

NLT Training Services Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

31 October – 3 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Not enough apprentices and study programme learners make good or better progress; a high proportion fail to achieve their planned qualifications or do so beyond the agreed date.
- Few study programme learners achieve their career aims by entering employment, training or further education; many leave the programme early.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate and fail to ensure that apprentices and learners succeed and attain fully.
- Off-the-job training fails to focus sufficiently on developing apprentices' understanding of engineering principles; this slows apprentices' progress and limits their usefulness to employers.
- Managers have not provided staff with the training and development opportunities that would effectively enhance their professional practice.
- Apprentices and learners do not have an appropriate understanding of fundamental British values; they have a weak understanding of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism.
- Training officers do not work sufficiently well with employers so that apprentices get the most out of on- and off-the-job training; employers are not routinely involved in reviewing apprentices' progress and setting improvement targets.
- Directors' scrutiny and evaluation of leaders' and managers' performance fails to ensure that all study programme learners and apprentices receive high-quality training.
- Senior leaders and managers have not implemented effective quality improvement and performance management arrangements that lead to raised standards or fully resolve the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have very effectively exploited their links with employers to plan a range of apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of local and regional industries.
- Where apprentices complete their programme they secure sustained employment and often progress to the next level of apprenticeship, particularly in engineering.

Full report

Information about the provider

- NLT Training Services Ltd (NLT) is a registered charity delivering training across the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside regions. NLT has a training site near Chesterfield that includes an engineering technical training centre. A centre in Scunthorpe offers classroom facilities. A very small number of learners undertake training with a subcontractor.
- The large majority of apprenticeship training is for the engineering and manufacturing sectors. Non-engineering apprenticeships include business administration, customer service, accountancy, warehousing and distribution and leadership and management. In addition, NLT offers study programmes at the Chesterfield site under the title of Evolve. The programmes focus on helping school leavers and young people who have become disengaged from learning to develop their work- and engineering-related skills. Study programmes are offered at levels 1 and 2 in engineering.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, managers and directors should significantly increase the proportion of apprentices and learners who achieve and complete their programme within the planned time by:
 - raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to inspire all learners to achieve fully through participation in well-planned personalised learning programmes
 - effectively linking on- and off-the-job training so all learners make good or better progress
 - setting and using challenging targets for all learners based on an accurate assessment of their starting point
 - improving attendance on study programmes.
- Leaders, managers and directors should quickly raise standards by:
 - improving performance management using appropriately demanding targets for all staff aligned to clear job roles; rigorous monitoring of target achievement should result in swift and effective actions to address performance shortfalls
 - ensuring that all training officers receive relevant training and development and use it to improve their professional practice
 - implementing effective quality improvement arrangements, guided by the use of a detailed and ambitious action plan that accelerates significantly the pace of improvement
 - introducing rigorous quality assurance of taught sessions by direct observation that focuses on learning and the experience of the apprentices and learners; associated training officers' improvement action plans should lead to enhanced and sustained high-quality learning experiences
 - ensuring that training officers use effective strategies to improve apprentices' and

learners' understanding of fundamental British values and enable them to protect themselves from the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism.

- Directors should apply an unremitting and rigorous scrutiny of leaders and managers to validate that implemented improvement actions are permanently raising standards for all learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, NLT has been through a period of prolonged change. Directors and senior managers indicated to inspectors that towards the end of 2015 and early in 2016, they had identified very significant performance shortfalls. The current chief executive officer, appointed in late 2017, is ambitious for the company and the success of apprentices and learners. Under her guidance, directors and senior managers have started to identify key actions to improve standards. Although the team has made a good start in reviewing the provision and implementing a number of changes, it is too soon to judge their impact.
- Senior leaders, managers and directors are not taking sufficient action to ensure that learners on the study programmes and apprentices receive high-quality training. Leaders, managers and training officers do not have high enough expectations for learners and apprentices.
- Performance management is weak. Directors and leaders do not effectively evaluate and systematically manage the performance of all staff. Members of staff are not fully accountable for their actions. Managers fail to set and monitor appropriate performance targets for staff. Directors and leaders have not identified underperformance quickly enough and taken swift action to eliminate it. NLT have been slow to reverse declining achievement rates. Managers appropriately manage the performance of the subcontractor.
- Strategic and operational management are inadequate. Decision-making is uncoordinated. Managers have not provided staff with clearly defined job roles. The planning and prioritisation of training, to ensure that all staff are more effective in their role and prepared for promotion, is not effective. The training and performance review of managers to enhance their managerial capabilities is weak.
- Leaders have not eliminated all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. For example, in classroom-based sessions, learners are often not effectively engaged in learning. Training officers do not routinely challenge the most able learners with work that helps them achieve to their full potential. Most written feedback on learners' work is insufficiently detailed and training officers do not routinely correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. This delays learners' progress in achieving their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers have made insufficient progress in assessing accurately the quality of the current provision. They have been too slow to produce and implement a detailed action plan to bring about the necessary improvements. Leaders and managers have not raised the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly enough. As a result, learners' and apprentices' progress is slow.
- Classroom observers place little emphasis on judging the quality of learning and the progress learners and apprentices are making. Observers do not clearly identify key strengths and weaknesses of taught sessions. Managers do not ensure that action plans for training officers are routinely complied with following observations. They do not follow up systematically the agreed actions to eliminate identified weaknesses and improve the quality of the provision. Training officers do not evaluate thoroughly how effectively they manage learning and enable apprentices and learners to progress.

