

# Touchstone Educational Solutions Ltd

Independent Learning Provider

## Inspection dates

16–19 October 2018

Overall effectiveness		Inadequate	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Inadequate</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Leaders' management of the adult learning programmes in health and social care, business administration and functional skills mathematics and English is inadequate.
- Leaders' management of the apprenticeship programmes in health and social care is inadequate. They do not ensure that the programmes meet the apprenticeship requirements or that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training.
- Governance arrangements are ineffective. Governors do not have sufficient information to provide challenge and support in relation to the management of adult and apprenticeship programmes, learners' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders' arrangements for safeguarding adult learners and apprentices are ineffective. They fail to carry out risk assessments to identify vulnerable adults or make sufficient checks on the suitability of the staff that they employ.
- Too many current learners and apprentices make slow progress.
- Assessors and tutors do not identify learners' and apprentices' starting points and do not use information about learners' existing skills and knowledge to plan learning and support that enable learners to make good progress.
- Leaders, governors and managers do not have an accurate view of the quality of the programmes and do not have effective plans in place to make improvements.
- Leaders' and managers' management of data and of learners' and apprentices' files is very poor. They do not withdraw learners and apprentices from programmes in a timely manner and consequently claims for funding continue after learners and apprentices have withdrawn.
- Assessment practices are weak. Staff cannot always attribute assessed work in adult learners' portfolios reliably to individual learners.
- Learners and apprentices do not have a sufficient understanding of the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation.

### The provider has the following strengths

- All adult learners who take examinations in English and mathematics functional skills achieve their qualifications.
- The majority of tutors and assessors use their teaching skills well to engage and support learners to learn in lessons.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Touchstone Education Solutions Ltd (Touchstone), established in 2006, is an independent training provider based in central Woolwich, East London. Touchstone offers adult learning programmes in health and social care, access to higher education (nursing), business administration and childcare, and courses in mathematics and English for adults. It also offers apprenticeships in care management and lead adult care worker standards. Originally a subcontractor offering apprenticeships, Touchstone gained its own funded contracts in 2016.
- Touchstone has training centres in Woolwich, Greenwich and Leeds. Touchstone recruits the vast majority of its learners and apprentices from the church community groups with which it works closely. At the time of the inspection all adult learners and apprentices were over the age of 18 years.

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

- Review the status of all the apprentices and identify those that do not meet the requirements of the apprenticeship programme, and then:
  - work closely with apprentices' employers to ensure that apprentices have time allotted for off-the-job training in their work time
  - ensure that apprentices complete the correct number of hours on their programme that matches the information in their files
  - plan and implement sufficient off-the-job activities to meet their off-the-job entitlement.
- Urgently improve safeguarding arrangements, by:
  - following the guidelines in their policies for recruiting staff and taking up references
  - providing safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training for all staff working with adult learners and apprentices
  - implementing and acting on a vulnerable adult risk assessment for adults identified as being vulnerable
  - ensuring that staff, learners and apprentices know how to report safeguarding concerns and to whom they should report them
  - ensuring that learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Ensure that governors provide better support and challenge for leaders and managers, and introduce more stringent checks, with a focus on data management, quality assurance and safeguarding.
- Accurately assess learners' and apprentices' starting points and use this information to plan learning and support their individual needs.
- Improve data and file management by accurately recording learners' and apprentices' information and withdrawing the apprentices who are no longer in learning from the

programme immediately.

- Leaders should introduce comprehensive quality improvement processes and ensure that they are able to identify areas for improvement quickly and accurately.
- Raise the standard of teaching, learning and assessment by supporting and training staff to:
  - improve their assessment practice and identify discrepancies in learners’ and apprentices’ work quickly
  - improve the quality and quantity of detailed and helpful feedback they give to learners and apprentices to help them improve their work and make good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have failed adequately to manage the apprenticeship and adult learning programmes. They do not ensure that learners and apprentices experience good-quality teaching, learning and assessment and they do not meet the requirements of the apprenticeship programme.
- File management is very weak and records about learners are very poor, with missing or inaccurate information. Leaders are too slow to withdraw those learners and apprentices who have asked to be taken off their programme. Consequently, claims for funding continue to be made for apprentices who are no longer in learning.
- There are very weak systems in place to track the progress that learners and apprentices make. Leaders do not have an accurate view of how well learners and apprentices progress towards the achievement of their qualifications. Too many learners and apprentices make slow progress.
- Leaders and managers do not accurately assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers' processes for evaluating the quality of their programmes are weak. Managers do not use the information gained from the very small number of observations of teaching, learning and assessment to make improvements. As a result, staff do not receive training and development to help them improve their practice. Too much assessment practice is poor.
- Performance management is weak. Staff do not benefit from appraisals or have targets to improve the quality of their work. As a result, leaders do not act quickly enough to deal with staff when they underperform.
- Insufficient attention is paid to promoting positive attitudes towards people who have protected characteristics. Leaders do not ensure that learners and apprentices have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and cultural diversity. Learners and apprentices do not receive adequate advice and guidance about the appropriateness of programmes in meeting their career aspirations. Too many learners and apprentices start their programme without knowing what they need to do to complete their course.
- Leaders do not know how successful their courses are because they do not collect or analyse information about adult learners' next steps well enough. Leaders do not know how many adult learners on mathematics and English qualifications move from one level to the next. However, the access to nursing programme, for the small number who started the course, is successful in supporting the majority of learners to gain university places.

