

HIT Training Ltd

Independent learning provider

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

- Strong leadership is well supported by a committed staff team who share high aspirations for learners and employers.
- Managers work strategically to establish the new apprenticeship standards in conjunction with a wide range of employers.
- Apprentices and learners are very highly motivated and have a positive attitude to their work and qualifications.
- Apprentices contribute well to improving their employers' businesses, which is highly valued by employers.
- A large proportion of apprentices and learners successfully complete their qualifications, enabling them to sustain their employment and gain additional responsibilities and in many cases promotion.
- Resources in the chef academies are extremely good, providing excellent facilities for learners to develop new skills.
- Trainer assessors use online resources, including digital media, well to promote independent and on-the-job learning.
- Apprentices benefit from trainer assessors who can confidently and purposefully integrate and embed relevant English and mathematics skills into training.
- Employers are not all sufficiently involved in the coordination of on- and off-job-training for apprentices.
- Trainer assessors are not all sufficiently confident to raise awareness and challenge learners or employers in their understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Too few apprentices in health and social care, management and higher apprenticeships, and in functional skills in mathematics, and reading at level 2, complete their qualifications on time.

Full report

Information about the provider

- HIT Training Ltd (HIT) is a national provider of apprenticeships and adult skills programmes operating from a head office in Shoreham-by-Sea in West Sussex. HIT Training Ltd has a total staff of 500 personnel, most of whom are trainer assessors operating from 35 offices countrywide. Trainer assessors mostly deliver training in the workplace. Recently developed chef academies provide off-the-job training for professional chef apprenticeships.
- The company primarily focuses on apprenticeships in the hospitality sector but also runs programmes in business management and health and social care, providing intermediate, advanced and higher apprenticeships. The small percentage of adults not on apprenticeship programmes gain work skills, through subcontractors, in taxi driving or complete functional skills training in preparation for an apprenticeship or complete industry-specific qualifications. Around 300 apprentices are training using the new apprenticeship standards developed by HIT with employer groups.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders must fully involve all employers in the planning and coordination of all on- and off-job-training for apprentices.
- Managers should further develop the understanding and capacity of all trainer assessors to raise awareness of, and challenge learners and employers in their understanding of, radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders should ensure that staff further improve achievement rates specifically in health and social care, business management, care leadership and functional skills in mathematics and reading at level 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers provide strong strategic leadership to set a clear direction and focus that staff adhere to well. Managers are committed to delivering high-quality learning programmes that meet individual and employers' needs successfully. Managers have taken appropriate action to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, and to improve achievement rates that had declined slightly last year. Staff training and the appointment of a functional skills specialist have improved learners' progress in functional skills subjects.
- Leaders and managers work well with local, regional and national partners. Close working relationships exist with industry, professional and funding bodies, as well as local enterprise partnerships, schools, and provider networks. Employers value the individual approach that managers take to understand their specific needs and provide tailored training.
- All staff have worked hard to develop the provision to meet apprentices' and employers' needs. Managers have successfully implemented the new employer-led standards for hospitality apprentices. Working closely with the hospitality sector and employers they commenced training to the standards with around 300 apprentices. Employers and managers have made good progress in introducing these apprenticeships in the care sector.
- A pre-apprenticeship programme very effectively enables potential apprentices to attain English and mathematics qualifications to support their progression to apprenticeships in both hospitality and care. Managers introduced higher apprenticeships to meet the training needs of apprentices in management roles.
- Managers have effective systems to capture and make use of learners' and employers' feedback. Managers use employer feedback well to deliver tailored learning programmes that meet employers' specific needs. Learner feedback has led to changes to meet learner shift patterns, and provide alternative trainer assessors when necessary.
- Performance management of trainer assessors is robust. Managers review trainer assessor performance against targets, progress of learners and overall caseloads monthly to identify and deal with problems early to ensure that learners stay on track. Regional managers grade trainer assessors quarterly, based on observations and learners' progress; effective actions are then put in place where required.
- Managers implement a thorough process of observations of teaching and learning, which includes subcontractors. Detailed observation reports clearly identify aspects of delivery that staff could improve and staff are encouraged to reflect on how to improve. Trainer assessors receive very effective support to enhance their coaching and training skills. Managers link the observation process to professional staff development well, identifying general training needs for staff to develop their skills. However, in a small minority of cases, the observation reports focus too much on teaching, and insufficiently on learners and their progress.
- Managers and staff use the company intranet very effectively to share best practice, with useful links to examples of outstanding teaching and resources. Managers make good use

of online communications to share information and hold regular face-to-face meetings with staff countrywide.

