

Whitbread PLC

Employer

Inspection dates

3–6 October 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	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 do not use data well enough to check the progress that apprentices make.
- Trainers and assessors do not ensure that apprentices achieve as well as they can.
- Although around a quarter of apprentices achieve English and mathematics qualifications at a level higher than that required for their programme, managers do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of English and mathematics skills.
- Observations of practice are not sufficiently evaluative to identify the improvements required to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Trainers and assessors do not use information on apprentices' starting points to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment meet the needs and abilities of apprentices.
- Too many trainers and assessors do not provide specific feedback that enables apprentices to improve their theory work to high standards.
- Not enough managers, trainers and assessors set challenging targets that enable apprentices to excel.
- Leaders do not effectively challenge the subcontractor to improve outcomes for apprentices.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders ensure that apprentices have a good awareness of the career and qualification progression routes available to them within the company; as a result, a high proportion gain promotion.
- Apprentices demonstrate good job-related skills, including team-working, problem-solving and adhering consistently to health and safety and food hygiene standards.
- Staff effectively use their considerable vocational knowledge and expertise to enable apprentices to improve their practical skills well.
- Leaders work very effectively to provide work placement and job opportunities for adults who have been unemployed for a long time.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Whitbread PLC (Whitbread) is a large hospitality company with operations both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Whitbread brands include Premier Inn, Hub by Premier Inn, Costa, Beefeater, Table Table, Brewers Fayre and Bar & Block.
- Whitbread provides intermediate, advanced and higher-level apprenticeships in hospitality and catering at their Premier Inn hotels and Costa outlets, for which it receives public funding. Whitbread also provides around 200 apprenticeships following the same programmes, but funded directly by the company with no government funding. The provider began delivering apprenticeship programmes based on the new standards in May 2017. At the time of the inspection, the large majority of the apprentices were enrolled on a framework programme, with a minority following the new standards.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that trainers and assessors:
 - provide demanding teaching and coaching that challenges apprentices to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills
 - accurately identify apprentices' starting points, so that suitably challenging targets can be set, and their progress can be measured appropriately
 - provide specific feedback that enables apprentices to improve their theory work to a high standard
 - ensure that all apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills.
- Ensure that observations of practice identify the improvements required to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Ensure that leaders challenge effectively the subcontractor to improve outcomes for apprentices.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not paid sufficient attention to ensuring that the quality of provision has improved outcomes for apprentices. As a result, too many apprentices have not made the progress of which they are capable and too few achieved or in a timely manner.
- Leaders and managers have recently taken actions to ensure that apprentices at risk of not completing their programmes are supported to do so. Consequently, an increasing proportion of apprentices are now achieving their qualifications and making better progress. Leaders and managers now have a renewed intent and determination to rectify weaknesses in the provision and to improve outcomes for apprentices.
- Leaders and managers do not use data and information to secure a robust understanding of the progress that apprentices make. For example, they do not monitor sufficiently the achievement rates of all groups of apprentices and they do not have a full understanding of how well apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills or achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers effectively manage compliance aspects with their subcontractor. However, they do not set the subcontractor challenging targets to ensure that apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills and achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers do not evaluate aspects of the apprenticeships provision sufficiently well. Their self-assessment report lacks evaluative judgements and does not identify the key weaknesses in the provision. Leaders' and managers' understanding of the quality of the provision is overly optimistic. As a consequence, their improvement planning is not helpful in securing the necessary improvements.
- Observation records of teaching, learning and assessment are not sufficiently evaluative to identify the improvements required to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good. Leaders and managers do not pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of teaching or share good practice enough.
- Assessors hold the appropriate assessor qualifications and managers rigorously review and monitor their staff performance. However, leaders' and managers' performance management of staff has not resulted in sufficient improvements to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and apprentices' outcomes are good.
- Leaders work very effectively to provide work placement and job opportunities for adults who have been unemployed for a long time. Leaders' actions are now succeeding in reducing the achievement gap between male and female apprentices.
- Senior leaders and managers continue to support the well-established and clear career pathways across Whitbread's brands. They have fully measured the business benefits that the apprenticeship programme provides and they consider it a key aspect of their succession planning strategy. Apprentices are aware of the career and qualification progression routes available to them within the company; as a result, a high proportion gain promotion.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have recently renewed the vigour of their challenge of leaders and managers to make the necessary improvements to provision and improve outcomes for apprentices.
- Governors' challenge of leaders is now beginning to help secure improvements. However, leaders do not provide sufficient data and information to enable governors to effect the required challenge. Governors are now increasing their expectations of leaders and managers to provide such information. As a result, leaders have set managers more pertinent targets intended to raise the quality of provision, for example setting targets to promote the volume of female apprentices securing leadership roles within the company.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are comprehensive and accessible arrangements in place for apprentices to secure additional help and support at work. Appropriate arrangements are in place to escalate welfare concerns and keep apprentices safe online.
- Leaders have been slow to implement all aspects of the 'Prevent' duty. However, apprentices demonstrate tolerance and respect with colleagues and customers in the workplace. They demonstrate a good level of vigilance at work and know whom to contact when faced with a related incident or when they have a concern about the radicalisation of a colleague or a customer.
- The provider has carried out the appropriate checks on the subcontractor's staff to ensure their suitability to work with apprentices. Leaders and managers have established a culture where bullying and harassment are not tolerated. In the very few instances where learners report bullying, this is dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too often, teaching and coaching do not meet the needs and abilities of the apprentices. Most apprentices have significant prior experience of working in hospitality and retail. However, trainers and assessors do not take apprentices' existing vocational skills and knowledge sufficiently into account. As a result, they do not provide sufficiently challenging tasks that enable apprentices, particularly the most able, to excel.
- Not enough trainers and assessors provide tuition and coaching that enables apprentices to understand and apply underpinning theory and improve their knowledge and skills. Too many do not provide specific feedback that enables apprentices to improve their theory work to high standards.
- Not enough managers, trainers and assessors set challenging targets that enable apprentices to make swift progress. Too much target-setting does not focus sufficiently on the skills, knowledge and behaviours that apprentices need to develop in order to make good progress. Managers have not ensured that all apprentices receive timely reviews that challenge them to make rapid progress.
- Staff do not enable enough apprentices to improve their English and mathematics skills

