

People and Business Development Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

5–8 June 2018

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	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders have not effectively dealt with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection because they have not taken effective action or directed staff well enough.
- The proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve their qualifications is too low. Too few apprentices achieve their apprenticeships within planned timescales.
- Leaders do not effectively assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, they have not ensured that assessors improve their practice, to enable learners to make rapid progress.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of the provision are overly optimistic. Managers have not targeted improvements where they are most needed.
- Assessors do not challenge learners sufficiently, or have high enough expectations of learners and apprentices. As a result, too few make the progress of which they are capable.
- Assessors do not enable learners and apprentices to develop their English and mathematical skills as part of their learning or work.
- Teaching and learning is weak for those taking English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications as part of their apprenticeship.
- Assessors do not involve employers in the design of learning programmes for their apprentices. As a consequence, too often the activities apprentices undertake at work do not link effectively to their learning.

The provider has the following strengths

- Learners and apprentices develop good practical skills and confidence through their qualifications. They benefit from a range of additional learning through their employers.
- Learners and apprentices demonstrate good standards of professional behaviour at work.
- The large majority of apprentices who achieve their qualifications progress onto the next level of study. Some learners and apprentices gain enhanced responsibilities at work.

Full report

Information about the provider

- People and Business Development Ltd (PBD) is a medium-sized independent learning provider, based in Haverhill, Suffolk. PBD provides apprenticeships and adult learning programmes, predominantly in early years education. Apprenticeships are offered at levels 2 and 3, and a small number of apprentices follow programmes in supporting teaching and learning, business administration and play work. Most apprentices are over 19 years old. PBD is yet to provide new standards based apprenticeships and all apprentices are currently on framework based apprenticeships. PBD offers adult learning at levels 3 and 5. The organisation has learners and apprentices based in many regions within England including London, the South East and Nottinghamshire.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders need to put in place clear and specific actions, which they regularly monitor and review, to tackle the weaknesses identified at this and the previous inspection.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve their qualifications within planned timescales, by ensuring that:
 - assessors have high expectations of learners and apprentices, and set challenging targets and activities
 - assessors help learners and apprentices to develop their understanding of underpinning theory by routinely testing their knowledge and skills
 - learners and apprentices are enabled to develop their English, mathematical and ICT skills so that they can progress successfully
 - learners make best use of the high-quality online resources available, and that this learning is evaluated in progress reviews.
- Ensure that employers are routinely involved in the planning of learning programmes and in the reviews of progress with learners and apprentices.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not made sufficient progress in raising the quality of provision since the previous inspection, and too many weaknesses remain. New leaders have taken steps to bring about improvements, but these are yet to have a demonstrable impact.
- Most learners and apprentices make slow progress in their studies. Leaders do not set high enough expectations of their staff and learners. Too many managers and assessors do not challenge and motivate learners and apprentices to make the progress of which they are capable. Although the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has improved, the rate of improvement is too slow.
- Leaders do not effectively evaluate and improve the work of their staff. They do not robustly challenge poor performance or set demanding targets and improvement plans for staff who need support. Leaders do not inform assessors of their strengths and weaknesses related to their craft of teaching. They focus too heavily on processes which have little impact on learners and the progress they make.
- Leaders do not rigorously assess the quality of provision, and their self-assessed judgements are therefore overly optimistic. As a result, they do not have clearly defined targets or milestones by which to measure improvement and are unable to evaluate the impact of any actions they take. For example, the quality improvement plan contains broad targets but lacks detailed action points to help staff to make improvements.
- Leaders do not monitor well enough the quality of apprenticeships and adult learning programmes. They do not have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, while apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training, leaders and managers do not have sufficient understanding of the quality of this provision.
- Leaders do not ensure that learners and apprentices receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Consequently, the information apprentices and learners receive about their career options is limited to the knowledge and expertise of their assessor, and that within the curriculum of their course.
- Leaders encourage staff to develop their knowledge and vocational competence through rich and varied training opportunities. Staff successfully complete courses such as: degrees in their subject specialisms; assessor awards and internal quality assurance training; teaching certificates; youth work; and GCSEs and functional skills in English and mathematics. However, leaders do not focus staff development activities on those areas where they would have the greatest impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Subcontracting arrangements are mostly effective. This is the first year leaders have worked with subcontracted provision. They oversee the quality of the work conducted by the subcontractor's staff and are beginning to tackle weaknesses to help learners make better progress.
- Leaders have recently started to attend meetings with the local enterprise partnership.

