

# Inspection of Heathercroft Training Services Limited

Inspection dates:

13 to 16 December 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Heathercroft Training Services (HTS) is based in Eastbourne, with an office in Nottingham. At the time of the inspection, all learners were based at Eastbourne. HTS provides apprenticeships, traineeships and adult learning programmes for learners based mainly in the southeast of England, with the majority being in East Sussex and Kent.

At the time of the inspection, there were 232 apprentices, including 34 who were on a break in learning. There were 125 apprentices on four programmes from level 2 to 5 in health and social care and 95 apprentices on four programmes at levels 2 and 3 in early years. There were nine apprentices on four digital programmes at level 3 and 4. There were three apprentices on the level 3 business administrator programme. Nearly all apprentices were aged over 19-years old. There were 54 learners aged 16 to 19 on a traineeship programme and six learners on programmes for adult learners. There were no learners in receipt of high needs funding.

HTS has no subcontractors.

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

The attitude of most learners to their training at HTS is positive. They rightly value learning in an inclusive, caring and welcoming environment, where staff role model values of respect and equality and diversity effectively.

Most apprentices work hard and are motivated. For example, learners on the level 4 network engineer programme apply their learning in their own time by practising in their home. However, a small number of apprentices go beyond their planned end date, and staff have not sufficiently supported and encouraged them to complete their programmes.

Most learners appreciate the skills and knowledge they are acquiring and justly recognise how this enables them to make a greater contribution at their employer or placement provider. For example, learners on the level 3 adult care worker apprenticeship programme gain leadership and organisational skills that enable them to complete staffing rotas and return-to-work interviews with colleagues who have been absent. However, too many apprentices take longer than planned to complete their programme or leave their programme early.

Learners on the traineeship programme grow in confidence and become more resilient. However, too many trainees face delays in starting their work placement or are placed in a sector different to that in which they wish to work. As a result, they do not get sufficient opportunity to apply and consolidate the skills they are acquiring in a suitable work environment.

Learners rightly feel safe while studying at HTS and while at work. HTS staff know learners well and take effective action to promote their well-being. Learners know how to keep safe while online and at work thanks to the guidance they receive from staff. For example, learners on the level 2 adult care worker apprenticeship programme understand how to use lone-worker devices to keep safe when working on their own. Learners also know how to report concerns to staff, if needed.

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

Leaders do not secure the consistent and timely engagement of employers to support learners. Too often, employers do not participate in apprentices' review meetings. This means that they cannot contribute to discussions about apprentices' progress. Leaders have also not developed relationships with a sufficient range of employers to ensure all trainees participate in a relevant work placement from the beginning of their programme. As a result, too many apprentices and trainees make slow progress and do not successfully complete their programme.

Leaders do not organise the teaching of English and mathematics in a logical sequence, building from simple to more complex concepts. In addition, leaders do

not track apprentices' progress in English and mathematics sufficiently well to ensure that additional support is provided where learners fall behind. As a result, learners make slow progress and do not pass their qualifications in the time expected.

Leaders have not put in place a structured curriculum to develop apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours beyond the technical content of the programme they are studying. As a result, apprentices do not develop their wider skills and interests.

Leaders have not put in place suitable arrangements for apprentices to receive sufficient careers advice and guidance. Consequently, many apprentices have a limited understanding of the range of career and learning options available to them.

Leaders have implemented a curriculum that is closely aligned to employer and local enterprise partnership priorities. They have created clear career pathways that enable learners to progress into employment effectively in key skills shortage areas. For example, in response to national skills shortages, they have recently extended the curriculum to include a range of programmes in digital skills.

Staff plan the order in which topics are taught on most programmes carefully. This enables learners to acquire new skills and knowledge over time and become more valued employees. For example, level 3 adult care worker apprentices initially learn the importance of safeguarding clients before moving on to more advanced concepts, such as medication, personal care and hygiene.

