

Appris Charity Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

14–17 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and trustees have taken effective action to resolve the majority of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection; this has resulted in marked improvements in the quality of provision for apprentices and the outcomes that they achieve.
- Leaders and staff maintain very effective partnerships with employers and meet workforce training and development needs well.
- Before they join their programme, prospective apprentices experience highly effective advice and guidance that places them with employers and on programmes that meet their needs and career ambitions.
- Employers provide high levels of support and challenging work that enable apprentices and adult learners to improve their skills well in their workplaces.
- Tutors establish apprentices' practical skills levels effectively and set them challenging training and assessment tasks that enable a high proportion to develop their practical skills beyond those required for their qualification.
- The large majority of apprentices and adult learners make good progress from their starting points; a high proportion achieve within the planned timescale.
- Apprentices develop very good attitudes; they behave exceptionally well, treating peers, employers and staff with tolerance and respect.
- Staff take very effective steps to ensure that apprentices develop an excellent understanding of British values; apprentices discuss confidently the importance of these in their work and everyday lives.
- Apprentices have very good access to enrichment activities and additional qualifications that support them particularly well to develop their careers.
- When teaching theory, tutors do not ensure consistently that all apprentices have understood key learning points before moving on to new activities.
- Progress reviews carried out in apprentices' workplaces do not provide apprentices with sufficient challenge about the specific skills and work competences that they should focus on and practise.
- Tutors do not establish sufficiently apprentices' existing levels of skill and individual needs in English and mathematics at the start of their programmes.
- Too many apprentices receive insufficient support and challenge to improve their English skills.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Appris Charity Limited (Appris) was established in 2011 following the merger of two group training associations, Bradford Training Association Limited (BTAL) and Leeds Training Trust. A third group training association, Keighley and District Training Association, had previously been incorporated into BTAL in 2007. Appris operates from a training centre in Bradford. The large majority of learners live and work in West Yorkshire.
- Of the 302 learners on programmes at the time of the inspection, 10 are employed adult learners taking engineering qualifications. Appris does not plan to deliver any further adult learning programmes when these learners complete. The remaining 292 learners are apprentices. Almost all apprentices are enrolled on engineering and manufacturing programmes, mainly at advanced level. Of the remaining apprentices, most follow team leading programmes within engineering and manufacturing contexts. Appris also provides a very small number of administration apprenticeships for office-based staff working in a few of the engineering and manufacturing companies that they work with. The majority of current apprentices are enrolled on frameworks; however, since August 2017 almost all new apprentices have been enrolled onto standards-based apprenticeships.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Training advisers should ensure that, during progress reviews carried out in the workplace, apprentices are clear about the skills that they need to practise to make sustained progress.
- Leaders should provide training and support to improve tutors' skills and confidence so that tutors consistently check and confirm that apprentices understand key learning points before moving on to new activities.
- Leaders, managers and staff should ensure that all apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills by:
 - providing robust assessment that identifies accurately apprentices' skills in these subjects when they start their programme
 - ensuring that tutors and training advisers provide appropriate and challenging training and support in these subjects, particularly in English, that meet individual apprentices' abilities and needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and trustees have taken effective action to resolve the majority of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have communicated well a very clear vision to improve the quality of provision. Their strategies and actions have strengthened significantly governance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the progress made by learners and apprentices.
- Leaders and managers maintain very effective partnerships with employers. They have designed a curriculum that meets the skills needs of employers and the local economy well. They take effective steps to ensure that programmes meet the requirements of apprenticeships. Employers take a keen interest in the design of training programmes and in the progress that apprentices and learners make. Where apprentices and learners are at risk of falling behind schedule, or of leaving their programme early, employers and staff work together effectively to support them to catch up and remain on programme.
- Leaders' and managers' well-considered and successfully implemented actions have led to improvements in the quality of tutors' and advisers' performance. Managers ensure that staff use tracking systems well to monitor the progress of apprentices and learners on their programme and provide individual support if they are experiencing any problems. As a result, the large majority of apprentices and learners now complete their programmes within the planned timescale.
- Leaders and managers provide staff with appropriate professional development and manage the performance of staff well. Managers use regular review meetings with staff to hold them to account for learners' and apprentices' progress and achievements, and to identify any support and development that staff need to improve their practice.
- Leaders and managers evaluate accurately the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They use their findings effectively to plan further improvements to the quality of learners' and apprentices' programmes. However, too many of the actions in the accompanying improvement plan lack clearly defined targets or success measures. They do not provide leaders and managers with enough clarity about progress in bringing about improvements. Very recently, leaders have recognised this and are in the process of designing a more focused improvement plan.
- Leaders and managers take effective steps to ensure that the off-the-job training for fabrication and welding apprentices delivered by two local further education colleges meets apprentices' needs and is of good quality. Managers monitor subcontractors' compliance well through demanding service level agreements and regular visits and audits. Consequently, the large majority of apprentices make good progress in developing their fabrication and welding skills.
- Leaders and managers ensure that prospective apprentices receive helpful advice and guidance before they start their programmes. This enables prospective apprentices to make informed and realistic choices about apprenticeship options. Managers ensure that apprentices receive good ongoing careers advice throughout their apprenticeship. They provide very effective support for those who are at risk of redundancy.
- Leaders and managers now promote British values very successfully throughout the

curriculum; this was a weakness at the previous inspection. They have ensured that staff at all levels create and effectively promote a culture of tolerance and understanding. As a result, apprentices demonstrate a high degree of respect for one another, their employers and staff.

