

TQ Workforce Development Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

13–16 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have been slow to implement actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment, so that overall standards have fallen since the previous inspection.
- The number of apprentices achieving their qualifications, and doing so within agreed timescales, has declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers do not use data effectively to track apprentices' progress into higher levels of study, or adult learners' progress into employment or further education, and so do not have a sufficiently clear view of the effectiveness of the provision.
- Tutors and assessors do not take account of apprentices' and learners' prior knowledge and experience to plan learning, and to ensure that they make good progress and develop to their full potential.
- Learners and apprentices are not set challenging, detailed targets based on their individual starting points and, as a result, targets lack aspiration and their progress is hindered.
- Employers are not sufficiently involved in the review of apprentices' progress, or the planning of learning; as a result, they do not provide the workplace support necessary for learners to achieve their apprenticeship.
- Staff do not provide effective information, advice and guidance to support learners and apprentices in making informed choices about their next steps to further study or employment.

This provider has the following strengths

- Tutors and assessors use their vocational and occupational experience well to reinforce learning across all training programmes.
- Tutors and assessors use a wide range of relevant and interesting resources, including technology, to support their teaching and to motivate learners and apprentices.
- Learners develop good practical and vocational skills across all training programmes.
- Learners and apprentices benefit from good personal support and individual coaching from tutors and assessors, both in the classroom and during their frequent workplace visits.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Based in Daventry, TQ Workforce Development Ltd (TQWD) is a privately owned national provider of work- and classroom-based learning programmes for adults. A board of directors, supported by a leadership team consisting of a managing director (business owner), a quality and compliance director and six senior managers, oversees and manages the business.
- Learners are in a wide range of large and small-to-medium-sized enterprises, mainly in the North West, the Midlands, London and the South East. The company holds a contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide intermediate and advanced apprenticeships as well as adult learning programmes. Two operational teams of managers, assessors and tutors have operational responsibility for managing programme delivery.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that managers promote well-focused actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for learners and apprentices.
- Make sure that staff use information, advice and guidance effectively to place each learner and apprentice on provision that suits their capabilities and interests, and maximises their progression opportunities, based on individual starting points.
- Ensure that trainers make effective use of the outcomes of the initial assessment of learners' and apprentices' skills, to plan learning and to set challenging targets; these targets should include the development of skills and behaviours, including English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT), and include additional qualifications.
- Ensure that assessors engage employers in apprentices' progress reviews and in the planning of learning in the workplace, so that all apprentices make good progress.
- Collect and analyse apprentices' and adult learners' progression data to evaluate the impact of the provision on apprentices and learners; use this information effectively to identify trends, and inform qualification selection, teaching and learning, and information, advice and guidance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have been slow in implementing improvement strategies following a period of poor outcomes for apprentices. As a result, they have made slow progress in tackling weaknesses. These include the low achievement rate for apprentices, particularly for completion within agreed timescales, and the lack of challenging and stretching targets for learners.
- Following a 'notice of concern' relating to the performance of apprenticeship programmes issued by the ESFA, TQWD leaders and managers have a clear operational action plan in place to complete the frameworks for the remaining funded apprentices by July 2017. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that apprentices in the subcontracted provision are also working to this timeframe. Currently, the large majority of apprentices are on track to complete by this date. The management of the subcontracted provision for adult learners is good.
- Leaders' use of data to analyse performance and inform planning requires improvement. They do not use data to determine the overall direction of the provision or the suitability of programmes. For example, the planning of adult learning and apprenticeships does not take account of information showing learners' destinations after their programmes. As a result, it is not clear that existing or proposed new programmes provide suitable routes for learners to achieve their career aims and fulfil their potential.
- Leaders have recently introduced new procedures intended to help individual assessors and tutors improve their teaching and learners' progress. However, when observing staff, managers concentrate too much on assessors' and tutors' personal performance and not enough on the progress apprentices or learners make in the session. When helping assessors and tutors devise their personal action plans, managers set development targets which are too generic to enable them to know what they need to do to improve their performance, and in a majority of cases are not measurable or specific to the individual.
- Leaders have restructured the management and assessor teams, and taken further steps to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners. These changes have started to have an impact; for example, apprentices behind with their studies now make better progress, and apprentices feel more confident that they will be able to complete their qualification frameworks.
- Senior leaders have high expectations and promote a set of shared values across all aspects of the provision. Staff understand these shared values that place learners and apprentices at the centre of all activities. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and have clear strategic plans aligned to meet the needs and priorities of local businesses and the unemployed.
- Recently appointed assessors have all completed a comprehensive and well-crafted induction and recognise the shared values and high expectations of senior leaders; the new operational management team members have yet to undertake their induction programme. Performance reviews, introduced recently, report on a set of key performance indicators linked to the strategic direction. It is too early to make a

judgement on their impact.

