

Inspection of Tarmac Trading Limited

Inspection dates:

1 to 3 August 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Tarmac Trading Limited (Tarmac) is an apprenticeship provider based in Nether Langwith, Nottinghamshire. Apprentices are all employees of Tarmac. They work at mineral processing sites across the country and study at the company's purpose-built training facility, 'The Park', in Nether Langwith.

At the time of the inspection, 12 apprentices were on the level 2 mineral processing mobile and static plant operator apprenticeship standard. Nine were on the level 2 mineral and construction product sampling and testing operations, and four were on the level 2 road surfacing operative apprenticeship standards. Almost all apprentices are adults.

Leaders work with two subcontractors. Sheffield College provides functional skills training, and Safety Coaching provides IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) courses.

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

Apprentices receive excellent training and support. All staff involved in their training communicate and work together extremely well to plan and conduct apprentices' studies. This includes expert trainers who teach workshops and training managers who oversee apprentices' progress. A team of assessors evaluate apprentices' competence, and line managers ensure that their training extends into work. As a result, apprentices thrive and are fully equipped to take their next steps.

Staff provide apprentices with rich and varied opportunities to experience the scale of Tarmac's operations. Apprentices visit each other's sites. They visit the biggest quarries in the country but also see how smaller plants operate. As a result, apprentices develop a full breadth of understanding about their industry.

Apprentices thoroughly enjoy and value their training and rarely miss any aspect of it. They benefit from a culture in which staff and apprentices learn and support each other. For example, apprentices with strong digital skills help those with less confidence. Mature apprentices freely share their wider experience to the benefit of younger apprentices.

Leaders offer apprentices a wide range of beneficial support services. They can access an online doctor and earn rewards for a healthy lifestyle. Apprentices attend a useful occupational health suite to understand and tailor their personal protective equipment to meet their needs. Apprentices feel very well cared for and rightly value the support they can access.

Apprentices have a comprehensive knowledge of health and safety. They have a detailed understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe at work. They know who to contact if they have any concerns about themselves or a colleague.

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

Leaders have very high expectations of what their apprentices can achieve. This radiates from all the staff involved in apprentices' training. Leaders carefully plan how apprentices can progress beyond their apprenticeship and provide high-quality opportunities for them to do so. Most apprentices make progress in their careers or take on additional responsibilities when they complete their studies.

Managers carefully consider the knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices need to succeed. They plan an ambitious curriculum, which goes well beyond the minimum requirements of the course. For example, apprentices undertake leadership training to prepare them for future supervisor roles. Mineral and construction product sampling and testing operations apprentices complete higher-level training on recycling processes. As a result, apprentices acquire knowledge that exceeds the level they would be expected to have.

Apprentices attend high-quality practical and theoretical training every two weeks. Managers and trainers sequence this training very effectively. For example, mineral testing apprentices learn how to competently assess material compounds in a lab before undertaking more complex on-site tests. Apprentices who are new to their roles rapidly apply what they learn to increasingly challenging tasks at work.

Managers and trainers think thoroughly about how and when to develop apprentices' behaviours. For example, apprentices learn about safe working and how to approach others if they do not meet expected standards. Apprentices become confident to challenge all staff, including those who are more senior, and visitors. They consistently demonstrate very high standards of behaviour and professionalism.

Trainers are highly qualified and experienced. Managers also draw on the wider expertise of Tarmac staff to teach specific niche topics. Leaders rightly recognise when they do not have the expertise to teach a particular subject. They select suitable subcontractor partners to support apprentices to study their functional skills and IOSH qualifications successfully.

Training managers attend all apprentices' workshops. This ensures that they gain a comprehensive knowledge of what apprentices need to practise and apply in their roles. They share this in detail through frequent communications with apprentices' line managers. As a result, line managers provide ample opportunities for apprentices to develop their skills at work. For example, following training in the use of paver machinery, apprentices have jobs in place the following week to use this equipment.

Trainers design high-quality resources and activities. After every workshop, trainers set apprentices well-designed coursework. The activities allow apprentices to reflect on their new knowledge in the context of their own site. As a result, apprentices often identify improvements or support other staff to raise standards at work. For example, apprentices introduced grip tape to all site handrails after their health and safety workshop.

Apprentices receive highly effective feedback, which enables them to improve their work rapidly. They increasingly include complex technical vocabulary in their written work and during verbal discussions. As a result, almost all apprentices produce work at a level beyond what they study.

Apprentices achieve very well. Around half of apprentices gain distinction grades on their final assessments. A third of apprentices have secured promotion following the completion of their studies.

Managers have clear processes in place to support the very few apprentices who require additional learning support. Trainers make suitable adjustments, such as providing extra study time or using coloured overlays. This helps apprentices to participate in their studies.

Leaders provide an extensive range of personal development opportunities for apprentices. Most apprentices raise funds for charity, support quarry open days for school children or complete improvement projects. For example, apprentices put in place a successful initiative to reduce packaging wastage at their site. As a result, apprentices develop their wider personal skills well.

Leaders provide apprentices with effective careers guidance. Apprentices frequently discuss their career and personal development with their trainers and managers. Most know what their next steps are and the progression routes that are available to them.

Leaders conduct a thorough annual self-assessment to evaluate the quality of individual apprentice's experience. They use this to set themselves relevant actions for improvement. Leaders' careful monitoring ensures that actions have the intended impact. For example, leaders' actions to improve line managers' contribution to apprentices' studies led to very quick and positive improvement.

Governors are effective in their roles. The board consists of a team of well-qualified and experienced internal staff and an external member. Leaders provide governors with useful reports about apprentices' studies. Governors increase their scrutiny of any areas for improvement. For example, too many apprentices were going past their planned end date of study. Leaders' actions, combined with governor oversight, mean this is no longer an area of concern.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a very strong commitment to safeguarding and the health and safety of apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead and staff complete suitable training. Policies and procedures are comprehensive. Leaders undertake appropriate recruitment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to undertake their roles.

Leaders recognise any safeguarding concerns of which apprentices are most likely to be at risk. As a largely male workforce, leaders prioritise time for conversations about mental health. Leaders train managers to identify any signs of concern with their apprentices, including how to have supportive conversations on difficult subjects.

Leaders diligently keep the very few younger apprentices safe when they attend training away from home.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2654242
Address	National Skills and Safety Park Nether Langwith Mansfield NG20 9JQ
Contact number	01623 848400
Website	www.tarmac.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Matt Gibbs
Provider type	Employer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Safety Coaching Sheffield College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior manager operational competence, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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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