

Inspection of Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited (The)

Inspection dates:

23 to 26 August 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity operating under the name of Oldham Training Centre (OTC). It is a member-owned organisation with over 30 member companies.

OTC provides apprenticeships in manufacturing technologies, engineering, administration, and business management. At the time of the inspection, there were 129 apprentices. There were 29 on the level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician standard, 23 on the engineering fitter standard, 22 on the level 3 engineering framework, 17 on the level 3 engineering technician standard, and 10 on the level 3 business administrator standard. A few apprentices were on the following apprenticeship standards: level 2 customer service practitioner, level 3 engineering design and draughtsperson, level 3 team leader or supervisor, level 3 plate welder and level 5 operations or departmental manager.

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

Apprentices improve their confidence and resilience as a direct result of their apprenticeship. They make a positive contribution in the workplace as they confidently and professionally complete tasks with increasing independence. Level 3 engineering apprentices skilfully maintain machinery by accurately identifying and correcting faults. Level 3 business administrator apprentices confidently speak to difficult customers by remaining calm and professional.

Most apprentices incrementally develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful in their roles. Level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician apprentices skilfully change machine blades, and grease and tension machines. This results in a significant number of apprentices gaining additional duties or promotion, or progressing to higher learning. Conversely, level 3 business administrator apprentices do not always develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to make the required progress to complete their apprenticeship.

Apprentices have a very positive attitude to learning. They are motivated to learn and see the benefit of their apprenticeship. Apprentices recognise how the apprenticeship helps with their career progression at work. Apprentices attend well and are punctual for their planned training.

Apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills as a result of their apprenticeships. They use these skills proficiently to communicate with colleagues and customers with an increasing level of professionalism. For example, level 3 business administrator apprentices write business communications and calculate annual expenditure costs.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. They have a good understanding of health and safety and know how to work safely at work. Apprentices know who to contact and how to report concerns they may have. While most apprentices receive training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, staff do not routinely reinforce apprentices' understanding of British values, the 'Prevent' duty and the risks relating to radicalisation and extremism.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale to provide apprenticeships for the employers that they serve in the engineering and manufacturing industry. They offer a range of engineering and non-engineering apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that all apprentices receive a consistently high-quality education. There are too many inconsistencies within the different engineering pathways, such as electrical and manufacturing. The non-engineering curriculum is not ambitious enough to enable apprentices to achieve their full potential.

Leaders ensure that tutors are well qualified to teach their subjects. They have extensive experience in their industries. Tutors use their expertise to deliver learning that enhances apprentices' knowledge and skills. They use assessment effectively to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge and inform teaching. As a result, most apprentices know more and remember more throughout their programme. However, leaders do not ensure that staff regularly update their vocational and industry skills so that they remain up to date with current industry developments.

Leaders have been too slow to improve the quality of education that apprentices receive. They have not successfully rectified all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, for example improving the quality of feedback to apprentices, and ensuring board members are provided with sufficiently detailed data to allow them to challenge senior leaders to secure rapid improvement.

Leaders do not have clear oversight of the progress that apprentices make on their programmes. They do not ensure that staff put effective plans in place to support apprentices to catch up. As a result, over half of apprentices are making slow progress towards completing their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers do not sufficiently monitor the quality of education that apprentices receive. They do not focus on the improvement of tutors' teaching skills. They do not routinely monitor the quality of teaching and assessment practice that staff provide for apprentices. This means that leaders and managers do not know where the weaknesses lie in the quality of education that they provide for apprentices.

On- and off-the-job training is not consistently planned and coordinated for all engineering apprentices. Training advisers do not always work with apprentices' employers to plan how apprentices can swiftly practise and hone their skills at work. Training advisers do not plan and coordinate on- and off-the-job training for any business administrator apprentices. This means that far too many engineering and non-engineering apprentices do not develop their skills quickly enough.

Most engineering apprentices know the requirements of their final assessments. However, too many apprentices are unaware of the grade opportunities that are available to them. Level 3 business administrator apprentices do not have their final assessments introduced until late in their apprenticeship. This means that these apprentices are unable to practise and prepare for their final assessments.

Staff and employers provide apprentices with information about internal promotions and further and higher study opportunities. However, apprentices do not receive broad, unbiased guidance on career opportunities beyond their current employment.

Governance is not effective. Senior leaders do not provide board members with appropriate information about the quality of their apprenticeship provision. This means that board members are unable to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the inconsistencies in the quality of education. Board members have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate processes and policies that staff use effectively to ensure apprentices and staff are kept safe. Checks during recruitment ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices.

Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that apprentices and staff maintain good mental health and well-being. For example, several staff are trained mental health first aiders. Leaders have established positive links with external agencies such as social services, MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub), CALM (campaign against living miserably) and the police. This ensures that safeguarding staff take quick and effective actions when concerns are raised.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that they prioritise the implementation of effective quality assurance processes so that they can accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education.
- Leaders should provide the board with accurate information to enable them to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the quality of education apprentices receive.
- Leaders should improve the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training with employers so that apprentices can practise, improve and master their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work.
- Leaders should quickly establish rigorous processes to help them accurately monitor the progress that apprentices make on their apprenticeships.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades available, early in their apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that trainers and training advisers receive appropriate training to update their vocational knowledge and understanding of topics such as British values and the risks relating to radicalisation and extremism, so that they can provide apprentices with appropriate training.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53721
Address	Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate Lees Road OL4 1JP
Contact number	0161 624 5360
Website	www.otctraining.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Nick Eglin
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, 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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