

Inspection of Whitby and District Fishing Industry Training School Limited

Inspection dates:

29 November to 1 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Whitby and District Fishing Industry Training School Limited was established in 2002. It provides specialist training for the maritime industry. In August 2018, it began training apprentices towards the level 3 workboat crewmember standard, which equips apprentices to work as deckhands on a wide variety of specialist vessels. More recently, the provider started to offer a level 2 diploma in maritime studies (sea fishing pathway) for young people aiming to pursue a career in the fishing industry. At the time of the inspection, there were six apprentices on the level 3 workboat crewmember apprenticeship and fewer than five on the level 2 diploma in maritime studies. Apprentices and learners attend block-release training at the centre and spend significant time out at sea, either working or attending work placements on seafaring vessels.

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

Staff have high expectations of their learners and apprentices, who work to very high standards of safety when on boats and comply with the safe working procedures that are expected of them. Learners and apprentices become knowledgeable about safety signals, slip hazards and other maritime safety arrangements, such as the mandatory requirement to wear life jackets on quayside before they enter boats.

Learners and apprentices have positive attitudes and are committed to their training. They are proud to be members of the maritime industry and speak positively about their time at sea. For example, they say that they feel part of the local heritage and well connected to the community as respected citizens.

Learners and apprentices attend very well at all times of the year, despite the severe weather conditions that they encounter, particularly in winter. They benefit from good working relations with their line managers and crew members. They enjoy attending sessions in the provider's centre during block-release training, where they share their experiences of being at sea.

Staff keep in touch frequently with the families of young learners to demonstrate that their child's welfare is a priority. Parents are often involved in learners' progress reviews so that they understand what their children are learning and the support that is in place to help them succeed. Parents are aware of the work that learners are doing at sea, such as preparing bait for lobster pots and filleting fish ready for the marketplace, and that learners are well protected on board boats and provided with safety wear, such as buoyancy aids.

Learners and apprentices are kept safe and value the support from staff to make them feel safe. Leaders have rigorous processes in place to ensure learner safety. They vet accommodation lodgings for overnight, block-release training and carry out rigorous checks on attendance at sea. Learners and apprentices are provided with good-quality, warm clothing and the protective equipment that they need to work at sea.

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

Leaders have a clear vision and strategic intent to provide high-quality specialist training for the maritime industry. They work closely with employers to plan and design learning programmes that meet employers' specific needs. Leaders plan specialist training above the requirements of the apprenticeship, such as tug-boat operators licensing, crane handling and additional navigation training. This contributes to creating a workforce that is highly skilled to meet the needs of the maritime industry.

Leaders have successfully planned a curriculum to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that learners and apprentices need to carry out their job roles effectively. They ensure that learners and apprentices complete essential safety training prior to going out to sea on vessels. Staff provide training on fire safety, first aid and basic sea-worthiness at the start of courses so that learners and apprentices acquire the fundamental skills needed on seafaring boats. As a result of their training, apprentices quickly become useful crew members on boats that harvest seaweed commercially or on tugboats that slow down large vessels and guide them into harbour safely.

Staff are well qualified and experienced practitioners from the fishing industry. Learners and apprentices benefit from gaining up-to-date knowledge and skills from current maritime practitioners who are experts in their field. For example, staff bring expertise from carrying out the role of lead trainer on sea safety for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. However, leaders do not focus sufficiently on improving the pedagogical skills of teachers. They rely on staff to update their own industry knowledge and teaching practice. Leaders have plans to enhance the teaching skills of staff, but these have not yet been implemented.

Leaders ensure that all learners receive the support needed to help them to achieve, including for those with additional learning needs. They work closely with employers to determine what support learners need and adapt their teaching accordingly. For example, sea skippers provide good support for learners on sea-fishing courses who struggle to master the technical skills that they need at work. They conduct individual coaching sessions with learners and give clear instructions and demonstrations on topics such as accurately repairing lobster pots. This support helps learners to make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills.

