

# West Anglia Training Association Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

26–29 June 2018

Overall effectiveness		Inadequate	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Inadequate</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Trustees have failed to support and challenge leaders to improve outcomes for apprentices in engineering and construction or to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders do not plan apprenticeship programmes well, resulting in a poor learning experience for most apprentices.
- Leaders have not made precise plans to quickly rectify the issues identified at the previous inspection. As a result, too many apprentices do not make expected progress and too many do not achieve before their planned end date.
- Trainers and assessors focus too narrowly on the basic requirements of qualifications. They do not plan and use methods to inspire and challenge apprentices to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders do not ensure that apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills adequately.
- Leaders do not effectively monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the outcomes for apprentices or the impact of actions to improve provision. As a result, they do not have effective plans to ensure future improvement.
- Leaders do not take enough account of apprentices' progress, or the views of staff and employers, when identifying areas for improvement.
- Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive good advice and guidance so that they can make informed decisions about their next steps.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders' and employers' expectations for apprentices' behaviour are high; staff intervene quickly and effectively follow up any concerns that arise.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of how to protect themselves and others from radicalisation and forms of extremism.
- Employers ensure that apprentices develop high-quality practical skills, so that their work meets industry standards.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- West Anglia Training Association (WATA) is a group training association, based in Huntingdon, which was established in 1976 as a charity company limited by guarantee. WATA provides apprenticeship programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 and adults across Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Bedfordshire. Apprentices have access to framework apprenticeship programmes at both intermediate and advanced levels in engineering and construction, such as highway maintenance. Most apprentices who enrol on programmes have good prior attainment of grades 9 to 4 in five or more GCSE qualifications, including in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have recently and significantly reduced their provision. They have ceased to offer business administration programmes and programmes for adults in scaffolding.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Urgently strengthen governance by:
  - providing trustees with timely and accurate information on apprentices' progress and the quality of the provision
  - ensuring that trustees monitor the quality of the provision and hold leaders rigorously to account for the outcomes for apprentices.
- Ensure that all apprentices make good progress and complete their programmes within planned timeframes, by:
  - planning and using assessment and progress reviews more frequently and effectively, and setting apprentices specific and challenging targets
  - effectively planning the study of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) element of apprentices' programmes, with sufficient resources to allow timely achievement
  - taking rapid and effective steps to help apprentices who are behind in their studies get back on track with their learning.
- Swiftly ensure that trainers and assessors improve apprentices' English and mathematical skills and enable them to progress beyond the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship programmes.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - using information on apprentices' progress to identify and tackle any weaknesses in learning and assessment
  - ensuring regular observations of training which focus in particular on its impact on apprentices' progress
  - evaluating the standards of trainers' and assessors' work, and providing them with clearly defined actions to improve their practice
  - providing specific training and development to help staff improve further.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders have failed to take precise and swift action to remedy the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection for their provision in engineering and construction, and to stem the decline in outcomes for apprentices. Too many apprentices do not make good progress during their studies and too many have remained in learning well past their planned end date.
- The board of trustees and leaders have faced significant difficulties with management changes in recent years, leading to a high turnover among trainers and assessors. Leaders have been too slow to recruit appropriate staff, resulting in reputational damage to the company with many employers and the wider business community.
- Leaders have not put in place sufficient staff and resources and this lack has affected apprentices' progress. The remaining staff do not have sufficient time at their disposal to enable apprentices to make good progress. Leaders have recently reduced the range of programmes offered.
- Trustees, leaders and managers do not ensure that information on apprentices' performance and progress is accurate and do not use data systems effectively to provide them with an accurate view of apprentices' progress across all provision. They do not have a robust understanding of their functional skills achievement data. Their records of achievement are ad hoc and disorganised. As a result, leaders do not follow up slow progress and intervene appropriately.
- Leaders' self-assessment of the performance of the organisation is overly positive. They fail to recognise the reasons why too many apprentices fall behind with their NVQ units, and why the majority have been waiting to complete for too long. They do not accurately identify significant weaknesses in provision, and so do not take steps to improve the provision.
- Managers' observations of teaching and learning do not enable trainers to improve their skills. Managers focus heavily on trainers' performance and not enough on how well apprentices learn and make progress. As a result, managers do not challenge trainers enough to improve apprentices' skills and understanding. Leaders do not use the information they receive from observations to plan further training so that trainers develop new skills.
- Leaders do not effectively monitor the progress of apprentices within subcontracted provision, and this failure affects outcomes for apprentices. For example, too few apprentices at Vogal Ltd successfully achieve their English and mathematics functional skills and this impacts on their timely achievement. Additionally, leaders and managers do not monitor closely enough the arrangements for safeguarding and health and safety. For example, managers do not routinely track apprentices' attendance.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that apprentices have access to high-quality independent advice and guidance. Consequently, too few apprentices have a good understanding of additional training and education to support them to achieve their aspirations.
- Leaders and employers have high expectations of apprentices' behaviour and staff work quickly to eradicate any incidents of bullying or harassment. Most apprentices behave