- Leaders and managers have implemented an effective revised strategic plan with a clear focus on ensuring that the performance of current apprentices improves. Future plans include engaging with apprenticeship-levy-paying employers, and taking more care over the selection of employers to take on apprentices, to ensure good on-the-job support and training. Additionally, managers are planning the introduction of training for parents to improve their English and mathematical skills, so they can support their children in their schoolwork.
- Leaders' self-assessment of the provision is realistic and self-critical. Leaders identify broadly the strengths and areas for improvement well, and the quality improvement plan sets appropriate actions and targets to improve the quality of provision.

The governance of the provider

- Actions by board members have been slow in making a positive impact on outcomes for apprentices and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Board members have recently made positive interventions, resulting in a significant proportion of apprentices and employers re-engaging with their learning and starting to make better progress towards the completion of their qualifications.
- Board members now have an improved awareness of the performance of apprentices and learners, as a result of the introduction of more rigorous quality assurance arrangements. They now have better access to more accurate information about the performance of staff, apprentices and learners. Board members provide effective challenge to managers and have a deeper understanding of actions required to improve the quality of the provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding processes and procedures meet current requirements. Leaders hold appropriate records about staff training and the required employment checks. Apprentices and learners feel safe in their workplaces and classrooms and know to whom they should report any concerns. Managers have put in place appropriate safe recruitment processes and practices.
- The suitably qualified designated officer for safeguarding has established good relationships with external agencies, such as local authorities. Staff receive annual updating and training to ensure that they understand the threats from radicalisation and extremism and how to safeguard learners and apprentices. Staff, learners and apprentices have a good awareness of health and safety and how to stay safe in the classroom and workplace.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors do not take enough account of apprentices' and learners' knowledge and experience to plan learning that ensures the most able develop to their full potential. For example, a minority of apprentices with higher-level qualifications in mathematics and

English find these elements of the apprenticeship too easy; as a result, these apprentices, who are the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Tutors provide feedback on learners' work which is too brief, and not clear enough to help them understand how to improve the standard of their work or improve their skills. Verbal feedback is more effective in providing detailed information and discussion to ensure improvement. Tutors correct spelling and grammatical errors in adult learners' work, but assessors do not consistently do so for apprentices, and so they have a tendency to repeat the same mistakes.
- Tutors and assessors do not set learners and apprentices clear and meaningful job-related targets. Learning seldom challenges the most capable apprentices and learners to develop their understanding and skills beyond those expected for the qualification. Apprentices do not have access to additional qualifications to further enhance their employability.
- Staff do not use information, advice and guidance well enough to support learners and apprentices in making informed choices about their progress to further study or work. As a result, learners and apprentices do not receive enough information about potential career opportunities or further learning before they finish their courses.
- Tutors and assessors use their vocational and occupational experience well to reinforce learning in relevant vocational contexts. As a result, learners and apprentices develop good practical and vocational skills. For example, learners on 'Back to Work' programmes develop good interview skills, while apprentices on team-leading apprenticeships resolve conflict when dealing with difficult clients. Assessors do not involve employers when planning, monitoring and reviewing apprentices' learning. As a consequence, apprentices do not make the progress in the workplace of which they are capable.
- Tutors and assessors use a wide range of relevant and interesting resources, including technology, to support their teaching and to motivate learners and apprentices. As a result, they enjoy learning through the use of online learning activities, including resources to improve their English and mathematical skills. Apprentices enjoy working online with a choice of assessment papers in preparation for their examinations. Tutors use laptop computers and mobile telephones well with business administration apprentices to gain access to useful websites. For example, these apprentices make use of government websites to explore data protection legislation.
- Learners and apprentices appreciate the frequent and reliable assessments to show knowledge and levels of competence. Apprentices use a wide range of evidence in their portfolios to support the successful achievement of the requirements for their qualification. Tutors deploy suitable questioning techniques to check and extend learners' understanding. For example, warehousing and storage learners applied their mathematical skills to work out the total number of boxes stored in an area of a warehouse during a workplace practice session.
- Staff provide good support to enable individual learners and apprentices to overcome personal and practical difficulties. This help has led to improved confidence and well-being among learners.
- Managers have recently introduced effective coaching and very frequent visits for apprentices who are behind target and making slow progress. These changes have improved learners' achievement of their qualifications and led to better development of skills.

