

Inspection of Piper Training Limited

Inspection dates:

7–10 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Piper Training Limited (Piper Training) is an independent learning provider that was established in January 2018. The head office is based in Penrith, Cumbria. It is part of the building engineering services association (BESA). Piper Training offer apprenticeships in areas relevant to heating and ventilation. There are currently 68 apprentices on programme. Delivery of apprenticeship programmes is wholly subcontracted. Almost all apprentices study at levels 2 and 3. A very small number of apprentices study project management at level 4. A quarter of all apprentices follow standards-based apprenticeships.

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

Apprentices want to achieve and do well. They enjoy their training sessions and they attend regularly. They say they feel safe. Apprentices are respectful towards each other, teachers, colleagues and customers.

The variation in the quality of training that apprentices receive is unacceptable. This is regardless of whether they are studying on apprenticeship standards or frameworks.

Apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships do not receive enough information to help them fully understand their end-point assessment requirements.

A few apprentices are angry because their assessors have not visited them in their workplace frequently enough. Because of this, they are making very slow progress through their apprenticeship programme.

The majority of apprentices develop sufficient new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, the apprentices we met could skilfully identify cable sizes and circuit breakers for different circuits in their workplace. Apprentices receive extra training, such as the 18th edition electrical and practical welding qualifications.

Most apprentices say that they have grown in confidence. Their work supervisors confirm this. Apprentices skilfully deal with a range of challenging job tasks. They communicate confidently with workers employed through subcontractors. This enables the smooth running and timely completion of projects.

Apprentices do not receive effective support to improve their English and mathematics skills quickly enough. Teachers do not improve the English and mathematics skills for apprentices who already have their functional skills or GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics.

The quality of feedback that apprentices receive to help them develop their knowledge and skills varies considerably. Apprentices who receive effective feedback understand what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. A minority of apprentices receive cursory feedback that is unhelpful. As a result, they are unable to extend their knowledge and skills quickly enough.

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

Governors, senior leaders and managers do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of their apprenticeship provision that is delivered solely through subcontractors. They do not focus on how well apprentices develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Governors do not hold senior leaders to account or set actions for improvement.

Leaders and managers have not rectified most of the weaknesses identified at their new provider monitoring visits. They do not evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Leaders do not use management information to measure the impact of their programmes.

Senior leaders' monitoring of the performance of their subcontractors, for whom they rely upon to deliver all aspects of their apprenticeship programmes, is poor. They do not know whether the curriculum is designed well or delivered in a logical order. Leaders are unaware of the progress apprentices make through their programmes. They do not know whether teachers employed at the subcontractors receive focused professional development. Leaders do not know that around a fifth of apprentices have not had workplace visits for several months.

The senior leadership team has recently changed. They have implemented many new monitoring processes to get a clear oversight of the quality of apprentices' experiences. Leaders and managers are not seeing the impact of these processes yet.

Most subcontractors deliver their curriculum in a logical order. This helps apprentices improve their knowledge and skills over time. For example, teachers incrementally build on apprentices' welding knowledge and skills. This enables apprentices to complete complex welding activities successfully. They weld fixed pipe or overhead pipework and work skilfully in confined spaces.

The majority of teachers plan useful activities to check how well apprentices remember key facts. For example, apprentices studying thermo-dynamics and the refrigeration cycle recall previous learning accurately. This enables them to construct a cold room. Consequently, apprentices extend their analytical and problem-solving skills.

A few teachers do not check apprentices' understanding well enough. They do not correct any errors that apprentices make. Apprentices are not aware of what they need to focus on to help them remember key facts.

Employers value the contribution that apprentices make to their business. They make sure that apprentices develop their knowledge and skills by working in as many departments as possible. For example, apprentices spend time in quality assurance, finance and the warehouse. This extends apprentices' understanding of the wider functions within the organisation.

Teachers are well qualified, have relevant vocational knowledge and significant industrial experience in their subject areas. They receive regular industry updates. For example, teachers attend exhibitions on current ecosystems and accredited certificate schemes (ACS) for gas operatives.

The majority of teachers apply useful strategies to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge. Apprentices complete mock assessments, end-of-unit tests and

discussions. A few teachers do not identify apprentices' incorrect responses. This means that teachers do not know the next steps for apprentices' learning.

Apprentices do not receive helpful support and guidance about career and progression opportunities within the building engineering industry.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe. They work safely in this high-risk industry. Apprentices have a good understanding of to whom they should report safeguarding or safeguarding-related concerns. They understand how to keep themselves safe from the threats of extremism and radicalisation.

Leaders and managers have not established sufficient links with local 'Prevent' duty agencies to gather information on the risks that apprentices may face in different geographical locations.

Leaders and managers have ensured that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place. These are yet to be tested as there have been no referrals to date. All staff have received appropriate training on safeguarding.

Senior leaders ensure that staff recruitment processes include appropriate checks on staff suitability.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Rapidly put in place procedures and formal arrangements to ensure that governors provide support for leaders and hold them to account for their oversight of subcontractors and the quality of the apprentices' education and training.
- Hold subcontractor leaders to account to provide the appropriate staff training so that all apprentices receive a consistently high quality of education and training.
- Extend links with local 'Prevent' duty agencies in different geographical locations so that apprentices fully understand the risks that they may face.
- Put in place highly effective strategies to support apprentices who need to improve their English and mathematical skills to prepare them fully for their roles and next career steps.
- Improve the quality of careers information, advice and guidance so that apprentices have the knowledge required to make their future choices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1280358
Address	Old Mansion House Eamont Bridge CA10 2BX
Contact number	07957 601583
Website	www.thebesa.com
Principal/CEO	David Frise
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Carter Synergy Choice Training Limited Dudley College of Technology EAS Mechanical Services Ltd Gloucester College Hartlepool College of FE JLS Assessments Limited Leeds College of Building LTE Group Salford City College Southampton City College The Trafford College Group United Colleges Group

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of business analytics, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring reports. 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

Kim Bleasdale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Busby	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector
Dilys Taylor	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