

Inspection of Youth Force Limited

Inspection dates: 12–15 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Youth Force Limited is an independent learning provider based in Sussex. All training is provided in employers' workplaces across the country but mainly in the south east. At the time of the inspection, 80 apprentices were on apprenticeship programmes on levels 2 and 3. Most apprentices are on standards-based programmes at level 3, with a small number on frameworks at levels 2 and 3. Fifty-three apprentices are studying laboratory technician programmes, 21 are studying infrastructure technician and six are studying business administration programmes. There were no learners in receipt of high-needs funding. Youth Force Limited does not work with any subcontractors. Apprentices on the laboratory technician programme work for some of the largest construction companies in the country on major infrastructure projects.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices are enthusiastic to learn. They enjoy developing new knowledge and skills and are increasingly confident to apply their new learning at work. Apprentices benefit from support and encouragement from their tutors and workplace mentors. They gradually build and apply the specialist knowledge, skills and behaviours needed by their employers.

Apprentices recognise considerable growth in their personal skills and abilities and in their self-belief because of their training. They are ambitious for their futures and work hard to achieve their goals. Apprentices take pride in their work and achievements. Employers value the increasing knowledge and skills of the apprentices and allocate them additional responsibilities.

Apprentices are supported from the beginning of their programmes to achieve a merit or distinction in their final assessments. Because of this, an increasing number of apprentices successfully achieve at distinction level.

Tutors provide frequent careers advice and guidance to apprentices. As a result, apprentices have a good awareness of the various pathways and opportunities available to them in their industry.

Apprentices feel safe at work and work safely in their workplaces. Apprentices show a very strong awareness of the importance of health and safety in the workplace.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have successfully changed the curriculum they offer to specialise in the provision of apprenticeships in science and technology subjects. They work closely with employers to develop programmes that meet the needs of their workforces and address skills shortages. They consult with specialist organisations such as The Concrete Society, the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services. They use these links to design industry-specific learning materials for the infrastructure technician and laboratory technician programmes.

Tutors take great care in identifying how the apprenticeship standards relate to the specific work of the apprentices and their starting points. Tutors use their detailed knowledge of each apprentice to plan learning and prepare resources which are highly relevant. For example, apprentices who work at very large infrastructure companies study additional and personalised modules to address any knowledge gaps such as the scientific theory underpinning the testing of different aggregates.

Tutors carefully plan assessment so that the apprentices are confident in one step before moving on to the next planned and more complex task. As a result, apprentices progressively build their understanding and knowledge and transfer this to their long-term memory. Apprentices benefit from regular and detailed feedback,

using vocationally relevant examples. For example, business administration apprentices deepen their understanding of the importance of accuracy while developing a stock control process.

Tutors are highly knowledgeable in their specialist areas. They demonstrate strong awareness in niche areas and industry-specific requirements. Most tutors use a good range of effective strategies to test learning and develop deeper knowledge. A minority of tutors are being supported to improve their teaching skills.

Apprentices develop significant new knowledge and skills through their on-the-job learning with their workplace mentors. This is carefully built upon and extended by the tutors. During professional discussions and observations in the workplace tutors ask apprentices challenging questions. For example, in soil testing, they consider the environmental impact of construction.

Tutors do not routinely plan for the further development of English or mathematics skills. A small minority of apprentices continue to improve these skills but for the large majority this does not extend beyond learning the technical language of their specialist sector. Many apprentices aspire to study at a higher level and tutors do not ensure that they develop appropriate academic or study skills to prepare them for this.

Managers have not ensured that tutors consistently support the small number of apprentices with additional learning needs. They are not always aware of the particular learning needs of each learner nor equipped with the skills to meet these needs. As a result, these learners do not gain confidence as quickly as others and their progress is slower.

Tutors do not encourage apprentices to develop a broader knowledge and awareness of their wider society. For example, apprentices do not take part in skills competitions or social projects such as charitable events or fundraising. Many apprentices are the only apprentice in their workplace and there are too few forums for debate among apprentices.

The chief executive officer, as the sole owner–director of the company, holds all her senior managers to account for their performance and successfully challenges them to bring about improvements.

Leaders and managers have not fully addressed the lack of clarity between on- and off-the-job training so that all apprentices benefit from a coherent and well-understood programme of learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, including the designated safeguarding leads, have regular training on

safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Managers ensure that staff are recruited through safe procedures and have relevant employment checks. Staff and apprentices know how to report any safeguarding concerns. Managers respond quickly to any welfare concerns and ensure that appropriate support is in place and monitored. Leaders and managers have implemented a 'Prevent' duty action plan, but this is not based on a risk assessment that is relevant to the different vocational contexts that apprentices work in. As a result, most apprentices do not understand why these risks are relevant to them.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that the small number of tutors who need to improve their teaching skills are supported to acquire these skills rapidly.
- Leaders need to ensure that all apprentices benefit from a broader curriculum which encourages them to develop a fuller understanding of their society and their rights and responsibilities within it.
- Leaders must provide more rigorous oversight of apprentices' off-the-job training and how it links with on-the-job training so that they maximise the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices are supported to develop relevant academic and study skills so that they are better prepared to successfully move onto higher-level study.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276407
Address	1st Floor 1 Gordon Mews Gordon Close Portslade BN41 1HU
Contact number	01273 776779
Website	www.youthforce.co.uk
CEO	Charlotte Blant
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

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, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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