Staff carry out frequent reviews of learners' and apprentices' progress in collaboration with skippers. Skippers provide learners and apprentices with a helpful commentary on how well they are performing at work. They check the training record book to monitor their learners' and apprentices' progress and assess them accurately against industry standards to indicate the level of proficiency that each learner and apprentice has achieved. However, curriculum staff do not provide enough specific guidance for learners or apprentices about how to improve the quality of their work.

Staff accurately identify the starting points of apprentices in English and mathematics. They provide effective teaching for those apprentices who need to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics, and most apprentices pass at their first attempt. However, staff do not use the results of initial assessment to plan training for apprentices to develop their English knowledge and skills further, particularly for those who already have achieved well at GCSE. They rarely correct spelling and grammatical errors in apprentices' work or ensure that apprentices are able to write accurately for their job roles.

Teachers prepare apprentices well for their final examinations. They hold frequent discussions with their apprentices about how to answer examination-style questions

fully and how to check their own progress against the knowledge, skills and behaviours covered by the apprenticeship standard. Apprentices achieve well, with a high proportion achieving distinction grades in their final examinations.

Learners and apprentices receive guidance on local risks such as drug smuggling and county-lines sea lanes. They know that skippers and boat crews may come under pressure from criminal gangs to traffic drugs in times when fishing seasons are less profitable. Learners and apprentices are aware of the North Yorkshire police campaign, 'operation Cracken', to identify smugglers entering United Kingdom waters and know to report boats acting suspiciously to their skippers. However, in a few instances, staff are not doing enough to enhance learners' and apprentices' understanding of topics such as equality and respect for others at work.

Learners and apprentices receive good-quality careers advice and guidance about work options on completion of their training. They know about opportunities to work in the Merchant Navy, on local fishing boats and other related jobs, such as in marine engineering. They benefit from frequent visits from guest speakers who come in to talk to them about their career options. Apprentices aspire to move into roles with more responsibility and better salaries. For example, tugboat deckhands want to be skippers and know the qualifications that they need to attain to be successful.

Leaders undertake useful quality assurance activity. They hold frequent events with staff to standardise questions and answers for unit end tests, use learner feedback to revise course content, and use the information from their partner providers to gain useful insights into the quality of teaching. For example, representatives of the Maritime Coastguard Agency come into the centre to evaluate the quality of teaching by staff providing sea rescue sessions. They make recommendations for improvements related to teaching, such as how to improve the use of real sea resources in lessons.

Leaders know the main strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. They have taken recent action to conduct more detailed scrutiny and oversight of specialist, subcontracted short course provision. They rightly recognise that they need to continue to improve their oversight to assure themselves fully that all learners receive a consistently high quality of education.

Governors are experienced maritime practitioners at a local and national level. Their experience includes having been the harbour master of Whitby and Scarborough and ownership of a local fishing fleet. Governors use their extensive knowledge of the sector to influence improvements, particularly around financial stability. They present trophies at the annual awards ceremony to recognise learners' and apprentices' achievement. Governors have a reasonable overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in the organisation and a basic understanding of what leaders are doing to improve the quality of education and training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those responsible for safeguarding have completed appropriate training. They attend frequent training events at the local council and receive information about risks to learners from fishing-industry experts.

All staff complete safeguarding training so that they are aware of local risks, such as the rise of county lines and, in particular, people and drug trafficking gangs who use sea lanes between coastal holiday resorts to exploit vulnerable people and commit crime.

Leaders are aware of the types of symbols and literature that extremist groups may use. In the very few instances where they suspect that their learners and apprentices may be at risk of being radicalised, they make appropriate referrals to the police or specialist agencies.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Use the information from initial assessment to develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills.
- Ensure that staff provide specific guidance for learners and apprentices about how to improve the quality of their work.
- Ensure that staff cover equality and respect for others at work in their training.
- Implement training for teaching staff to enhance their teaching skills further.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55364
Address	Whitby Mission and Seafarers Centre Hagersgate House Hagersgate Whitby YO21 3PP
Contact number	01947 825871
Website	www.whitbyfishingschool.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Hodgson
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Humber Offshore Training Association Port Training Services

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.

Inspection team

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