

Inspire 2 Independence (i2i) Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

12–15 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too many apprentices do not complete their qualification, and too few complete their programme on time. The progress that current apprentices are making towards achieving their qualification is too slow.
- Directors and managers have not been successful in sustaining the previously good standard of provision. Quality improvement arrangements are not sufficiently ambitious.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard.
- Trainers and assessors do not take sufficient account of learners' and apprentices' starting points to provide challenging work. As a result, too many apprentices and a small proportion of adult learners do not achieve their full potential.
- Too many apprentices and adult learners do not extend their skills in mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Assessment and monitoring of progress lack rigour. Too often, targets and feedback do not ensure that apprentices and learners have a clear understanding of the specific skills that they need to develop.
- Too many apprentices and a small proportion of adult learners do not receive good information, advice and careers guidance to prepare them for their next steps in learning or a career.

The provider has the following strengths

- A high proportion of adult learners achieve their qualification and progress to employment or higher levels of study.
- Most apprentices and learners develop good English and work-related skills that enhance their employability and career opportunities.
- The quality of individual and specialist support, particularly for learners with complex needs, is effective.
- Directors and managers work very well with regional and local partners to provide training and programmes that fulfil the specific needs and priorities of their respective regions.
- Directors and staff promote a culture of pride, respect and tolerance. Staff, learners and apprentices demonstrate these fundamental values well.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Inspire 2 Independence (i2i) Ltd is an independent learning provider founded in 2004 with a head office in York. In addition to training funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the provider acts as a subcontractor delivering the Department for Work and Pensions work programme. The skills and employability division of the organisation supports apprenticeships in retailing, administration, customer services, team leading, management, employment-related services, care and warehousing. These take place in Yorkshire and Humberside, the north west, the north east, East Midlands and West Midlands. Short qualifications at levels 1 and 2 are offered in retail, customer service and employability programmes. Inspire 2 Independence (i2i) Ltd works with a range of local and national partnerships to contribute to the wider prosperity and regeneration of some of the most economically deprived areas in the country.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievements of apprentices and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that trainers and assessors:
 - plan and use activities that take account of apprentices' and learners' starting points and provide challenge so that they achieve their potential
 - improve the monitoring of apprentices' and learners' progress, set clear and helpful targets which link on- and off-the-job training for apprentices and recognise the career aspirations of adult learners to help them make at least good progress
 - provide clear and helpful feedback so that apprentices and learners have a good understanding of the progress they are making, the skills they are developing and what they need to do to improve and achieve
 - improve the development of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills so that a greater proportion of apprentices and learners improve their skills from their starting points and achieve functional skills qualifications at a higher level
 - gain English, mathematics and ICT qualifications at a sufficiently high level and develop their skills so that they are confident to teach these subjects.
- Directors and managers should:
 - closely review apprentices' progress against expected targets and take prompt and effective action where progress is behind target, so that a higher proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications within their planned end dates
 - strengthen quality improvement arrangements to ensure that priorities for improvement are clear, time frames are challenging and the progress in implementing strategies to improve is monitored and evaluated closely
 - strengthen the information, advice and careers guidance that apprentices and learners receive to ensure that they are well prepared for their next steps in learning

