

XTP International Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

2–4 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Safeguarding is not effective.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship on time is too low.
- Leaders have presided over a significant deterioration in the standard of training that apprentices receive since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have not ensured that the planning and management of apprenticeship programmes comply fully with the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.
- Information, advice and guidance are poor, resulting in apprentices not being recruited to the appropriate programme to suit their job role and career aspirations.
- Leaders have not prioritised the development of apprentices' English and mathematical knowledge and skills, so the majority of apprentices do not achieve their qualifications or improve their knowledge and skills in these subjects.
- Leaders, managers and vocational coaches do not identify apprentices' prior experiences or existing knowledge and skills at the start of the apprenticeship, so they cannot plan and implement on- and off-the-job training effectively.
- Very poor management, planning and implementation of the apprenticeship programme have impeded apprentices' personal and professional development.
- Self-assessment is not accurate and quality improvement planning is ineffective.
- Vocational coaches do not set challenging targets for apprentices to achieve. They focus on accrediting existing knowledge and skills as opposed to developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will make apprentices more productive in the workplace.
- Vocational coaches do not develop apprentices' verbal and written competencies throughout their apprenticeship.

The provider has the following strengths

- This provider has no key strengths.

Full report

Information about the provider

- XTP International Limited operates from Stockport, Cheshire. Leaders and managers recruit learners from a wide geographical area across the north west of England. They offer apprenticeships from level 2 to level 5 in education and training, customer service, business and administration, management, and manufacturing technologies. They currently have 68 apprentices. Eighteen apprentices are enrolled on standards-based programmes, 50 are enrolled on apprenticeship frameworks.
- The managing director has overall responsibility for the strategic development of the company. He is supported by 14 staff. These include the operations director and three recently appointed vocational coaches who are responsible for the delivery of all aspects of the apprenticeship.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of utmost urgency, leaders and managers must review safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all apprentices are safe. They should do this by ensuring that:
 - the safeguarding staff receive appropriate induction, training and direction to allow them to execute their roles effectively
 - they review all policies, procedures and processes on a regular basis to ensure that the most up-to-date guidance underpins these policies and they should ensure that all staff follow these policies, procedures and processes to protect apprentices
 - all staff receive regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty to ensure that they have a full understanding of safeguarding and that they follow the appropriate procedures and processes when they receive disclosures
 - they develop relationships with appropriate external agencies to support apprentices and keep them safe.
- Increase rapidly the proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship by the planned end date and make sure that apprentices make good progress.
- Implement a rigorous system to monitor the progress that apprentices make. When apprentices make slow progress, intervene swiftly to ensure that they receive support to catch up and achieve their apprenticeship on time.
- Ensure that apprentices receive effective information, advice and guidance at the start of, and throughout, their programme. Ensure that apprentices are on the most appropriate programme and that they receive high-quality support throughout their studies to achieve their personal and career-related objectives.
- Ensure that leaders and managers improve the arrangements for self-assessment and improvement planning, by:
 - using the views of staff, apprentices and employers, and management information to identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the provision
 - ensuring that improvement plans detail accurately the aspects that need to be

improved, identifying how they will achieve these improvements and monitoring meticulously the ensuing progress

- prioritising the development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills by providing initial and ongoing development for vocational coaches to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to support apprentices effectively
 - ensuring that a much higher proportion of apprentices are successful in achieving their English and mathematics qualifications and that they extend their knowledge and skills beyond the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that they recruit apprentices with integrity and meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship, by:
- ensuring that apprentices take part in a broad and balanced curriculum that provides them with the opportunity to learn substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours through skilfully coordinated on- and off-the-job learning
 - making sure that employers understand fully the commitment of employing an apprentice, ensuring that employers give apprentices the required amount of time during working hours to complete their work and to aid rapid knowledge and skills development.
- Leaders and managers should improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment swiftly, by:
- ensuring that vocational coaches use the results of assessments completed at the start of the programme to plan and implement a high standard of training that challenges apprentices to develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours
 - making sure that vocational coaches set challenging targets for apprentices to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have presided over a significant decline in the standard of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. They have not dealt swiftly with the extensive areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. This has resulted in the quality of provision deteriorating. Consequently, almost all apprentices make slow or very slow progress on their programme and do not develop the substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours that they and their employers require.
- Leaders' management of staff performance is poor. Leaders and managers have not set, communicated and implemented effectively targets from the strategic business plan, 'Journey 2 Outstanding', to ensure that they achieve the key business objectives. They are making slow progress on all the objectives. Leaders have only very recently implemented monthly meetings to discuss the performance of vocational coaches. Observations of teaching, learning and assessment are not accurate. They focus too heavily on what vocational coaches do as opposed to what apprentices learn, which is often too little.
- Leaders' and managers' arrangements to self-evaluate their provision are not fit for purpose. Self-assessment is wholly inaccurate. Their most recent self-assessment report, dated January 2018, contains glaring inaccuracies and over-optimistic judgements. Leaders and managers do not recognise the many weaknesses identified during the inspection. Leaders' action plans to improve the provision are cursory and lack any evaluation. While they detail the improvements needed, they do not specifically indicate how they will achieve these. They do not comment on the impact they will have on apprentices and their learning. The result of this is that leaders and managers have not made any improvements since the last inspection and the quality of the apprenticeship provision has deteriorated.
- Leaders and managers have not placed a high enough priority on developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that apprentices develop their English and mathematical knowledge and skills rapidly. As a result, too few apprentices pass their examinations in these subjects at level 1. Those apprentices who have already developed the required knowledge and skills do not enhance them to benefit themselves and their employer.
- Leaders and managers have not been successful in devising and implementing a rigorous system to monitor the progress that different groups of apprentices make on their programme. Their lack of oversight has resulted in their being unaware that almost all apprentices make slow or very slow progress. At the start of the inspection, leaders and managers were unaware that the large majority of apprentices do not make their expected progress.
- While leaders and managers have engaged extensively with employers, they have not developed programmes to ensure that apprentices acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have a positive impact on their employers' businesses. They have used apprenticeship funding to accredit apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. Managers and vocational coaches have failed to plan and implement learning so that apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours, reach their