professionally at work, and employers value apprentices' work ethic and commitment.

- Leaders make certain that apprentices develop a good understanding of how to stay safe from radicalisation and extremism. Most apprentices are able to demonstrate how this may affect them at home or at work.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Trustees have failed to effectively challenge leaders to improve the provision swiftly. As a result, the pace of improvement is too slow and has resulted in inadequate provision. Trustees focus narrowly on the financial sustainability of the organisation and do not hold leaders and managers to account for low outcomes over time.
- Leaders do not provide trustees with key information on apprentices' progress and the quality of learning and assessment, and so they are unable to hold leaders to account for their quality improvement plans and actions. The data that leaders present to trustees is inaccurate and does not enable trustees or leaders to have a robust understanding of the current quality of apprenticeship programmes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure that the basic statutory requirements for recruiting staff are met. Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that apprentices and staff are safe. Staff and apprentices receive adequate training to raise their awareness.
- Due to the irregularity of apprentices' reviews, leaders and staff do not sufficiently check apprentices' understanding of safeguarding. As a result, apprentices have a limited grasp of wider safeguarding issues, such as internet safety. Apprentices at subcontracted provision have a good awareness of safeguarding protocols within their settings. Apprentices receive a 24-hour hotline number to contact designated safeguarding staff should they have a concern for themselves and others.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not well organised across apprenticeship programmes. Significant numbers of apprentices follow courses that do not match their prior learning and skills, and, as a result, too many do not develop or build on their existing skills.
- Staff do not identify apprentices' starting points effectively, in order to plan and deploy learning and assessment to enable apprentices to make progress. Staff do not identify apprentices who may require additional learning and/or support quickly enough and do not arrange for them to receive extra help to stay on track.
- Trainers and assessors do not provide apprentices with key information regarding their overall progress towards completing their apprenticeship programmes. Too many apprentices have a limited understanding of their progress and what units and assignments they are studying.
- Trainers and assessors do not assess apprentices' progress well or frequently enough,

and they do not inform apprentices of how they can progress more rapidly. In particular, staff do not effectively assess the NVQ element of the apprenticeships relating to knowledge and understanding.

- In teaching and learning, trainers and assessors focus too narrowly on the evidence required for awarding organisations. Trainers and assessors do not plan and use learning methods to motivate, excite and challenge apprentices to deepen their knowledge, and as a result, apprentices carry out tasks and activities at a pedestrian pace.
- Trainers and assessors do not link theory well to practical tasks when teaching off-the-job training. Trainers do not draw on apprentices' job roles and work-related experiences to effectively consolidate skills and knowledge. As a result, apprentices do not value their off-the-job training and how it relates to their work.
- Assessors and trainers do not record the work and assessment that apprentices accomplish. They do not set them further targets. Assessors and trainers fail to identify what apprentices have completed and what their next steps are. As a result, this inhibits apprentices from making good enough progress.
- Apprentices develop good practical skills as a result of effective on-the-job training from supportive and skilled employers. For example, most employers enhance apprentices' skills development by enabling them to work in different departments of their companies.
- In engineering, staff are suitably qualified and experienced and they utilise their expertise widely to enhance apprentices' skills. For example, apprentices competently undertake three-dimensional (3D) modelling and computer-aided design (CAD), which helps them to understand the design drawings they use at work. Most apprentices in subcontracted provision at Vogal Ltd and Cambridge Regional College have good experiences of their off-the-job training, which is well matched to their job roles. For example, electrical engineering apprentices who have learned about rewiring distribution boards confidently manage these tasks in the workplace by replacing and installing new cables and circuits to electrical safety systems.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Work to promote and support apprentices' personal development and meet their specific welfare needs is not good enough. For example, apprentices who require additional help do not benefit from individualised support from trainers, assessors or specialist staff. Consequently, apprentices do not develop wider employability skills, such as self-confidence and resilience, to enable them to achieve well.
- Apprentices do not have a robust understanding of their apprenticeships programmes. Trainers and assessors do not enable them to understand and manage their own learning and progress. Consequently, they rely too much on trainers and assessors to tell them what they need to complete. Assessors do not routinely involve employers in reviews and therefore they do not have a good understanding of the progress that apprentices make at work.
- Trainers and assessors do not ensure that apprentices are fully informed of the choices open to them for their next steps. Leaders have not ensured that apprentices are provided with independent careers advice and guidance. As a result, apprentices do not understand the full range of progression routes available to them.

