

Inspection of TEC Partnership

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 May 2022

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
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

TEC Partnership is a large provider of further education and skills in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The partnership provides education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships, and provision for learners with high needs at Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education (GIFHE), East Riding College, Scarborough TEC and Skegness TEC. Modal Training provides heavy goods vehicle (HGV) and large goods vehicle (LGV) driver training courses for adults and apprentices, and National Employer Training (NET) delivers short employability courses for adults.

At the time of the inspection, there were 4,247 learners on education programmes for young people, 4,317 learners on adult learning programmes, 1,201 apprentices and 390 learners with high needs. TEC Partnership no longer works with subcontractors.

TEC Partnership has recently undergone significant changes in leadership. A new chief executive officer (CEO) is in post, and new principals have recently been appointed at East Riding College, Scarborough TEC and Grimsby Institute.

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

Most learners on education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes and provision for learners with high needs achieve their qualifications and progress to positive next steps, including higher education, further training or employment.

Most learners benefit from interesting and stimulating lessons with teachers who help them to develop useful skills and professional behaviours. Learners taking early childhood studies courses at GIFHE learn how to develop children's language skills in childcare settings. Hairdressing learners at East Riding College develop practical techniques that prepare them well for their roles working in salons. Adult learners on employability courses at NET develop the interview techniques that they need to prepare them to apply for jobs.

Learners and apprentices attend well and arrive on time for their lessons. Staff reinforce the importance of good attendance and punctuality and where necessary provide support, such as 'catch-up' meetings, to ensure that learners do not fall behind.

Learners on education programmes for young people benefit from a thoughtful and well-taught tutorial programme in which they explore important issues such as the dangers of drug and alcohol, and threats posed by cyberbullying and radicalisation. Teachers help learners to understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Many learners take part in meaningful additional activities alongside their studies. The 'level up' initiative helps learners to gain valuable digital skills that they can use for study, work and life. Many learners take part in yoga, meditation, and art therapy sessions during mental health awareness weeks to help them manage stress. At Skegness TEC, learners studying health and social care take part in community action projects such as raising funds for Skegness food bank and mental health charities. Consequently, learners build their confidence and resilience, and develop empathy for others.

Learners and apprentices demonstrate high levels of respect for their tutors and their peers. They feel safe in centres across the partnership. They say that everyone is respectful of each other, including on social media, and that staff and learners do not accept bullying or sexual harassment. Learners know how to report any concerns and are confident that staff would swiftly deal with any issues.

Too many apprentices do not develop rapidly enough the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to move on to their next steps.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for the courses that they provide across the partnership's centres. They make good use of labour market information to identify and develop education and training that meets local needs in the areas that they serve. Leaders work closely and effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including local enterprise partnerships, local authorities and employers. For example, leaders collaborate with employers to provide high quality HGV and LGV driver training for adults and apprentices, to fulfil skills shortages in the logistics industry.

Leaders have invested in the partnership to enhance learners' experience and ensure that learners have access to up-to-date resources. These include industry-standard facilities for construction and engineering, and bespoke gaming rooms and high-quality software for creative media production courses, that replicate a professional working environment.

Leaders and managers have appointed well-qualified and experienced staff to deliver their programmes. Leaders provide most staff with a wide range of relevant training to develop their teaching skills and subject specialist knowledge. On the light-vehicle apprenticeship programme, for example, tutors have recently updated their knowledge of working with electric and hybrid vehicles. Leaders encourage sharing of best practice within and across teams. Staff use the experience of more-experienced teachers to improve their practice, such as designing assignments and making the curriculum more relevant to the world of work.

Leaders rightly recognise that the partnership is currently going through a period of considerable change at senior leadership level, with a new CEO in post and changes in leadership at most centres, with new principals not yet in post. The CEO identified a number of potential issues associated with the merger soon after taking up post, and with support from the partnership board is taking steps to ensure that these matters are swiftly resolved.

