

Inspection of Yellow Tree Workforce Development Limited

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Information about this provider

Yellow Tree Workforce Development Limited is an independent learning provider based in Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. At the time of inspection, there were 16 apprentices, all over the age of 19. Of these, nine were on the level 3 team leader or supervisor apprenticeship, five were on the level 3 digital marketer apprenticeship, and two were on the level 3 science manufacturing process operative apprenticeship. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Most apprentices are disappointed with their apprenticeship experience. They feel unsupported in their learning and rarely receive contact from provider staff. As a result, most apprentices leave their apprenticeship without completing it.

Apprentices on the level 3 team leader or supervisor apprenticeship do not know what they need to do to achieve. They are unclear on their progress or what to do to complete their apprenticeship. As a result, they have lost confidence in the ability of leaders and skills coaches to support them to achieve.

Newly recruited apprentices on the level 3 digital marketer apprenticeship are more positive about their experience and enjoy their apprenticeship. However, leaders have not ensured that they undertake enough meaningful workplace activity. Consequently, they are not well supported in developing the workplace skills and behaviours they will need to succeed.

Apprentices feel safe in the workplace and when learning with the provider. However, not all apprentices know where to go if they need help. As a result of their poor learning experience, a significant minority of team leader apprentices were not confident that a concern would be dealt with if raised.

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

Since the previous visit, there have been significant changes in senior leadership, management, and teaching staff. Since these changes, leaders have been too slow to identify and reverse the rapid decline in the quality of education apprentices receive. As a result, the large majority of apprentices have left without achieving their apprenticeship.

The small number of level 3 team leader apprentices who have remained on their apprenticeship have received very little support over the past nine months. Leaders have been too slow to recruit replacement coaches to support them in completing their apprenticeship. Consequently, they are significantly beyond their planned end date, and continue to make no progress.

Leaders have not ensured that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are being met for apprentices on the level 3 digital marketer apprenticeship. Apprentices work from home with minimal contact with the employer and are not supported in developing their new knowledge and skills in the workplace. Instead, apprentices work mostly independently and use their off-the-job training time to complete independent research to understand what they need to do to complete tasks. As a result, apprentices are not engaged in a well-planned and meaningful apprenticeship that supports them to develop significant new knowledge, skills, and behaviours in the workplace.

Leaders have recently appointed appropriately qualified and vocationally experienced coaches for their level 3 team leader and level 3 digital marketer apprenticeships and have recruited a new functional skills tutor. However, leaders have not assured themselves that the quality of the support and teaching apprentices now receive is of sufficiently high quality. Consequently, they are unaware of the challenges level 3 team leaders are still facing in accessing their learning.

Leaders have developed a well-ordered curriculum for the level 3 digital marketer apprenticeship, designed to support apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills over time. For example, apprentices first learn about how businesses operate before learning about market segmentation. However, as these apprentices are very early in their programme, the impact of this curriculum planning cannot yet be seen.

Skills coaches do not consider the vocational starting points of apprentices when planning their teaching. For example, skills coaches assess the starting points of digital marketer apprentices at the start of the apprenticeship. However, they do not use this information to plan learning, set targets, or adjust their teaching to fill gaps in apprentices' knowledge. As a result, apprentices do not progress as quickly as they could.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices working toward functional skills qualifications are supported well enough. For example, level 3 team leader or supervisor apprentices who require English and mathematics functional skills qualifications have not received sufficient teaching to complete the necessary assessments. As a result, these apprentices cannot progress further with their apprenticeship, as they have yet to meet the requirements to pass through the gateway towards their end-point assessment.

Skills coaches do not provide apprentices with feedback on their written work quickly enough. Most digital marketing apprentices have waited too long to receive feedback on the work they have submitted. As a result, they do not know what they have done well or what they need to do to improve their work. In the small minority of cases where skills coaches have provided feedback, this has been developmental and has helped apprentices to improve their work.

Leaders and skills coaches do not provide all apprentices with sufficient careers education, information, advice and guidance. For example, apprentices on the level 3 team leader are not aware of what their next steps could be. However, most apprentices on the level 3 digital marketer apprenticeship understand the career pathways available to them in the digital marketing industry.

Leaders have ensured that most apprentices develop their understanding of topics related to life in modern Britain during induction. In most cases, this understanding is not revisited or further developed throughout their apprenticeship. Consequently, not all apprentices can recall what they have learned.

Those responsible for governance are experienced professionals in their fields. However, governors do not possess the appropriate expertise in education to hold leaders to account for the quality of education. Consequently, they do not challenge leaders enough to ensure that apprentices receive a high-quality learning experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Support level 3 team leader or supervisor apprentices to make progress with their learning and complete their apprenticeship.
- Implement robust quality assurance measures, which will provide leaders with clear oversight of the quality of education they provide.
- Put in place suitable governance arrangements to ensure that leaders are held to account for the quality of education they provide.
- Use information on the vocational starting points of apprentices when planning their learning.
- Provide team leader or supervisor apprentices with the English and mathematics teaching they need to be able to complete their functional skills qualifications and develop the English and mathematics skills of all apprentices throughout their apprenticeship.
- Improve recruitment practices to ensure that apprentices are recruited to job roles which will allow them to develop the skills they need to meet their apprenticeship standard from the start of their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2654175
Address	5 East Gate Business Centre Burton-on-Trent Staffordshire DE13 0AT
Contact number	01708732177
Website	www.yellowtree.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Alex White
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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