- Although training officers are occupationally skilled and vocationally qualified, they have received insufficient training to teach English and mathematics confidently and competently. Leaders and managers do not ensure that training officers are able to identify and correct learners' and apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Consequently, many learners repeat the same errors.
- Leaders and managers have recently reviewed and improved the provision of information, advice and guidance. For example, all learners now receive more pre-enrolment information, advice and guidance. As a result, the number of early leavers has reduced considerably, though for study programmes the rate is still high. Leaders and managers have placed insufficient emphasis on ensuring that all staff who provide information, advice and guidance are appropriately qualified and competent.
- Leaders and managers have worked very effectively with employers to plan a range of apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of local and regional industries. However, curriculum planning has not ensured that all elements of the study programme are fully in place. Managers recognise that for many learners, participation in another programme, such as a traineeship, would be more appropriate.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements require improvement. Directors understand the importance of supporting and challenging the senior management team. Directors meet regularly. They give justifiable attention to monitoring and maintaining the company's financial stability. However, directors do not hold leaders and managers to account fully for the inadequate quality of study programmes and apprenticeship training.
- Directors had received inaccurate information in 2015/16. As a result, they were unaware of the significant performance shortfall that had arisen during that time. Consequently, they were insufficiently active in identifying and challenging weak performance and actions that could lead to reputational damage. The reports that directors now receive are appropriate to inform effective scrutiny.
- Directors are aware of the need to increase the number of directors and they have identified suitable additional board members.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers give the protection of learners and apprentices a high priority. They follow safe recruitment practices when appointing new staff. Existing staff are subject to appropriate vetting every three years. Training for designated safeguarding officers and staff is appropriate.
- Senior managers take swift and effective action when staff, employers, apprentices or learners suspect or express a concern. Managers maintain detailed records of incidents. They follow up systematically all cases until they are resolved satisfactorily. Managers have good links with relevant local agencies and make referrals when needed. The range of safeguarding-related policies and procedures is good. Employers understand their responsibilities towards apprentices in ensuring that they stay safe both in the workplace and in wider society.

- The large majority of learners know how to refer any concerns to a training officer or one of the four designated safeguarding officers. However, apprentices' and learners' understanding of fundamental British values is often underdeveloped. They have a weak appreciation of how to protect themselves from the threats posed by extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Not all training officers have sufficiently high aspirations for apprentices and learners. Training officers often do not take sufficient account of the different needs of the apprentices and learners during taught sessions. Consequently, progress for many is slow. In a few cases, training officers fail to arrive and begin sessions on time.
- Training officers do not set consistently detailed targets for apprentices and learners at assessment and progress reviews. The objectives they set are often too descriptive and lack challenging deadlines to accelerate progress. This contributes to apprentices' and learners' weak understanding of what they need to do next and slows their progress. Training officers fail to establish learners' targets early in their study programme to allow for effective monitoring and achievement by the planned end date.
- Training officers do not correct routinely spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors made by apprentices in their written work. Not all apprentices have a good enough understanding of which aspects of their written English they need to develop further. Much work completed by apprentices is not marked and feedback is not given. In a minority of cases, written feedback is constructive and helps apprentices to improve.
- Apprentices' off-the-job training fails to focus sufficiently on developing their understanding of engineering principles, for example how the structure of materials responds to cutting and shaping. Apprentices are making inadequate progress in mastering the use of computer numerical controls, as specialist training officers are not in post.
- Training officers fail to identify apprentices' and learners' starting points effectively and use this information to plan appropriately personalised learning programmes. Consequently, apprentices and learners do not achieve their qualifications within the planned time. Too many apprentices and learners leave early without completing their training.
- In theory lessons, training officers do not set work that engages and stimulates all study programme learners to succeed. In particular, training officers do not challenge sufficiently the most able learners by setting suitably taxing work and completion deadlines. Consequently, learners become bored and fail to build adequately on their previous learning. They fail to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Training officers do not structure and complete all apprentices' and study programme learners' portfolios so they can effectively manage their learning. Consequently, too few apprentices and learners use their portfolios well enough to prove their competencies and achievement.
- Training officers provide apprentices with appropriate oral feedback that highlights how they can improve. However, training officers' written records of this feedback following assessment do not correspond consistently with their oral feedback. Consequently, apprentices do not have an accurate record of their feedback to use as guidance.

