

Inspection of WS Training Ltd

Inspection dates: 5 to 8 July 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
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

WS Training Ltd (WS) is an independent learning provider based in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Most of their programmes are taught in Ipswich, with a small cohort of young learners in Colchester.

WS offer education programmes for young people, including study programmes and traineeships, provision for learners with high needs, and apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 learners on employability-related study programmes and 20 learners were on traineeships. There were 75 learners with high needs on bespoke study programmes. WS offer standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5 in four subject areas to 133 apprentices. There were 86 apprentices on one of three standards in business, administration and law, mainly at level 3. There were 22 apprentices on one of three standards in information and communication technology at level 3, 15 were on the level 2 warehousing supply chain standard and 10 apprentices were on the level 2 lean manufacturing operative standard. Around one third of apprentices are under the age of 19. WS do not work with any subcontractors.

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

Learners and apprentices learn from staff who know their needs, care about them and help them to succeed. Learners and apprentices enjoy learning with WS Training, both in classrooms and in workplaces. The majority of young learners, previously disengaged from education, value highly the opportunity to learn and progress towards employment.

Learners who have high needs receive excellent support from a range of staff. They learn in a calm and orderly environment, in which they make good progress towards independence and, where appropriate, employment. Learners routinely celebrate their achievements with each other. They learn through topics that are relevant to their personal interests, such as music and art.

Apprentices gain the skills and knowledge they require to succeed at work. They are supported well by their employers and their tutors. They acquire new skills, practise them regularly and build on their existing knowledge. Apprentices are motivated to use what they are learning to add value to their employer. They propose and implement change projects to improve efficiencies and customer experience. Apprentices gain additional roles and responsibilities at work.

Learners on study programmes and traineeships are well prepared for their future careers. They benefit from meaningful work experience placements that provide useful insight into their intended vocations. Learners value the feedback they get from employers when they are on their placements.

Younger learners express their views and opinions openly. Learners benefit from positive relationships with staff, who use humour appropriately to contribute to the respectful and positive culture at all sites.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in learning environments and at work. They feel confident in reporting to staff any welfare or safety concerns they may have.

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

Leaders have improved the quality of study programmes and apprenticeships since the previous inspection. The quality of education is now good across their provision. Leaders have significantly reduced the proportion of apprentices who are beyond their expected end dates. Their investment in resource to support careers advice and guidance has ensured that learners and apprentices are aware of their career options and prepared for progression to their next steps.

Leaders work effectively with a variety of local stakeholder groups, including the New Anglia local enterprise partnership. Leaders are highly ambitious for young learners who are not in education or employment, or unable to cope in a traditional learning environment. They work thoughtfully with partners to align apprenticeships with government schemes aimed at getting the unemployed into long-term work.

Leaders and staff ensure that apprenticeships are tailored to meet the needs of individual employers through the choice of programme, additional qualifications and delivery modes. Most apprentices extend their skills and knowledge beyond the content of the standard and gain additional responsibilities in the workplace. Apprentices on level 2 supply chain warehouse operative broaden their work skills through completing forklift operating qualifications.

Most teachers and tutors make good use of a wide range of high-quality physical and electronic resources. They select appropriate resources to enhance their teaching and to help learners and apprentices fill any identified gaps in knowledge. Apprentices on the level 3 business administrator standard make good use of interesting webinars, such as on public speaking, to help them prepare for tasks at work.

Teachers and tutors use assessment effectively to help learners and apprentices secure their knowledge. They frequently check learners' and apprentices' understanding using a variety of appropriate methods. Teachers and tutors ensure that learners and apprentices secure their knowledge through repetition and recall activities. When learners make errors, teachers help them to correct their work and to prevent the same error in the future.

Tutors and employers collaborate effectively to ensure that apprentices deepen their knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace. Workplace mentors ensure that apprentices have the opportunities they need to apply their skills in different contexts. Apprentices shadow teams in other departments of the business, such as the underwriting and brokerage teams, to extend their understanding.