- Leaders and managers have not done enough to ensure that apprentices improve their skills in English and mathematics from their starting points.

The governance of the provider

- Trustees' scrutiny of the performance of Appris and the challenge that they provide to leaders have strengthened significantly since the last inspection. Careful recruitment of new trustees has ensured that members now bring a wide range of skills and experience to the board. Trustees include individuals from a national science, technology, engineering and mathematics training centre and local and international engineering companies. Trustees have received a good range of training to support them in their role. This has helped them to use the skills and experience that they bring to the board to guide the strategic direction of the charity successfully.
- Leaders keep the board of trustees well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and how well apprentices are achieving. Trustees use their skills and knowledge well to analyse this information and hold managers to account effectively for apprentices' progress and achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders very effectively promote a culture of safeguarding and well-being for all learners. Qualified designated safeguarding officers apply and reinforce to staff and learners the wide range of safeguarding procedures that are in place. Staff, learners and apprentices know what to do and to whom they should talk if they have safeguarding concerns or problems.
- Managers ensure that the very few recorded incidents are acted upon quickly, including when they need to be escalated to appropriate agencies. They have good links to appropriate professional bodies and networks, and use these well to keep apprentices and learners safe. For example, Appris is part of the West Yorkshire Learning Providers network, which shares good practice in safeguarding.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are knowledgeable about the 'Prevent' duty, have received appropriate training and communicate this knowledge well to apprentices and learners. Apprentices who have started their programmes within the last two years have a sophisticated understanding of the risks of extremism and radicalisation, know how to recognise these risks, and how to keep themselves and others safe. However, leaders have not ensured that learners and apprentices who are closer to the end of their programmes have such a secure understanding about these risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors accurately assess apprentices' practical skills at the beginning of their programme, and use this to set challenging targets for apprentices. As a result, apprentices develop their practical skills rapidly in the early stages of the programme. Apprentices enjoy the practical training sessions, such as when using lathes. They continue to receive good opportunities to develop their practical skills within their workplaces. For example, they perform tasks such as programming spring manufacturing machinery, and maintaining and repairing press tools to high standards and exacting tolerances.
- Tutors and training advisers are well qualified and have good vocational skills and knowledge, which employers, apprentices and adult learners value highly. They use their skills adeptly to coach apprentices and learners, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of engineering and, for the few non-engineering apprentices, administration concepts. Tutors provide frequent and effective support for those who require extra help, including for the small number of apprentices with additional learning needs.
- Staff have high expectations of apprentices. In off-the-job training, apprentices work diligently and with well-maintained levels of focus and concentration. They accurately complete problem-solving tasks and apply their learning well to their workplace roles. Employers value highly the skills of the staff and how they consider the demands of industry and the needs of apprentices.
- Tutors and training advisers ensure that employers are very well informed about apprentices' and learners' progress in developing their skills. They work closely with employers to identify and provide high levels of support and challenging work which enable apprentices to improve their skills quickly in their workplaces. Consequently, apprentices and learners develop their skills to high standards and make valued contributions to their employers' businesses. For example, apprentices learn how to perform essential maintenance while causing minimal disruption to production.
- The majority of apprentices make good progress in improving and applying their skills in mathematics in their workplaces. For example, they work to exacting tolerances in pattern-making and machining and accurately calculate stress and strain on bolts and steel sections.
- Apprentices develop technical language skills well. Tutors ensure that apprentices quickly develop their confidence to use technical terms in discussion and in their written work. Apprentices' reports reflect well the technical aspects of their work roles. For example, advanced apprentices refer to switching blades and stems used in their workplace. They understand the need to apply the correct torque to ensure the accurate positioning of components.
- Most apprentices benefit from helpful feedback, which enables them to be clear about how to improve. In a small minority of cases, however, feedback merely praises successful completion of a piece of work, meaning that apprentices are unclear about how they could improve the quality of future work.
- Tutors do not collect or use information about apprentices' starting points in English and mathematics sufficiently well to plan and provide learning activities. As a result, too often apprentices are not challenged sufficiently and receive insufficient opportunities to enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable in these subjects, particularly in

English.

