

Inspection of Transworld Publication Services Limited T/A Protocol Consultancy Services

Inspection dates:

1 to 3 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Apprenticeships	Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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Information about this provider

Established in 1993, Transworld Publications Services Ltd, trading as Protocol Consultancy Services (Protocol), took on its first direct contract for providing training towards National Vocational Qualifications in 1996. The provider currently offers traineeships to learners aged 16 to 19, of which there are 12, and has been on the register of apprenticeship training providers since March 2017. The provider teaches a range of apprenticeships from levels 2 to 5, alongside its traineeship offer. At the time of the inspection, there were 61 apprentices, of whom 59 were following standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 33 apprentices were studying business administrator at level 3, and of the remainder, the majority were following team leader/supervisor at level 3, customer services practitioner at level 2, or learning and skills teacher at level 5.

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

Apprentices and traineeship learners develop a positive approach to their studies and are motivated to take the next steps in their careers. Apprentices are very motivated to learn. Several traineeship learners stated that they now plan to go on to further study as a result of their learning.

All learners become more confident and improve their communication skills. For example, traineeship learners become more confident in their ability to achieve and move on to their next steps. Apprentices are able to deal successfully with complaints from colleagues, and as a result, they have gained a greater understanding of the impact of their actions, so improving collaborative working.

Traineeship learners improve their attendance and participation in activities as they advance through the course. Apprentices are committed to learning and have a good understanding of how to achieve a high grade in their end-point assessment.

Traineeship learners develop a strong sense of social responsibility through engaging in fundraising activity. Some traineeship learners complete their work placements in community organisations, where they support disadvantaged groups. For example, learners give advice and guidance to community members on accessing benefits.

Apprenticeship and traineeship learners report feeling safe. They receive information on the providers' safeguarding arrangements during their induction and know how to report any concerns.

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

Leaders work with a range of partners, including the local authority, employers and community groups, to develop a curriculum that meets local needs. For example, they have worked with the local authority to implement traineeships to help meet the 'not in education, employment or training' strategy for the Birmingham area.

Leaders use a range of appropriate activities well to monitor the progress of all learners, including assessment visits, progress reviews and performance rating of learners. They use this information to challenge the actions being taken to improve the learners' experience and support achievement. As a result, learners who fall behind are swiftly supported to catch up.

Leaders are held to account by well-established governance arrangements. Those in the governance role possess relevant expertise to inform improvements at the provider. For example, a managing director from another training provider is the lead for quality and carries out teaching observations, and has provided feedback that has subsequently led to improvements in teaching.

Managers and training advisers are supported to develop their teaching skills through a range of activities, including training, lesson observations and peer

shadowing. However, the lesson observation process does not yet fully consider the impact of this activity on the learners' development of new knowledge and skills.

The large majority of apprentices develop new knowledge and skills, which they use in the workplace with the support of workplace mentors. For example, a learner produced a communication policy that required staff to ensure that their language was inclusive and pitched at an appropriate level.

Training advisers ensure that apprentices are well prepared for their end-point assessment and provide regular and useful advice on how to achieve a high grade. They revisit learning regularly via recaps, quizzes, the provision of resources and workplace visits to ensure that learners retain knowledge in their long-term memory. As a result, the majority of apprentices achieve well.

A large majority of traineeship learners develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, learners understand health and safety policies and they know how to communicate in a business environment.

A large majority of traineeship learners benefit from highly structured and meaningful work placements. Provider staff work closely with placement providers to plan a suitable range of tasks and activities to meet learners' interests and develop new skills. For example, learners who are ambitious to work in digital marketing have the opportunity on placement to apply their skills in producing high-quality marketing leaflets and posters.

The majority of apprentices and traineeship learners benefit from good-quality feedback that supports them to improve and allows them to revisit learning. For example, traineeship learners receive feedback on how to improve their CV. This has subsequently led to a greater response to the job applications they make.

Training advisers do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' English and mathematical skills. Learners complete a diagnostic assessment of their skill levels at the start of the course, but training advisers do not use the results of this well enough to enable learners to improve any specific gaps in their knowledge. A few learners recall useful comments on their written work, but too few learners receive this feedback.

Tutors do not ensure that careers advice is routinely made available to all learners. Traineeship learners benefit from ongoing impartial careers advice and guidance; however, apprentices do not routinely receive high-quality, unbiased information about career opportunities beyond the opportunities with their current employer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff receive appropriate training updates on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are able to identify the signs of concern and support learners appropriately.

Most traineeship learners and apprentices gain an understanding of British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism during their early weeks on programme. For example, traineeship learners design posters on respect and tolerance. Traineeship learners and the majority of apprentices can describe how British values are relevant to them in their daily lives and workplace settings. However, not all apprentices can remember what they have learned later in their programmes and how to apply it.

Traineeship learners understand the impact that sexual abuse has on individuals and understand how they can get support for themselves and others, should they have any concerns.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all learners receive appropriately focused training to fill gaps in their English and mathematical skills.
- Ensure that all apprentices have access to impartial careers advice, so that they are aware of the full range of progression opportunities available to them.
- Ensure that apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism is developed throughout their apprenticeship, so that they can apply this to their daily lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54008
Address	The Old Guild House 1 New Market Street Birmingham B3 2NH
Contact number	0121 236 2634
Website	www.protocolgroup.org.uk
CEO	Sue Tipton (Managing Director)
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2006
Main subcontractors	None

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 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

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Beth Selwood	Ofsted Inspector
Megan Dauksta	Ofsted Inspector

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