

Inspection of Education and Training Skills Ltd

Inspection dates:

25 to 27 January 2022

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	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Established in 1965, Education and Training Skills (hereby known as ETS) is an independent training provider and registered charity based in the south west of England. ETS has two training centres in Exeter, one in the centre and the other on the outskirts of the city. ETS provides apprenticeships and adult life skills programmes.

At the time of inspection, 70 apprentices were studying apprenticeships, almost all at level 3. Thirty-eight of these were studying the emergency service contact handling (ESCH) apprenticeship standard, which is subcontracted to Devon and Cornwall Police (D&CP). Thirty-two were studying apprenticeships in business administrator, customer service practitioner, customer service specialist, sales executive, team leader/supervisor and operations/departmental manager with ETS.

ETS has recently started to provide learning programmes for adults in employability skills, functional skills in English and mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). During the inspection, 65 adults were studying on a range of courses from entry level 3 to level 2.

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

Apprentices and adult learners feel safe when at work and during their training sessions. They are motivated to learn new knowledge and skills, and develop professional behaviours quickly. Consequently, they integrate well into their workplaces. The vast majority of apprentices achieve their qualification in the planned timescales and over half achieve at a distinction grade.

Apprentices and adults benefit from a carefully structured and tailored curriculum. Staff use curriculum plans to provide apprentices with information on what they will learn and when, including personal development topics such as healthy living and mental well-being.

Trainers provide apprentices and adults with effective training and support. Adults gain the confidence and skills they need to start looking for employment or to progress into further study. Apprentices develop quickly the skills required for work. They are positive about studying their apprenticeship because they understand how it will help them to further their careers.

Apprentices and adults gain substantial new skills and knowledge as a result of studying with ETS. Apprentices benefit from a wide range of professional development courses as part of their apprenticeship. They gain additional skills and knowledge, such as time management and dealing effectively with customer complaints.

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

The vast majority of apprentices and adults benefit from studying a curriculum that is ambitious and carefully sequenced. This quickly enables them to acquire the substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be successful at work and in achieving their qualifications.

ETS managers have dealt effectively with most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They now provide apprenticeships only in the curriculum areas in which they have expertise, for example business administration and team leader supervisor. Leaders are also meeting their charitable objectives by introducing new basic skills and employability courses designed specifically for adults who are disadvantaged.

Apprentices studying ESCH receive highly effective instruction from trainers. Trainers use a wide range of teaching techniques, including classroom training, scenario-based challenges and role play. Apprentices participate enthusiastically in learning sessions and gain excellent problem-solving skills.

Apprentices benefit from additional training, for example workshops in a range of topics, such as teamworking and presentation skills. They learn how to make decisions quickly, communicate appropriately and deal with difficult situations

well. Apprentices apply these newly gained skills competently within their workplaces. Apprentices studying ESCH recognise the meaningful and significant contribution they make in their job roles, to their employers and to the community. They are proud of the work they do.

Apprentices studying ESCH benefit from off-the-job training sessions taught by knowledgeable and skilled police force trainers. Trainers check carefully apprentices' understanding of the key concepts that they need to be highly effective in their roles. D&CP and ETS managers and trainers align closely the training in the workplace to what the apprentices learn when off-the-job. As a result, this prepares apprentices well for the initial phase of their employment and reinforces the key learning points of what they have learned. Apprentices shadow work colleagues in different roles within the emergency call centre. This enables them to listen actively and to reflect on and learn from the calls received and the responses provided.

Teachers carefully structure and plan well the curriculum for adult learners. This helps to prepare most adults to successfully move into employment or further study. Learners benefit from studying programmes which enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Apprentices and adults understand the importance of effective speaking, listening and ICT skills at work. Trainers support them well to develop these skills quickly. Adult learners progress from functional skills courses onto apprenticeships, such as business administrator and ESCH. A few adults recently gained employment with two large employers based locally. Consequently, these employers now offer interview opportunities to all adults studying with ETS.

