

# Inspection of Choice Training Ltd

Inspection dates:

28 June to 1 July 2022

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Choice Training Limited (Choice) is a small, independent learning provider based in Dagenham, Essex. The provider has experience of teaching apprenticeships as a subcontractor and started training apprentices on its direct contract in May 2017. Choice provides primarily standards-based apprenticeships and a small number of frameworks in the subject sector areas of engineering and construction.

At the time of the inspection, Choice had 152 apprentices on standards and frameworks at levels 2 and 3. Of these, 90 apprentices were on the level 3 service and maintenance engineer standard, 30 were studying the level 3 craftsperson standard, 12 were on the level 2 installer standard, and another 12 were on the level 3 installation electrician and maintenance electrician standard. The remaining seven apprentices, on the levels 2 and 3 frameworks in plumbing and heating, had recently completed their programmes.

Most apprentices were above 19 years of age. Nineteen apprentices were aged 16 to 18. Seven apprentices were women, all of them following advanced-level programmes.

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

Leaders and managers have successfully created an inclusive learning environment, where apprentices from different ethnic backgrounds and female apprentices in a traditionally male-dominated industry thrive in their studies. Apprentices enjoy being part of a diverse community, which is free from bullying and harassment.

Leaders have fostered a culture and atmosphere that is highly respectful and collaborative. Apprentices, including those with additional needs, demonstrate exemplary behaviours. They are polite and courteous to their peers, staff and visitors. Apprentices from different study groups socialise well in the centre's communal areas.

Staff have exceptionally high expectations of apprentices' behaviour and set these consistently. Leaders reward high attendance and punctuality with a generous tool kit allowance. Consequently, apprentices have excellent attendance and punctuality to lessons.

Employers confirm that apprentices' attitude to work is outstanding. They are often trusted with sensitive information and rapidly assume positions of significant responsibility in managing complex heating, ventilating and power systems. Apprentices are very successful in competitions, where they represent both the provider and the industry.

Apprentices do not have a consistently well-developed understanding of topics, such as fundamental British values, the 'Prevent' duty and sexual harassment. Staff provide training and information to apprentices at induction and occasionally revisit these topics throughout their training. However, not all apprentices clearly understand how these topics relate to their day-to-day lives and work activities.

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

Leaders offer a curriculum focusing on their areas of expertise while effectively supporting national skills needs in the construction and engineering sectors. Choice started offering apprenticeships in electrical installation in response to the shortage of qualified electricians in the industry.

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious curriculum based on current research and developments in the industrial and commercial building industry. They have high aspirations for their apprentices to develop their skills and make progress in their careers. For example, the service and maintenance curriculum aligns particularly well with the work of large employers who install and maintain heating and ventilation systems in large buildings, such as hospitals, hotels, schools, and office blocks. As a result, apprentices have secure jobs in their chosen trades with well-established employers. Most apprentices sustain their employment and move up to higher roles in their careers.

Leaders have planned the curriculum particularly well and take good account of apprentices' work roles and the requirements of the qualifications. As a result, the

majority of apprentices are able to use their classroom learning in the workplace. For example, level 3 electrical installation apprentices use the theory they have been taught on relevant safety regulations to conduct appropriate safety checks in the workplace. They quickly learn basic skills to put together a distribution board using double sockets and metal pipes at the start to enable them to be on site.

Leaders support tutors effectively in developing their teaching skills and vocational knowledge. Tutors attend standardisation meetings and receive constructive feedback on their teaching skills. Tutors who still work in the sector participate in a range of industry-specific events, such as plumbing and heating exhibitions, and complete external courses on the use of the latest technology within their trade. Consequently, they maintain current subject knowledge and improve their teaching practice.

Tutors expertly use different methods to teach apprentices. They link theoretical content clearly with apprentices' work and reinforce this further in the practical sessions. Apprentices test and apply their learning to work-based situations, with good guidance from their tutors. Consequently, apprentices master their practical skills and develop a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They quickly gain the confidence to work independently and become reliable members of their workplace. A high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualification.

Tutors provide constructive verbal feedback to apprentices on their work. As a result, apprentices improve their work over time and generally produce a good standard of work. However, tutors' written feedback on apprentices' submitted work is not sufficiently specific to ensure apprentices understand what they need to do to improve. In some cases, tutors do not correct all spelling and grammar errors in apprentices' written work and, consequently, apprentices continue to produce work with the same mistakes.

A high number of apprentices successfully achieve their mathematics and English qualifications. Tutors promote apprentices' English language and mathematical skills well in lessons. They skilfully introduce new technical terms through research activities. Apprentices are able to apply numerical skills relevant to practical and theoretical tasks. For example, level 3 craftsperson apprentices calculate the volume of dosing chemicals based on percentage concentration.

Staff work collaboratively with the employers to help ensure apprentices make good progress and cover the necessary range of activities at work. Tutors promptly contact employers if they identify gaps in apprentices' workplace skills. Employers then make suitable arrangements in the workplace to ensure apprentices close these gaps rapidly. For example, apprentices on the level 3 heating and plumbing programmes undertake additional roles at work and some gain promotions as a result of their learning.

Leaders ensure that apprentices have opportunities to develop their wider knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices complete additional welding and electrical qualifications, enhancing their employability. They attend talks on a range

of issues, including prostate cancer in men and mental health. Apprentices also participate in an annual 5-a-side football tournament to raise funds for a local charity. However, leaders do not always ensure apprentices receive impartial career guidance. Consequently, apprentices do not fully understand the broader opportunities available at the end of their apprenticeship.

Leaders do not ensure that staff thoroughly complete essential records, such as progress reviews and safeguarding incident logs. These records are not sufficiently detailed and do not always provide helpful information on the specific support needed or given. Progress review records do not provide a clear account of discussions with employers and apprentices or monitor their progress towards set targets.

Since the monitoring visit, leaders have put in place sound governance arrangements. Governors bring appropriate industry expertise and apprenticeship knowledge, enabling them to hold leaders accountable. Leaders provide timely reports on performance, including regular updates on the quality of teaching and apprentices' progress. As a result, governors have made effective decisions to bring about improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers promote safeguarding effectively across the organisation. They have suitable policies and procedures in place, including those which relate to the 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding lead and others responsible for safeguarding have completed appropriate training. Leaders ensure that staff are safe to work with their apprentices. Staff training for safeguarding is relevant and up to date.

Staff understand well different issues, including specific family circumstances and mental health concerns, that make some apprentices vulnerable. They deal with safeguarding concerns appropriately and work well with parents, employers and relevant external agencies, such as mental health charities to ensure the safety of their apprentices.

Leaders have thorough oversight of local risks and specific risks associated with the construction and engineering industry in which their apprentices work. Apprentices also learn about work-related health and safety practices through their courses. Staff further reinforce these practices at the centre, where apprentices wear appropriate PPE when learning in the workshops. Consequently, apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe in the workplace.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Tutors should provide more helpful feedback on apprentices' work, so that they know how to make improvements. They should ensure also that apprentices understand how to correct errors they make in spelling and grammar.
- Leaders should ensure that staff record more precisely the outcome of apprentices' reviews and incident logs, in particular to identify any support that apprentices need, so that this can be provided in a timely and effective manner.
- Leaders and managers should review how tutors support apprentices to develop a good understanding of fundamental British values, the 'Prevent' duty and sexual harassment.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices receive unbiased career advice and guidance, so they are fully informed about their next steps.

## Provider details

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Website	<a href="http://www.choicetrainingltd.co.uk">www.choicetrainingltd.co.uk</a>
Managing Director	Robert Tye
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

## 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.

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