or their career.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Directors and managers have not sustained the previously good standard of provision, or been fully effective in addressing all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have not been successful in reducing the significant proportion of apprentices who make slow progress on frameworks including business administration, management and customer services. Managers and assessors do not take swift enough action to support apprentices who are at risk of not completing their qualification within the planned time.
- Directors and managers do not plan and monitor improvement actions effectively enough. They monitor progress towards completing actions identified in the quality improvement plan. However, the objectives in the plan are not ambitious and lack challenging deadlines. As a result, it is not clear whether progress has been made towards successfully improving areas of weakness. The self-assessment process makes appropriate use of apprentices', learners' and employers' views to formulate judgements.
- Directors and managers do not monitor closely enough the development of apprentices' and adult learners' mathematics and ICT skills. They have established clear strategic objectives to increase the proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve English, mathematics and ICT qualifications at a higher level, and to develop their skills in these subjects. However, not all trainers and assessors are sufficiently skilled and confident to teach these subjects.
- Senior staff manage the performance of their staff effectively and support their development through a well-structured training programme. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. However, staff turnover and recruitment problems in specific areas of the country have resulted in disruptions to training and assessment. These have slowed apprentices' progress. Trainers and assessors have been recruited successfully for customer services and business administration apprenticeship programmes, and a higher proportion of apprentices now remain on their programme in these areas.
- A recently implemented and well-considered restructure of the organisation has improved the arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observations and review meetings with staff focus attention on the delivery and assessment of learning and the progress of individuals. However, they have not yet had sufficient impact on improving the quality of training, particularly for apprentices.
- Directors and managers work effectively with employers and partners. They work well with Jobcentre Plus and the Department for Work and Pensions to design a curriculum that meets the needs of most learners and apprentices well. The range and content of programmes fulfil the requirements of employers and help address local, regional and national employment needs. Directors successfully work with large employers to provide opportunities for the long-term unemployed in some of the most deprived areas of the country to develop their work skills. This supports adult learners well in preparing them to return to the labour market.
- Directors and managers manage the performance of subcontractors effectively. The quality of subcontracted training has improved, and a high proportion of apprentices

following programmes with subcontractors complete their programmes successfully.

- Directors, managers and staff develop a culture of pride, respect and tolerance which embraces the strategic values of the organisation. Staff are strongly committed to the corporate aims of improving employability skills and career prospects in the retail and business sectors. These behaviours are demonstrated well throughout the organisation.

The governance of the provider

- Directors have set an ambitious strategic vision for the development of the company based on a sophisticated understanding of the training needs and skill shortage sectors across different regions of the country. They are familiar with the experiences of their learners and apprentices, and use this information effectively to hold managers and subcontractors to account for the quality of the provision.
- The changes that directors have made to the structure and staffing of the organisation have not yet had sufficient impact on important aspects of their work, and some weaknesses from the last inspection remain.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Directors and staff place a high priority on promoting the safety and welfare of learners and apprentices. Apprentices demonstrate safe working practices at work. Learners and apprentices report that they feel safe in learning. They have a good understanding of safeguarding and know to whom they should report safeguarding issues if they arise.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures for staff, learners and apprentices are used well and are fit for purpose. Safe recruitment practice is followed, and managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on staff. All staff have received enhanced checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service, and managers record these in an up-to-date central register.
- Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding issues, such as child protection, honour-based crime, radicalisation and extremism, to ensure that they can spot early signs of concern. The safeguarding team, under the leadership of the designated safeguarding officer, has good links with other agencies to which to refer learners and apprentices where appropriate. For example, the team ensures that learners and apprentices have access to support for homelessness and mental health issues.
- Directors and managers have implemented a 'Prevent' duty action plan after conducting a full risk assessment. They ensure that learners and apprentices receive regular training about how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, many apprentices and learners do not yet demonstrate a sufficiently good understanding of how to protect themselves from these risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard. In too many instances, trainers and assessors do not use learners' and apprentices' starting points sufficiently well to provide challenging work in sessions. Too often, progress meetings do not review the skills that apprentices develop from on-the-job training and do not challenge apprentices to think beyond the basic requirements of their assessments. Adult learners do not have the opportunity to progress through workbooks at a challenging pace or complete additional activities linked to their career aim. As a result, too many apprentices and a small proportion of adult learners find the work too easy and do not achieve their full potential.
- Assessment of learning lacks sufficient rigour. It focuses too much on the requirements of the qualification and does not cover the specific skills that learners and apprentices need to develop to do their job well or gain employment in their chosen area. Too many trainers and assessors do not use information from assessment sufficiently well enough. The assessment of apprentices' prior learning and vocational experience is not effective enough. A large proportion of apprentices have been employed in their vocational area for a number of years and are not encouraged to start their programme at a higher level. As a result, too many apprentices and a small number of adult learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In too many instances, trainers and assessors do not provide feedback that is clear or helpful in identifying the skills that apprentices and learners have developed, or that provides guidance on the skills needed to improve further. Trainers and assessors do not set sufficiently ambitious personal targets for apprentices to make good progress towards achievement. The personal objectives for adult learners are insufficiently precise, and monitoring of progress towards achieving these objectives is not rigorous enough.
- Too many trainers and assessors do not improve learners' and apprentices' mathematics and ICT skills sufficiently well. Apprentices are not routinely challenged to extend their learning in these essential skills beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Adult learners have limited opportunities to study functional skills mathematics qualifications.
- Trainers and assessors develop most learners' and apprentices' English skills very well, resulting in a very high proportion developing improved communication skills and the written skills necessary for their work roles. Apprentices undertake additional projects such as financial management reports and marketing campaigns. Adult learners develop effective job search skills which support them to apply for jobs successfully and attend employment interviews with greater confidence and improved communication skills.
- Trainers and assessors have good industry knowledge and experience in their subjects, and they skilfully engage employers in planning apprentices' development and effective on-the-job training. As a result, employers value the contribution that apprentices make to the workplace. Adult learners, particularly those furthest away from gaining employment, enjoy their learning and develop essential employment knowledge, specialist vocabulary and an understanding of what to expect in a broad range of job roles.
- Trainers and assessors promote learners' and apprentices' awareness of equality and diversity and the impact of bullying effectively in learning activities. For example, learners and apprentices discuss the provision of gender-neutral toilet facilities in the workplace and the implications of Sunday opt-out contracts for staff in the retail sector.
- Support for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Trainers

