

Inspection of Pet-Xi Training Limited

Inspection dates:

28 September to 1 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The company's chief executive officer established Pet-Xi Training Limited (Pet-Xi) in August 1995. The provider was awarded a contract by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in May 2017 to teach employability programmes in Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire. The provider gained a contract with the West Midlands Combined Authority in 2019 to teach courses for adults across Birmingham and Coventry. In April 2019, it received an apprenticeship levy contract. There are currently seven apprentices studying the level 3 rail engineering standard. Adult learning programmes include level 2 customer service, level 2 information communication technology (ICT) and level 2 team leading. At the time of this inspection, there were 35 learners in scope. All adult programmes (except level 2 ICT) are taught intensively in one week. Leaders have recently extended the duration of level 2 ICT to two weeks.

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

Learners are respectful and listen carefully to both teachers and each other during the short five-day courses. They do not interrupt while others ask individual questions, waiting patiently to contribute. Most learners attend their sessions on time. Teachers enable learners who have other commitments such as childcare or attendance at job interviews to continue to study their course.

Trainers conduct rail apprentices' sessions in structured and focused lessons, both in the classroom and in a track-side training area. Trainers and apprentices are respectful and supportive of one another, so that learning is productive and taught at a pace that suits all.

Learners who study team leading and customer service develop significant new knowledge. For example, in team leading, learners develop an understanding of working in teams and how to manage conflict. As a result, these learners are better prepared for their next steps.

The majority of learners who follow courses that have interviews with employers (such as customer service and team leading) move into employment. However, on ICT courses that do not include employer interviews, the proportion of learners moving into employment is below the provider's target.

Learners feel safe because staff prioritise safe working practices and ensure that they have a suitable understanding of safeguarding. Learners and apprentices know what to report and whom to contact if needed. However, apprentices' understanding of the threats from extremist groups is less well developed.

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

Leaders are ambitious for their learners and apprentices and have a clear purpose and strategy to support those who have significant barriers to learning and employment, such as previously poor experiences of education. They have developed strong links with local business and regional agencies, including the West Midlands Combined Authority and Jobcentre Plus. They use these to plan an appropriate curriculum offer to help learners identify new career options and move closer towards their planned next steps.

In most adult and apprenticeship courses, teachers plan and order topics and activities in a logical way. For example, in customer service, learners develop an understanding of how to 'delight the customer' before applying this knowledge to dealing appropriately with a range of customer complaints. As a result, teachers help learners secure new knowledge that they build on during more complex activities. In ICT, teachers do not plan learning in a logical way. Learners complete a final assessment about the benefits of using ICT before fully understanding how various software packages improve business performance. Trainers do not ensure

that apprentices continue to develop their English and mathematical skills beyond level 2.

In most cases, teachers use a range of questioning techniques intelligently to check learners' understanding and help them to make links with new information. For example, on a 10-day ICT course, teachers use quizzes effectively to recap and revisit previous topics such as manipulating data in a variety of software packages. As a result, learners consolidate their knowledge and remember more long term.

Trainers work effectively with the employer and draw on their shared expertise to provide apprentices with clear and comprehensive explanations that relate practical work to theoretical concepts. For example, apprentices apply robust safety practices to new techniques to refine their skills in using a transposer to reposition lengths of rail track to replace older track. Employers value the skills apprentices develop and the contribution they make to their business.

Most teachers on adult courses assess learners' work frequently and help them to close gaps in their knowledge. Trainers provide apprentices with highly developmental feedback after practical activities to ensure that apprentices understand key concepts and improve their skills rapidly. However, on five-day ICT courses, teachers fail to provide learners with sufficient feedback and the time to reflect and improve on their work independently. Where trainers provide apprentices with written feedback, guidance is not sufficiently helpful for apprentices to improve on their assignments significantly.

Teachers and trainers provide focused and effective support for learners. Leaders and teachers understand thoroughly many of learners' barriers to learning. Where learners fall behind, teachers provide rapid extra support and tuition. In most cases, learners and apprentices catch up and get back on track with their qualification. Where necessary, learners are referred to agencies to support their particular needs, such as by providing financial advice and mental health support.

Leaders and managers accept that they do not identify well enough learners' attributes and wider skills, including those related to employability, such as punctuality, problem-solving and skills with people. As a result, teachers do not know enough about learners' starting points to plan learning sufficiently outside their qualification, so that all learners focus on the individual skills and behaviours needed for them to move successfully to their next steps. Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive sufficient information about future careers outside their current employer.

Leaders use information appropriately about learners' achievement, destinations and views to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. They use this knowledge to inform teachers' broad training needs. As a result, most teachers develop or hold the requisite assessor and teaching qualifications to apply their subject knowledge well, thus helping most learners to achieve their qualifications.

Leaders have developed an effective governing body. Governors have considerable experience in the further and higher education sector and use their expertise to hold leaders and managers to account. The chair has tasked governors to lead on areas such as safeguarding, quality and finance to ensure the scrutiny of leaders' actions in these areas. Governors rightly accept that the information they receive does not identify well enough learners' and apprentices' progress to help them ensure that leaders enable all learners and apprentices to achieve their best.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safety of both staff and learners. From policy to practice, they operate an appropriate structure to oversee and promote safe working practices. Consequently, staff and learners feel safe and able to refer concerns where needed. For example, the designated safeguarding lead works closely with two deputies, who discuss and act swiftly on safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding team has effective relations with a variety of agencies, including the local authority and mental health organisations, so that it can refer learners and apprentices swiftly to the support they require.

Leaders follow safer recruitment practices and ensure that teachers have the requisite experience, abilities and clearances to work with learners and apprentices. They also ensure that all staff receive training on safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff receive regular updates from senior leaders to promote current information to learners. Topics include county lines, e-safety, sexual abuse and harassment, domestic violence and extremist behaviours.

Managers and employers ensure that rail apprentices have a strong working knowledge of health and safety, including track-side safety. As a result, apprentices know how to work safely and identify possible risks when undertaking new activities.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that they improve the information they have about learners' starting points, so that teachers can plan courses that help learners to develop the skills and attributes necessary for them to move to their planned next steps.
- Leaders need to ensure that apprentices continue to develop their English and mathematical skills beyond level 2.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices have access to impartial information about career opportunities outside their existing employers.
- Governors and leaders should work together to improve the information available to governors, so that governors may hold leaders to account more fully

for learners' achievements and the quality of education and training they receive.

Provider details

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Address	Unit 4 Westwood House Westwood Way Westwood Business Park Coventry West Midlands CV4 8HS
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Website	www.pet-xi.co.uk
CEO	Fleur Sexton
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of skills, 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 visiting 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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