

London Skills & Development Network Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not maintained the high standards evident at the previous inspection. Quality assurance arrangements are insufficient to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain good.
- Apprentices do not receive all elements of their apprenticeship training programme. Too few develop good skills and knowledge, and too few continue into higher training or supervisory roles.
- Leaders and managers do not make effective use of external and impartial scrutiny and support to shape and inform their views on the quality of provision.
- Teachers do not manage effectively the repeated instances of poor behaviour in lessons. They do not ensure that learners attend punctually or frequently.
- Teachers and assessors do not use the information available to them about learners' abilities at the start of the course to provide learning that is suitably demanding. They do not create individual programmes of learning that meet learners' aspirations effectively.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient guidance to learners on how they should improve the standard of their written English work.
- Too few learners and apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance, or know the full range of opportunities available to them on completing their qualifications.

The provider has the following strengths

- The proportion of adults and apprentices who achieve their qualification is high.
- Adult learners benefit from a wide range of additional qualifications that enhance and enrich their learning, including alcohol awareness, and lifting heavy objects safely.
- Rail engineering programmes provide appropriate pathways into work for learners who have previously struggled to gain training and employment.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The London Skills & Development Network (LSDN) is a community-based education and skills provider based in London, established in 2011. Formerly part of an alliance of nine individual learning providers, LSDN now works with one subcontractor that offers English and mathematics qualifications at level 1 and health and social care qualifications at level 2 for learners who work in the domiciliary care sector.
- Most learners are adult learners who are working towards qualifications in rail engineering and transport operations at levels 1 and 2. A high proportion of learners have previously served custodial sentences, with a very small proportion currently released from prison on licence. LSDN provides apprenticeship frameworks in early years, digital media, accountancy and finance. A high proportion of learners and apprentices already have English and mathematics at GCSE grade 4 or above.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers need to make effective use of impartial scrutiny to shape and inform their views when judging the quality of the education and training they provide.
- Leaders and managers need to:
 - strengthen existing quality assurance arrangements to focus closely on the skills and knowledge that learners and apprentices are developing
 - ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to training and develop good skills and knowledge
 - ensure that learners and apprentices progress into further training, employment, and/or higher-level qualifications
 - ensure that teachers receive appropriate training to manage learners' behaviour effectively in lessons
 - provide effective careers advice and guidance so that learners and apprentices know what they can do when they complete their learning
 - do a comprehensive risk assessment of the small proportion of learners with a history of violent behaviour, to ensure that staff and learners remain safe.
- Teachers and assessors need to make effective use of information available to them regarding learners' and apprentices' prior skills and knowledge to teach programmes that meet their personal learning goals well.
- Teachers need to ensure that adult learners:
 - attend punctually and frequently, and remain focused on their learning
 - receive detailed information and tuition on how to improve the standard of their written English work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not maintained high standards, or taken appropriate action to remedy weaknesses. Quality assurance arrangements are insufficient to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain good. The monitoring and supervision of apprenticeship learning are weak.
- Leaders and managers have not identified that many apprentices are on programmes of learning that do not challenge them to develop new skills and knowledge. Too many apprentices are completing qualifications at a level comparable with their existing knowledge and experience. Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices receive all elements of their apprenticeship training programme, for example in having the opportunity to do work-related projects and assignments when at work. They do not know the reasons why a high proportion of apprentices do not continue to higher level qualifications or employment or gain promotion.
- The management and monitoring of subcontractor partners are insufficient. Leaders and managers do not receive adequate information on which skills and knowledge apprentices are learning to hold subcontractors effectively to account. Leaders' and managers' monitoring activities focus too much on meeting the financial requirements required by funding organisations, and not enough on taking rapid action to help those apprentices who are making slow progress, or are at risk of not completing. Leaders and managers have not ensured that current apprentices on finance and accountancy programmes have received regular and frequent assessment of their skills and progress.
- Managers' overview of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is insufficient to ensure that it remains good. Their monitoring of the quality of workplace reviews and the broader aspects of apprenticeship learning is inadequate. Managers do not have a good enough overview of the quality of learning on adult learning programmes. They do not provide effective staff development following their quality reviews and observations of lessons.
- Leaders and managers have not developed a curriculum to meet the needs of local learners and employers. Since the demise of the alliance, the curriculum has reduced significantly. Plans to extend the curriculum are in place, but currently no learners are undertaking new programmes of learning.
- Managers have an effective strategy to ensure that those learners and apprentices who need to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics do so. Apprentices, who need to achieve functional skills qualifications as part of their programme, do so in good time.
- Leaders and managers prepare learners well for life in modern Britain. Learners have a good understanding of how British values relate to their life. For example, learners have a good understanding of democracy, personal liberty and the rule of law.
- Managers work closely and very effectively with charities for social justice. They ensure that learners who have served custodial sentences, with limited opportunities to learn and establish a career, have the chance to work towards qualifications that could secure their long-term financial security.