- Managers have effectively improved the teaching of functional skills English and mathematics. A new specialist support trainer successfully supports trainer assessors to build their skills and confidence in supporting learners. Progress and achievement rates for current learners have improved significantly.
- Leaders and managers collect, evaluate and use data extremely well to monitor performance and set actions for improvements. Data is routinely collected to monitor learners' progress, functional skills results, achievement rates, early leavers, those out of funding, and the destinations of leavers. Regional performance is carefully analysed to identify local concerns and take swift action to deal with problems.
- Self-assessment reporting is robust, although the report is overly long and too descriptive. Regional and national quality improvement plans focus on performance and improving outcomes for learners but pay minimal attention to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers have prepared trainer assessors well to integrate diversity and modern British values into their training. However, trainer assessors are not all confident enough to challenge apprentices and employers about the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

The governance of the provider

- Directors provide effective leadership, working closely with operational managers. They have an excellent understanding of the provision and overall performance. Directors' meetings focus appropriately on key concerns such as apprentices' recruitment, personnel changes, employers, and developments in teaching, learning and assessment in order to challenge managers.
- Communication between the strategic board and the operations board is very good, with managers and staff effectively challenged about any poor performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior managers maintain a frequently updated and accurate single central record on the checks made on new staff during recruitment. Safe recruiting policies and practices ensure that risks to learners are minimised. The designated safeguarding officer monitors a company-wide safeguarding email account, responding quickly to concerns raised by staff or learners. They also deliver introductory and useful refresher training on safeguarding. Staff have all completed online training and attended practical workshops.
- Apprentices and learners identified as 'at risk' receive good support. Detailed records provide useful information on the support and interventions given to learners. However, a small range of information recorded during performance reviews does not always get included in the central records.
- Appropriate action plans and training are in place to support staff to understand radicalisation and extremism. The majority of apprentices and learners have a basic understanding of extremism and radicalisation and know how to report a concern.

However, trainer assessors do not always challenge and test learners' understanding when opportunities arise. Detailed health, safety, and risk analysis conducted in all employers' premises does not identify if there are any concerns or comments about radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Learners enjoy and benefit from a flexible approach to learning. The majority of trainer assessors schedule learning observations, taught sessions and reviews to meet the needs of apprentices and their employers well. For example, they often deliver training in the early morning for apprentices completing night shifts, and conduct observations during night shifts.
- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic trainer assessors plan theory sessions very effectively, using resources such as digital media and flash cards purposefully to develop and test apprentices' understanding. For example, they use laminated flash cards to match ingredients to mix cocktails and prepare sauces. A management apprentice used digital flash cards to match the benefits and features of different management styles.
- Trainer assessors have appropriate teaching qualifications and valuable recent industry experience that they use very well to plan and conduct relevant, focused and motivational training sessions. Trainer assessors skilfully ask questions to check and challenge learners, using more probing questions to secure comprehensive answers when appropriate. In a minority of sessions, trainer assessors were too quick to tell the learner the answer rather than wait for one; this is especially the case for advanced and higher apprentices.
- Trainer assessors establish good relationships and effective communications with employers, most of whom recognise the progress that their learners make. Most employers are involved in the planning of training for their apprentice, choosing units of study to fit with their job role. However, not all employers attend apprentice reviews and not all are aware of their apprentice's progress or the links between their training and that delivered by HIT staff.
- Apprentices working towards qualifications in English receive good support from staff who confidently pay good attention to spoken English and the use of technical language. Most trainer assessors are thorough in identifying spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors in learners' work. They assuredly encourage learners to identify their own mistakes.
- Assessors use workplace examples very well to help learners understand mathematics concepts. For example, discussing staff rotas and the numbers of staff required in a care home to explain and explore ratios; or in the chef academy examining the ratios and proportions of ingredients to make bread, and the critical importance of temperature conversions in bread-making.
- Apprentices receive outstanding tuition and training in the very well-equipped chef academies where they develop comprehensive technical skills training from highly qualified, industry-respected trainers. For example, apprentices successfully extend their skills in bread-making, meat preparation and cooking offal. Apprentices enjoy their training and make good use of the high-quality equipment. They value their new skills which they take back to their workplaces – allowing them to introduce new dishes and

extend menus.

- Most apprentices complete independent learning tasks between assessor visits, developing their research and information communication technology skills well; for example, researching management theories that they apply in meetings at work. In a minority of cases, employers do not allow apprentices time while at work to meet with their assessor or complete portfolio work.
- Apprentices use technology very effectively, enabling them to extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, learners use an application on their telephones to help them develop confidence in their spelling skills. They gain confidence in their own ability to spell. They use technology appropriately to monitor progress well. Apprentices confidently navigate through their e-portfolios. Assessment evidence is quickly loaded to e-portfolios. Good use is made of digital picture and voice recordings to capture naturally occurring evidence. The vast majority of assessment decisions are accurate and fair.
- Trainer assessors skilfully embed diversity into their training, for example identifying the types of bread made by different cultures and why they are cooked in a particular way. The majority of learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity as they demonstrate how to meet the different needs of customers and colleagues. For example, they are aware of cultural differences when planning menus and understand how to communicate with deaf customers. Apprentices' and learners' understanding of safeguarding in the context of their workplace and work role is good. Recent training for trainer assessors on British values and the 'Prevent' duty has increased their awareness; however, many still lack confidence to challenge and support apprentices and their employers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices and learners on adult programmes are ambitious and enthusiastic, and eager to extend their learning. They quickly become more confident in applying their newly gained skills, including teamwork and problem-solving, in the workplace. They enjoy their learning and are motivated to work independently between sessions with a positive attitude to learning.
- Apprentices demonstrate strong verbal communication skills; management apprentices demonstrate high levels of flexibility, initiative and problem-solving. For example, a hospitality management apprentice applied Edward de Bono's six hats model when managing team meetings to reduce conflict and enable all members to participate.
- Apprentices make valuable contributions to their workplaces, taking on additional responsibilities as they improve their skills. Many successfully lead projects to improve performance, quality and compliance in their workplace. Employers value the contribution that apprentices make and give them increased responsibility. For example, an advanced apprentice had taken on the redesign and delivery of a welcome day for new employees and the manager commented on how well regarded the new programme was by staff. Another learner has responsibility for running the conference centre in the absence of the manager.
- Learners and apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills, developing these essential skills in their daily work to the benefit of themselves and their employers. For