potential and enhance the contributions they make to their employers' businesses.

The governance of the provider

- Leaders have failed to appoint any form of supervisory body to hold them to account for the performance of apprentices and the apprenticeship provision. This was a recommendation at the previous inspection that leaders have not implemented. Since the previous inspection, leaders have commissioned a range of educational consultants to support them in making the required improvements. Their impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, apprentices' achievements and the effectiveness of leadership and management is not yet discernible.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that the safeguarding staff have received the appropriate level of training to allow them to execute effectively their roles in the organisation. The designated safeguarding officer is not fully aware of their responsibilities and has not benefited from an appropriate induction into the role.
- Leaders have not developed working relationships with external organisations to support apprentices. Leaders have not ensured that the few vulnerable apprentices have received any support.
- Documentary evidence of training completed by staff in relation to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty is not available. Apprentices have a very poor understanding of whom to contact should they have any concerns about their safety. Apprentices also have a poor understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. This is of great concern since many apprentices are located in 'Prevent' priority areas in Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers do not plan and implement apprentices' programmes in accordance with the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They do not liaise with employers sufficiently to ensure that they are fully aware of what an apprenticeship entails, including that apprentices should have time set aside for their off-the-job learning. Consequently, most apprentices complete their off-the-job learning in their own time, which contravenes apprenticeship requirements. Several apprentices have not received any training since they started their apprenticeship more than eight months ago. Other apprentices, who have been on programme for 13 months, do not have a learning plan and staff have not reviewed their progress.
- Leaders, managers and vocational coaches, in conjunction with employers, do not plan and implement highly individualised and challenging learning for apprentices. Apprentices' on- and off-the-job training lack effective coordination. Since the previous inspection, the quality of on- and off-the-job training has deteriorated and is of poor quality.
- Too many apprentices do not start their on- and off-the-job training promptly when they enrol on an apprenticeship. Most apprentices are vague about what their apprenticeship involves or what new skills they are going to learn. Many apprentices do not know when

they are due to finish and what they are required to do to complete their apprenticeship successfully. The proportion of apprentices who completed their programmes by their planned end date in 2017/18 was very low.

