

Inspection of Pilot IMS Limited

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Pilot IMS Limited is an independent learning provider based in Halesowen, West Midlands. At the time of the inspection, there were 34 apprentices in learning. Most apprentices were studying either the level 3 team leader or level 5 operations or departmental manager apprenticeships. Fewer than five apprentices were studying either the level 2 business administration or level 2 lean manufacturing operative apprenticeships. One apprentice was under the age of 18.

There were 58 adult learners studying security programmes taught in collaboration with specialist employers in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall. There were no learners with high needs. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices and learners are highly motivated throughout their studies. Adult learners are excited by the opportunity to move rapidly into reliable and flexible work. Apprentices are motivated by the high aspirations set by their trainers and employers. The large majority of apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeship and achieve the highest grades at end-point assessment.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from a positive and respectful culture while studying. Learners feel they are cared for and are provided with the support they need to succeed. Staff provide support to signpost learners to assistance with homelessness, as well as financial and mental health support. They help learners manage their personal challenges confidently.

Level 3 team leader apprentices rapidly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to make progress in their careers. Trainers work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices have opportunities in the workplace to practise their skills. For example, trainers attend meetings chaired by apprentices to give rapid feedback and help them to improve their practice. As a result, a significant number of apprentices are promoted to leadership roles during or after the completion of their apprenticeship.

Adult security learners gain confidence and self-esteem during their studies. They develop their resilience by practising the skills needed for the workplace alongside prospective employers. They practise dealing with unattended bags and packages and using scanning equipment through role plays. They show these skills confidently to employers during assessment in the workplace. Almost all adult learners progress into employment at the end of their studies.

Learners and apprentices are respectful of each other and their trainers. Trainers create a calm adult learning environment in which learners feel comfortable and confident. Learners share experiences in class and speak out if they have concerns. As a result, learners and apprentices feel safe and are confident that if they experienced problems they would be swiftly supported and resolved.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision: to offer education programmes that allow learners to develop at work or to progress into jobs and improve their social mobility. They recognise the need for apprenticeships that develop individuals into more senior and skilled roles and adult education programmes that support learners to progress into skills shortage areas.

Leaders enhance the curriculum for adult learners to include additional qualifications. For example, learners achieve an emergency first-aid certificate and a certificate in event security operations. These additional skills accurately meet employers' needs and enable learners to progress rapidly and successfully into work.

Leaders and trainers carefully sequence learning over time. In adult security, apprentices learn about personal and workplace health and safety before moving on to more complex legislation about the security industry. Learners then apply this knowledge to their work to ensure they keep themselves and site visitors safe.

Trainers use their industry expertise effectively to teach learners and apprentices. They provide real examples that help learners and apprentices to apply new knowledge at work or at their placement. For example, in adult security, trainers provide good examples of high-risk situations, such as restricting dangerous items from entering a football stadium. Learners can rapidly understand how to behave in complex workplace settings.

Trainers work closely with apprentices to ensure they develop new skills within the workplace. Trainers of level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices use guided discussions to encourage apprentices to reflect on their workplace. Apprentices consider how they could use new leadership theories to improve their management style. Apprentices swiftly develop their leadership skills.

The majority of trainers use a range of techniques to ensure that learners and apprentices know more and remember more over time. They use directed questioning, unpick complex ideas and discuss how these ideas relate to the workplace. However, in a few cases on the level 3 team leader apprenticeship, trainers rely too heavily on apprentices completing independent learning tasks. Where apprentices misunderstand what they have learned, trainers are unable to resolve this in a timely manner.

Trainers provide effective individual support for learners with learning support needs such as dyslexia. They ensure that learners with mental health issues are supported within their workplaces and during their studies, providing, for example, frequent support sessions and positive feedback to build their confidence. These learners progress as well as their peers.

A small number of learners and apprentices do not develop the English and mathematics skills needed to move on to their next steps. Level 5 operations or departmental management apprentices do not develop the academic writing skills needed to progress on to higher levels of study. Trainers of adult learners do not systematically target gaps in writing skills, such as mistakes in spelling and grammar, to improve the skills of learners moving into the workplace.

Trainers and support staff provide adult learners with effective careers education, information, advice and guidance at the start of the course. They match learners to employers based on their career aspirations. As a result, adult security learners are very clear about the progression routes available to them, such as stewarding, airport security, security at music festivals or supermarket CCTV operators. For too many apprentices, however, this advice is limited to the next opportunity at their current employer. Trainers do not systematically develop apprentices' awareness of the wider opportunities open to them.

Leaders ensure that they provide vocational continuous professional development for most teaching staff. Security trainers regularly update their practice with the employers they work alongside. Staff are kept up to date with changes in assessment practice relevant to the qualifications they teach. However, most teaching staff do not have enough opportunities to develop their teaching knowledge and skills further.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provider. Areas for development are accurately identified, and progress against quality targets is regularly monitored. However, targets are not always specific enough for leaders to clearly prioritise actions and monitor any overrunning of targets. As a result, some areas for development have not been improved swiftly enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Strengthen the quality improvement process to facilitate rapid improvement.
- Ensure that English and mathematics skills are identified and developed throughout all apprenticeships.
- Ensure that staff receive continuous professional development to further develop their teaching skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53895
Address	Unit 5 Coombswood Court Steelpark Road Halesowen B62 8BF
Contact number	0121 794 0230
Website	https://pilot-uk.com/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Spencer Shuter
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	1 to 4 December 2015
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the human resources manager, 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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