### The governance of the provider

- Governance is ineffective. The board of governors does not take effective action to implement areas for improvement agreed at governors' meetings. Governors do not check any progress made against actions nor challenge leaders and managers when they fail to implement these actions. For example, in November 2017 it was agreed that leaders would implement formal performance management and appraisals for staff, but this was not done. As a result, staff do not receive feedback on their work or support to improve

their practice.

- Governors and leaders, in their leadership meetings, do not focus well enough on the quality of adult learning and apprenticeship programmes. Governors do not receive adequate reports, nor do they have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Governors are right to recognise that the information they receive does not enable them to hold leaders and managers to account.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have failed to promote an effective culture of safeguarding across the provider. The designated safeguarding officer completed appropriate training during the inspection, but too few staff have completed training in safeguarding. As a result, staff are not aware of the correct procedure for raising concerns.
- Leaders do not follow their own procedures set out in their policy for employing staff, and do not take up references or follow safe recruitment practices.
- Leaders and managers do not assess the risks that adult learners face and as a result cannot identify potentially vulnerable adults on their programmes. Leaders and managers do not have a clear view of when adult learners should attend training. It is not possible for managers to contact learners who are absent, since too many phone numbers in learners' files are incorrect.
- The 'Prevent' duty action plan meets the requirements of the legislation, but too few staff have completed 'Prevent' duty training. They do not recognise the significant risks in the areas in which the provider operates, many of which are 'Prevent' priority areas. Too few learners and apprentices understand the risks of extremism well enough.

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

### **Inadequate**

- At the start of the programmes, assessors and tutors do not accurately assess the skills and abilities that learners and apprentices already have. As a result, learners and apprentices do not receive an individual learning programme that meets their specific needs. It is hard for tutors and assessors to check how much progress learners and apprentices make.
- Assessors and tutors are insufficiently skilled at assessing learners. They do not make consistently accurate assessment judgements. Too often, they assess and pass work that does not meet the assessment criteria or required standard. They do not identify when adult learners' work is almost identical, or when learners have not declared that work is their own.
- Assessors and tutors do not use the results of learners' and apprentices' initial assessment in English and mathematics to plan and teach lessons that consider each learner's and apprentice's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, learners and apprentices with development needs in these subjects do not receive specific targeted support to help them improve their skills.
- In lessons where assessors' and tutors' planning for learning is not effective, they do not facilitate activities well nor use appropriate resources. In mathematics and English

functional skills classes, tutors' over-reliance on handouts reduces learners' opportunities to explore the topics in these areas.

- Learners do not receive feedback that is sufficiently helpful so that they can clearly identify what they need to do to improve. Feedback on written work for higher-level apprentices does not help apprentices develop their writing skills or their use of appropriate English language. Tutors give very little feedback to adult learners to help them use appropriate referencing techniques in their written work.
- Assessors and tutors have appropriate professional and vocational qualifications. The majority of tutors and assessors use their subject knowledge well to teach lively and interactive sessions in lessons. During these lessons, adult learners on access to nursing courses ask frequent questions to extend their knowledge and make good progress. Learners on health and social care level 2 courses work well in pairs and listen carefully to each other. Learners studying English functional skills develop good communication skills.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

### **Inadequate**

- Leaders, managers and staff do not have high enough expectations of learners' and apprentices' attendance and punctuality at training sessions and workshops. Learners' attendance is poor. Managers' recording of attendance is weak, and staff do not challenge lateness.
- Learners and apprentices do not receive detailed and helpful information at the start of their course to help them make well-informed choices. Staff do not provide learners with sufficient information about the content of programmes or take into account learners' and apprentices' prior qualifications. As a result, learners with low-level English and mathematics skills are often on courses at too high a level. Staff do not adjust the amount of time or value of the adult learner loan to account for learners with higher-level qualifications and knowledge than the course on which they enrol.
- Staff do not assess learners' and apprentices' barriers to work and learning appropriately at the start of the programme. Staff do not know when learners and apprentices need support to develop work-related skills such as timekeeping, motivation and teamworking.
- Staff do not support learners and apprentices sufficiently to improve their mathematics skills in relation to their career aspirations. For example, in business administration level 3 learners struggle to understand tax ratios.
- Learners and apprentices do not benefit from extra activities outside their course that allow them to explore personal and social issues. Staff do not give learners help to develop their knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values, healthy eating and mental health issues. As a result, learners are not fully prepared and equipped to take part in life in wider society.
- Learners and apprentices are not supported well enough to develop their written English skills to help them move on to higher-level qualifications or senior job roles. Tutors do not correct many grammatical errors in learners' and apprentices' written work. Staff provide good support to adult learners in their functional skills qualifications.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe at work and have an adequate knowledge of safeguarding in their workplace. However, staff do not ensure that learners and apprentices have a good enough understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation

and extremism, nor of risks around keeping themselves safe. Not all learners and apprentices know who to contact if they have any concerns about safeguarding.

