

Short inspection of Pilot IMS Limited

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

Outcome

Pilot IMS Limited continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Pilot IMS is an independent learning provider founded in 2001. It provides apprenticeship training nationally, and adult learning predominantly in the Midlands region. At the time of the inspection, 44 apprentices were on level 2, 3, and 5 apprenticeships in areas including business improvement techniques, food manufacturing, and management. Most apprentices were on standards-based apprenticeships. There were 35 adult learners on level 2 courses in business improvement techniques, customer service, retail and team-leading. Pilot IMS works with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to provide regulated and non-regulated learning to support a local homeless project.

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

Adult learners make good progress because of the support they receive from their trainers in and outside of the classroom. Trainers help them to develop their confidence and skills, so that they can live productive lives in their communities and be more ambitious in their career aims.

Apprentices grasp quickly new concepts and skills because of their trainers' expert knowledge, which helps them to understand often complex theories and principles in subjects such as in engineering and manufacturing. Trainers provide them with a good variety of projects and independent research activities that help them to apply theory to practice thoroughly.

Apprentices' and adult learners' attendance is high. They value the flexible access to their training both in the workplace and the classroom that suits their differing shift patterns, working commitments and appointments. Most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications.

Apprentices and learners benefit from a safe and secure environment. They have access to a wide range of support, including counselling and mental health services. Learners and apprentices are confident that staff will act on their concerns quickly and know who to contact in times of crisis.

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

Leaders work closely with employers to design a challenging curriculum for learners and apprentices to build their knowledge, skills and the behaviours needed for further learning and employment. Leaders work closely with the WMCA to identify the skills gaps in the region, and, in addition, they have designed a specialised programme to help those individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

Leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum focuses on learners' and employers' specific needs. For example, adult learners benefit from learning life and employability skills. They increase their confidence in working with others and learn how to speak assertively during interviews. Apprentices who study business improvement techniques implement their projects into their specific job roles and, in a few cases, throughout their employer's business.

Trainers plan learning in a logical order so that learners and apprentices build on their knowledge and skills thoroughly over time. For example, apprentices learn how differing management theories influence organisational structure, helping them to evaluate their own management style and their effectiveness in managing staff.

Trainers on adult courses teach their curriculum sensitively. For example, trainers enable learners to discuss challenging topics, such as abuse and harassment, in a safe environment in order to help them explore and deepen their understanding. As a result, learners feel more confident to protect themselves and seek help when needed.

Trainers ensure that learners and apprentices learn and remember new knowledge long-term. Apprentices re-visit specialist knowledge routinely to ensure they have the thorough understanding required for end-point assessment. For example, apprentices in food manufacturing ensure they have a strong knowledge of the potential risks presented by bacteria in various food settings.

Most trainers assess learners' and apprentices' work routinely and provide them with helpful feedback for improvement. Where trainers provide written feedback, they do not, in a few cases, give sufficiently specific feedback and targets in order to help apprentices achieve the highest grades.

Trainers use a range of resources and support from the National Careers Service to provide learners and apprentices with comprehensive advice and guidance at the start of their programmes. Consequently, they are well informed about their current course and next steps. Nearly all apprentices stay in employment and move into more complex roles with greater responsibility.

Directors have the capacity to ensure sustainable improvement across the provision. They receive scrutiny routinely from providers from which they subcontract provision, and from the WMCA. They use the information effectively to improve the learners' experience on these

programmes. However, directors have not strengthened governance arrangements, so that they have sufficient independent challenge to hold them fully to account.

Although apprentices make good progress towards achieving their qualifications, leaders have identified rightly that they do not ensure that trainers have sufficient information about apprentices' starting points, so that all apprentices can achieve their potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture across the business. Managers ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures are up to date, and that staff and learners know them well.

Leaders support their most vulnerable adult learners very well through effective multi-agency links. These organisations offer health and well-being sessions, including counselling and mental health support.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that trainers identify learners' and apprentices' starting points accurately so that they can use the information to plan learning to help learners and apprentices to achieve their potential.
- Leaders should strengthen their governance arrangements to ensure they have sufficient independent support and scrutiny to hold them fully to account.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53895
Address	201–206 Alcester Street Birmingham B12 0NQ
Contact number	0845 300 2264
Website	Pilot-uk.com
Director	Spencer Shuter
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2015
Main subcontractors	–

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Pilot IMS Limited was judged to be good in December 2015.

The inspection team was assisted by the strategic quality lead, 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

Richard Deane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Collett	Her Majesty's Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020