Leaders have developed an effective working relationship with local county council leaders, resulting in programmes designed to enable learners and apprentices to select course units that best fit their employment and career goals.

The governance of the provider

- The arrangements for governance are not effective enough. No governance or external scrutiny arrangements exist. As a consequence, leaders do not benefit from external challenge or advice and are not held to account for the actions they have taken. Leaders lack understanding of the actions they can take to improve the quality of their provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have undergone appropriate vetting before they start work for the company. Designated safeguarding leads are appropriately qualified; however, not all staff have received relevant safeguarding training. Leaders took effective action to rectify this during the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed and implemented an effective and comprehensive system for recording safeguarding referrals. Designated safeguarding leads follow up each case to ensure that it is appropriately resolved.
- Learners are safe and feel safe. Learners have a good understanding of safeguarding for themselves and others while they are at work, through their workplace training. Learners and apprentices also have an extremely sound understanding of which external organisations to contact should a concern arise. However, they do not have a good understanding of the expectations within PBD's own safeguarding processes.
- Not enough learners and apprentices are adequately aware of how to protect themselves from risks, such as those associated with radicalisation and extremism, or when online. Most learners and apprentices work within early years settings and demonstrate a good understanding of how these risks apply in the workplace.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Assessors do not have high enough expectations for learners. As a consequence, too many learners are not making sufficient progress or complete their qualifications within planned timescales. Assessors too readily extend dates for submissions or agree breaks in study when learners fall behind with their studies. Too many assessors do not enable apprentices to effectively use their off-the-job training time. As a result, not enough apprentices deepen their learning, complete their assignments on time or make the progress of which they are capable.
- Too many assessors do not focus well enough on helping learners and apprentices to develop their understanding of underpinning theory. Learners and apprentices mainly acquire knowledge through independent learning using online learning modules. Too few learners routinely access these resources and assessors do not effectively test the depth of their understanding.
- Assessors provide developmental feedback on learners' and apprentices' work, which

enables learners and apprentices to pass their vocational assignments. However, they do not provide enough challenge for apprentices and learners to develop their skills beyond the minimum requirement for the qualifications. For example, assessors' feedback does not help learners to understand how they can develop their wider early years knowledge and skills to improve their chances of securing sustained employment.