assess learners' individual support needs at the start of their programme and ensure that learners receive support quickly. Out-of-class support is effective and learners are provided with specialist support in an accessible format which helps to improve their literacy skills. A very high proportion of learners who need extra support complete their course successfully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners' and apprentices' behaviour is good. At induction, trainers and assessors quickly establish a good working relationship and set high standards of acceptable behaviour. As a result, the majority of adult learners develop a positive attitude towards achieving full-time employment, and most apprentices demonstrate high standards of behaviour in the workplace.
- Adult learners and apprentices develop a good range of skills that are important in the workplace, such as teamwork, customer service, problem-solving and interacting well with others. They take pride in their work and develop improved social skills as a result of their training. Learners and apprentices are prepared well for the demands of work.
- Learners and apprentices have a clear understanding of safeguarding and the safety requirements they need in the workplace. For example, apprentices confidently discuss the dangers of frequent purchases of over-the-counter medicines, the consumption of alcohol by employees when using machinery in a warehouse and the specific requirements for safe lone-care work.
- Most learners and apprentices confidently apply their knowledge of living in modern Britain in a range of contexts. For example, apprentices discuss the importance of democracy in social media use and their concerns over false media stories. Adult learners understand the importance of fundamental British values and they know why these are important. Learners respond well to very committed and professional staff who model these values every day. Learners develop behaviours appropriate for work and understand why it is important to manage their own feelings and express their views in a professional manner. They are polite and respect the views of others.
- Pastoral support is effective. Staff use outside agencies extensively and support learners who have personal issues to overcome substantial barriers to their learning. For example, referrals to domestic violence support and local authority services help learners to remain on programme and achieve their qualification.
- A small proportion of adult learners benefit from purposeful work placement activities with large employers, such as car retailers. This supports learners to practise skills in a range of customer service and administration work roles, to develop greater understanding of the skills required and to appreciate how employees contribute to their workplace.
- Learners and apprentices do not have an in-depth knowledge of how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, or relate the risks to their everyday lives and local context. Despite training, learners and apprentices do not develop their understanding beyond a basic level.
- Too many apprentices and a small proportion of adult learners do not benefit from good information, advice and careers guidance. Employability programmes have strong links with Jobcentre Plus managers and adult learners receive information on the programmes