example, employers in hotels and conferencing comment positively on the improved accuracy of advanced and higher apprentices' report writing skills, particularly in documents detailing key organisational processes and publicity material. Business administration apprentices routinely develop and use spreadsheets and graphical representations in their presentations at meetings.

- Apprentices understand about living and working in modern Britain and the importance of the diverse needs of customers and colleagues. For example, a business administration apprentice, discussing customer requirements, described how they had organised prayer rooms and sourced meat to meet the requirements of different faiths. Another apprentice explained how they adapted their management style towards a member of staff with Asperger's Syndrome to ensure that they understood instructions.
- Learners and apprentices receive good initial advice and guidance to ensure that qualifications match their job role and aspirations. HIT staff and employers provide valuable advice and guidance to support learners' progression as apprentices consider their future and the skills they need to progress. Many learners progress onto higher-level qualifications while employed and often gain promotion as a result of their studies. For example, one learner who was going to leave their employer on completion of their apprenticeship was encouraged to discuss options with their current employer – resulting in an offer of promotion.
- Apprentices feel safe and work safely using personal protective clothing and equipment appropriately. They have a good understanding of health and safety and adopt safe working practices when using the internet. For example, learners understand the importance of referring to data sheets to ensure that they dilute and use cleaning materials safely. An apprentice used their new e-safety knowledge to discuss with their children the potential hazards of cyber bullying, the use of social media sites, and ways to keep safe while online.
- The standard of a small minority of higher apprentices' written work requires improvement. Apprentices' written responses to questions lack depth and detail and they fail to take into account recognised management principles and theories when discussing the management of teams. A small number of advanced apprentices are unfamiliar with how to reference their work and in a few cases their writing lacks fluency.
- Too many apprentices only have a basic understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Trainer assessors do not systematically develop or challenge apprentices' understanding.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The overall achievement rates for the vast majority of apprentices in 2015/16 were good. Achievement rates for apprentices completing within agreed timescales have improved and current apprentices are making good progress. Achievement rates for a minority of apprentices in health and social care, management and care leadership still require improvement.
- Outcomes for apprentices and learners have improved since the introduction of functional skills specialist trainers, who support staff and learners to prepare them well for skills assessments.

- Achievement rates for a minority of level 3 apprentices completing functional skills level 2 in mathematics, reading, and information communications technology were low in 2015/16. Managers recognise this and additional support has been provided to trainer assessors working at these higher levels. Most apprentices now make good progress due to the much improved support from staff. One apprentice who completed a level 1 mathematics qualification realised that she understood percentages when she recognised that the marked-up sale price for a dress was only 20%, not the 25% advertised, and she negotiated a further discount.
- Apprentices produce high-quality work. Employers frequently give apprentices projects to improve business processes in care homes or to take responsibility for a menu. Several chef academy apprentices have worked collaboratively to produce a glossy, detailed cookbook with a wide range of fine dining recipes.
- Apprentices and learners complete appropriate initial assessments that trainers use well to plan learning programmes. Consequently, the vast majority of apprentices and learners make good progress from their starting points.
- Learners on adult employment courses in taxi driving all complete their training and almost all gain sustained employment. Employed learners who need to improve their mathematics and English skills prior to starting an apprenticeship achieve well and the majority progress onto an apprenticeship.
- Senior staff and directors frequently monitor the achievement of different groups of learners and apprentices. There are no significant variations in success of learners by gender or ethnicity. Managers do not monitor or consider performance against other factors such as those who had free meals at school.

Provider details

Unique reference number	57860
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	9,372
Principal/CEO	Jill Whittaker
Telephone number	01243 456500
Website	www.hittraining.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+
	-	397	-	179	-	42	-	-
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	579	5,606	62	2,407	1	273		
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	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:	Antrac Ltd JB Skills Training R&D Care Training Centre Ltd Ann Clarke Associates Global Ltd QTS Blue Apple Training							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and development director, 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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