

Inspection of Prospects Training International Limited

Inspection dates: 10–13 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Information about this provider

Prospects Training International Limited (PTIL), which trades as Geason Training, was established in 2008. PTIL received a direct contract to deliver apprenticeship programmes in 2017. In December 2018, PTIL was acquired by the Speedy Group of companies. Its head office is based in Nottingham. It has four main delivery sites: Derby, Liverpool, London and Sheffield.

This is the first full inspection since the new provider monitoring visit (NPMV), which took place in April 2019. There are currently 310 apprentices, of whom 25 are aged 16 to 18, and the remainder are over the age of 19. PTIL delivers standards-based apprenticeships and apprenticeship frameworks. It offers two career pathways: construction and professional. Currently, 250 apprentices follow a range of construction programmes from level 2 to level 4. There are 15 professional programmes from level 2 to level 4. There are 60 apprentices on the professional pathways.

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

Apprentices told inspectors that they enjoy their practical skills sessions. These sessions have boosted apprentices' confidence and helped them to hone their skills. Consequently, apprentices have been able to make a greater contribution to the workplace and become more valued employees.

Staff do not plan learning well enough for apprentices with additional learning needs. This means that these apprentices are overly reliant on staff and do not develop their independent study skills quickly enough. They do not achieve as well as their peers.

Apprentices do not always receive feedback that helps them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. For example, trainers do not consider what apprentices can already do when identifying the new skills that they need to develop.

Trainers do not work well enough with employers, across all apprenticeship programmes, to effectively coordinate on- and off-the-job training. This means that training for a small minority of apprentices is fragmented. As a result, these apprentices are not able to practise easily their newly developed skills in the workplace.

Most staff, who have significant experience in their professional field, plan interesting lessons. For example, staff use the recently introduced learning hubs to enhance apprentices' practical skills. They also use a range of activities to test and extend apprentices' learning. This helps apprentices to deepen their understanding, recall key information and apply their learning in the workplace.

Apprentices benefit from opportunities to develop their interests and talents. For example, apprentices take part in challenging mountaineering expeditions such as the 'Three Peaks Challenge' and local boxing events. They participate in specialist vocational skill qualifications, for example plastering and tiling. They enjoy attending the celebration events at the learning hubs, which reward their achievements.

Apprentices' thorough knowledge of health and safety ensures that they work safely and competently in the workplace. Apprentices told us that they feel safe in the workplace and in the training centres.

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

The newly appointed leadership team recognised that the curriculum was not fit for purpose. They have recently reviewed and overhauled the content of the curriculum. This has led to the introduction of newly revised learning programmes. That said, leaders have identified that there is still much to do to strengthen the provision further.

Where employers have embraced the changes to the curriculum, they have seen that apprentices are now swiftly improving and developing their skills. Apprentices with these employers are making an increased contribution to the workplace. However, a small minority of employers have resisted changes to the curriculum. This has delayed apprentices in developing the skills that they need for the construction industry. For these apprentices, the curriculum remains poorly planned and lacks coordination between on- and off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices see their off-the-job training as being irrelevant. They do not achieve as well as they should.

The new leadership team is working tirelessly to improve the quality of education and training that apprentices receive. They have recently recruited staff to several key posts. The pace of change, while initially slow, has recently begun to increase. However, it is too soon to see the impact of many of these changes. For example, leaders have introduced quality improvement processes, which they are now reviewing. They recognise that many of the new processes are based on compliance rather than quality improvement.

Most apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they use effectively in the workplace. For example, apprentices on level 4 construction site supervision programmes review and discuss, with colleagues and clients, key aspects of construction. These include pre-application and planning, and surveying and building law. They apply formulae to calculations to ensure that they order the correct quantity of materials. The breadth of knowledge that most apprentices acquire helps them to remember and recall learning that has been committed to their long-term memory.

That said, many apprentices on level 3 occupational work supervisor programmes do not develop sufficient new knowledge or practical skills. They merely receive accreditation for the existing skills that they had when they enrolled on to the apprenticeship.

Many trainers use the information apprentices provide at the start of their programme and ongoing assessment to identify and close gaps in apprentices' knowledge. Thorough assessment accurately captures apprentices' acquisition of knowledge and what apprentices still need to learn. However, staff on practical maintenance operative and occupational work supervisor programmes do not use information about apprentices' prior learning to plan the curriculum well enough. These apprentices have gaps in their knowledge and continue to make the same mistakes because staff do not effectively challenge apprentices' misconceptions.

A few apprentices do not understand the content or expectations of end-point assessment (EPA) as they are not adequately prepared for it.

Apprentices do not receive enough high-quality careers advice and guidance to support them in making future career choices.

Apprentices benefit from personalised programmes to help them to develop their English and mathematics skills. Teachers design the English and mathematics curriculum so that it becomes incrementally more difficult. This helps apprentices to develop their confidence and their understanding of the topics being taught. Apprentices become better prepared for their examinations and develop their confidence in applying their skills in the workplace. For example, apprentices use technical drawing skills to calculate the cost of materials. Apprentices for whom English is not their first language, improve their confidence and skills in communicating with customers and colleagues.

Board members know PTIL very well and they are experienced and knowledgeable about the expectations of the role. Board members challenge leaders and managers to improve swiftly the quality of education and training. They hold them to account for poor performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have developed a comprehensive range of policies, procedures and guidance documents. These ensure that members of staff are clear about what they should do if they have any safeguarding-related concerns. They have established positive relationships with external organisations, including regional 'Prevent' duty coordinators and mental health charities.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. They know what to do if they have any concerns and who they should contact. They told us that they feel confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted on.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that the prior knowledge, skills and experience of all apprentices are used effectively to plan high-quality education and training across all programmes.
- Improve the feedback that apprentices receive so that it helps them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that all apprentices on standards-based programmes are well prepared for their end-point assessment.
- Improve impartial careers education, advice and guidance for apprentices so they can make informed decisions about their future career choices.
- Ensure that apprentices with additional learning needs develop their independent study skills. This is so that they reduce their reliance on trainers, are challenged in their learning and complete their programmes in line with their peers.

Provider details

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 1237126 |
| Address | Unit 2c 1 Longwall Avenue Meadows Nottinghamshire NG2 1NA |
| Contact number | 0115 990 2105/07788 360501 |
| Website | www.geason.co.uk |
| Principal/COO | Sacha McCarthy |
| Provider type | Independent learning provider |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Main subcontractors | No subcontracted provision |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous new provider monitoring visit 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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