- Assessors do not accurately identify learners' and apprentices' skills and support requirements at the start of their learning programmes. As a result, they do not set learning targets which are based on an accurate assessment of learners' starting points and the progress they are making. Leaders have not put in place an effective system to identify learners and apprentices with additional needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. As a consequence, learners who need specific help do not receive this in a timely or effective way.
- Too many learners and apprentices do not develop good standards of written English. Learners' work often contains errors in spelling. Assessors do not effectively aid learners and apprentices to develop these skills over time or in relation to their work roles and ongoing employment. Consequently, the standards of learners' written English within their work is too often poor. Most assessors do not routinely model good use of English in their feedback to learners and in their written communications.
- Learners and apprentices do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in the use of mathematics beyond the basic requirements of their qualifications. They are able to do basic calculations such as child to staff ratios, but assessors do not provide opportunities for learners or apprentices to develop and demonstrate more advanced numeracy skills in their assignment work. Apprentices who are studying qualifications in mathematics do not receive any teaching for this work, and rely too much on self-selected online learning modules and practice tests.
- Most assessors do not ensure that learners and apprentices make effective use of the wide range of high quality online resources that are available. Webinars, which are well researched and up-to-date, with current sector information linked to assignments, are permanently available through the e-portfolio system. However, assessors do not check sufficiently what learners and apprentices gain from these resources; too few learners and apprentices use them and attendance at webinars is low. The minority of apprentices who do use the webinars find them valuable; they benefit from the opportunity to work with other apprentices, share views and ideas, and develop their understanding with their peers.
- Assessors and employers successfully use their industry knowledge and experience of the care and education sector to enable learners to develop their practical skills and make a positive contribution to the settings in which they work. During professional discussions, the majority of assessors use questions well to help learners relate what they do in their job role to relevant theory. Employers provide good role models and mentors to help learners develop and refine their skills.
- Assessors ensure that learners' and apprentices' understanding of safeguarding and equality and diversity in the context of their workplace and work role is good. For example, learners were able to confidently explain how they make adjustments in the activities they plan for children with learning disabilities such as a hearing impairment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and assessors do not effectively gather and analyse information on learners' and apprentices' personal and social development needs. As a consequence, too many learners do not develop these skills further and no effective learning targets are set to encourage this development.
- Apprentices within early years settings are not sufficiently aware of the range of careers available within the sector. Assessors do not plan careers advice and guidance as a routine part of the review process. Discussions with apprentices about their career aspirations are too often left until near the end of their course and are limited to advice on the next level of qualification.
- Learners and apprentices develop skills that employers value and they contribute well in their workplaces. For example, learners on level 5 management programmes use skills learned in collaboration with external agencies to add value to the pre-school settings in which they work. They collaborate effectively with the local authority to ensure that specialist support is provided to children with specific barriers to learning, such as speech and language development.
- Learners and apprentices take pride in their work within the work place and are confident in their job roles. Some take on extra responsibilities as a result of their learning. For example, apprentices studying level 3 early years programmes take responsibility for writing and monitoring care plans for children in nursery settings. These apprentices gain valuable additional qualifications through their employers which widen their understanding and care skills. However, leaders and assessors do not provide opportunities for apprentices and learners to undertake additional activities to bolster their development.
- Learners and apprentices demonstrate a very good understanding of British values. However, assessors seldom effectively check whether apprentices and learners understand how living in a modern British society may affect them. The questions they ask are rudimentary and they readily accept weak responses from their learners.
- The majority of learners' and apprentices' practical work meets professional and occupational standards. Most learners and apprentices develop appropriate study skills. Higher-level learners undertake academic research projects and demonstrate how they can effectively apply this study to their places of work.
- Learners and apprentices exhibit high standards of professional behaviour. They are respectful of colleagues and staff in the workplace. Learners and apprentices comply fully with guidelines for behaviour and conduct within their work settings, including good timekeeping and attendance to work.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too many learners and apprentices make slow progress in developing their knowledge and understanding and as a result are not on track to achieve within planned timescales. The proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve their qualifications has improved since the previous inspection but still requires improvement. Managers' actions to increase the rate at which learners and apprentices make good progress have not had enough

impact. No significant differences in achievement exist between different groups of learners.