- Adult learners and apprentices, particularly in security settings, are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and know how to report concerns. For example, prompted by recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, security apprentices working in shopping precincts have a greater awareness of high-alert situations and potential threats. However, the majority of apprentices have a narrow understanding of the wider aspects of radicalisation and extremism and how they may relate to their work and their everyday lives.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- All learners and apprentices undertake an initial assessment to establish their starting points on entry to the programme, but tutors do not use this information to support the planning of learning and development. As a result, a small minority of learners and apprentices undertake qualifications at a lower level than they have already attained.
- The majority are not aware of their options for further education, training and employment to support their next steps, because the information, advice and guidance provided at the start of their programmes are too brief. Tutors and assessors do not ensure that the action plans agreed with learners and apprentices have sufficient detail to identify and promote the ongoing development of individuals.
- The large majority of learners and apprentices enjoy their learning. Until the recent changes of training providers and personnel, a significant minority remained dissatisfied with the personal and academic progress they were making. Since these changes, apprentices make better progress in their job roles and enjoy the more frequent visits by assessors to help them make good progress or catch up with their course work. Work produced by learners is of an expected standard.
- Learners gain relevant interpersonal and employability skills, such as improved timekeeping, better personal presentation and more effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills, as well as increased confidence and self-esteem. Apprentices improve their vocational skills in the workplace. The large majority of employers recognise and appreciate the practical skills apprentices develop and apply in their job roles.
- A significant minority of apprentices gain promotion and take on more responsibility in the workplace. For example, an apprentice is now taking a more central role at his company by training other staff. Learners and apprentices have an adequate awareness of the rights and responsibilities of employers, and of themselves as employees. Adult learners achieve relevant qualifications to enhance their future employment prospects.
- Adult learners and apprentices benefit from the swift response of staff to their specific personal support needs, and are able to overcome difficulties. For example, a learner preparing for a job interview received a supply of appropriate clothing to wear. Another learner, rehoused due to a family crisis, obtained essential furniture items. As a result, both learners experienced minimal disruption to their programmes.
- The majority of adult learners develop their English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well, as a result of the clear focus by staff on improving these skills. Apprentices develop sufficient skills in these subjects to pass their functional skills tests, but are not enabled to apply these skills in wider contexts, such as in the workplace.

- The majority of learners and apprentices have an appropriate awareness of safeguarding and how to stay safe, including the safe use of technology and appropriate health and safety practices in the workplace. They have a reasonable understanding of the dangers and risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and how to raise concerns if they do not feel safe. For example, an apprentice took appropriate action by reporting a spate of 'cold-calling' to vulnerable residents in a care setting. A significant minority of apprentices are not clear about the application of British values and the 'Prevent' duty to their daily lives, although they know what to do if they have concerns.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Overall achievement rates by apprentices, and their rates of achievement within agreed timescales, have fallen since the previous inspection and are low. Adult learners' achievement rates for qualifications have remained high since the previous inspection.
- The majority of adult learners do not progress into positive destinations, such as employment or further education and training. All apprentices are employed and the vast majority remain in employment at the end of their apprenticeships. Information about the number of apprentices moving into higher levels of study is incomplete and so provides only a partial view to managers and governors of the effectiveness of the provision.
- Tutors and assessors do not make good use of initial assessment and qualification attainment information in planning learning to meet the needs of individuals. This failure hampers progress, particularly for the most able learners and apprentices. However, staff are now targeting support more effectively and making more frequent visits; as a result, learners, and particularly apprentices, are making better progress and are more likely to complete their qualification frameworks.
- Managers monitor the achievement of groups by gender, ethnicity, disability and age. They have recently introduced an action plan, including impact measures for improving outcomes by particular groups of learners, but it is too early to judge whether this plan is making a difference.
- First-time pass rates are high for learners taking their functional skills tests in English and mathematics. However, a small minority of learners undertake qualifications at a lower level than their prior attainment. A significant minority of apprentices successfully complete functional skills qualifications at a level higher than framework requirements. However, a small minority of most-able learners undertake qualifications at a lower level than their prior attainment.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- TQWD provides adult learning programmes in English and mathematics from entry level 1 up to level 2, and vocational level 1 qualifications in employability and work skills, customer service, contact-centre operations and warehousing storage principles. Almost half of the 408 learners are on functional English and mathematics programmes, 219 are on programmes provided by subcontractors and 164 are taking vocational certificates offered through pre-employment training opportunities linked to job vacancies. A minority of learners undertake online level 2 qualifications in business administration, customer

service and team leading.

