

Inspection of BPIF Training Limited

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 August 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

BPIF Training Limited is an independent learning provider based in Coventry. It provides workforce training across the United Kingdom. The company was formed as a subsidiary training arm of its parent company the British Printing Industries Federation Limited (BPIF) Limited and began providing apprenticeships in August 2021.

At the time of the inspection, there were 342 apprentices in learning across 12 occupational standards encompassing four sector subject areas, the largest being arts, media and publishing.

The large majority of apprentices study at level 3 in vocational subjects including print technician, signage technician, team leader, customer service practitioner and customer service specialist. A further 57 apprentices study the print operative apprenticeship at level 2. In addition, 37 apprentices study for apprenticeships in either level 3 sales executive, level 5 operations/departmental manager or level 7 senior leader.

Most apprentices are adults, with a very small minority who are younger apprentices. Apprentices are employed in a range of print-related companies located across the country, ranging in size from large multinational organisations to small, specialist publishing businesses. Learning is predominantly provided on site at employer premises or taught online.

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

Apprentices benefit from enthusiastic training coordinators who are very well qualified in their specific occupational areas. They make good use of their considerable vocational knowledge and expertise in the print and graphics industry to provide learning that is reflective of current industry practice.

Apprentices receive good-quality on- and off-the-job training and assessment, which helps them to develop relevant occupational skills. They benefit significantly from access to high-quality and industry-standard resources that help them to develop their vocational practice and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding at work. Employers prioritise apprentices' training and support them very effectively.

Apprentices are highly positive about their learning. They can articulate well the benefit of undertaking the apprenticeship. They can clearly express how the skills they are learning have a rapid and beneficial impact at work. Apprentices demonstrate high standards of behaviour and professional conduct, which their employers value.

Apprentices benefit from opportunities to develop their broader interests beyond their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices on print-related apprenticeships have been supported to visit other employer sites to look at the different types of printing technology used across the industry, such as offset lithography and flexographic printing.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns. They understand their rights and responsibilities and recognise the importance of developing positive relationships with their peers, including respecting the principles of equality and diversity. They recognise the importance of healthy and safe working practices and give good attention to their own safety by closely adhering to workplace protocols.

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

Leaders and managers work closely with employers to provide curriculums that respond to an aging workforce and a national need to upskill and attract new talent to the print sector. They carefully select the most appropriate vocational pathways to ensure that curriculums are well matched to meet the needs of each apprentice and the specific requirements of their employers.

Training staff ensure that the apprenticeship curriculums are logically sequenced. For technical-based subjects, apprentices' learning commences with a focus on health and safety to ensure they develop the correct working practices from the outset. For business support subjects, apprentices start with personal and professional development before moving on to more complex topics, such as communications and project work. As a result, learning for apprentices is layered and increases in complexity over time to prepare them for their final assessment.

Most training coordinators accurately identify apprentices' starting points and use this information to put together individualised curriculums that meet the needs of the apprentice and their employer. They plan and organise appropriately challenging learning activities that link theory with practice effectively. However, in a small minority of instances, the information gathered by training coordinators for apprentices on level 3 customer service specialist and level 3 signage technician is not used to tailor the curriculums for apprentices based on what they already know and can do. As a result, a few apprentices repeat learning unnecessarily.

Training coordinators skilfully use a range of learning strategies to embed key concepts into apprentices' long-term memory, enabling them to make secure connections between theory and practice. For example, on the level 5 operations or departmental manager apprenticeship, training staff use a variety of methods, such as discussion, group work and case studies, to develop apprentices' understanding of the principles of different management theorists. Apprentices participate and contribute fully to planned learning activities, retain what they learn, and can confidently use these management theories at work.

Training staff provide apprentices with incisive developmental verbal and written feedback, detailing clearly what they do well and the areas in which they need to improve. Most apprentices make effective use of this feedback to improve their written work and practical skills throughout their apprenticeship.

Apprentices work alongside experienced professionals in high-quality workplaces and develop effective skills that their employers need. They develop knowledge that relates closely to their work activities. Employers highly value the contribution that apprentices make at work. For example, level 3 signage technician apprentices develop the skills associated with undertaking a billboard site survey, how to accurately estimate the cost of designing and producing a sign from start to finish, and how to communicate this information to the customer.