well. When trainers provide pertinent tasks and activities that provoke apprentices' interest, they are motivated to advance these essential skills. However, not enough trainers teach apprentices how to solve mathematical problems proficiently; as a consequence, too many apprentices lack confidence and continue to make the same mistakes. Not enough staff help apprentices identify and correct errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Too many staff do not ensure that apprentices improve the structure and format of their written English.

- Staff effectively use their considerable vocational knowledge and expertise to enable apprentices to improve their practical skills well. As a result, apprentices develop good job-related skills; they make good contributions to the success of the business by reducing loss, increasing profit and raising the quality of customer service and satisfaction.
- Managers and assessors effectively support learners who have additional learning needs. As a consequence, these learners make good progress.
- Managers ensure that apprentices have access to good-quality resources which support them in developing their independent study skills and in applying their practical skills confidently in the workplace. Specific themed learning events enable those apprentices who attend to hone their skills well under the effective supervision of specialists.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Too often, apprentices do not attend essential components of their course. For example, attendance at vocational workshop sessions is much better than at English and mathematics functional skills lessons. As a result, too many apprentices do not improve these essential skills, and too many apprentices fail to attend their functional skills tests.
- Too many apprentices do not take responsibility for their personal development. For example, they do not value sufficiently the relevance of underpinning theory, English and mathematics to their practical skills in the workplace and future careers.
- Apprentices feel safe and have a good understanding of how they can raise concerns if they do not feel safe. They have a good understanding of e-safety and how to respond in the event of a critical incident, and know the process for reporting accidents, injuries and sickness. However, some are anxious about travelling the long distances required to attend their workshops.
- Most apprentices are confident, enthusiastic and self-assured about their jobs. They take pride in their work and their role in the workplace. They provide good-quality customer service and work well with their colleagues.
- The majority of apprentices grow in confidence while developing a sound understanding of the business. Apprentices demonstrate good job-related skills, including team-working, problem-solving and adhering consistently to health and safety and food hygiene standards.
- Apprentices receive appropriate information, advice and guidance to develop their careers within the company. Some apprentices use this information to help them develop realistic plans for their future careers. However, not enough recognise the importance of English and mathematics skills in improving their future employability.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, too few apprentices successfully completed their programmes and even fewer within the planned timescales. However, leaders' recent actions to improve provision are now securing better outcomes for apprentices. Leaders' data indicates that the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has increased.
- Since the last inspection, more apprentices than previously are now making good timely progress compared with their starting points, but not enough. Apprentices following framework programmes, particularly customer service programmes, make better progress than their peers studying the new standards. Not enough apprentices enrolled on higher-level programmes make sufficient progress.
- Female apprentices do not achieve as well as their male peers. However, leaders' actions have begun to reduce successfully the achievement gap between male and female apprentices.
- Around a quarter of apprentices achieve English and mathematics qualifications at a level higher than that required for their programme. However, managers do not ensure that enough apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills.
- Leaders ensure that apprentices have a good awareness of the career and qualification progression routes available to them within the company; as a result, a high proportion gain promotion.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55363
Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	736
Principal/CEO	Alison Brittain
Telephone number	01582 42400
Website	www.whitbread.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+
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	38	235	5	246	1	35		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for whom the provider receives high-needs funding	–							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Creative Learning Partners							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the data and funding manager, 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 managers; 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

Maria Navarro, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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