Leaders have accurately identified that apprenticeship provision needs further improvement. Leaders and managers have begun to implement sensible actions to address this. However, the proportion of apprentices who are successful on their programme varies significantly across subject areas and is too low on standards-based programmes.

Most teachers plan and sequence learning activities logically, so that learners can build on and improve their knowledge and understanding. Learners on a level 3 health and social care course study the fundamentals of equality and diversity, communication, and legislation at the start of their course. When studying more-complex topics, such as dementia, learners recall and build on their knowledge from the first year. Learners apply their learning effectively in their work experience placements. For example, learners use their understanding of legislation to ensure that those in their care stay safe.

Most teachers assess learners' knowledge and understanding well. In level 3 art and design, teachers critique learners' work and provide helpful feedback on artistic techniques, so that learners know what they need to do to improve. In level 2 joinery, teachers use online quizzes and timed practical activities to prepare learners for examinations and for the workplace. As a result, teachers identify and fill any gaps in learners' knowledge or understanding, enabling learners to progress onto more-complex topics. However, in too many cases, tutors do not assess apprentices' work well enough or inform them about they need to do to improve, which slows the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time.

Most learners develop their skills in English and mathematics skills well. Joinery learners acquire and use technical language fluently, such as balustrading, and confidently calculate angles and quantities of timber for roofing. Art and design learners learn to write clear project proposals, and health and social care learners confidently structure their written assignments and deliver engaging presentations to their peers.

Too many apprentices do not improve their English or mathematics skills rapidly enough. Apprentices in light-vehicle maintenance do not receive teaching for functional skills English or mathematics early enough in their programmes. Consequently, too many struggle to apply formulae and use ratios to solve problems related to gear systems, which slows their progress and impacts on their preparation for their end-point assessments.

Managers use funding effectively to provide most learners who have high needs with the individualised and specialist support that they need. Managers establish and maintain effective working relationships with parents and carers, school staff, and healthcare professionals to ensure a smooth transition from school to college. In the very few cases where teachers do not use the information that they have about learners' needs well enough, this slows learners' progress.

Most learners receive appropriate careers guidance to support them in considering their next steps. In health and social care, external speakers talk to learners about different career routes and the local National Health Service talent academy offers advice on placement opportunities. However, a few learners do not receive timely or appropriate guidance to help them make informed career decisions. For example, they receive limited information about apprenticeships as a potential next step from level 2 programmes in construction.

Governors are actively involved in determining the group's strategic direction. They have a good knowledge of local needs and actively participate in the curriculum planning process to ensure that the curriculum is designed to meet needs.

Governors have a thorough understanding of the group's strengths and areas that need further development, such as apprenticeships. They receive comprehensive reports that enable them to monitor performance and quality effectively. They have a good awareness of areas that needed improving and, at group level, provide good oversight, challenge and support to ensure that leaders are making good progress in tackling any issues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong safeguarding culture. A comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure is in place, providing full clarity for all staff. Safeguarding training for staff is comprehensive. Designated safeguarding leads ensure that appropriate actions are taken in response to safeguarding concerns and disclosures, including involvement of and communication with relevant external agencies.

Leaders recruit staff who are safe to work with learners. All staff undergo enhanced disclosure and barring checks.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They know about risks to their safety and how to keep themselves and others safe. They know who to contact should they have any concerns.

Most learners and apprentices have a reasonable understanding of risks such as radicalisation, bullying and harassment, and inappropriate online activity. Learners develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through the college-wide tutorial programme.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programmes.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive the timely English and mathematics teaching that they need to improve their skills and pass their functional skills examinations.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive thorough assessment and constructive feedback on their work, so they know what they need to do to improve in order to complete their apprenticeship successfully.
- Ensure all learners and apprentices across the partnership have access to high-quality and impartial careers guidance.
- Ensure that the new senior leadership team and governors swiftly address any identified issues arising from the recent merger, to ensure stability for the partnership.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130585
Address	Nuns Corner Grimsby DN34 5BQ
Contact number	01472 311222
Website	https://tecpartnership.com
Principal/CEO	Ann Hardy
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the executive director of quality, 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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