

Inspection of McArthur Dean Training Limited

Inspection dates:

22 to 25 August 2023 and 20
September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Education programmes for young people

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

McArthur Dean Training Limited is an independent learning provider with its main premises in Hull and training centres in Scunthorpe and Grimsby. At the time of this inspection, there were 150 apprentices. The highest proportion were enrolled on level 2 and 3 apprenticeship standards in team leading, business administration, customer service and accounting. The remainder were on level 4 professional accounting and level 5 operations manager standards. There were 12 young people enrolled on traineeships for those aged 16 to 18. In the previous academic year, the proportion of funding for traineeships accounted for over a quarter of the total amount allocated to the provider.

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

Apprentices and trainees are enthusiastic about their learning and participate actively in thought-provoking classroom discussions. Tutors create a positive culture in training sessions where they agree protocols such as waiting to take turns during debates. Trainees and apprentices are always respectful. They remain motivated and engaged throughout their studies.

Tutors establish clear expectations for apprentices' and trainees' attendance and punctuality at the start of their training. Apprentices who are unable to attend value catch-up sessions provided by tutors, which enables them to keep on track. Most apprentices and trainees attend well and are punctual.

Many trainees carry out work placements near the beginning of their programme in order to learn the fundamental office skills that they need at work. However, those who go on placement later in the programme have a poor experience. They complete self-study activities in the early part of their programme that do not prepare them well enough for the world of work, and they learn very little.

Tutors help apprentices to develop their character and confidence. Together with apprentices' employers, they provide good support and guidance, enabling apprentices to apply their new knowledge, skills and behaviour quickly at work. For example, level 3 team leading apprentices are able to analyse work situations more effectively and reflect on the best approaches to take when dealing with difficult clients. They remain optimistic and engaged with their work and are resilient to setbacks when they are not immediately successful.

Apprentices and trainees feel safe. They know how to report issues or concerns to those responsible for safeguarding and are confident that staff would act swiftly if necessary. Apprentices and trainees learn about a range of topics related to extremism and terrorism. However, a few are not informed well enough of the local risks where they live, work and study. Leaders have recently introduced more teaching for apprentices and trainees on these topics, but it is too early to see the impact of this.

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

Leaders have not done enough to ensure that trainees receive good initial advice and guidance. Too many trainees, when recruited, are already suitable for an apprenticeship or employment and, consequently, the progress toward their career ambition or employment goals is delayed.

Tutors do not provide trainees with demanding enough curriculum content and work. Many trainees have already achieved GCSEs at a high grade or studied A-level or vocational qualifications at level 3. Too many trainees already have the knowledge that the curriculum covers, and this impedes their progress.

Staff do not provide apprentices and trainees with enough impartial careers advice and guidance to equip them with an understanding of the range of opportunities available to them. Many apprentices do have opportunities to enhance their career with their current employer. For example, several level 2 accounts assistant apprentices have gone on to complete a level 4 apprenticeship, been promoted to senior positions or taken on additional responsibility at work.

Leaders have developed provision that meets local employment needs in the professional services sector. They work closely with employers to design and sequence the apprenticeship curriculum. For example, employers identified that level 3 team leader apprentices would benefit from data protection training. Tutors moved this training to the start of the programme so that apprentices are better able to understand the importance of keeping client information confidential.

Leaders conduct a range of useful quality assurance activities to ensure that the apprenticeship programme is of good quality. Activities include reviews of the quality of teaching and reviews of learning plans and evaluations of apprentice and employer feedback. The information gathered through these activities is used well to determine staff training and development needs. Leaders provide staff with helpful individual feedback on positive aspects of their teaching and how they could improve, such as how to engage learners more effectively in group discussions. However, the quality assurance that leaders undertake for the traineeship provision is not good enough. Leaders do not know that trainees receive too little teaching or that the standard of work that trainees produce is too low.

Tutors teach apprentices well. They coach them in up-to-date practices that relate closely to what they do at work. For example, level 3 team leader apprentices apply what they learn in class about using clear and professional language to improve staff performance when the work of their employees is not good enough.

Staff support apprentices and trainees well to develop their English and mathematical skills. They provide helpful feedback on written work following assessment, which helps apprentices and trainees to improve the accuracy of their writing. Tutors on level 4 accounting apprenticeships show apprentices how to produce Gantt charts and analytical reports, which they then use at work to demonstrate quarterly profit and loss for their customers' businesses.

The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme has, until recently, been too low. In response to this, leaders have implemented a range of effective actions to improve retention. The proportion of apprentices who remain on their programme and achieve has improved during the last 12 months.

Tutors coach apprentices and trainees effectively to enable them to understand the principles of equality and appreciate the benefits of a diverse society. For example, level 3 business administration apprentices can describe the legal implications of not abiding by legislation related to the protected characteristics of staff, such as their sexuality.

Staff successfully develop apprentices' and trainees' understanding of healthy relationships. For example, they provide training so that apprentices and trainees understand what is meant by coercive control and sexual consent. Staff provide high-quality training materials and videos, facilitating group discussions on these topics to help deepen apprentices' and trainees' understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have appropriate safeguarding arrangements and reporting procedures in place. They hold detailed records of any incidents that occur.

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. They hold qualifications in safeguarding and complete annual update training to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of how to keep apprentices and trainees safe.

Leaders conduct appropriate checks when they recruit staff. They request employment references and carry out identity checks to determine staff suitability to work at the provider.

What does provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all groups of learners receive effective initial advice and guidance so that they are enrolled to the appropriate course and their learning is not delayed.
- Ensure that all groups of learners receive sufficient teaching and that teaching is demanding and of a high quality.
- Ensure that all groups of learners receive advice and guidance that will support them to pursue their future careers.
- Ensure that leaders fully and accurately evaluate all aspects of their provision so that they are able to understand all the strengths and areas for development and take action to remedy weaknesses.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53280
Address	Old Custom House Market Place Hull HU1 1RS
Contact number	01482 210093
Website	www.mcarthurdean.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Audrey Dawson
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 November 2016
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality assurance 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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