- Training officers plan activities thoroughly in study programme sessions to develop learners' practical skills effectively. For example, learners on the electrical programme are able to connect competently a two-way electrical socket. Learners make components to the correct levels of tolerance and meet industry standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Apprentices' and learners' personal development during their training is weak. They do not improve adequately their work-related behaviours and skills such as effective team working and leadership. Particularly for apprentices, personal growth is often a consequence of attending the workplace rather than the training programme. For example, an employer successfully helped an apprentice take on progressively more responsible tasks to overcome her lack of confidence and low self-esteem.
- Apprentices' awareness of how to improve their personal well-being is inadequate. Training officers do not reinforce sufficiently apprentices' appreciation of the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Apprentices' and learners' poor learning experiences demotivate them. Consequently, they do not value fully the training programme and how it contributes to their personal improvement and career aims achievement.
- Apprentices' and learners' understanding of fundamental British values is insufficiently developed. Their awareness of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism is poor. They do not all have an appropriate understanding of how to apply their learning on these topics to their everyday lives.
- Attendance at taught study programmes sessions is too low. Managers have introduced strategies to improve participation rates but these have yet to be successful. Not all learners have an appropriate understanding of the importance of good attendance and punctuality as valuable employability skills. Apprentices' attendance is generally good, particularly at the workplace. Behaviour in classrooms and communal areas is good.
- Apprentices and study programme learners develop a good understanding of appropriate health and safety practice. They demonstrate the relevant application of this learning by safely undertaking workshop tasks.
- Learners feel safe. Most are aware of how to report any concerns they may have about possible risks to themselves or others. They have confidence that any anxieties raised will be taken seriously and appropriately dealt with.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- Apprentices' and learners' achievement rates declined in 2015/16 and again in 2016/17. Apprentices' achievement rates are not high enough. A large proportion of apprentices have not completed their apprenticeship by the planned end dates, many of which were unrealistic. The rate at which study programme learners achieve their main qualification is very low, and particularly so for engineering at level 1.
- The proportion of apprentices and learners who are not making adequate progress in completing their qualifications is high. Many are not on target to achieve their individual

learning goals and complete by the agreed date. Managers' tracking of progress does not include appropriately up-to-date information on current achievement against targets. Plans to address this, through the introduction of an electronic portfolio process, have yet to be realised.

- The rate at which study programme learners successfully progress to further education, training or employment is very low. A significant number of learners leave or are dismissed from the programme without achieving all their learning goals.
- Study programmes learners do not develop their English and mathematics skills sufficiently well when compared to their starting points. Learners' GCSE English and/or mathematics pass rates are low. Achievement is high for the relatively small numbers of learners who study English and mathematics functional skills at level 2. Achievement at level 1 is low.
- Apprentices make appropriate progress in developing their written English skills. Apprentices' application of relevant mathematics skills to practical engineering problems is good. However, apprentices often do not commence functional skills training in English and mathematics early enough in their programme. This delays completion of the apprenticeship.
- Too often, apprentices only produce a good or better standard of work because of the training they receive from their employer. The standard of learners' work on study programmes is not good enough. Where learners take pride in their work, it develops their skills and knowledge well. For example, a learner enthusiastically applied his metalwork and welding skills to the creation of a metal poppy as a gift for a relative. This helped the learner to understand the significance of the national Armistice events and their associated history.
- No significant achievement gaps exist between different groups of learners. Managers' actions have resolved the disparity between the achievement of the main cohort and the small number of apprentices who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Most apprentices who complete their programme secure sustained employment. They often progress to the next level of apprenticeship, particularly in engineering.
- Within the previous year, a significant number of apprentices left their training due to circumstances beyond the provider's control. For example, apprentices did not continue in training because of redundancy or dismissal by their employer. This was particularly the case within the engineering sector. Managers have supported apprentices appropriately to find alternative career routes. Retention of current apprentices is high.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- NLT currently has 45 learners enrolled on study programmes in mechanical and electrical engineering and fabrication and welding. Approximately one third of learners are studying at level 1 with the remainder at level 2.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are weak. A significantly high number of learners make slow progress or leave without achieving their learning goals.

