

# Inspection of The Learning Foundry Limited

Inspection dates: 20 to 23 August 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

The Learning Foundry Limited (The Learning Foundry) is an independent learning provider based in Liverpool. It is part of the Regenda Group, a not-for-profit organisation that operates in housing, construction, care, education, training and careers. The Regenda Group's mission is to regenerate communities and support people to create the opportunities they need to thrive. Most learners are from the Liverpool City Region.

At the time of the inspection, there were 635 apprentices studying from levels 2 to 5. Apprenticeships include dental nursing, early years, housing and property management. There were 144 adult learners studying courses, including business, housing and team leading. There were 118 learners on Skills Bootcamps in green skills, telecommunications and sound check. The Learning Foundry also provides education programmes for young people. There were 55 young people on 12-week courses in construction, dentistry, performing arts and preparation for work. The Learning Foundry works with a specialist subcontractor to provide training for learners who have experience of the criminal justice system, looked after children and ex-service personnel. A fifth of learners and apprentices have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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

Learners and apprentices value their time at The Learning Foundry. They appreciate the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for their future success. Learners on education programmes for young people follow curriculums that help them to develop positive routines, including regular attendance, timekeeping and study skills. They also learn about the importance of effective communication and how to work well in a team, so they are prepared for employment opportunities.

Apprentices deepen their theoretical understanding and use this to underpin their practical skills effectively. Early years practitioner apprentices learn about roles and responsibilities in the workplace, health and safety and safeguarding. They then consider health and well-being, child development, communication and working in partnerships with parents and carers. Consequently, they gain a good understanding of the early years foundation stage.

Adult learners enjoy learning in relaxed training environments and the positive relationships they have with their development coaches. Development coaches reiterate their high expectations of learners' behaviour and the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Learners appreciate that their course gives them a chance to follow a well-paid career with progression opportunities.

Learners and apprentices benefit considerably from leaders working with employers and community groups. Leaders arrange for guest speakers to talk with learners and apprentices about a range of curriculum-related topics and to explore potential career options. Learners on education programmes for young people gain valuable experience on work placements that prepare them for employment or an apprenticeship. Leaders work closely with employers and Job Centre Plus to ensure that the adult curriculums meet their needs. They discuss the knowledge, skills and behaviours employers need in the workplace so that they can include these in their training.

Learners and apprentices demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They become increasingly more confident to try things and make mistakes to solve problems. Attendance is high for most learners and apprentices. For the very few with low attendance, leaders and development coaches take appropriate actions to support their re-engagement and help them to catch up on missed learning.

Development coaches create organised, disciplined environments during practical activities in construction and telecommunications. Learners understand these are high-risk environments and that they need to follow instructions very carefully. Learners feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when working online.

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

Leaders are passionate about providing education and training to address social disadvantage in the Liverpool city region and further afield. They strive relentlessly to re-engage young people and adults so that they can improve their life chances. Leaders ensure that adult courses, including Skills Bootcamps, meet the needs of learners, many of whom have been unemployed for some time, and prepare them for employment. Apprenticeships meet the skills needs in the Liverpool City Region in priority areas such as education, housing and management. Apprentices are prepared for productive careers.

Development coaches teach curriculums in a clear order to ensure learners' and apprentices' learning is securely built on solid foundations. Learners on education programmes for young people swiftly develop their employability skills so that they can undertake job searches and attend interviews with confidence. Adults on construction courses learn about fundamental health and safety principles so that they know how to keep themselves and others safe. They then move on to consider effective communication and rights and responsibilities in an industrial environment. Level 3 dental nursing apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need early on in their apprenticeship so that they can work safely and effectively in dental surgeries. They learn about infection control, patient consent and communication before entering dental surgeries.

Learners and apprentices benefit from development coaches with significant experience and expertise in the subjects they teach. They are teacher-qualified or working towards their teaching qualification. In a few subject areas, such as dentistry and property development, coaches are members of professional bodies. They have online access to current topics, resources and courses that they use to inform their teaching.