- Leaders and managers have promoted successfully a positive and inclusive culture of learning. Adult learners quickly recognise that at LSDN, their past mistakes will not hinder their opportunity to learn and succeed.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are ineffective. No governance arrangements are in place to help, guide and challenge the chief executive and senior management team in their work. Leaders and managers do not make effective use of impartial scrutiny to shape and inform their views on the quality of provision.
- Senior leaders and managers spend little time evaluating the impact of management actions on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. At the time of the previous inspection, the nine individual providers in the alliance provided useful challenge and scrutiny to the work and management of the network. Since the demise of the alliance, no such arrangements are in place.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers have implemented thoroughly their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. Effective training has ensured that staff and learners are confident to challenge appropriately those people who express unsuitable views. Learners have a detailed understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism to themselves and their communities. Learners have an effective understanding of how to keep themselves safe while at work, and when using the internet.
- While learners and staff at LSDN feel safe, and incidents are very few, managers need to do more to avoid the very small but potential risk of personal violence. Risk assessments of the small proportion of learners who have a history of violent behaviour are incomplete. Teachers do not receive detailed risk assessments to manage learners' safety and behaviour appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not use the information available to them regarding learners' and apprentices' previous educational achievement to provide suitably demanding learning. When teaching theoretical aspects of learning, they take too much time reviewing basic information at the expense of extending and deepening learners' understanding and knowledge. Before introducing a new topic, teachers and assessors do not check learners' and apprentices' prior knowledge. For example, in a lesson on curriculum vitae (CV) writing for adult learners, the teacher did not establish whether learners already had a current CV.
- Teachers do not use effective strategies to check the depth of knowledge and skills individual learners have acquired and learned in lessons. Teachers spend too much time gaining superficial feedback at the expense of probing learners' deeper understanding and comprehension.
- Teachers provide limited feedback on learners' assessed work to enable them to improve

their work to a good standard. While teachers indicate well what learners have, or have not, achieved, they do not show or discuss with learners how they can improve their skills or knowledge.

- Teaching, learning and assessment on apprentices' programmes are inadequate. Assessments of apprentices' learning and their skills development are at times infrequent, and too near to the end of their programme. Teachers and assessors do not help apprentices develop a broader understanding of the subjects they are learning. Assessors' recording of assessments and reviews is inaccurate and at best scant, with many amendments made to dates when assessment of learning has occurred.
- Teachers assess learners' vocational work on adult programmes frequently and effectively. They maintain accurate records so that they have a good overview of the progress that learners make towards achieving their qualifications.
- Teachers assess adult learners' skills in English and mathematics effectively at the start of the programme. They use this information well to place them on suitable levels of learning.
- On rail engineering programmes, teachers make good use of a broad range of resources to help learners understand the practical work they will do and the tools they will use. Teachers use online resources effectively to enhance and extend learning.
- Learners and apprentices have an effective understanding of health and safety and know how to keep themselves and their co-workers safe. Learners on rail engineering programmes have a good understanding of trackside safety and recognise the dangers they will encounter when working at night and in isolated locations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not manage instances of poor behaviour in class effectively and learners' attendance and punctuality are poor. Teachers do not take appropriate action to remedy the behaviour of a minority of learners who come in and out of classes during lessons, chat on their mobile telephones in class, or talk socially to others with little regard for the teaching taking place.
- Assistance for learners who require extra help to complete their learning is insufficient. Managers and staff do not identify effectively those learners who need help at the start of a programme or take appropriate action when they identify learners making slow progress. Those learners who have identified themselves to teachers as having additional learning needs do not receive the necessary help for them to make good progress.
- Learners do not receive sufficient information at the start of their programme to understand fully the content of their training programmes. For example, learners on rail engineering programmes are not aware of the different components of their programme. A minority of learners do not see the benefit of additional qualifications or understand how they will help them to become rail engineers.
- Too few learners and apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance, or know the full range of opportunities available to them on completing their qualifications. Learners who maintain their interest in working in rail engineering receive good careers guidance about jobs available on completion of the programme. For example, teachers

discuss with learners the further study required to become a trackside lookout.

