

Short inspection of Bridge Training Limited

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Bridge Training Limited continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Bridge Training Limited (BTL) is an independent learning provider founded in 1989. BTL is based in Gloucester and works with young people who face multiple challenges and learning difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 210 learners were following study programmes across eight vocational areas. The largest group of learners is on a construction study programme based at the Gloucester Skills Centre. The newest curriculum option is in art. BTL also offers functional skills and GCSE-level courses in English and mathematics. Courses range from entry level to level 2 in English and mathematics and level 1 and level 2 in vocational areas. In addition, BTL offers a range of part-time vocational programmes to learners who are 14–16 years old, including those who are electively home educated.

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

Many learners at BTL describe their time with the provider as their first positive educational experience. Learners value highly the care they receive from staff.

Learners enjoy the nurturing learning environment, which they find relaxing and fun. Staff are friendly and make themselves readily available to listen to learners' concerns. This helps build learners' confidence and their self-esteem. They re-engage with learning and benefit from new and exciting experiences.

Learners develop a better understanding of the life-choices available to them. They become motivated to learn the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will help them achieve their goals.

Learners feel safe at BTL. They are confident that any issues they have will be listened to and acted on by staff.

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

Leaders have developed a well-planned and considered curriculum, which meets learners' needs and aspirations. Teachers organise individually tailored learning activities, which focus well on preparing learners for their next steps. Staff provide learners with very effective personal support. As a result, the majority of students make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders recognise that many learners have not had the opportunity to explore different interests, or do not fully understand their future options. Consequently, leaders provide opportunities for learners to become more socially and economically active. These include educational visits to London art galleries and residential trips, which inspire the learners and enrich their understanding of the wider community. Initiatives like these help learners improve their understanding of the choices available to them and make more informed decisions about their long-term goals.

Leaders, staff and the BTL advisory board have high expectations for all their learners. They set clear codes of conduct, which most learners understand and comply with. Staff challenge any disruptive and inappropriate behaviour by skilfully redirecting learners' energies or reducing tension through a good use of humour. The majority of students develop good social skills and the knowledge to improve their own behaviour.

Leaders have developed an individualised approach to careers information, advice and guidance. Learners who are not yet ready for work placements take part in local events and charitable projects. These have included rebuilding a local playground and delivering a photography exhibition at Gloucester cathedral. As a result, they learn skills such as meeting deadlines and working as part of a team. Many learners who are ready for work have placements which allow them to develop the specific skills, knowledge and behaviours required for their chosen career. However, leaders need to continue to expand the number of employers they work with, so that all learners can gain from high-quality work placements and work with current industry-standard equipment.

Teachers use their experience and knowledge well to enliven sessions and engage with their learners. They ensure that learners understand complex and new knowledge before moving onto the next topic. For example, in construction, learners repeat tasks and expand their working areas. This enables learners to embed their new knowledge and practical skills. However, resources in some curriculum areas do not meet industry standards. This means that learners are not always learning the most current techniques or practice.

Teachers check learners' knowledge by asking them searching questions. Learners receive prompt verbal feedback on their practical work and on how to improve their work in the future. Not all teachers mark or identify errors in learners' English and

mathematics written work. As a result, learners do not review their work or learn how they can improve.

Staff ensure that BTL's learning environment encourages and enables learners to re-engage with learning at their own pace. For example, staff introduced flexible timetables for learners who were attending full-time education at BTL for the first time. This allowed learners to attend for the morning only, then build up to full-time as they developed their social skills and stamina. Learners' attendance levels improved as a result but are still too low. Managers have new plans to establish realistic attendance targets for each learner alongside more general strategies designed to improve attendance. They recognise that a minority of learners' personal circumstances mean that full attendance is not currently possible.

Staff have a good understanding of learners' personal circumstances and learning requirements. As a result, learners feel able to share personal challenges and difficulties. Staff have produced a comprehensive pen portrait of each learner. They use this well to identify appropriate learning strategies and build on learners' strengths.

Leaders have set up a welfare team to provide learners with individualised help to tackle the personal issues they face. The team works closely with teachers to ensure that everyone is aware of any concerns and that potential risks can be minimised. Staff have also developed positive relationships with a wide range of external specialist agencies that provide help for learners on site. This ensures that learners who need more urgent help can access services quickly.

Members of the BTL advisory board have extensive expertise that they use highly effectively to provide leaders with appropriate support and challenge. They are justly proud that the provider is developing to become what they term 'first choice and not last chance' for their learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have developed a positive safeguarding culture. They have extensive knowledge of the potential risks their learners face. Leaders use this information well to ensure that learners understand how these issues could affect their everyday lives. For example, victims of knife crime have delivered training for BTL learners, so they fully understand the impact and consequences of this issue.

Safeguarding and welfare teams work together very effectively to provide early support. This approach has successfully minimised the number of safeguarding incidents. Leaders use rigorous procedures to report and record safeguarding issues. Learners feel that any concerns they have will be dealt with effectively.

Members of the BTL advisory board scrutinise safeguarding practice closely and act as a critical friend to the designated safeguarding lead.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should extend their involvement and engagement with more local employers to ensure that all their learners benefit from industry-standard equipment and become ready to move into their chosen careers.
- Teachers should ensure that all learners develop their skills in English and mathematics quickly by ensuring that learners' work is marked thoroughly, and learners are given time to review their work.
- Leaders and managers should support learners to attend the provision as often as their personal circumstances allow.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50827
Address	Archdeacon Training Centre Archdeacon Street Gloucester GL1 2QX
Contact number	01452 411112
Website	www.bridgetrainingltd.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Mark Harrod
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2017

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Bridge Training Limited was judged to be good in May 2017.

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

Kathryn Rudd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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