Teachers and learning support staff provide effective, bespoke support for young learners. They work together effectively to ensure learners with more-complex needs can participate fully in lessons. Well-trained and experienced learning support assistants provide excellent support for learners with high needs. Learners with high needs work towards appropriate and personalised educational, social, emotional and physical targets. The curriculum is sufficiently broad to take account of the personal and communication skills that learners need to gain for adult life. Staff give learners greater autonomy in making choices and carrying out more complex work over time.

Teachers and tutors do not set useful targets for learners and apprentices. Too often, targets set are too broad. They focus on completion of tasks rather than on learning and skills development. As a result, learners and apprentices are not clear on their areas for development or the intended purpose of the activities set for them to complete.

Leaders have put in place a broad curriculum that helps young learners to develop the ability to thrive as individuals. They are better able to become effective family members and employees and play an active part in society. Teachers cover topics that help learners understand how to stay safe and healthy. Learners, including

those with high needs, have a good understanding of how to have healthy relationships.

Too few apprentices extend their learning beyond the technical and vocational focus of their apprenticeship. Leaders have put in place a comprehensive series of events to extend apprentices' awareness of topics such as equality, diversity, mental health and peer-on-peer abuse. However, few apprentices take the opportunity to attend and do not learn more about these topics.

Learners and apprentices receive appropriate and ongoing impartial careers advice and guidance. Leaders have recruited a careers adviser who provides a range of support and useful guidance for learners and apprentices. Learners have a good understanding of their career goals. Apprentices have a good understanding of the breadth of careers available, both with their employer and in the wider sector. However, too few learners who complete a study programme progress to employment or an apprenticeship.

Learners' and apprentices' behaviour at learning and work is very good. Staff are quick to challenge rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour, and to reinforce high expectations for conduct. They help learners who have high needs to self-regulate their behaviour and provide support for the learners' well-being and mood.

Young learners' and apprentices' attendance to classroom-based learning is too low. Staff are very quick to follow up with young or vulnerable learners, on every instance of non-attendance to ensure their well-being.

Arrangements for governance are very effective. The three board members each bring a specific expertise and insight to the board. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of provision through forensic interrogation of leaders' reports. Board members have strengthened leadership through considered appointments to new management roles. They hold leaders and managers to account for their actions and for the quality of provision with rigour. Their challenge has, for example, resulted in improved outcomes for learners and apprentices, and the decision made to cease offering hairdressing apprenticeships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding maintain effective relationships with local safeguarding partnerships to keep their knowledge and awareness of local threats up to date. They are well informed about the increase in human trafficking in Ipswich, the rise in gang activity 'hot spots' and the ongoing county lines activity in Suffolk and neighbouring areas. Leaders work with police representatives to provide sessions for young learners on specific threats such as knife crime and drink spiking. Learners and most apprentices have a secure understanding of a variety of ways in which to keep themselves safe online and in day-to-day life.

Leaders and staff responsible for safeguarding, handle and monitor all referrals and disclosures effectively. They monitor vulnerable learners and those at risk of harm closely. The safeguarding and welfare teams work collaboratively to ensure learners' well-being. Leaders are held to account effectively for the support they provide for learners and apprentices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that young learners' attendance to learning improves. They must ensure that apprentices attend the recently introduced group learning sessions. Staff must continue to monitor all non-attendance and follow up accordingly.
- Leaders must ensure that tutors revisit and reinforce learning beyond technical and vocational aspects of the programme with apprentices. Tutors must help apprentices to secure a broader understanding about matters that affect daily life such as equality, inclusion, peer-on-peer abuse and healthy lifestyles.
- Teachers and tutors must set meaningful learning goals for learners and apprentices. They must ensure that learners' and apprentices' targets support progress in learning and skills development, and that learners and apprentices understand their specific areas for development.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55448
Address	Manor Barn, Church Road Great Barton Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP31 2QR
Contact number	01284 788005
Website	www.wstraining.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Kirstie Wright
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	25 to 28 June 2019
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the CEO, 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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