

Inspection of Vocational Training Services Care Sector Limited

Inspection dates:

21 to 24 February 2023

Overall effectiveness**Requires improvement**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Adult learning courses

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Vocational Training Services Care Sector Limited (VTS) is an independent learning provider. It provides training across Essex and in the immediate surrounding areas. It was established in 1994. VTS specialises in providing apprenticeships and adult learning courses for staff in the care and education sectors at level 2 to level 5. VTS provides training in the workplace for a range of settings, including hospitals, residential homes, children's nurseries and schools.

At the time of the inspection, there were 297 apprentices and 15 adult learners in training. Around three quarters of apprentices were on early years and teaching assistant apprenticeships. A quarter of apprentices were on care apprenticeships. Most adult learners study courses from levels 3 to 5. The largest of these was the level 3 early years practitioner.

At the time of the inspection, VTS did not have any subcontractors and did not have learners in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Learners and apprentices appreciate that staff are available to give the extra help and support they need. Learners and apprentices are proud of their achievements. They have high hopes for their future careers. Learners and apprentices know that staff care about their well-being and act on any concerns. Most learners and apprentices would recommend VTS as a good place to learn.

Tutors and employers have high expectations of their learners and apprentices. The attendance of learners and apprentices at taught sessions is high. Where learners or apprentices cancel learning, due to personal or professional reasons, for example, tutors are swift in rearranging the missed session.

Learners and apprentices swiftly become role models in their workplace. For example, teaching assistant apprentices in a special school quickly become resilient in managing the personal care needs of the children they work with. They develop an effective understanding of using communication software for children who are non-verbal.

Apprentices do not take part in activities beyond their apprenticeship. For example, they do not contribute to activities in the community. Tutors do not encourage apprentices to reflect on how they can develop their skills. A few apprentices do help with fundraising.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in their classrooms and at work. They do not experience any harassment or bullying. They know who to report any concerns to. They are confident that staff will take the appropriate action. However, learners and apprentices do not always have a sufficient understanding of the local risks of radicalisation and extremism. They are not aware of how to keep themselves safe from associated risks in their personal and professional lives.

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

Leaders and managers have developed a clear vision that meets the skills shortages in the education and care sectors. Leaders have established good communication with employers, who are positive about the training their staff receive. For example, early years apprentices develop the skills they need to supervise others and to design child centred play. Leaders have designed the senior healthcare work apprenticeship with local hospital managers to provide career progression routes in the NHS. As a result, employers benefit from a skilled workforce that can meet the challenges of their sectors. Most learners and apprentices stay with their employer or progress to a positive destination.

Most managers and tutors work closely with employers to provide courses that meet their training requirements of individual apprentices. Level 3 senior healthcare apprentices learn first about effective communication and handling patient

information. They later learn more practical elements of their role, such as giving person-centred care. Staff teach pressure-area care to meet specific employer needs and to make learning relevant to work. However, staff do not ensure that apprentices working in settings for people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the theoretical concepts of SEND quickly enough. Consequently, apprentices do not benefit from the theoretical understanding that underpins their work.

Leaders have not ensured that learners and apprentices have access to a broad range of learning experiences beyond the technical aspects of their courses. For example, they do not complete any additional qualifications beyond those required of the apprenticeship. As a result, learners and apprentices do not have opportunities to develop and discover their interests and talents.

Apprentices with additional learning needs make at least the same progress as their peers. Tutors intervene to meet apprentices' needs effectively. Tutors change the layout of typed material to meet apprentices' preferences and help apprentices to use assistive technology, such as the read-back feature on Word processing software. This helps apprentices to identify and correct grammatical mistakes, which improves the standard of their work.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from qualified tutors who have the vocational knowledge and experience in the sector in which they teach. For example, tutors who teach level 3 early years have experience in a variety of different roles, including working in a nursery or owning their own childcare business. Tutors on the level 3 senior healthcare worker have worked as qualified nurses for many years. However, leaders have not ensured that the level 5 tutors have sufficient vocational technical and leadership experience to teach all parts of the qualification. Leaders ensure that tutors who do not have teaching or assessing qualifications gain them after their first year of employment.