- Too few learners are set or achieve challenging targets. While the proportion who achieve high grades has increased, not enough current learners are attaining the higher standards of which they are capable. Learners' work is often limited to the minimum requirements of the qualifications they are studying. However, most develop appropriate, industry-standard practical skills that they apply well in the workplace.
- Too many adult learners withdraw from their programmes early because assessors do not effectively enable them to make progress in GCSE English and mathematics. Leaders have taken action to ensure that apprentices are entered for suitable qualifications, such as functional skills. However, too many learners and apprentices do not develop their English, mathematics and ICT skills quickly enough to make progress in these subjects. Consequently, the proportion of learners who achieve their functional skills qualifications is low.
- The vast majority of learners and apprentices who complete their learning remain in employment, gain extra responsibilities at work or progress to the next level of learning. Apprentices who complete their programmes remain in their current employment and assessors assist them well to progress to the next level of apprenticeship. Most learners who progress to level 5 qualifications secure leadership roles within early years settings.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Around 80 adult learners, who claim advanced loans, are enrolled on early years programmes. Approximately half of these study courses at level 3 while the remainder study at level 5. Leaders provide adult learning programmes with a clearly defined purpose to meet skills needs within the early years and childcare sector.
- Assessors do not challenge learners' understanding beyond minimum qualification requirements. Most assessors solely evaluate progress against tasks completed and this limits the ability of learners to develop, consolidate and deepen their learning. Too often, assessors provide feedback that is too generic or lacking in constructive criticism, and do not suggest improvements for future pieces of work.
- Assessors do not routinely involve learners or their employers in the selection of units. As a result, too many learners make slow progress as their learning does not directly relate to their workplace. Too many assessors do not inform employers regularly about the content of learning programmes. Consequently, employers cannot enhance learning effectively to allow learners to make rapid progress and bolster their workplace skills.
- Too few learners have the opportunity to develop their English and mathematical skills. A small number of learners choose to enrol on English or mathematics qualifications. Assessors do not effectively help learners to improve their skills in these subjects and consequently progress is slow.
- Learners are not clear about how or where to access careers information, advice and guidance through PBD. As a consequence, they rely on their employers to help them.

However, learners are clear about their future plans following completion of their qualification.

- Assessors provide adequate guidance on industry-relevant topics such as the stages of child development. As a result, most learners produce work which demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of the content of their qualifications. Where practice is effective, learners make good progress. For example, in a lesson learners studying at level 3 produced comprehensive work on ways to reduce children’s barriers to learning in early years.
- Learners take pride in their job roles, have high expectations of themselves and maintain professional and occupational standards. Learners effectively apply the theory they learn in the workplace to their leadership roles. For example, they successfully reference appropriate theory to promote positive behaviour in children under two years of age.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Currently, 84 intermediate apprentices and 311 advanced apprentices study frameworks programmes with PBD. Four fifths of apprentices are taking qualifications in early years and childcare. The remaining apprenticeships include youth work, business administration and education.
- Leaders ensure that the apprenticeships provision meets the principles of the apprenticeships programmes. However, leaders have yet to plan for the requirements of the new standards based apprenticeships. Leaders have not ensured that the off-the-job training provided for the large majority of apprentices is well managed. Assessors do not encourage their apprentices to use training time effectively, and provide little guidance to employers, who are expected to manage this aspect of the programme. For too many apprentices, off-the-job training time does not benefit their learning or help them to make rapid progress.
- Assessors do not often involve employers in the design of learning or in assessment activities for their apprentices. Employers rarely attend review meetings or discussions regarding apprentices’ progress. Consequently, employers are not able to help their apprentices relate their underpinning theory to skills in the workplace. However, apprentices benefit from working with employers who often provide good learning opportunities for their apprentices. This support enables apprentices to make rapid progress in developing the practical skills they need to perform well at work.
- Most assessors do not use reviews effectively to challenge apprentices to maximise their progress or to extend apprentices’ learning. Assessors set too many targets that do not enable apprentices to make swift progress. As a result, learners often fall behind with their work and assessors are not quick enough to take decisive action to help learners get back on track.
- Apprentices with additional needs, and those who need specific help, do not receive support in a timely or effective way. Leaders and assessors do not accurately identify support requirements, and this delays their progress. They do not support the high proportion of apprentices who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, these apprentices struggle to make satisfactory progress due to their limited written English skills.

- Assessors manage assessment well to enable apprentices to make progress in their practical skills in the workplace. Apprentices in childcare and early years are confident at work and manage the children in their care well. They demonstrate good standards of behaviour and knowledge of current industry practice. For example, they effectively manage the behaviour of the children in their care and make a good contribution to developing children's communication skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58563
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,133
Principal/CEO	Janet Dawson
Telephone number	01440 731731
Website	www.pbdevelopment.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	1	-	40	-	39
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	41	43	72	239	-	-		
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:	S4YC							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the training 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

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Shane Langthorne	Her Majesty's Inspector
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