- Learners and apprentices behave well in lessons. They respect each other and their tutors and take part in discussions and learning activities with confidence and enthusiasm.

## Outcomes for learners

## Inadequate

- In 2017/18, the provider's data shows that the majority of adult learners who took level 3 qualifications in health and social care achieved them. The proportion who achieved within the planned time, however, was very low. The concerns about the reliability of assessed and accredited work in learners' portfolios raises questions about the validity of the provider's achievement data for 2017/18.
- The very small number of adult learners on business administration level 3 courses did not achieve well.
- The quality of learners' and apprentices' work is not consistently of a good standard and too often there are discrepancies in submitted work. These include work that was completed a year before the learner started the course, work that did not show how assessment criteria were met, and work from learners that contained almost identical answers. Consequently, assessed and formally accredited work cannot be reliably attributed to individual learners, a few of whom have received qualification certificates.
- In 2017/18, the provider's data shows that all adult learners who took mathematics and English functional skills qualifications achieved them. However, managers were unable to confirm how many learners achieved at their first attempt, or how many progressed to the next level of qualification.
- The proportion of learners and apprentices who remain on their course is high. However, this information is not reliable due to the untimely manner and accuracy of the recording of withdrawals from the programmes. Too many apprentices remain enrolled on courses when they have stopped attending for their learning.
- Too many current learners and apprentices make slow progress. The small number of apprentices on adult care worker apprenticeship standards make very slow progress. Managers do not have an accurate view of how well learners and apprentices progress from their initial starting points.
- Staff do not develop sufficiently the work-related skills needed in the health and social care sector for unemployed adult learners. Too many learners do not have access to relevant work placements which they need to meet the qualification requirements.
- A minority of learners and apprentices can identify new skills and knowledge gained since starting their training programme.

## Types of provision

## Adult learning programmes

## Inadequate

- At the time of the inspection, 238 adult learners were on programmes funded using advanced learner loans. The vast majority of adults are on programmes in health and social care at level 3 and a small group of learners study care management at level 5, childcare at level 3 and access to higher education. There are also approximately 300 enrolments on functional skills mathematics and English courses.
- Leadership and management of the adult programme are weak. Managers and staff do not keep learners' records up to date and accurate. Learners' contact details in the provider's files are inaccurate. Too many numbers do not exist or do not relate to the learners in the files.
- Leaders fail to plan individual learning programmes for adults that take into account learners' prior skills and knowledge. Managers, tutors and assessors do not have a clear plan for learning and assessment. Too many learners make slow progress.
- Tutors and assessors do not support learners well enough to overcome barriers to employment or learning. They do not check with learners when they start the course what barriers they have. They do not put in place targeted support to help learners overcome barriers.
- Leaders and managers do not work effectively with partners in the area to widen participation and support learners' progression to further learning and employment. As a result, learners do not understand the wider opportunities available to them. They do not receive enough support to be more independent in their local communities.

## Apprenticeships

## Inadequate

- At the time of the inspection, 80 apprentices were enrolled on apprenticeship programmes. The vast majority of apprentices are on higher apprenticeship frameworks, completing level 5 in care management. Ten apprentices are on the new lead adult care worker level 3 standard.
- The leadership of the apprenticeship programme is weak. Leaders do not ensure the programme meets the apprenticeship requirements. The majority of apprentices do not receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training and almost all apprentices complete off-the-job training in their own time. Staff do not keep accurate records of apprentices' working hours. A minority of apprentices on the lead adult care worker standard do not work sufficient hours.
- Tutors and assessors do not assess apprentices' prior knowledge and experiences before they start an apprenticeship. As a result, it is difficult to judge whether apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Managers, tutors and assessors do not work closely enough with employers to explain the requirements of the apprenticeship programme and link the on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices do not have a clear assessment plan. Too many employers do not know how much progress their apprentices make. Some employers did not recognise the names of the apprentices who, according to the apprenticeship files, are supposed to be with them.



- Apprentices are insufficiently aware of the requirements to complete functional skills in English and mathematics. Too often, staff do not inform apprentices of the results of their initial assessment of these skills or how they should complete their functional skills. As a result, apprentices on the lead adult care worker standards do not know the level they start at and that they need to achieve their functional skills at level 2.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	1236920
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	450
Principal/CEO	Dr Yemisi Olabiran
Telephone number	020 8317 8006
Website	<a href="http://www.touchstone-esl.com">www.touchstone-esl.com</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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	120	-	100	-	216	-	23
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	10	-	70		
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 chief executive officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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

Jane Hughes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Dill-Russell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marinette Bazin	Ofsted Inspector
Rosy Belton	Ofsted Inspector
Saskia Niderost	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Townsley	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Learner View**

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Employer View**

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to [www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018