- A significant minority of learners do not receive independent information, advice and guidance based on their prior qualifications and experience. In these cases, English, mathematics and ICT qualifications are set at a lower level than they have already achieved. As a result, they are not able to take full advantage of their training and are not prepared well for their next steps or future career plans.
- Targets set for learners focus on worksheet or unit completion and not on identifying the new skills and behaviour that learners should develop while on their programmes. As a result, individuals cannot clearly see the progress they are making.
- In the majority of teaching and learning sessions, tutors have a good awareness of their learners and plan well to meet their individual needs. Tutors ask probing questions to develop learners' independent thinking and analytical skills. As a result, the majority of learners are able to develop good practical and social skills that will benefit them in further study or in the workplace. For example, during a lesson preparing learners for job interviews, they discussed the importance of non-verbal communication. A learner with a relative who has impaired hearing explained how he interpreted whether she was happy, angry or sad by her body language.
- Training programmes meet the needs of the learner, the local community and employers well. Staff use flexible ways of providing training, which effectively support hard-to-reach learners and those returning to training after some time away from the classroom. For example, distance learning courses enable learners to gain qualifications and move at their own pace into employment or further education.
- The majority of learners are positive about the impact that training has on their plans for employment or further education. They feel safe, have good support from tutors and enjoy their learning. They are positive about the confidence and general well-being they develop and believe in their potential to be successful.
- Learners develop and apply written English skills well. For example, learners identify improved use of the apostrophe and commas in their reports and emails. They learned to use vocational and technical terminology, such as 'disruptive' and 'integrative', during a session linked to the topic of negotiation.
- Staff ensure that themes relating to the 'Prevent' duty, British values, and equality and diversity are integrated well within employability topics. Staff generate effective discussions about radicalisation and extremism, gender issues, appropriate behaviour, and laws relating to the workplace.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- TQWD provide intermediate and advanced apprenticeships in customer service, management, team leading, business administration, health and social care, improving operational performance, and rail and passenger services. Of the 212 apprentices on programme, the majority are health and social care apprentices and 53 are apprentices in subcontracted provision. The vast majority of apprentices show good attitudes towards their clients and service users, and display appropriate professional behaviour and conduct in their various employment settings.
- Apprentices provide relevant information about their education and qualifications at the

start of their programmes, but staff do not use this to place them on an appropriate level of programme. For example, an intermediate health and social care apprentice with an existing grade C in GCSE English and a grade D in mathematics is undertaking level 1 functional skills in these subjects, so that their programme lacks purpose and aspiration.

- Information obtained at the start of apprenticeship programmes is not used to establish individual starting points and to plan learning and skills development. As a result, staff do not set targets which are tailored to the knowledge and skills needs of individual apprentices. Instead, they set targets which simply require apprentices to complete programme units by the end date of their apprenticeships. They do not challenge apprentices to make the individual progress to meet their capabilities or aspirations.
- Assessors ensure that their reviews of apprentices' progress are regular and flexible to meet the needs of individuals; however, assessors do not consistently involve employers. Consequently, assessors do not share valuable feedback given to apprentices with managers and supervisors, so that opportunities to plan workplace learning are lost. As a result, employers are not aware of the need to provide relevant activities and support in the workplace for apprentices to make good progress and achieve their framework.
- Staff do not ensure that apprentices have access to additional qualifications to enhance their value to their current and future employers. Until recently, staff did not routinely develop apprentices' wider English, mathematics and ICT skills.
- Recently appointed assessors use their extensive vocational skills and experience to plan learning sessions using a range of methods and resources that engage apprentices well, allowing them to make better progress. Apprentices removed from low-performing subcontracted provision are responding well to increased visits. As a result, they feel better supported and have rising expectations and confidence that they will complete their frameworks.
- Assessors provide detailed and constructive verbal feedback to apprentices during learning sessions and at reviews. Their written feedback on submitted work lacks detail to help apprentices bring about improvements. The extent to which they correct learners' grammatical and spelling errors is inconsistent, and so learners are prone to repeating the same mistakes in their written work.
- Assessors promote health and safety well and ensure that apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity within the workplace and in wider society. Although apprentices have a good understanding of what to do and whom to contact if they have any concerns about harassment and bullying, they have lesser appreciation of British values and the 'Prevent' duty, relating to radicalisation and extremism.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58168
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,234
MD	Jane Quarmby
Telephone number	01788 892050
Website	www.tqtraining.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	210	-	198	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	11	103	1	77	-	20		
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 and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	B-Skill, Vocational Staffing Solutions (VSS), Back to Work							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality and compliance, 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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Maura Cummins	Ofsted Inspector
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