

Inspection of Hoople Ltd

Inspection dates:

21–23 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

Hoople Ltd (Hoople) is a public-sector-owned company created by Herefordshire Council and Wye Valley NHS Trust. It is based in Hereford. Hoople holds contracts with the government to deliver apprenticeships and study programmes.

Hoople delivers standards-based apprenticeships for level 3 dental nursing, level 2 health care support, level 3 senior health care support, level 3 early years education, level 3 teaching assistants, and level 2 customer service practitioners. The provider also delivers frameworks for level 5 higher care leadership and management, level 2 children and young people's workforce, level 2 supporting teaching and learning, level 2 business administration, and level 2 customer service. At the time of the inspection 46 apprentices were completing apprenticeship programmes.

There are 22 learners on a study programme, which has a focus of supporting learners with high needs. All of these learners complete work experience, functional English and mathematics, employability qualifications and a vocational qualification at level 1.

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

Apprentices' curriculum does not consistently challenge them and enable them to reach their potential. It is too often focused on the achievement of qualifications rather than their personal development.

Learners and apprentices are not routinely set challenging goals. Learners do not always receive feedback that helps them to know what they need to do next.

Apprentices and learners do not consistently receive support to develop the written and spoken English skills they need.

Apprentices do not receive sufficient impartial careers advice to help them identify their next steps. Guidance is too often based on qualifications and their employer's needs.

Learners enjoy attending the centre, their workplaces and the activities they take part in, which ensure their motivation and participation.

Apprentices and learners understand well-being and healthy eating. For example, foundation-level learners learn about the sugar content in foods. Assessors review with their apprentices whether their working hours are manageable, and how to deal with work-related stress.

Learners and apprentices develop a good understanding of aspects underpinning British values and how to respect others. For example, apprentices apply this understanding to their roles when dealing with service users. They respect individual rights, choices and dignity in dietary care and end-of-life care.

Learners on a study programme develop useful skills for employment through taking part in a range of well-matched work placements with very supportive employers. In some cases, these lead to paid employment. For example, a learner is now working in a national hotel chain and saving to go on holiday.

Apprentices have a clear understanding of the risks in the workplace. They can explain clearly the importance of health and safety and other workplace regulations. Learners and apprentices feel safe in the provider and in their workplaces.

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

Governance has not been effective in making sure that leaders and managers are successfully challenged on the quality of the curriculum. This has resulted in the reduction of apprentice recruitment, and the year-on-year decline in the number of apprentices achieving their apprenticeships. However, senior leaders identified issues within the provider and have now taken responsibility to rectify these.

As a result, several actions have been implemented, which include a restructure and the appointment of a new service manager. It is too early to see the impact of these actions on the quality of education.

Managers work closely with stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs. For example, stakeholders identified that the local area did not have sufficient diversity of programmes for learners with high needs. The provider took action to develop a study programme for learners with additional needs, who do not feel able to attend college. As a result, the provider now delivers a study programme for learners with high needs.

Learners take part in a study programme which has a clear intent to improve their chances of becoming active citizens and gaining voluntary and/or paid employment. The programme includes activities to increase learners' independence, confidence and self-esteem. Apprentices' curriculum is logically ordered to ensure that they are progressing through the apprenticeship; however, the curriculum focuses too much on qualifications and not enough on the development of their knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers have not made sure that resources for learning on study programmes are sufficient. The teaching kitchen used for learners on a study programme is too small and contains too few resources to support learning. Limited classroom resources fail to take account of the specific needs of some learners.

Managers do not effectively identify the starting points of apprentices. At the start of the programme, apprentices sit an academic assessment of English and mathematics. However, managers do not put enough focus on the experience or qualifications that apprentices may already have. Apprentices are then placed on a course that meets the requirements of their job role, rather than being appropriate to their starting points. As a result, managers cannot be sure that the curriculum challenges apprentices sufficiently well to enable them to meet their potential.

Attendance for the vast majority of learners and apprentices is high. Teachers for the study programme closely monitor attendance and punctuality. As a result, the majority of learners achieve on time. A small minority of apprentices have poor attendance, particularly to functional skills appointments, and are at risk of not achieving in the planned time.

Tutors do not consistently promote the development of learners' literacy skills. For example, tutors' writing on flip-chart paper and presentations is not clear enough. Text in course documentation is not sufficiently accessible to learners with low levels of literacy.

Apprentices develop appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them for the next stage of training or employment. Apprentices work with their employer to develop more complex skills in the workplace. This has resulted in apprentices gaining permanent positions early in their apprenticeship. Most apprentices gain permanent roles or promotion following the completion of the apprenticeship.

Apprentices have clear expectations of the professional behaviours required in the workplace and demonstrate appropriate behaviours in their interactions with service users and the children they support.

