

Inspection of TRN (Train) Limited

Inspection dates:

27 to 30 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Adult learning programmes

Good

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

TRN (Train) Limited is an independent learning provider based in Gateshead which has been operating since 2002. It provides apprenticeships primarily in the children's and adult social care sectors to organisations nationally. At the time of the inspection, there were 586 apprentices studying on 10 standards-based apprenticeships from level 2 to level 5. The majority of apprentices are studying on the level 4 children, young people and families practitioner standard.

TRN (Train) Limited also provides courses for adult learners primarily in the construction sector and for a small number of learners in the adult social care sector. Construction training is delivered at a specialist skills training centre in Gateshead. At the time of the inspection, there were 12 learners studying for a diploma in construction and civil engineering services and 12 for a diploma in adult care and a diploma for residential childcare.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from calm and welcoming learning environments. They feel well supported by their tutors and skills coaches. Apprentices appreciate the support that skills coaches provide. Skills coaches give clear expectations for attendance and completing work. On construction courses, tutors prepare learners for sessions well, and learners are clear about expectations and are ready to learn. Useful displays in classrooms reinforce expectations, including in relation to behaviour and attendance.

Tutors and skills coaches foster a positive culture and successfully encourage learners and apprentices to be respectful of staff and each other. Learners and apprentices speak positively about their sessions. Apprentices appreciate the one-to-one sessions with their skills coaches who are responsive when apprentices contact them if they need support. However, in a few cases, skills coaches' locations are some distance from apprentices' workplaces, and skills coaches rarely carry out face-to-face visits.

Learners feel safe. They know who the designated safeguarding officer is should they need to raise a concern. Learners on construction programmes clearly understand the risks of working in a construction environment, including the risks and dangers relating to the use of alcohol and drug use, and the links to accidents in the industry. Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces, and they have a good understanding of how to ensure that service users are safe.

Too often, skills coaches do not provide teaching for apprentices that is of a high enough quality. Learning activities frequently focus only on completion of tasks and assignments rather than enabling apprentices to acquire new knowledge. Skills coaches, in most cases, do not use questioning effectively to assess apprentices' understanding. They often prompt apprentices too quickly before allowing them time to consider their answers. In a few cases, skills coaches do check learning effectively to ensure that apprentices understand concepts such as attachment theory and communication methods.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale to deliver programmes that meet local, regional and national skills needs. They consider labour market information and use their links with local enterprise partnerships and construction industry training boards to identify labour shortages, such as for construction site workers, painters, decorators and skilled joiners. Leaders and managers meet with employers in the children's and adult social care sectors to identify and meet the specific business needs of employers.

Although leaders and managers use a range of processes to check the quality of provision, they have not put actions in place swiftly enough to make improvements. Quality assurance processes focus overly on compliance with awarding body and

funding requirements and not sufficiently on the education and training that learners and apprentices receive. Skills coaches do not monitor well enough the progress that apprentices make in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours and focus mainly on apprentices' progress in completing units. Leaders and managers recognise this weakness and have recently introduced a system to monitor apprentices' progress more accurately.

Tutors and skills coaches sequence programmes in a logical order to build learners' and apprentices' skills and knowledge. On adult learning courses, learners swiftly develop new skills and knowledge. Learners start by studying construction site health and safety, accident and emergency procedures and the techniques of laying mortar, modular paving and concrete. Skills coaches then plan with employers optional units to meet individual job roles and employers' needs.

Too many skills coaches are not suitably qualified to teach on high-level apprenticeship standards, and only a few have teaching qualifications. Leaders and managers have identified in their quality improvement plan that tutors and skills coaches need to develop their expertise and teaching practice. They plan to provide all delivery staff with a minimum of a level 4 teaching qualification. It is too early to see any impact of this yet.