Learners and apprentices become more skilled in their job roles as a result of their studies. They take on additional responsibilities at work or gain promotions. Apprentices studying the level 3 early years increase their depth of understanding of how to support the children they work with. They demonstrate the appropriate professional behaviours when interacting with parents and carers. Learners on the level 5 children, young people and families manager apprenticeship develop their confidence to allocate work to staff in their setting. Level 3 senior healthcare workers become competent in wound and catheter care. They know how safe working arrangements can reduce the risk of infection. For example, they know the clinical signs of sepsis and how to identify when their patient is becoming unwell.

Most tutors use their assessment of the individual apprentice's starting points effectively to adapt learning. For example, tutors do not repeat training on safeguarding for teaching assistant apprentices due to their secure existing knowledge. Tutors use professional discussions with the apprentices to ensure that knowledge is retained and reinforced. As a result, most apprentices swiftly gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours. However, in adult learning courses, tutors do not

use learners' existing skills and knowledge to plan and tailor learning effectively. As a result, many learners do not develop substantial new knowledge and skills.

The quality of teaching on different courses varies too much. Tutors do not ensure that apprentices on early years level 3 have sufficient understanding of key concepts before completing their assignments. Most tutors on other courses use a variety of appropriate methods to teach and assess key concepts, including presentations, discussions and questioning, asking open and reflective questions. This helps learners and apprentices to apply their knowledge to the workplace.

Tutors support apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills effectively. Apprentices become more skilled at using English and mathematics in their job roles. For example, senior healthcare workers carry out accurate measurements and calculations when maintaining fluid charts. Early years apprentices help children to improve their written work.

Most learners and apprentices produce work of the appropriate standard. Most tutors use their vocational experience to provide useful developmental feedback to learners and apprentices. Tutors explain concepts and theories clearly. This helps learners and apprentices to understand what they have done well and what needs further development. As a result, learners and apprentices improve their standard of work over time.

Tutors help apprentices to make effective progress in their studies. Very few apprentices fall behind. Apprentices who do fall behind are rapidly identified and helped to catch up on missed learning. Most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications. However, tutors do not consistently support adult learners so that they achieve their qualifications on time.

Leaders have not ensured that learners and apprentices benefit from well-planned, impartial careers advice and guidance. While most are clear about their next steps and long-term career goals, they are not always clear on how to achieve their ambitions. They are not aware of the wider careers available to them.

Learners and apprentices value the good relationships they have with their tutors. Tutors create a positive and respectful culture where learners and apprentices can develop their essential employability skills. Learners and apprentices develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. For example, teaching assistant apprentices help children learn about the meaning and value of democracy. Learners who study a care course know about the legislation linked to their setting and how this guides their work.

Until recently, governance arrangements have been limited. There has not been the necessary and important robust challenge required to hold senior leaders to account for improving the quality and enhancing the effectiveness of the provision. The new governance arrangements have a stronger focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, governors have not identified the shortcomings in leaders' safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners and apprentices are safe at work, in learning and when working online. They know how to report their concerns. Learners and apprentices work in safe environments. They have not experienced bullying or harassment. Leaders and managers have ensured that the courses they teach include references to relevant and up-to-date information on safeguarding. For example, level 3 early years apprentices know how to protect a child from abuse. However, too few apprentices and learners understand how safeguarding relates to themselves.

Leaders' oversight of current safeguarding legislative practices was limited at the time of inspection. For example, safe recruitment practices were not in place, and leaders did not meet the expectations of the 'Prevent' duty guidance. When inspectors raised their concerns, leaders responded promptly by ensuring that staff received appropriate training. Leaders reviewed their existing processes and developed an appropriate action plan. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are now effective and meet statutory requirements.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and governors must ensure that they embed statutory requirements for safeguarding and the safer recruitment of staff and assess the impact on apprentices and learners.
- Leaders must ensure that the starting points of adult learners are used to plan and sequence courses so that learners gain substantial new knowledge.
- Governors must provide effective scrutiny. They must hold leaders to account to quickly improve the quality and effectiveness of education.
- Leaders must ensure that learners and apprentices receive ongoing, high-quality and impartial careers guidance so that they know how to identify and access the choices available to them and achieve their aspirations and career goals.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices and learners know about the local risks that can affect them at work and in their personal lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55230
Address	Chalkwell Lawns 648-656 London Road Westcliff-On-Sea SS0 9HR
Contact number	01702 353557
Website	www.vts.ac.uk
CEO	Mandy Holland
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	1 to 4 November 2016
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations 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.

Inspection team

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