

Education and Training Skills Ltd

Community learning

Inspection dates

12–15 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The quality and effectiveness of the provision have declined progressively since the previous inspection.
- The standards of training and support apprentices receive are not consistently high.
- Too many apprentices are not making the progress they should be making.
- Leaders have not ensured that all employers give apprentices their full entitlement to off-the-job training.
- A substantial cohort of health and social care apprentices are well past their planned completion dates.
- Apprentices' achievement of qualifications on health and social care programmes is too low.
- A small minority of apprentices receive inaccurate advice and guidance and are placed on the wrong level of programme.
- Apprentices do not always achieve to the best of their ability.
- Leaders' new arrangements for quality improvement, performance monitoring and management are being implemented, but have not yet had full impact.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders develop apprenticeship programmes which meet the needs of employers and apprentices well.
- Education and Training Skills (ETS) trainers develop most apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours effectively.
- ETS leaders have developed very good resources for apprentices' teaching, training and learning.
- Off-the-job training in ETS centres is effective and valued highly by apprentices.
- Most apprentices enjoy their work, become self-assured, and gain technical knowledge and good practical skills for employment.
- Most apprentices receive good advice and guidance, which helps them understand the career paths they can follow.
- Almost all apprentices gain permanent employment after completing their qualification.
- Apprentices' achievement of functional skills and business-related qualifications is high.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Education and Training Skills (ETS) was founded in 1965 as a group training association to provide engineering training and was awarded charitable status in 1984. It operates in the south west of England with a head office in Exeter and a satellite centre in Truro.
- ETS provides employer levy-funded and non-levy-funded apprenticeship programmes, working with large-, small- and medium-sized companies. ETS provides intermediate, advanced and higher level apprenticeships in business administration, customer service, team leading, management, information and communication technology (ICT), and health and social care. Business-related apprenticeships comprise the large majority of programmes offered. The company's operation is overseen by a board of trustees.
- Unemployment in the south west is 2.9% compared to 3.9% nationally. Around 39% of the south west region's population are qualified to NVQ level 4 or above, similar to the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of the provision systematically and rapidly, by:
 - ensuring that all apprentices receive and record their full entitlement to off-the-job training
 - fully implementing the current professional development programme for trainers to ensure they provide apprentices with consistently effective support and training
 - providing all overdue health and social care apprentices with the support they need to complete their qualifications
 - monitoring and managing all apprentices' performance closely and routinely using a greater range of data to ensure apprentices make good progress and achieve their qualifications within planned timescales
 - ensuring that all apprentices are placed on the right level of programme
 - fully implementing and routinely evaluating the effectiveness of the new arrangements for quality improvement, performance monitoring and management.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and staff recognise that the quality and effectiveness of the provision have declined since the previous inspection. They are taking appropriate, but mostly recent, steps to improve. They are implementing a comprehensive and well-targeted improvement plan, but recognise that all apprentices are not yet receiving consistently high standards of training and support.
- A substantial minority of higher level apprentices on health and social care programmes are currently well past their completion dates. Leaders and trainers have focused strongly on supporting all these apprentices to finish their programmes. The number overdue to complete has reduced substantially in recent months but is still too high.
- Too many apprentices are not making the progress expected of them, compared with their starting points. Leaders have appointed experienced new management and training staff to the training team to improve the consistency, frequency and effectiveness of interactions with apprentices. This initiative is beginning to have a positive impact on improving apprentices' rates of progress.
- Leaders and trainers have not been successful in ensuring that all employers provide apprentices with their full entitlement to off-the-job training. Additionally, the ETS training team has not so far managed to get all apprentices to record their off-the-job training accurately.
- Leaders and managers are implementing new arrangements for quality improvement, performance monitoring and management. Most of these are at early stages and their impact is so far modest. A highly evaluative self-assessment report (SAR) for the current year was made available during the inspection. This clearly and accurately identified key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The SAR links seamlessly to a workable, realistic and priority-based quality improvement plan (QIP). The quality and clarity of the SAR and QIP are good. They are each substantially more effective than the preceding versions.
- Managers regularly observe sessions in classrooms and during apprentices' reviews. Their observations concentrate almost exclusively on recording what happens in a session. They do not pay enough attention to evaluating the impact of training on apprentices' progress, learning or skills development.
- A minority of employers and apprentices were critical of a decline in ETS' standards of communication and support in 2018. However, the great majority of employers and apprentices now recognise that ETS' recent improvement programmes are having a positive impact. The great majority of employers are now very positive about the impact of ETS training staff on their apprentices' knowledge and skills development. Leaders work closely with a wide range of employers. They ensure that the apprenticeship programmes developed are responsive to the needs of employers and apprentices in the south west region.
- ETS leaders have developed and invested in good resources for apprentices' teaching, training and learning. These include very well-equipped off-the-job training classrooms at its Exeter and Truro offices. ETS leaders, managers and trainers are well qualified and