- When teaching theory, tutors do not ensure consistently that all apprentices have understood key learning points before moving on to new activities. When using questioning to check understanding, too often they allow the quicker learners to dominate.
- Progress reviews carried out by training advisers with apprentices in their workplaces do not provide apprentices with sufficient challenge about the specific skills and work competences that they should develop and practise. Too often, training advisers focus on ensuring that apprentices complete units of the qualifications rather than on developing their skills.
- Tutors do not develop apprentices' writing skills sufficiently well. Tutors pay close attention to the correct spelling of technical terms, but do not identify errors in the language or fluency and presentation of apprentices' work. Consequently, apprentices' writing skills do not improve progressively during their programme and many apprentices continue to make the same errors throughout their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Staff reinforce rigorously high professional standards. Apprentices and learners display exemplary attitudes and behaviours, which their employers value highly. They demonstrate high levels of respect and tolerance to staff, their peers and employers at all times.
- Attendance within the training centre is very high, and the vast majority of apprentices arrive to lessons on time. Staff expect apprentices to view training in the centre as they would a day in the workplace; apprentices understand very well the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Apprentices in the training centre take a great deal of pride in the work that they produce in the workshops and in theory lessons. In off-the-job training sessions at Appris and at the subcontractors, they work diligently and maintain high levels of focus and concentration.
- A high proportion of engineering apprentices achieve additional full or partial qualifications above the minimum required for them to achieve their apprenticeship. With the good support of their employers, a high proportion of apprentices on advanced-level programmes also achieve the higher national certificate in engineering. These additional qualifications increase greatly apprentices' vocational skills and prepare them particularly well to develop their careers.
- Apprentices have excellent access to additional training and enrichment activities in, for example, welding, fork lift truck driving, and team-leading. Through these activities, they enhance their skills, make valued additional contributions in their workplaces and improve their progression opportunities.
- Apprentices and learners develop outstanding personal and social skills, alongside their development of good vocational skills. Staff ensure that they have many and varied opportunities to develop their confidence and communication skills. These include, for example, participating in careers events for school pupils in the local area and delivering high-quality presentations about aspects of their apprenticeship and learning to their

employers. Staff and employers provide regular opportunities for apprentices to participate in motivational national and international skills challenges and competitions.

- Apprentices and learners have a very high awareness of the need to stay safe and keep others safe when working in a high-risk industry. Staff and employers ensure that they adopt safe working practices and adhere rigorously to health and safety rules. Apprentices and learners know how to report any concerns and are confident that staff and employers will follow up appropriately any issues they may have.
- Staff ensure that apprentices and learners have a very good awareness of how to protect themselves in their everyday lives. Apprentices and learners have a highly developed awareness about the steps they should take to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Apprentices, particularly those aged 16 to 23, have a good awareness of risks they may face in their lives through, for example, poor mental health and alcohol and drug misuse.
- The large majority of apprentices and learners have a very well-developed awareness and understanding of the threats of extremism and radicalisation. The vast majority can explain the range of risks they may face at work and in their everyday lives and the action they would take if they had concerns.
- Tutors very effectively ensure that apprentices develop and demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the importance of the values of respect, tolerance, democracy and individual liberty in the workplace and in their everyday lives.
- Staff provide thorough initial advice and guidance which ensure that apprentices are matched effectively to employers and job roles. A robust application and interview process ensures that potential apprentices have a thorough understanding of the different pathways available. Consequently, very few apprentices leave in the early stages of their apprenticeship.
- Tutors provide apprentices with comprehensive information about the progression opportunities available to them in both their learning and work. Apprentices are ambitious to progress within their career, and staff provide good advice to individuals who ask for help in making choices. Staff provide outstanding support, careers advice and guidance to apprentices who are at risk of redundancy.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The large majority of apprentices in all subjects make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of apprentices at intermediate, advanced and higher level who achieve their planned learning goals has improved in recent years and is now high. Almost all apprentices who successfully complete their programmes do so within the planned timescale.
- A high proportion of the small remaining cohort of adult learners achieve their planned learning goals, the large majority within the planned timescale.
- Tutors in the training centre effectively establish apprentices' starting points and potential at the start of programmes. Based on these indicators, they set challenging training and assessment tasks that enable a high proportion of apprentices to develop their practical skills beyond the minimum level required to achieve their qualification.

- Apprentices improve their engineering, manufacturing, team-leading and administration skills well through their work with their employers.
- Almost all apprentices who successfully complete their programmes obtain sustained employment, most with their existing employer.
- There are no discernible differences in the achievements of different groups of learners. Appris actively promotes engineering as a career option to females and as a result, the number of female apprentices in engineering and manufacturing has increased in recent years. Female apprentices achieve at least as well as their male peers.
- The majority of apprentices make good progress in improving their mathematics skill as an integral part of their practical engineering training and day-to-day work. However, the most-able apprentices who join the programme with high levels of existing skills do not extend these skills sufficiently.

Provider details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 50809 |
| Type of provider | Independent learning provider |
| Age range of learners | 16+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 297 |
| Principal/CEO | Mr John Igoe |
| Telephone number | 01274 668149 |
| Website | www.appris.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+ |
| | – | – | – | 7 | – | 3 | – | – |
| Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | | |
| | 30 | 12 | 175 | 70 | – | 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: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bradford College ■ Leeds City College | | | | | | | |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations 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

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Malcolm Fraser, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Richard Ronksley | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Rachel Angus | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Ralph Brompton | Ofsted Inspector |
| Kathleen Tyler | Ofsted Inspector |

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