activities, such as opportunities to participate in charitable fund-raising, community work, volunteering or team sports. Most learning targets relate solely to the achievement of NVQ units or specific aspects of the apprenticeship framework. Trainers' feedback on assessed work focuses largely on the achievement of core objectives rather than on challenging learners to achieve the very highest standards of which they are capable. As a consequence, learners do not gain the full benefits of participating in an apprenticeship programme.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Apprentices make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well. The proportion who complete the full apprenticeship framework within the planned period is well above the national rate. Most apprentices currently on programme are making at least the progress expected of them and none has exceeded their planned end date.
- WEBS' apprentices are highly regarded by local employers for the quality of their craftsmanship and commitment to the highest quality standards. Apprentices develop good specialist skills in upholstery, French polishing, cabinet making, and wood cutting and shaping. They work to challenging industry standards and demonstrate professionalism in their work.
- Apprentices produce work of a high standard and employers often use projects undertaken by apprentices to improve their business processes and production methods. Most trainees and apprentices pass their functional skills tests in English and mathematics at the first attempt.
- The very large majority of apprentices continue working for their employers after they complete their apprenticeships. Many are now in significant positions of responsibility across the furniture manufacturing sector in the East Midlands. Of the 21 staff employed at WEBS, 12 are former apprentices, two of whom are in management roles. This provides a good opportunity for those apprentices who are considering a career in vocational training.
- Managers monitor regularly the achievement of groups by gender, ethnicity, disability and age and produce reports for the company's directors. Currently, no significant variations exist in the achievement of different groups of apprentices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55294
Type of provider	Not-for-profit organisation
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	294
Principal/CEO	Samantha Jones
Telephone number	01159 677771
Website	www.webstraining.com

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)	–	–	6	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	88	55	11	13	–	–		
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 Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of business and quality 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

Jai Sharda, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Forrester	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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