have appropriate subject expertise. Trainers use their knowledge very well to support apprentices' learning and development. Trainers are able to access an appropriate and useful range of programmes that develop their professional skills further.

The governance of the provider

- ETS' arrangements for governance require improvement. The board of trustees receives a substantial, but incomplete, range of information on ETS' performance. It considers the information it receives carefully and provides the leadership team with effective challenge and support. However, trustees had not until recently received sufficient data on apprentices' slow progress or often poor access to off-the-job training. Consequently, trustees did not rigorously challenge the leadership team on these aspects. This omission has now been rectified. Trustee meetings are held regularly and members' attendance is good. Trustees have a diverse and relevant range of skills and interests in the education, care and vocational sectors. They use these well to inform their decisions and actions as trustees.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- An ETS trustee has extensive senior-level experience in safeguarding. This trustee has worked closely with ETS staff to build a strong and practical framework for monitoring and promoting safeguarding practice. Leaders, managers and trainers pay very close attention to ensuring that the framework is effective. ETS operates an effective 'safer recruitment' policy. As a result, all staff have had appropriate and regularly updated checks on their backgrounds. Appropriately trained, designated safeguarding leads are in place.
- All ETS staff have received thorough training and know what to do if they are alerted to a safeguarding issue. Apprentices are very well informed about safeguarding and know whom to contact if they have any concerns. Apprentices' practical knowledge and understanding of the Prevent 'duty', British values, how to stay safe online and equality and diversity are very good.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In the previous year, a small minority of trainers did not provide consistent and effective support to all apprentices. A few apprentices had periods without a trainer, or a series of trainers with different approaches and ways of working. This slowed the apprentices' progress. ETS leaders have now appointed more appropriately qualified trainers. They have provided them with effective professional development to raise standards and consistency. Trainers are now providing apprentices with more consistently effective support and timely assessment of their work.
- Trainers do not involve employers in apprentices' progress reviews routinely. Consequently, too many employers do not have a good understanding of the requirements of an apprenticeship. They do not then provide constructive additional support for apprentices' learning and skills development.

