

Inspection of Nottinghamshire Training Group

Inspection dates:

24–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Nottinghamshire Training Group Limited (NTG) was founded in 1987 as The Bassetlaw Training Agency. In 2018, it acquired a training company that specialises in hairdressing and beauty therapy and rebranded as NTG. It provides apprenticeships programmes as a subcontractor. This inspection concentrated on its directly funded education programmes for young people. It operates from two sites in Worksop that offer its full range of provision. It has a further site in nearby Retford, where it provides hairdressing training.

NTG has historically focused its education programmes for young people on those learners who have had challenging experiences of school and post-16 learning. Increasingly, it seeks to become the provider of choice for a wider range of learners in the Worksop area. At the time of the inspection, it had 24 learners, most of whom followed programmes comprising work experience, a vocational qualification at level 2 and, where needed, English and mathematics. Vocational qualifications are in hairdressing, beauty therapy, childcare, teaching support and business administration.

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

Learners enjoy attending NTG. They are particularly positive about the small class sizes and the individual care that they receive from staff. They enjoy good relationships with their peers and many are able to cope much better in NTG's more intimate surroundings than they were at larger institutions. They feel safe and secure.

Learners are satisfied with the quality of education that they receive. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, this satisfaction is well placed. However, in childcare and teaching assistant programmes, learners do not benefit from well-planned and well-taught programmes. They do not learn enough new knowledge or gain enough new skills. In these subjects, staff do not have high enough expectations of learners and do not always challenge them to reach their full potential.

Learners develop their confidence and work-readiness well. This is because they participate in extensive and useful work experience placements and in a range of additional activities that focus on themes outside of their vocational subjects. Almost all learners secure employment at the end of their programmes, with a small number progressing to more advanced studies.

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

Leaders' and managers' actions to improve standards have not had enough impact. As a result, the quality of education is very mixed, with too much that is not good enough. In hairdressing, beauty therapy and mathematics, the standard of education is high, but in childcare and teaching assistant programmes it is not. Until recently, professional development for teachers did not focus sufficiently on improving teaching skills or subject-specific pedagogy.

In the weaker subjects, curriculum planning is not detailed enough. Teachers focus solely on qualification specifications, with insufficient regard for the specific skills and knowledge that learners need for the workplace. They teach topics in the order that they appear in specifications without considering whether this is the most effective sequence. Teachers often fail to make links with previous and subsequent lessons. In the stronger subjects, curriculum planning is good.

The diverse range of learners' abilities, prior attainment and qualification aims make it very difficult for teachers to plan individual lessons well. Consequently, where teachers are less confident, lessons lack a clear purpose and too much time is spent completing assessments rather than learning new material.

Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in their vocational areas. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, they use their expertise to provide clear explanations and helpful examples.

Teachers do their best to help the high proportion of learners who must overcome personal and academic challenges in order to learn. These challenges include a range of special educational needs and disabilities. In most cases, teachers provide effective help but occasionally, a lack of specialist support means that teachers have to spend a disproportionate amount of time helping individual learners, to the detriment of others.

Teachers' use of assessment varies considerably in its effectiveness. In programmes for teaching assistants, teachers accept work that does not meet the required standard. In business administration, teachers mark work carefully and provide precise feedback, but learners do not always make use of it. Mathematics teachers provide little useful feedback. In beauty therapy, assessment is used often and well to help learners to develop their expertise.

Managers have high expectations of learners' conduct. They have introduced a well-conceived policy for managing and developing learners' behaviour. They have provided effective electronic systems that help staff to coordinate their responses to poor behaviour and low attendance. As a result, learners consistently conduct themselves well.

Staff provide learners with effective careers guidance. A guidance officer ensures that learners enrol on courses that match their career aspirations and provides useful ongoing guidance. Teachers provide vocationally specific advice during lessons and in separate sessions that focus on career planning.

All learners benefit from extremely useful work experience placements. These placements often make up the core element of their programme. They help learners to develop their understanding of the workplace and to develop the skills and qualities that they will need to gain and sustain employment. This experience helps to ensure that almost all learners find work at the end of their studies.

Staff care about learners and have developed an environment in which learners feel safe and welcome. They take a personal interest in the difficulties learners face and help them to overcome significant obstacles on their path to employment.

Managers work with staff to provide a range of useful additional activities that help learners to develop their understanding of a broad range of relevant themes. These activities include trips and visits and a monthly programme of life skills lessons. However, although these lessons introduce learners to themes related to life in modern Britain, few learners can recall what they are told about British values.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers have developed clear and comprehensive safeguarding policies. These include a staff conduct policy that contains appropriate guidance on staff contact with learners, including through social media. Managers follow safer recruitment practices, and complete relevant pre-employment checks on new staff. The designated safeguarding lead has a clear understanding of her role and knows to whom she should escalate concerns. Staff help learners to understand particular dangers within the local area. For example, beauty therapy learners have examined the risks posed by county lines drugs gangs and can describe these clearly.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should work with staff who teach programmes in childcare and teaching support to ensure that they identify the specific skills learners need and plan coherent programmes of study.
- Leaders and managers should focus staff training activities on themes related to the quality of education, including curriculum planning, lesson planning, and the use of assessment.
- Leaders should review the way they organise learner groups and identify any ways of simplifying the planning teachers must undertake to meet the widely varying needs of learners in each group.
- Leaders and managers should consider how they might better support learners who require specialist additional help.
- Teachers should develop plans to include topics related to British values more frequently in lessons so that learners are able to recall information about these important themes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54810
Address	Cheapside Worksop Nottinghamshire S80 2HX
Contact number	01909 477669
Website	nottstraining.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Alex Lilley
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2017
Main subcontractors	–

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing 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

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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