on offer, such as retail and customer services, to help them plan for their next step. However, a small proportion of learners, particularly those who do not aim to gain employment in the retail sector, do not receive specific careers advice in relation to their personal career aim. Too many apprentices are on programmes that confirm their existing vocational knowledge and skills, and are not challenged to follow programmes at a higher level.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have implemented a range of improvement initiatives that have resulted in improvements in adult learners' achievement but have not brought about sufficient improvement in apprentices' achievements or in their progress. Too many apprentices do not achieve their apprenticeship qualification, and the proportion who achieve their qualification within the expected time remains low.
- Too many apprentices do not make the progress expected of them based on their existing skills when they start their course. Approximately two thirds of current apprentices are not making the progress expected towards achieving their qualification. Directors' internal reporting identifies that the achievement for apprenticeship programmes remains low and consistently below that of similar providers.
- Apprenticeship achievement is not consistently good across apprenticeship levels and subject areas. Approximately a third of all apprentices follow programmes where performance is too low for the subject and level, and is below that of similar providers.
- Progression to a higher level within the apprenticeship programmes is low. Less than one fifth of all apprentices move on to programmes at a higher level. However, many apprentices gain extra employment hours and additional responsibilities as a result of their training through, for example, becoming first aiders at work and taking responsibility for security and safety checks.
- The achievement rate for adult learners is high. It is above the rate of similar providers, and the proportion of adult learners who complete their programme within their planned time has improved. Adult learners study work-related qualifications at levels 1 and 2. These qualifications prepare them well to enter jobs in the retail and service industries.
- Progression for a high proportion of adult learners who have been out of work for long periods of time is improving. More than half of adult learners move on to higher levels of study or employment, of which a fifth gain sustained employment over a two-year period. Directors and managers monitor closely the progression of adult learners and use this effectively to design employability programmes for Jobcentre Plus and Department for Work and Pension partners.
- Directors and managers have successfully narrowed considerable achievement gaps between different groups of learners. The performance of male learners overall has improved and is in line with that of female learners. Achievement rates for apprentices on subcontracted programmes have improved and are above those of similar providers.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, 143 adult learners were on short employability programmes. Most gain qualifications at level 1 or level 2 in English and mathematics, business administration, retail, and child development and well-being.
- Learners make good progress in developing their English skills to a higher level. Staff effectively support adult learners to develop their English and work skills such as curriculum vitae writing, interview techniques and online job searches. The standards of work are high, and a large proportion of learners progress to sustained employment or higher levels of study.
- Learners benefit from programmes that have a clearly defined purpose of developing employability skills and meeting the needs of local and regional job markets. Directors and managers direct funding well to provide programmes for the most disadvantaged members of the community. Many learners have been out of work for a substantial period of time or have never had work. They gain great personal benefit from attending sessions and progress well.
- Most adult learners develop good personal and social skills, including significantly increased confidence, and this prepares them well for employment. Learners take great pride in their new-found confidence and in their work. A small proportion of adult learners are on programmes that are too easy for them academically. However, they benefit from the increased levels of confidence and social skills that they gain on the programme. Learners very often begin their programmes lacking the skills they need to secure and sustain employment, and attending significantly improves these skills and thus increases their potential to gain employment.
- Support for learners is good. Learners with complex needs make good progress in overcoming barriers to learning and moving towards greater independence and employability. Learners describe in detail how attending classes has increased their self-esteem and hope for the future. Trainers provide effective individual support that enables learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. For example, learners with dyslexia are provided with extra resources in an accessible format and have extra support sessions to help them to improve their literacy skills. Learners very much appreciate the care and attention they receive.
- Learners do not have sufficiently specific targets that identify and help to develop the skills that they need. Trainers set too many targets that are the same for all learners on a programme. Targets usually relate to the completion of the qualification rather than helping learners to achieve individual career goals.
- Learners do not make consistently good progress in developing their mathematics and ICT skills or achieving further qualifications to help them apply for specific jobs. Learners report that they need more help in developing ICT skills in order to be effective employees, consumers and citizens. Directors and managers have recently designed new programmes that include opportunities to improve learners' functional skills. However, it is too early to see the impact of these sessions.
- Too many trainers do not use a broad enough range of activities to help learners of different abilities in the same lessons make the progress expected according to their potential. All learners use standardised workbooks that assess their learning. Too few trainers give clear and helpful feedback on marked work that supports learners to