- Staff do not define apprentices' vocational starting points clearly and do not use them to plan and implement on- and off-the-job learning. Vocational coaches place a disproportionate emphasis on assessing existing knowledge, skills, behaviours and personal qualities, as opposed to developing new ones. This results in apprentices losing interest in their programme because they do not learn anything new.
- Target-setting is weak. Apprentices' targets relate mainly to the completion of units on their apprenticeship. Managers and vocational coaches give insufficient attention to setting targets that focus on the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. They do not identify apprentices' personal development needs specifically and do not set targets to fulfil them.
- Apprentices do not receive challenge and support through training and assessment, to make rapid and sustained progress. Almost all apprentices make slow or very slow progress. In many cases, the high turnover of vocational coaches has had a serious negative impact on apprentices' progress. For example, several business and administration apprentices have had up to seven vocational coaches in less than six months. When apprentices do not make their expected progress, no formal plans are in place to ensure that they catch up quickly and complete by their planned end date. The motivation of too many apprentices' is low and their commitment to the apprenticeship programme has diminished. Vocational coaches who have just joined the team are beginning to help apprentices to make progress and complete their apprenticeship successfully. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of their support.
- A significant number of apprentices do not know whether they will continue with their apprenticeship. This is because of delayed and disrupted starts to the programme and irregular or infrequent visits by vocational coaches. They are despondent about the progress they have made on their apprenticeship and identify correctly that management of the programme is poor.
- Most apprentices do not develop new occupational knowledge, skills and behaviours, including in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). Managers and vocational coaches do not have high enough expectations of what apprentices can achieve. They place too little importance on apprentices developing their vocational competences to high industrial standards and improving their personal effectiveness. Apprentices focus disproportionately on collecting evidence for their portfolios to the detriment of their vocational and personal development. Consequently, apprentices do not realise their full potential.
- Apprentices' written work is not of a consistently high standard. Vocational coaches do not provide sufficient developmental feedback to enable apprentices to improve the accuracy and quality of their work. Managers and vocational coaches do not identify routinely the spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in apprentices' written work. Consequently, apprentices repeat errors and their standards of English do not improve. Vocational coaches' feedback also contains punctuation and grammatical errors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- The inadequate management, planning and implementation of the apprenticeship programme has delayed apprentices' personal development. Managers give insufficient attention to ensuring that they identify the personal, social and vocational needs of apprentices fully. Since the previous inspection, this aspect of the provision has deteriorated.
- Apprentices do not have access to high-quality initial and ongoing information, advice and guidance (IAG). Often, apprentices enrol onto the apprenticeship programme without receiving sufficient IAG about the programme and its relevance to them in their current and future job roles.
- Apprentices do not receive any careers information, advice and guidance at the beginning of, or during, the apprenticeship. They do not receive adequate preparation for the next stage of their training and employment. Apprentices want information on career development possibilities and associated additional training opportunities.
- Apprentices' knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, and ICT are underdeveloped. Although apprentices' starting points are clear, they do not have structured individual learning programmes to improve their functional English, mathematics and ICT.
- Leaders, managers and vocational coaches do not ensure that apprentices who have the necessary qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT to meet the apprenticeship requirements develop their knowledge and skills. Staff give insufficient importance to ensuring that every apprentice in the vocational areas has highly developed English, mathematical and ICT knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Leaders and managers do not provide enough enrichment activities to enable apprentices to explore personal, social and ethical issues and to prepare them for life in wider British society. Leaders and managers have introduced very recently an electronic-portfolio system that contains helpful resources. For example, these include video clips to extend apprentices' knowledge and understanding of relevant topics, such as good health and well-being, self-limiting beliefs and first aid. Too few apprentices have access to these resources.
- Leaders, managers and vocational coaches do not ensure that apprentices' knowledge of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty develops progressively. Apprentices have insufficient awareness and understanding of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. They are also insufficiently informed about the safe use of the internet and social media.
- Most apprentices are mature, confident and self-assured employees. Many of them make a good contribution to their employers' businesses irrespective of the apprenticeship training. Their motivation for the apprenticeship programme is low, their enthusiasm fluctuates, and many do not meet the deadlines for submitting work.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- The proportion of apprentices who complete their programme by the planned end date decreased significantly in 2017/18, compared to the previous year, and is low. Just over half of the apprentices completed their apprenticeship on time. There has been a significant decrease in the number of apprentices completing their qualification by the

planned end date for around two thirds of the programmes, which include management, business and administration, and learning and development. Almost all apprentices studying the improving operational effectiveness programmes achieve on time.

- Apprentices who work towards apprenticeships at levels 2 and 4 achieve significantly higher than the very low achievements of apprentices at levels 3 and 5. The achievement of female apprentices is significantly lower than male apprentices. Less than half of the female apprentices achieved by their planned end date in 2017/18.
- Almost all apprentices make slow or very slow progress on their programme and do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as part of their apprenticeship training. Too often, vocational coaches accredit apprentices with the knowledge and skills they already have. They do not support them, through skilfully planned training, to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses. Approximately a quarter of the apprentices who should have achieved in 2017/18 left their apprenticeship early.
- Fewer than half of the apprentices who study English and mathematics at level 1 achieve their qualifications. The small minority of apprentices who study level 2 in these subjects achieve their qualifications. Leaders have failed to prioritise the teaching of these key subjects. This has contributed to apprentices not receiving sufficient training to help them pass their examinations.
- Leaders and managers collect destination data. They do not analyse it thoroughly enough to inform them how effective the provision is in meeting the needs of apprentices and their employers. In 2017/18, a very small proportion of apprentices progressed to higher-level qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58273
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	127
Managing Director	Craig Shaw
Telephone number	0843 509 4020
Website	www.xtp-int.com

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)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
		11		46		11		
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:	-							

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 apprentices 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

Paul Cocker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Jonny Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Gater	Ofsted Inspector

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