Most employers play an active role in the coordination of on- and off-the-job activities for their employees. As a result, apprentices can apply their knowledge, practise their skills and develop fluency by putting what they have learned into practice at work. For example, apprentices on the level 3 print technician apprenticeship confidently develop their knowledge of different types of paper and the importance of its grain before it is fed into the printing press. However, in a small minority of instances, a few employers do not routinely attend progress reviews for their employee. In these instances, employers are not aware of their apprentices' progress or how they can best support them to achieve their apprenticeship.

Most apprentices who join the apprenticeship with exemptions in English and mathematics do not develop these skills beyond the requirements of their apprenticeship. Training coordinators do not make good use of the information available to them about apprentices' existing skills. This means that apprentices do not plan learning that systematically extends their literacy and numeracy skills further. The few apprentices who need to complete an English and/or mathematics

qualification as part of their apprenticeship benefit from well-planned learning activities and develop these skills very effectively.

Leaders, managers and staff have developed a welcoming and inclusive culture, where apprentices are courteous and treat each other with respect. Apprentices demonstrate this in the way they conduct themselves when attending training and through their professional conduct in the workplace when dealing with colleagues and customers. Apprentices' attendance at training sessions and progress reviews is high.

Leaders ensure that the curriculums that apprentices follow support them in developing confidence in themselves and in their new skills, which they can then apply at work. For example, a few apprentices on print-related apprenticeships have completed additional training and qualifications, such as forklift truck training. This has extended their ability to contribute to tasks within the workplace. Apprentices on the level 5 operations or departmental manager course develop resilience and determination in leading meetings and dealing with challenging work situations.

Most apprentices receive useful information about life in modern Britain. Topics such as fundamental British values, the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and respect and tolerance are introduced by training staff during apprentices' induction, revisited through the 'topic of the month' and discussed during progress reviews.

Leaders ensure that apprentices have access to significant resources via a virtual learning platform to support them to remain physically and mentally healthy. However, too few apprentices are aware of these resources to support them with matters such as mental and physical health, personal finance and mindfulness.

Apprentices do not receive consistently effective information, advice and guidance that helps them to clarify and achieve their career aspirations. Leaders have recognised this and are in the process of implementing a more structured process for the provision of careers guidance. However, it is too early to judge the impact of recent actions to strengthen this aspect of the apprenticeship.

Quality assurance arrangements are effective. Leaders make good use of data reports to monitor apprentices' and training coordinators' performance against suitably challenging targets. Monthly data reports used by managers include useful information on apprentices' attendance, achievements and the quality of learning. They make good use of this information to inform the development of more rigorous and demanding quality improvement plans. However, managers accept that the electronic reporting system needs refining so that indicators of apprentices' progress and performance are consistently dependable.

Managers ensure that staff are appropriately trained and supported to improve their teaching practice. Training staff benefit from focused staff development activities relevant to their personal needs and job role, which helps them to consolidate their skills and confidence in supporting apprentices. For example, all staff have recently

attended a 'back to basics' training workshop to update and reflect on their teaching and assessment techniques and to share good practice.

Governors and senior leaders work well together. Governors receive frequent and detailed reports on the quality of the provision, which allows them to understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and gives them information to hold managers to account. They use their broad range of expertise, including finance and further education, to ensure that curriculums are both financially sustainable and that the quality of education and training apprentices receive is in line with their high expectations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers place a high priority on keeping apprentices safe. The designated safeguarding lead and the deputies are suitably qualified to carry out their roles. Managers ensure that staff update their safeguarding training frequently and that they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Monthly safeguarding reports are presented to leaders to keep them fully informed of all safeguarding related concerns. Leaders work effectively with a range of agencies, including medical practitioners, mental health organisations and a specialist charity for the printing sector, using these networks to ensure that apprentices have access to specialist support and protection where necessary.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all training staff routinely make effective use of the results of initial and diagnostic assessments of apprentices' vocational skills and abilities in English and mathematics, allowing them to plan and provide learning that meets their individual needs.
- Leaders should increase the involvement of employers in planning good-quality learning experiences for apprentices by ensuring they routinely attend and fully contribute to progress reviews through the setting of challenging targets to support the learning and skills development of their employees.
- Leaders should increase the extent to which training coordinators routinely provide apprentices with high-quality, impartial information, advice and guidance that helps them to develop a precise understanding of how their learning contributes to their long-term career goals.
- Leaders should improve their use of the information available to constantly monitor the performance that all apprentices make across a wide range of areas, such as their vocational skills and English and mathematics, progress from starting points, and the extent to which apprentices routinely access personal and social development materials on the virtual learning platform.

Provider details

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Website	https://bpif.training/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Karly Lattimore
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

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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