Both apprentices and adults benefit from the co-development of an individual learning plan with their trainer and employer, at the onset of their programme. This helps to ensure that apprentices, adults and employers know and understand curriculum content and the planned achievement goals and timescales. Apprentices undergo a rigorous assessment of their previously acquired knowledge and skills. Trainers use this information well to identify apprentices' starting points and adapt their learning plans accordingly.

Apprentices undertake a wide range of additional training which enhances their professional development and broadens their knowledge and skills. Apprentices studying ESCH learn quickly to use a range of specialist software programs to enable them to operate the call systems at work. Business administration apprentices understand the difference between internal office and external communications. Many apprentices make significant progress in learning the curriculum and, as a result, employers provide them with more complex and challenging tasks to complete early in their apprenticeship.

Adults and apprentices develop good communication skills which enable them to interact effectively with their peers. Adults benefit from learning in a calm and

relaxed environment. Apprentices learn in a supportive and safe working environment. As a result, most stay with their current employer after they have completed their apprenticeship.

D&CP managers manage the subcontracted apprenticeship provision effectively. As the employer, they have a thorough understanding of the job that apprentices do. They provide apprentices with the training they need to be successful at work and to successfully achieve their qualifications. Apprentices and D&CP trainers evaluate regularly the apprenticeship. D&CP managers review and update teaching resources frequently to ensure that the training content remains current.

ETS managers do not focus on quality improvement arrangements in sufficient depth. For example, they monitor useful data on the progress learners make towards completing the training and achieving the qualification. However, they do not reflect well enough on the effectiveness of the curriculum and how well teachers and trainers teach the content. As a result, they have not made all the necessary improvements to ensure that all apprentices receive consistently high-quality training and assessment.

A minority of apprentices do not benefit from a curriculum that is sequenced effectively, and therefore do not build sufficiently on their previously acquired knowledge and skills. The small number of apprentices studying the team leader/supervisor and business administration apprenticeships do not always benefit from constructive feedback that helps them to improve and deepen their subject knowledge and understanding.

ETS managers cancel too many training sessions for call handlers, some at very short notice, and often because of staffing issues. As a result, apprentices and their employers are inconvenienced and have their training delayed.

Not all learners receive high-quality, unbiased advice on what they can do after completing their apprenticeship or their adult learning programme. Consequently, they are not all aware of the wider progression and career opportunities available. For example, apprentices do not always understand what further and higher education options are available to them, such as higher-level apprenticeships or university degrees.

Trainers do not embed topics such as fundamental British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and exploitation systematically within the curriculum. Although trainers often teach the topics at induction, they do not revisit them in enough depth to ensure learners understand fully how these might affect them in their daily lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners rightly feel safe at work and when training with ETS. They know who to contact if they have any concerns. They are confident that staff and employers would listened to their worries and deal with them appropriately.

Trainers provide apprentices and adults with an informative monthly newsletter and have developed a comprehensive induction programme which helps learners and apprentices know how to stay safe and well. However, trainers do not revisit some safeguarding topics, such as how to keep yourself safe online, throughout the programme to ensure that learners know and understand the content.

Apprentices studying ESCH receive good support for their mental health and well-being from staff who understand the stressful nature of their jobs. Supervisors at work make daily checks to ensure that apprentices are coping well with the content of the calls from the general public. They provide apprentices with timely and appropriate support when they identify that they are troubled by what they hear on the calls.

Leaders carry out the required statutory checks on staff to ensure they are suitable to work with all learners, including apprentices who are under 18 years of age.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Managers should monitor the quality of education effectively to ensure that all learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers must ensure that all learners and apprentices receive unbiased and high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- Managers should ensure that teachers revisit and reinforce topics such as extremism throughout the curriculum, so that learners know and understand what it is like to live in modern Britain.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51688
Address	ETS House Emperor Way Exeter Business Park EX1 3QS
Contact number	01392 445444
Website	education-and-skills-td.com/
Principal/CEO	Richard Jenkins
Provider type	Independent training provider
Date of previous inspection	12 to 15 March 2019
Main subcontractors	Devon and Cornwall Police

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the general manager, 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

Steve Battersby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matt Hann	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Terri Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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