Most development coaches recap prior learning in their lessons to ensure that learners and apprentices remember what they have learned. On education programmes for young people, development coaches use direct questioning effectively in order to ensure that all learners get the opportunity to share their ideas and demonstrate what they know. Learners recall prior learning and link it to the tasks at hand. Adult learners complete quizzes and tasks in workbooks. Development coaches review these at the end of each day to check learners' understanding. In a few instances, development coaches do not use questioning well enough to check apprentices' understanding and rectify any misconceptions.

Learners and apprentices with learning difficulties receive effective support from development coaches and learning support officers (LSOs). LSOs provide specialist support to learners and apprentices, including those who have dyslexia. LSOs teach learners how to break information down into sections that are easier to understand, and they devise steps to help them respond to questions. LSOs and development

coaches provide learners with additional time and resources to process information, where appropriate.

Development coaches provide apprentices with clear feedback following the assessment of their written work. This accurately identifies what apprentices have done well and what they need to do to improve. Level 3 dental nurse apprentices promptly use this feedback to further improve their work. However, in a very few instances, level 2 early years practitioner apprentices do not routinely revisit their work to make the improvements identified by development coaches. On education programmes for young people, development coaches' feedback on learners' written work does not explain precisely enough what learners need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications. Apprentices' achievement is above the national rate and is improving. Over half of apprentices on graded courses achieve merit or distinction grades. Adult learners achieve well and over two-thirds progress to positive destinations in further education, training or employment. Most learners on education programmes for young people successfully complete their main course and progress to positive destinations. Although learners make progress in their English and mathematical skills, too few learners achieve their functional skills qualifications over the duration of their 12-week study programme.

Learners receive impartial guidance from a qualified careers adviser who liaises with employers, colleges and other training providers to provide learners with accurate information and guidance about their next steps. Learners receive support for CV writing, job applications and interview skills to help them prepare for employment or further study. Although most apprentices receive appropriate careers guidance, in a few instances, apprentices are not aware of the full range of careers available to them because they have not yet received any careers guidance.

Learners on education programmes for young people complete additional training and qualifications such as first aid, road safety and travel training. Apprentices benefit from completing additional qualifications such as basic food hygiene and first aid in early years to complement their training and support their job roles. Learners on education programmes for young people benefit from trips and visits. For example, they visit the maritime museum's slavery exhibition, learn about the advent of slavery and the ways in which this relates to modern slavery.

Development coaches ensure that they prepare learners and apprentices effectively for life in modern Britain. Learners understand, and discuss with some confidence, the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They understand why and how radicalisation may happen and the signs to look out for in their peers. Learners and apprentices understand the importance of fundamental British values. They are keen to treat others as they wish to be treated themselves, they are respectful of others' differences and enjoy harmonious relationships with their peers.

Leaders have implemented effective quality assurance and quality improvement processes that help them to have a clear and detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. Tutors routinely benefit from lesson observations that inform their training and development activities and help them to develop their teaching skills. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. They have created a supportive culture where consultation, collaboration and the sharing of good practice leads to sustained improvement.

Governors bring an extensive range of skills and experience to their roles. They have an extensive understanding of The Learning Foundry's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors receive high-quality reports from leaders that provide them with a clear, detailed oversight of all aspects of the provision. They use this information effectively in order to hold leaders to account. Governors provide suitable and supportive challenge to senior leaders to ensure that they take appropriate actions to rectify any areas of concern.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure development coaches use questioning effectively in lessons to check learners' and apprentices' understanding and to rectify any misconceptions.
- Make sure learners on education programmes for young people receive developmental feedback on their work so that they know what they need to do to improve.
- Provide apprentices with a consistently high standard of careers, advice and guidance so that they are aware of the full range of careers available to them when they complete their apprenticeship.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50376
<b>Address</b>	Watson Building 4 Renshaw Street Merseyside Liverpool L1 2SA
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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thelearningfoundry.co.uk">www.thelearningfoundry.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Terry Collier
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 to 14 June 2019
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Inside Connections

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality, curriculum and compliance, 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

Helen Whelan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Alastair Mollon	His Majesty's Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
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