- Managers do not ensure that training officers review the progress of their learners early enough. Training officers do not inform all learners adequately of the progress they are making. Consequently, learners are slow to identify, prioritise and implement improvement actions.
- Learners' development of accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and their use of specific terminology in workshops are weak. Training officers do not correct learners' written work systematically so that learners know how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Most learners do not make the expected gains in English skills compared to their starting points. At the previous inspection, learners' English skills were underdeveloped and this is still the case. Few training officers plan learning activities that effectively develop learners' written or spoken English in lessons.
- Learners do not make adequate gains in understanding the rules of mathematics. However, where they have mastered appropriate techniques they effectively apply their newly acquired skills to solving engineering tasks.
- Study programmes, particularly at level 1, do not provide sufficient progression routes to further study for the large majority of learners. Comparatively few learners achieve the level of English or mathematics necessary to meet the entry criteria at level 2. In 2016/17, learners' progression to a higher level of study, employment or apprenticeships was low.
- The information, advice and guidance learners receive do not prepare them sufficiently to understand what the programme entails. Interventions to smooth learners' transitions to alternative career or study options are not always timely.
- Where they would benefit from it, learners do not participate in sufficient work experience or work-related activity. Plans are not yet fully in place to increase the number of work experience opportunities for current learners. Few learners participate in extracurricular activities to develop their wider personal and employment-related skills.
- Learners demonstrate a good awareness of health and safety and work to industry standards in workshops. For example, they understand the correct personal protective equipment to wear when carrying out engineering activities.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Currently 209 learners are undertaking an apprenticeship and make up 83% of the provision. Ninety-one are at intermediate level, 112 at advanced level and six at higher level. The large majority of the apprentices are on engineering programmes with smaller numbers following programmes that include accountancy, business administration, finance and warehousing.
- The standard of apprentices' theoretical learning is inadequate. Training officers do not focus sufficiently on developing apprentices' understanding of engineering principles, which is often weak.
- Training officers provide employers with inadequate guidance on how to support apprentices so they achieve their programme aims at an appropriate pace. Employers make an inadequate contribution to the establishment of apprentices' targets or

workplace assessments. As a result, the rate at which a significant proportion of apprentices develop skills and knowledge is poor. Training officers fail to exploit workplace activities fully so that apprentices can practise and apply learning they have developed at the training centre. Too few employers have an effective understanding of the progress that apprentices are making.

- Apprentices do not consistently receive adequate assessment feedback on completed work to enable them to make rapid improvements. They are frequently unaware of how or when training officers will assess their completed work. Training officers have delayed or cancelled assessment appointments. This has slowed apprentices' programme completion and reduced their motivation to learn.
- Apprentices' ability to apply their understanding of fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty to their lives requires improvement. Few apprentices have developed a comprehensive understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.
- Apprentices work in good-quality environments that include an appropriate range and standard of equipment. Employers provide apprentices with relevant training to meet business needs, rather than as a planned contribution to apprenticeship completion. This training helps apprentices become a more valued employee. For example, an advanced apprentice can now use the appropriate techniques and tools to carry out coded welding to industry standards. Another can interpret circuitry for crane control panels, enabling him to carry out maintenance and full installations.
- The small number of business administration apprentices at the Scunthorpe centre benefit from good, constructive feedback. This effectively assists them to understand what they need to do to make more rapid progress and achieve higher standards. It is also helpful in informing them how to improve their written English.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53535
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	440
CEO	Sarah Temperton
Telephone number	01246 206520
Website	www.nlt-training.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+
	10	–	33	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	68	23	78	34	1	5		
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:	The Priory Academies							

Information about this inspection

The head of operations, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment reports and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and scrutinised learners' work at the training centre and in the workplace. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Nigel Bragg, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector

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