

Short inspection of The Skills Partnership Limited

Inspection dates:

12–13 February 2020

Outcome

The Skills Partnership Limited continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

The Skills Partnership Limited (TSP Learn) is a national independent learning provider that delivers training across a range of sectors, including facilities management and passenger transport. TSP Learn works with a wide range of employers, offering level 2 to level 4 apprenticeships. It also delivers courses to support adults into employment from entry level up to level 2. At the time of the inspection, there were around 500 apprentices and around 30 adult learners. Over a third of the apprentices were studying a management apprenticeship. There were around 150 apprentices on a facilities-related programme. The remaining apprentices were on a passenger transport, business administration or customer service apprenticeship. TSP Learn subcontracts to one of their employers to deliver some of the technical content of the passenger transport apprenticeship.

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

Most apprentices and learners enjoy their studies and appreciate the experience and support provided by tutors. The courses for adult learners are designed around their employment aspirations and the wide range on offer helps them to make progress in their careers.

Apprentices benefit from a curriculum that is well designed with employers. As a result, they develop new knowledge and skills that help them in their work. A few apprentices get promoted before they complete their apprenticeship.

Most apprentices make good progress. The vast majority know what they need to do for their end-point assessment and many feel confident in their ability to achieve merit or distinction grades.

Apprentices and learners feel safe at work. Transport apprentices have a particularly good awareness of potential suspicious behaviours they may see when working in train stations. They are confident about how they would deal with them.

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

Leaders and managers are supported well by the non-executive board. Board members have a clear overview of all aspects of the provider's performance. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and use this information to challenge leaders to improve the training for apprentices and learners.

Leaders and managers work effectively with employers to design training for apprentices to suit their business and skills needs. For example, one employer delivers workshops on railway station safety and gate-line working. As a result of employer involvement, apprentices become valued team members and rapidly improve their knowledge and skills for work.

Leaders and managers use the expertise of outside agencies effectively to support apprentices. For example, the Samaritans deliver workshops on spotting concerning traits in members of the public. Staff and apprentices also undertake regular training to raise awareness on topics, including county lines, dealing with debt and anxiety.

Employers that work with the provider feel well informed about the progress their apprentices make. The vast majority of employers take an active part in planning and reviewing the apprenticeship with tutors and most employers are involved in planning and delivering effective on- and off-the-job training. As a result, employers effectively support apprentices to achieve their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers support tutors well to improve their teaching skills and remain current in their areas of expertise. As a result, apprentices and learners develop new knowledge and skills that are relevant to their work. For example, management apprentices lead meetings and manage complex projects.

Tutors do not give constructive feedback to apprentices and learners on their written work. Consequently, they are not aware of what they are doing well and how to improve.

The quality of teaching for English and mathematics is not consistently good. For a small minority of learners, there is too much focus on completing practice examinations and test papers and not enough on developing the mathematics and English skills they need for their jobs.

Most apprentices benefit from good careers advice and guidance and are aware of what further training or promotion prospects are available to them. However, a small minority do not receive impartial advice, so they are not able to make informed choices about their next steps.

Staff support apprentices and learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Learners receive individualised help, so they make rapid progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and learners feel safe and they know who to contact if they have concerns. The non-executive board and staff are well trained in the policies and processes and these are applied swiftly when concerns are raised. Managers effectively use the information following incidents to plan further training. Learners receive training when they start their apprenticeship to make sure that they know how to keep themselves safe and understand the dangers of radicalisation.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should make sure that all apprentices benefit from good support to improve their English and mathematics skills.
- Leaders and managers need to improve the feedback to apprentices on their written work so that they are clear on what they are doing well and what they need to improve.
- Leaders and managers should make sure that careers advice and guidance are impartial and apprentices know about a wider range of options available for their next steps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54409
Address	9 Reading Road Pangbourne Reading Berkshire RG8 7LR
Contact number	01189 844 638
Website	www.tsplearn.co.uk
Principal/CEO	James Bishop
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2016
Main subcontractors	MTR corporation (Crossrail limited)

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in February 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and operations director, 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

Emma Barrett-Peel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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