- Too many apprentices do not routinely have sufficient time for off-the-job training. This slows their progress. Apprentices too often have to fit their studies around work commitments. This means they struggle to keep up with assignment, homework and programme timescales.
- Trainers do not provide apprentices with consistently good advice and guidance before they start their programmes. A very small minority are placed on programmes which are not well matched to their prior experience and skills. For example, a small group of apprentices with long practical experience of working in care settings have been placed on an intermediate-level programme. They are making rapid progress towards completing the requirements of their apprenticeship, but not learning new skills or achieving their full potential. ETS leaders have recently devised a more thorough approach to advice and guidance during induction. This has only just been implemented.
- Trainers conduct a thorough assessment of apprentices' skills in English and mathematics at the start of their programmes. However, trainers do not use this information consistently well to provide effective practical support to all those with lower level literacy, language or numeracy skills. Apprentices on health and social care programmes who are exempt from gaining a qualification in mathematics or English have too little structured opportunity to develop their skills further. Consequently, these apprentices are at a disadvantage when learning how to produce care reports, analyse data or take on management responsibilities.
- Most apprentices on business-related programmes develop good business English skills. They learn to communicate with clients using well-composed emails and produce professional business reports.
- Apprentices who get the time to attend, enjoy and value highly the off-the-job training sessions in ETS centres. Here, trainers offer well-planned programmes which develop apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Trainers use a carefully structured approach to show apprentices how theory is applied in practice. Morning sessions are focused well on developing apprentices' understanding of theory. Apprentices use afternoon sessions productively to research and reflect on how their learning applies in their workplaces.
- Apprentices benefit from interacting with their peers during ETS off-the-job sessions. They gain a broad understanding of systems and procedures in a wide range of organisations, including the public sector, NHS, manufacturing, engineering and distribution industries. Apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships benefit from very well-structured workbooks that prepare them effectively for their end-point assessment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Most ETS trainers negotiate effectively with employers and apprentices to ensure a good match between the units of the vocational qualifications apprentices take and their job roles. Apprentices gain confidence and become self-assured through working in often busy workplaces. They develop positive approaches to challenges at work. They make good progress in acquiring fundamental job skills, such as team working. They learn to solve problems and use their initiative on a routine basis.
- Most apprentices are highly motivated and enjoy their work roles. They understand well how the apprenticeship programme will help them progress towards their long-term

goals. Apprentices receive good information, advice and support from trainers and employers to help them make informed choices about their future careers. Most are very positive about their career paths. Two apprentices on a level 4 business administration programme have already secured permanent roles in their local county council offices. Another apprentice in an NHS commissioning role is being trained to take over a management post on the retirement of his manager.

- The majority of apprentices improve their technical knowledge and skills. For example, advanced-level business administration apprentices in NHS roles learn how to streamline processes and ensure complaints and requests are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Apprentices are articulate. Most can describe the skills they have developed clearly and how this benefits their employers' business. They show respect for each other and demonstrate a supportive and collaborative approach to completing tasks. Apprentices gain in confidence following ETS off-the-job sessions in assertiveness training, telephone techniques and dealing with difficult customers.
- Apprentices are safe and clear about whom they need to contact if they have any concerns. Trainers routinely emphasise good health and safety and how to be safe online. Trainers teach apprentices to implement a culture of respect and tolerance in their workplaces.
- Apprentices gain a very good understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values from induction onwards. Trainers check, reinforce and update apprentices' understanding of these aspects very well during their regular reviews. ETS leaders have introduced a challenging group discussion about contentious issues to apprentices' induction process.
- Apprentices do not all achieve to their full potential. Apprentices too often meet only the minimum requirements of the programme rather than, where they are capable, exceeding them.
- Apprentices do not develop good time-management skills in the course of their programmes. As a result, they struggle to schedule their off-the-job learning. This has led to a significant minority of intermediate-level apprentices making slow progress.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Apprentices' achievement of qualifications declined progressively between 2015 and 2018. In particular, the average rate for those completing within their planned timescales fell by around 20 percentage points. A high proportion of health and social care apprentices did not complete their programmes in the time expected.
- Apprentices' achievement rates on health and social care programmes were too low during 2017/18. The provider's data, which cannot be verified at this time, indicates an improving picture on these programmes in the current year. It is too early to confirm the achievement of apprentices following standards-based programmes since the great majority are scheduled to complete later this year.
- In 2017/18, apprentices' achievement of qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in functional ICT, mathematics and English skills was high. In the same period, a high proportion of apprentices on frameworks-based customer service, ICT, and business and administration programmes achieved their qualifications. These apprentices constituted the large

majority of all learners. There was little difference between the overall achievement rates of intermediate- and advanced-level apprentices, by gender or by age. Trainers identify apprentices' additional learning needs, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. They provide appropriate practical support to help these learners achieve.

- The standard of apprentices' work is high. Employers value their work and improvements in their effectiveness in the workplace. Almost all apprentices enter full-time employment on completing their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51688
Type of provider	Community learning
Age range of learners	16–18, 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	381
Principal/CEO	Richard Jenkins
Telephone number	01392 445444
Website	www.trainingsouthwest.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	15	32	16	104	0	64		
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:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the ETS general manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Nick Crombie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector

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