- Most adult learners develop good study habits and a positive attitude to learning. They make good use of the online resources provided to prepare effectively for their final examinations. In class, they make good notes of what they have learned, such as the procedures for dismantling track, and use the notes well to recap and refresh their understanding.
- Learners and apprentices develop good verbal skills in English and relate technical language well to their chosen subjects. They were confident and articulate in using their newly acquired language skills when discussing work-related topics.
- Learners and apprentices have a good understanding of British values and understand well how these relate to their chosen occupation. They talk confidently in terms of respect for others, and about democracy and the importance of the rule of law. Teachers skilfully developed learners' awareness of British values, for example through discussing the use of recreational drugs and the potential negative impact this would have on maintaining their future employment.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too few learners and apprentices continue into further training or employment. Not enough learners who start their programme achieve their level 2 qualification, which is a requirement for working in the rail industry, and gain employment. On apprenticeship programmes, most complete a level 2 qualification and remain with their existing employer. Too few continue to higher level programmes, or into working at a supervisory level on completion of their studies.
- Current apprentices make slow progress in their learning. The very small proportion working towards level 3 qualifications do not have a sufficient breadth of work-based activities to develop the higher level skills and knowledge they require. Employers do not provide adequate opportunities for learners to gain the necessary experience they need to be able to supervise their co-workers appropriately.
- Adult learners with weak written English skills do not receive sufficient help to improve their skills further. Too few apprentices with GCSE grade 4 or above improve their English skills and knowledge further.
- The provider's own data shows that in 2016/17, the proportion of adult learners who completed their programme at level 1 remained high. Most apprentices complete their programme within the planned timescale. Apprentices who study with subcontractor partners achieve equally well.
- Learners use and maintain their existing mathematical skills and can apply them to their work effectively. For example, learners on rail engineering programmes can calculate the weight individuals need to lift when sharing the burden of carrying a piece of rail track. Apprentices on childcare programmes use mathematics effectively when calculating the portion size they need to allow when giving small children their midday snack.
- Most learners and apprentices develop good verbal skills in English. Apprentices develop a good understanding of the relevant technical language required for their various job roles and pass their functional skills examinations at the first attempt. Adult learners discuss and debate a wide range of topics eloquently, and use technical language and rail-related

terminology effectively and can take verbal instructions well.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- There are 84 learners working towards accredited part-time qualifications in rail engineering, transport operations, domiciliary care, and entry-level to level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics. Most learners are working towards rail engineering qualifications. Managers plan programmes carefully to meet the needs of learners who have served custodial sentences and, through their subcontractor partner, plan well for those who work in residential care homes.
- Staff provide insufficient careers advice and guidance to learners on rail engineering and transport operations programmes. While tutors provide adequate information on the possible choices learners can make should they complete their programme successfully, they do not provide good-quality information on possible next steps for the many learners who fail to complete their level 2 programme or who do not continue in their learning beyond a level 1 qualification.
- Teachers do not assess learners' skills and knowledge well enough at the start of their programme to provide learning that is suitably appropriate and demanding. All learners follow a broadly similar programme of rail engineering and personal and social development qualifications regardless of their prior experience. Too often, learners work at the same pace and to the same timeframes for completing their programme, which for a minority is too slow.
- Teachers do not ensure that learners achieve a good standard in their written English. When learners present inaccurate written work and assignments, teachers do not help them to improve their existing skills and knowledge by providing useful guidance and appropriate feedback.
- Learners have a good understanding of the requirements of working on track improvement. They improve their self-esteem, and are motivated to succeed in finding employment and becoming financially independent.
- Teachers have developed a good range of online resources for rail engineering programmes that reflect very well the commercial standards of work that learners will be undertaking. Learners value the resources highly and make good use of them to study and improve their knowledge when away from the classroom. Materials include high-quality informative videos on technical aspects of trackside working.
- Learners have a highly effective understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and know how this relates to their work. Teachers integrate the dangers posed by those with radical and extremist views well into lessons. Learners know how to keep passengers travelling on the national railways safe.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Eight apprentices are working towards completing qualifications at levels 2 and 3 in childcare, digital media, finance and accounting.
- Current apprentices make very slow progress in their learning. Few have started the assignments they need to complete as part of their qualification. Assessors have not prepared apprentices on finance and accountancy programmes well enough to ensure that they pass their external tests. Too few employers provide apprentices with sufficient time while at work to complete the knowledge-based part of their qualification.
- Apprentices do not benefit from regular, focused reviews of their learning or regular and frequent assessment. At progress reviews, staff do not provide apprentices with constructive guidance on their performance, or about how they are developing their vocational and personal skills. Assessors and employers do not jointly review the progress apprentices are making towards developing the technical skills and knowledge they require to complete their learning. Employers do not evaluate the contribution that apprentices make to improving their business efficiency or profitability.
- Assessors do not use the information available to them regarding the skills and knowledge apprentices have to ensure that learning is suitably demanding or relates well to their job roles. For example, apprentices on level 3 finance and accountancy programmes do not have job roles which provide the breadth of experience they need to complete their qualification successfully. Apprentices on level 2 childcare programmes are too often already able to perform the assessment tasks that assessors set for them. Too few apprentices on level 2 programmes are developing new skills or extending their knowledge beyond the requirements of the qualification.
- Most apprentices do not understand the potential career routes and employment options available to them when they complete their studies. Assessors do not provide sufficient information while apprentices are working towards their qualification to help them to make informed choices about their next steps.
- Apprentices feel safe and they know to whom they should take any concerns they may have. They have a good awareness of personal safety and know how to use the internet appropriately. For example, they know how to use social media and shop online while protecting their own and other's personal information.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58729
Type of provider	Independent training provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	283
CEO	Virginie Ramond
Telephone number	020 3784 1294
Website	www.lsdn.org.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	84	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	8	-	-		
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	Dynamic People Limited							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and curriculum 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 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

Jules Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rieks Drijver	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Lambert	Her Majesty's Inspector

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