improve or challenges them to complete more complex tasks.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The provider has 275 apprentices of whom 21 are aged 16 to 18 and 254 are aged 19 and over. Apprentices follow a range of intermediate-, advanced- and higher-level framework programmes in business administration, health and social care, child development, and retail and commercial enterprise. The provision meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. No apprentices are following standards programmes.
- Too many apprentices have experienced disruption to their learning because of changes to their assessor, staff recruitment problems or because assessors do not visit them frequently enough. The recruitment of additional trainers and assessors has not yet had sufficient impact on improving the progress that apprentices make. Too many apprentices, including those currently in learning, make slow progress in achieving their qualification.
- Most assessors do not use information gathered from assessment sufficiently well to plan personalised learning and help apprentices to achieve their potential. Assessment methods such as witness testimony, observations and professional discussion focus on meeting the requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Too few apprentices are challenged to think beyond the basic requirements of their assessments.
- Too many apprentices are not making consistently good progress in developing their mathematics and ICT skills at a higher level in learning sessions and through feedback. Apprentices gain the necessary mathematics and ICT skills to achieve the functional skills elements of their framework but trainers and assessors do not emphasise sufficiently the importance of mathematics and ICT within the context of the workplace.
- Initial advice and careers guidance are not effective enough, and do not provide apprentices with realistic plans for their future. Trainers and assessors do not pay sufficient attention to what apprentices can already do. Consequently, apprentices are not challenged to develop higher-level skills and knowledge. Too few apprentices progress to higher-level programmes.
- Directors and managers develop apprenticeship programmes that meet local and economic priorities. They work well with large employers and subcontractors to ensure that apprentices can access learning in a location and vocational area that best meets their needs.
- A high proportion of apprentices following programmes with subcontractors make good progress and achieve well.
- Apprentices are confident, conduct themselves well and attend work and training sessions regularly. They develop the skills and behaviours that they need to contribute positively to the businesses where they work. Many employers consider them an important part of business growth and future planning. For example, within the retail sector, employers support apprentices to develop management skills by following higher-level team leader programmes before moving on to more senior roles within the company.
- A very high proportion of apprentices speak confidently about the skills and knowledge that they have developed on their programme and are able to recall new skills. For

example, business management apprentices manage staff more confidently and produce important documents and invoices for customers, and retail apprentices develop their understanding of consumer legislation. Apprentices have realistic plans for their futures and feel well supported by their trainers and assessors to achieve their personal goals.

- Most employers support their apprentices well. Employers are involved well in planning and reviewing their on-the-job training. In many cases, training is directly linked to apprentices' job roles and supports their development as employees. Employers provide good support to trainers and assessors to plan apprenticeship programmes that meet their needs well.

Provider details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 58472 |
| Type of provider | Independent learning provider |
| Age range of learners | 16+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 1,188 |
| Principal/CEO | Natalie Keating |
| Telephone number | 01904 606 000 |
| Website | www.enteri2i.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 | |
|---|---|-----|----------|-----|---------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships) | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ |
| | - | 28 | - | 95 | - | 20 | - | - |
| Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | | |
| | 14 | 132 | 7 | 98 | - | 24 | | |
| 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 | - | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | Yorkshire Fitness and Leisure Training Works (NW) Ltd | | | | | | | |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the group managing 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

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tracey Mace-Akroyd, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Charles Searle | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Ken Merry | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Bob Hamp | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Rachel Angus | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Rebecca Clare | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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