- Apprentices frequently attend their workplaces and most attend their off-the-job training regularly. However, leaders do not monitor all apprentices' attendance across the whole provision and cannot identify potential concerns with attendance, nor take effective action if attendance rates fall below expected standards.
- Apprentices enjoy developing their practical skills at work and produce work to a high standard. For example, apprentices adeptly perform a range of welding tasks to help in the production of agricultural machinery with minimum supervision. Employers value the contributions their apprentices make within their teams and to the organisation.
- Apprentices have high standards of professionalism and demonstrate high levels of respect for their colleagues. Apprentices are proud of the work they produce. For example, apprentices employed in highly specialist engineering companies that work with a range of composite materials produce high-quality aviation products and meet the exacting standards required.
- Most apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of British values through their work within their departments and teams. Apprentices understand the importance of respect and diversity when dealing with customers and clients.

## Outcomes for learners

## Inadequate

- Over time, too many apprentices have not achieved their qualifications and too few have achieved within the time allocated to them. The proportion of apprentices who achieve is significantly below that nationally, and rates of achievement within planned timescales are lower still. The newly appointed apprenticeship manager has been able to help ensure that a third of apprentices are now expected to achieve, but most will do so well past their planned end date.
- Leaders have failed to halt the decline in apprentices' achievements. Leaders and managers have very recently started to hasten the pace of apprentices' achievements, but too many apprentices still make slow progress.
- Too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable and too many are insufficiently aware of their current achievement towards their overall apprenticeship framework. This slow progress leads to apprentices no longer being challenged by the work they have to complete for their level 2 qualifications. For example, apprentices continue to complete lower level tasks even though their job roles are much more demanding and complex.
- Apprentices make slow progress in the achievement of their functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Although most apprentices start their apprenticeship programmes with good prior attainment in English and mathematics, they do not sufficiently develop their English and mathematical skills or enhance them beyond the basic requirements of their programmes. As a result, the standards of apprentices' written work meet the awarding organisation's requirements for vocational qualifications, but the quality of grammar, spelling and punctuation is often low.
- Too many apprentices following construction and engineering programmes have not made the progress of which they are capable, and too many are behind with their units and assessments. Too many adults enrolled on scaffolding courses have not remained in

their learning and consequently have not achieved their full programme.

- The proportion of apprentices studying at Vogal Ltd who successfully complete their apprenticeships declined significantly in 2016/17. Leaders have not given the subcontractor's leaders any targets to improve apprentices' outcomes.
- Apprentices who declare that they require additional support do not receive any additional help from staff. For example, apprentices who have dyslexia request support to write reports, emails and letters, but assessors do not acknowledge this and do not provide individualised support.
- Too many younger apprentices do not make progress at the same rate as adults. Leaders have done little to ensure that they halt or reduce the gaps in achievement rates.
- Leaders do not analyse the destination or progression routes of their apprentices, and as a result, do not know the full impact of their programmes. However, a few apprentices have progressed to higher level programmes.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	55306
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	300
Principal/CEO	Terri Jones
Telephone number	01480 435544
Website	<a href="http://www.wata.co.uk">www.wata.co.uk</a>

## 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+
	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	7	11	43	40	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Vogal Training Ltd Cambridge Regional College							



## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the trainer in engineering, 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

Harpreet Nagra, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alastair Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Masterson	Ofsted Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector

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