Teachers of English and mathematics are not always sufficiently experienced or qualified. At level 1 they do not always use the information gathered at the start of the programme to deliver the skills required. The teaching of level 2 functional mathematics is with a specialist tutor who provides a range of teaching options which support learning. This has resulted in improved achievement.

The review of education for apprentices and learners is not effective. Reviews take place regularly in study programmes but fail to detail and celebrate the specific skills that learners are gaining. Too many apprentices do not receive regular reviews of progress with their employer. As a result, on-the-job training is not linked precisely enough to the apprentices' development needs. At reviews, assessors and apprentices do not reflect on and capture how well they are developing specific knowledge, skills and behaviours over time.

Learners' and apprentices' targets are too generic to enable them to know exactly what they need to do to improve. They fail to provide a challenging date for achievement to ensure a suitably swift pace of improvement.

Managers do not track and monitor learners' and apprentices' progress well enough. For example, managers meet with assessors monthly to review apprentices' progress. Assessors review the risk of apprentices' failure prior to this meeting. However, assessors are too lenient when assessing this risk. As a result, too many apprentices leave before they complete their apprenticeship. The monitoring of progress on non-accredited learning for study programmes is in the early stages of development and requires further refinement to make sure that managers track all the progress that learners make, even the small steps.

Apprentices do not have access to unbiased careers advice and guidance. Advice and guidance for apprentices focuses on providing information about progression or completing further qualifications with the same employer. Apprentices do not receive sufficient, impartial advice to support them with their next steps.

Managers do not track time off the job well enough. Assessors often complete log sheets that apprentices use to identify hours spent learning off the job. However, these are not consistently reviewed to assess the time spent developing knowledge and skills, the type of training that apprentices complete, or the impact of the training. Managers often rely on employers to plan on-the-job and off-the-job training. As a result, not all apprentices receive the time they require, and their development does not always link closely enough to the knowledge and skills apprentices need.

Foundation learners develop a strong sense of community and citizenship. For example, a learner asked about raising funds to help with the Australian bush fires. They support a wide range of charities, including 'Children in Need' and Herefordshire food bank events.

The large majority of learners on a study programme achieve a qualification in mathematics and/ or English, and most achieve a vocational qualification. Most learners also achieve the outcomes identified in the education, health and care plans.

Managers work with staff to make sure they receive the sector training they need and support them well. Managers use end-of-year appraisals and monthly meetings to review the training and development of tutors and assessors. Staff spend time away from their job to attend continuing professional development activities; they also attend monthly training at the centre. This mainly focuses on the content of curriculum delivery and wider topics such as safeguarding. However, further development is still required on the expansion of teaching approaches. This is to support assessors to become more focused on the teaching of knowledge and skills. Staff feel well supported and valued by managers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have implemented a safeguarding referral system that is effective. Managers have developed good relations with local agencies and manage referrals well through to resolution. They clearly understand which agency to go to for differing situations – such as the local multi-agency support hub or family liaison – to get the best support for their apprentices and learners.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy hold the required qualifications to support the role. The deputy DSL works within the local authority delivering safeguarding and 'Prevent' training and then works with the provider two days a week. This gives the provider excellent access to training and local updates. All policies are in place as required. However, the 'Prevent' risk assessment/action plan would benefit from a further review to make sure that it can be used as an effective document to support the provider to review risks and take subsequent action where appropriate.

Apprentices have a clear understanding of the risks in the workplace and can explain the importance of health and safety. However, apprentices do not have enough knowledge of the wider safeguarding topic. They complete online training and worksheets during the early stages of the course, and there is evidence of discussion in review meetings. However, apprentices are unable to remember and articulate this information well enough.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must put in place a governance structure that can challenge leaders and managers appropriately to improve the quality of education and outcomes for learners and apprentices
- Leaders and managers need to make sure that starting points of apprentices are taken into account when developing the curriculum. They need to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging and ambitious to support apprentices to meet their potential.
- Leaders and managers must make sure that off-the-job-training is planned well and all apprentices receive the time away from work they need to learn.

- Leaders need to make sure that all learners and apprentices are supported routinely to develop their English and mathematics skills.
- Leaders and managers must make sure that apprentices receive unbiased careers advice and guidance to support them to make their next steps
- Managers should make sure that targets set for learners and apprentices are sufficiently challenging.
- Managers need to track the progress of learners and apprentices well, to make sure that they capture the progress that learners are making and to make sure that apprentices receive the support they require early enough.
- Leaders and managers must make sure that apprentices and learners clearly understand and can apply topics in safeguarding and 'Prevent', so they know how to keep themselves safe.

Provider details

Unique reference number	56201
Address	Churchill House Venns Lane Hereford HR1 1DE
Contact number	01432 383678
Website	www.hoopleltd.co.uk
Principal/COO	Nick Mather
Provider type	Private training provider
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2011
Main subcontractors	none

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the qualifications manager, 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

Bev Ramsell, lead inspector

Sharon Dowling

Beth Selwood

Megan Dauksta

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted 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