

# Inspection of First Rung Limited

Inspection dates:

13 to 16 December 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

First Rung Limited (First Rung) is an independent learning provider with charity status based in the London Borough of Enfield. First Rung provides education and training for young people through study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships at two sites, located in Ponders End and Colindale.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 204 learners enrolled. One-hundred and sixteen were completing study programmes in business administration, childcare, customer service, essential digital skills, and health and social care. Twenty-one were completing traineeships. Forty-seven learners were studying level 2 and level 3 standards-based apprenticeships in the early years, education, accountancy, and business sectors. There were 20 learners with high needs, all of whom studied alongside their peers. A small minority of learners, aged 14 to 16, were completing functional skills English and mathematics qualifications and vocational courses. Most learners were aged 16 to 18.

A significant proportion of First Rung's learners come from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Many leave school without a good set of GCSE grades. Many learners experience personal, social and emotional problems for which they need ongoing support while studying.

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

Learners and apprentices enjoy learning in a calm and orderly environment, where staff set high aspirations and expectations for their behaviour. They have good attendance at lessons. Staff care about their learners, encourage them to achieve well and celebrate their successes. Learners are motivated and take pride in their own work and that of their peers. The vast majority behave well.

Learners develop a good range of personal and social skills during their time at First Rung. For example, they develop their levels of confidence, learn how to work with others and improve their communication skills. They get good support to develop their study skills and to make successful job applications, such as through interview practice sessions. Consequently, learners develop the skills and professional behaviours they need, and most take positive next steps into further learning and work.

Learners benefit from a comprehensive range of support for their mental health and physical well-being. They complete a frequent self-assessment analysis about their well-being, which tutors use to talk to learners and apprentices about how they feel and put support in place where needed. As a result, learners who experience difficulties are supported in a timely manner.

Many learners and apprentices enjoy extra-curricular activities. For example, they go on trips to the local cinema or restaurants, and a few learners belong to a local health club. However, a few learners do not know about these opportunities or how to participate in them.

Learners feel safe in learning and know who to contact if they have any concerns.

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

Leaders plan programmes with clear aims that are designed for learners who would not otherwise be in education, training or employment. Leaders and tutors equip learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need at work, for study or on work placements.

Tutors plan each curriculum to teach new knowledge in a logical order. For example, on information communication technology (ICT) programmes, tutors teach learners how to enter data into spreadsheets before moving on to more complex tasks, such as how to generate reports. Apprenticeship tutors introduce apprentices to the early years framework before they learn how to apply it in practical situations. This approach enables learners to build their knowledge over time.

Leaders implement learners' work experience placements thoughtfully. For example, traineeship managers use the first few weeks of the programme to assess their learners' prior knowledge and skills, to identify gaps and explore career goals. They

use this information to find suitable work placements in settings such as early years. As a result, learners develop their understanding of working in industry and employer expectations.

Staff use the information in education, health and care plans (EHCP) to identify effective support for learners with high needs. Tutors understand learners' needs well. They adapt their teaching and provide learners with support, which helps them to make progress. For example, tutors break tasks down and read questions out loud to help learners who have difficulty processing information.

Tutors use a range of teaching strategies effectively. For example, mathematics tutors repeat calculations until learners understand how to complete them independently. Tutors in early years help apprentices to remember what they have been taught through exercises like quizzes and collaborative work, such as group discussions. Teachers on study programmes encourage learners to review and evaluate their performance in mock examinations. In doing so, tutors help learners to make progress by identifying and filling gaps in their knowledge.

Managers plan an effective programme of careers advice and guidance. Tutors provide learners and apprentices with comprehensive information prior to starting their programmes and on an ongoing basis. Leaders have put in place clear progression routes, from study programmes and traineeships through to apprenticeships. As a result, learners and apprentices are well informed about their options for further study and work.

Tutors give learners detailed and helpful feedback on their work. For example, English tutors provide learners with comprehensive feedback on how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Learners use this feedback to improve their work.

Staff do not use the information they gather about learners' prior knowledge to set individual goals against which they can review learners' progress. Goals are often too broad and do not outline the individual steps learners need to take to achieve them. For example, ICT learners can identify their long-term goals, which include taking examinations, and their future career aspirations. However, not all learners know how to get from where they are to the achievement of their long-term goals. Learners with high needs do have individual learning plans. However, tutors do not plan sufficient formal opportunities to review learners' progress in relation to their EHCP outcomes.

Leaders do not plan sufficient opportunities for staff to undertake specialist training that supports them to teach learners with high needs. Staff complete useful generic training in topics such as conflict management and safeguarding. However, their opportunities to develop specific skills and expertise are more limited.

Learners' achievement of qualifications varies too much and in most cases is too low. Most learners on study programmes and traineeships do not achieve all the key components of their course. However, apprentices pass their qualifications with high

grades, and learners with high needs achieve better than their peers. Leaders recognise that achievement issues are largely due to the disruption caused to students' learning by staffing changes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have put in place a sensible plan to address these issues. However, it is too soon to assess the impact of their actions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and their team are suitably experienced and trained for their roles.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding across the organisation. For example, they carry out appropriate recruitment checks that ensure staff are safe to work with learners. Staff undergo appropriate safeguarding training during the initial stages of employment and have regular refresher training. Leaders keep them well informed of local safeguarding issues through training and briefings.

Leaders put in place appropriate arrangements for safeguarding learners while they are on work placements. These include conducting health and safety risk assessments with new employers and checking that employers have appropriate insurance in place.

Learners are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns.

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

- Leaders must ensure that they improve achievement rates across the range of qualifications they offer.
- Leaders must ensure that learners have individual, clear and specific targets that help them take steps toward their overall academic and vocational goals.
- Leaders must ensure that staff undertake specialist training that supports them to teach learners with high needs.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	51850
<b>Address</b>	197-205 High Street Ponders End Enfield EN3 4DZ
<b>Contact number</b>	07951436070
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.firstrung.org.uk">www.firstrung.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Steve Woolcock
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 to 25 November 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy 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

Andrea McMahon, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Joanna Walters	His Majesty's Inspector
Mel Coleman	Ofsted Inspector
Ramita Tejpal	Ofsted Inspector

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