Too many apprentices leave their programmes early. Apprenticeships in the care sector in particular have been affected by a high attrition rate, with many staff leaving the sector during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders and managers recognise this and have developed new onboarding processes to ensure that apprentices and employers understand the commitments and expectations of an apprenticeship programme. Line managers attend apprentices' induction and help to develop initial training plans. This is starting to have an impact in reducing the number of recently enrolled apprentices leaving the programme early.

Apprentices who remain on their programme achieve their qualifications, and a high proportion attain high grades. They gain knowledge and skills that have a positive impact on their work roles. Apprentices on the level 5 children, young people and families manager standard develop their skills in using positive language to develop the self-confidence of the young people they work with, and they make useful contributions to senior leadership meetings to improve working practices.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. Too many apprentices complete their work in their own time. Staff log the off-the-job activity, but they do not record its quality or how apprentices improve as a result of the training.

In too many cases, leaders and managers do not ensure that line managers are present at apprentices' progress meetings with skills coaches. This means that in these instances, line managers do not provide information on apprentices' progress in the workplace and do not know what progress apprentices are making. Line managers who do attend understand what their apprentice is learning and how to support this in the workplace.

Apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics are not consistently provided with high-quality sessions to help them make swift progress. Skills coaches do not prioritise supporting functional skills development in their one-to-one sessions with apprentices. For a few apprentices, this results in delays in their readiness to enter the gateway to end-point assessments.

Learners and apprentices with additional learning needs receive good support which enables them to make progress in line with their peers. Staff identify learners and apprentices who need support and tailor learning to meet individual needs.

Leaders and managers do not provide a curriculum that develops learners' and apprentices' knowledge beyond the vocational content of their programmes. They do not ensure that skills coaches teach topics such as British values and radicalisation and extremism in sufficient depth. On short adult programmes, tutors develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity, which improves learners' employability skills.

Learners and apprentices are provided with effective careers advice and guidance. On adult construction courses, tutors work well with advisers from the National Careers Service to assist learners with preparing a curriculum vitae. An engagement team works with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Probation Service to support unemployed learners into work. Learners are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, and they have the opportunity to gain a construction skills certificate scheme, which enhances their chances of securing employment at the end of the course. Skills coaches provide advice and guidance on possible higher-level training and education and potential career progression. This results in learners and apprentices being able to make appropriate decisions about their next steps.

Board members have been too slow to hold leaders to account for the quality of education that apprentices receive. They have recently strengthened the senior leadership team and worked with leaders to implement strategies to reduce the number of leavers and to improve the quality of education. These actions are in their infancy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers place a strong focus on safeguarding. They have in place suitable policies and procedures to ensure the safety of young people and vulnerable adults. All staff undertake suitable safeguarding training, including training on the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders and managers have appropriate firewalls in place to flag up key words or block websites that may be a risk, and leaders receive reports if computers in the organisation try to access prohibited websites or words.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are suitably qualified and experienced to carry out their roles. They have level 3 qualifications and are supported by a team of designated safeguarding officers who have level 2 qualifications. The team meets monthly and uses a chat forum to keep in touch and update on any issues. Staff raise any causes for concern promptly, and the DSL ensures that concerns are dealt with swiftly. Low-level concerns are well recorded in case there is a need for escalation or a referral to another agency. The DSL reports all ongoing cases and referrals at the monthly board meeting.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the quality of teaching on apprenticeship programmes by ensuring that tutors and skills coaches have sufficient teaching expertise.
- Ensure that apprentices without qualifications in English and mathematics make swift progress towards achieving these qualifications.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive sufficient time to complete off-the-job training.
- Ensure that all employers are involved in reviewing the progress that apprentices make.
- Continue to reduce the number of apprentices who leave their programme early.
- Provide an effective personal development programme for apprentices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50315
Address	Endeavour House Colmet Court Queensway South Team Valley Trading Estate Gateshead NE11 0EF
Contact number	01914 770840
Website	www.trainltd.org
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Mark Hewitt
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2013
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing 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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