

# Inspection of Learning Skills Partnership Limited

Inspection dates: 22 to 25 August 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Learning Skills Partnership Limited is a national independent learning provider based in Hessle, near Hull. Most teaching sessions are taught online. At the time of the inspection, there were 518 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeship standards from level 2 to level 5. Of these, 91 were studying level 2 trade supplier, customer service practitioner or groundworker standards. There were 307 apprentices studying at level 3, with the majority on business administration, civil engineering technician or project controls standards. At level 4, 196 apprentices were mostly studying on the quantity surveying standard, associate project management standard or construction site supervisor standard. In addition, 14 apprentices were studying on the level 5 operations or departmental manager standard. A third of apprentices are aged between 16 and 18.

The provider works with one subcontractor, which provides the course for the certificate and diploma on the level 3 project controls technician standard.

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

Until recently, too many apprentices made slow progress, with many leaving their programmes early. Apprentices recruited more recently have started to benefit from more well-planned programmes and improvements made by leaders to the quality of education. As a result, they are making better progress.

Apprentices enjoy learning and attend their sessions well. Staff have established a positive culture and welcoming environment, which encourages apprentices to take part, learn and grow. Apprentices feel valued and supported during their programme. Tutors build positive relationships with their apprentices and create a calm and encouraging atmosphere in online sessions. Apprentices feel confident to express their views and ask and answer questions, both in online sessions and when asked to provide feedback about their programmes.

Apprentices are helped successfully by tutors to develop their personal development skills. They learn how to keep physically and mentally healthy and to recognise the signs of cyber-bullying, grooming and online hacking. Apprentices have a good understanding of British values and apply these values in their workplace by, for example, treating colleagues and customers fairly and with respect.

Apprentices who remain on their programmes are prepared well for their next steps in education, training or employment. They receive useful, impartial careers advice and guidance from their tutors. Most apprentices take on more responsibility in their workplace or gain promotions as a result of their apprenticeship. For example, level 3 business administration apprentices begin dealing with more sensitive and complex customers, act as a 'buddy' to new employees and set up new and more efficient processes in the workplace.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to talk to should they have any concerns at work or when they are learning online. They have a good understanding of radicalisation and extremism. However, they do not have a well-developed understanding about the potential local risks in the areas in which they live and work.

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

Leaders have recently taken appropriate action to reverse the decline in the proportion of apprentices who complete their programme successfully. They have revised the curriculum of most programmes of study and now monitor more closely and support apprentices who fall behind or are at risk. As a result, more apprentices stay on programme and achieve.

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale and vision for the training that they provide. Their provision closely aligns with the priorities and skills needs of employers and five regional local enterprise partnerships in the areas where they

offer apprenticeships. Most apprenticeships focus on construction and engineering and the business support functions that employers in these sectors need, such as assistant accountants, team leaders and business administrators.

Tutors plan the curriculum in a logical and carefully sequenced order to develop apprentices' skills over time. For example, associate project manager apprentices learn about budget control before progressing to resource management for complex projects. Apprentices talk confidently about the new skills and knowledge that they have acquired, and employers value their contribution to the workplace.

Leaders and managers recruit staff who are well qualified and have industry expertise in the subjects that they teach. Tutors and staff have access to professional development to improve their teaching and industry skills. Tutors have opportunities to go 'back to the floor' at large employers to keep their industry skills and knowledge up to date.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the quality of education is consistently high. They recognised that they were not identifying weaker aspects quickly enough and took action to improve the quality of training apprentices receive. They now carry out reviews of the quality of training and have recently started to conduct in-depth reviews of each programme area to identify specific strengths and weaknesses. Leaders encourage tutors to take part in projects to improve the provision. As a result of these actions, the quality of education that apprentices receive is beginning to improve, but too many weaknesses are not yet fully resolved.

Leaders have not ensured that teaching is of a consistently high quality across all areas of the provision. All teaching takes place online and, too often, is not sufficiently challenging. Tutors do not use effective enough teaching strategies to help apprentices know and remember more. As a result, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Too often, tutors do not provide apprentices with high-quality assessment to help them improve their work and extend their knowledge and skills. Apprentices who have been on their programme for some time have not received feedback frequently enough and, in too many cases, tutors have been slow to mark and return work. A few tutors provide swift and effective feedback to encourage apprentices to improve their skills, knowledge and behaviours. In these instances, apprentices respond well to feedback and improve their work to a higher standard.

Apprentices who need to gain a functional mathematics qualification do not make swift enough progress. This has delayed these apprentices in achieving their apprenticeships. Leaders have now put actions in place to address this issue, including employing a highly experienced mathematics tutor, providing a 'maths club' and investing in a new mathematics online learning platform, which apprentices find helpful. It is, however, too early to see the impact of these actions.

Staff feel well supported by leaders, who are considerate of their workload. Leaders place a high priority on staff well-being, and this creates a positive environment in which to work.

Leaders manage subcontracted provision well. They have a clear rationale: to use the high level of expertise of staff at the subcontractor to teach the certificate and diploma for the level 3 project controls technician standard. Leaders at the provider and the subcontractor work together effectively to monitor apprentices' progress.

Leaders have in place a governance board, the members of which have the right skills and experience to challenge and guide leaders on the strategic direction of the organisation. However, governors are not provided with accurate achievement data to make decisions about the quality of education and leadership and management. As a result, they are unable to hold leaders to account about the accuracy of their self-assessment or set clear actions to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have created a culture of safeguarding that ensures that apprentices are safe and know what to do if they have any concerns or issues.

Leaders have in place a clear reporting structure for apprentices at risk, and they respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly and appropriately. They implement suitable policies, including recruitment of staff who are safe to work with apprentices.

Leaders and staff keep up to date on safeguarding through 'themes of the month' and newsletters, which include topical issues such as incels and cuckooing. Leaders work well with external agencies, including the regional 'Prevent' coordinator to ensure that their 'Prevent' duty action plan is effective.

The chair of governors is well qualified and experienced in safeguarding and uses his experience to support and challenge the safeguarding lead.

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

- Maintain a thorough oversight of the quality of education and take appropriate action to ensure that apprentices benefit from a consistently high-quality curriculum across all programmes.
- Ensure that tutors use effective teaching techniques so that the curriculum is challenging and apprentices make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that apprentices develop their mathematical skills promptly so that they pass their mathematics qualification and complete their apprenticeship in the time planned.

- Provide apprentices with helpful and timely feedback on their work so that they know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.
- Provide governors with accurate data so that they can hold leaders to account for the quality of education that apprentices receive.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	59154
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Simon Alsop
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 to 22 June 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	20/20 Business Insight Limited

## 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

Philippa Firth, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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