Leaders and staff have high aspirations for learners, including those who face social disadvantage or who have had a negative experience of education in the past. For example, tutors on the traineeship programme establish clear expectations for behaviour in the classroom, prioritising kindness and respect. On the rare occasion that there is an issue, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Consequently, learners acquire appropriate professional workplace values and attitudes.

Tutors are well qualified and participate in relevant activities that maintain their vocational and teaching skills effectively. They explain concepts clearly and use resources well, such as workbooks, to help learners commit concepts to their long-term memory. Tutors successfully help apprentices apply their learning in the workplace. For example, tutors on the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship skilfully embed British values in learning activities. Apprentices then apply this by developing children's understanding of democracy when choosing a snack at breaktime. As a result, most learners find their studies interesting and consequently have high attendance in learning activities and work.

Learners on traineeship programmes rightly appreciate the broad and interesting curriculum that they follow. This helps to develop their understanding of the importance of focusing on what they can do and the strengths they possess, instead of the barriers they face. As a result, trainees grow in self-esteem and feel better prepared for employment. Staff on the traineeship programme provide effective support to help learners progress into employment. For example, they provide

advice that helps learners prepare for interview by anticipating the questions they may be asked.

Learners with education, health and care plans have their support needs met well. Learners with identified support needs have an individual plan, setting out their requirements clearly. However, in a small number of cases, these plans lack sufficient detail to ensure that support is closely aligned to learners' needs.

Most staff check learners' understanding carefully and give feedback that enables learners to improve the standard of their future work. For example, on the level 2 adult care worker apprenticeship, tutors ask apprentices how they apply previous learning about dementia when working with clients.

Tutors check learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar diligently. They help develop their academic writing, including, where relevant, academic referencing. For example, on the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship, tutors encourage learners to check their spelling and grammar and highlight where errors remain. As a result, the standard of learners' work is generally high and improves over time.

The small number of learners on adult programmes study the same qualifications that form part of apprenticeships offered by HTS. Adult learners participate in the same teaching and support processes and therefore have a very similar experience to that of apprentices. Learners on adult programmes who complete their qualification pass; however, too many leave their programme early.

The well-informed board of non-executive directors holds leaders to account effectively, and leaders implement appropriate improvements. For instance, leaders have strengthened arrangements to ensure that apprentices and employers are clear on the benefits of an apprenticeship and the commitments it places on them. As a result of this intervention, there has been a steady decline in the number of apprentices leaving their programme early.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have created a culture with a strong focus on safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is suitably trained and knowledgeable. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies, such as local authority adult services, where learners require more intensive help. As a result, learners are kept safe and receive the support they need in a timely way.

Staff are caring and proactive in ensuring learners' welfare. Staff identify learners who are vulnerable and contact them each week to ensure their well-being. The DSL reviews closed safeguarding cases with the designated board member for safeguarding to identify how staff can further enhance their safeguarding practice in

the future. Consequently, processes to keep learners safe are effective and improve over time.

Leaders conduct suitable checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with learners.

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

- Leaders should continue to take decisive action to increase the number of learners who successfully complete their programme within the planned timescale and achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices have access to sufficient careers information, advice and guidance so that they are aware of the full range of career and learning opportunities available to them.
- Leaders need to establish a wider curriculum that extends apprentices' knowledge, skills and interests beyond the technical content of the programme they are studying.
- Leaders must take rapid action to ensure that employers contribute in a timely way to learners' programmes so that learners are supported well to apply their learning in the workplace and complete their programme successfully.
- Leaders need to ensure that tutors have sufficient information about learners' additional needs so that they can provide the required support.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	52165
<b>Address</b>	142 Whitley Road Eastbourne BN22 8LT
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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hts.ac.uk">www.hts.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Luke Whiting
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 27 July 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the general manager, 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

Roland White, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Clifford Shaw	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Curtis	Ofsted Inspector
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