Inspection of Prostart Training

Inspection dates:	10 to 12 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Education programmes for young people	**Requires improvement**
Apprenticeships	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Prostart Training provides apprenticeships and education programmes for young people in the Nottingham area. Apprentices study in the workplace and take part in online training sessions. At the time of the inspection, there were 86 apprentices, with just over a third studying the level 5 operations manager apprenticeship. There were small numbers of apprentices on the following apprenticeships: level 3 business administrator, level 2 customer service practitioner, level 2 events assistant, level 3 supply chain warehouse operative, level 3 team leader and level 7 senior leader. There were six learners aged 16 to 19 on study programmes who study at the training centre in Long Eaton. Learners study a programme that includes customer service, business administration and personal development courses at level 1 as well as English and mathematics qualifications. Learners are taught in very small cohorts with tutors providing one-to-one support.

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

Apprentices have mature attitudes, are motivated and prioritise attendance at off-the-job training sessions. They appreciate the support of their tutors and the flexibility that tutors provide to enable them to balance their training alongside work. Tutors in online sessions model good professional behaviours by ensuring that cameras are on and apprentices raise their hand to speak. Tutors ensure that all apprentices are included in discussions by sensitively managing situations where apprentices dominate a conversation.

Learners on study programmes have positive behaviours and are respectful of each other and staff. Staff create a caring and nurturing environment where learners feel comfortable to be themselves. This means that learners, most of whom have complex barriers to participating in learning, take part in their study programme with enthusiasm and develop their confidence and resilience. However, a third of learners do not attend well enough which impedes their progress.

Tutors and mentors establish a supportive relationship with learners and apprentices which contributes to a strong sense of safety and well-being. Tutors teach helpful safeguarding topics through the early weeks of the course and reinforce this during discussions in review meetings. Apprentices and learners are aware of who to contact for support. They know about radicalisation and extremism, cyber safety, and bullying and harassment. Apprentices and learners feel safe in training and the workplace.

Apprentices receive helpful information, advice and guidance about their careers throughout their programme. Employers provide informative career review meetings that focus on apprentices' next steps at work. Tutors on study programmes encourage learners to attend local jobs fairs. They help learners to complete job applications and to prepare for interviews.

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

Leaders and managers provide high-quality apprenticeships in partnership with large local employers, such as the NHS and local councils, that lead to sustainable careers for apprentices. Apprentices are confident, capable and ready to take on more responsibility at work. Most achieve their apprenticeship and gain distinction grades. Many apprentices gain a promotion or take on additional responsibility at work after their apprenticeship.

Leaders offer young people who are not ready to study in mainstream education the opportunity to complete courses that develop their personal skills. Learners on study programmes improve their confidence and self-esteem, and most achieve their personal development qualifications. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that learners on study programmes complete all elements of their planned programme. Most learners do not take part in meaningful work placements or

receive the support they need to develop the skills to move on to further learning or work. Too few learners successfully gain employment, apprenticeships or further learning opportunities when they complete the study programme.

Tutors are well qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. They use their experience effectively to plan work-based scenarios that enrich discussions and enable apprentices to link their knowledge to the workplace. In business administration, tutors demonstrate the use of journals and notes to help apprentices understand how to manage communication challenges when speaking with clients on the telephone. Tutors on study programmes successfully interleave customer service topics with the personal skills, such as communication and presentation skills, that learners need for their next steps.

Tutors mostly use assessment well to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. On study programmes, tutors provide helpful feedback to learners about how they can improve their work. Learners act on this feedback and make progress in achieving the objectives of their customer service and personal development qualifications. Tutors use review meetings to discuss apprentices' professional skills and how to apply and further develop these in the workplace. However, in a few instances, tutors do not use questioning effectively in lessons to enable apprentices to think deeply about how to apply their knowledge and skills.

The small number of apprentices that study functional skills courses in English and mathematics complete these early in their apprenticeships and most pass their examinations. Tutors provide helpful online support sessions to learners on study programmes who need functional skills qualifications. Personal development tutors use lesson activities to develop learners' English and mathematics skills such as by setting tasks to calculate budgets for everyday life. Learners make progress in improving and applying their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. However, first-time test pass rates learners on study programmes completing functional skills qualifications are too low.

Tutors adapt teaching successfully to meet the needs of learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use inclusive practices such as planning regular breaks and short activities to maintain learners' focus and participation. Tutors use overlays and dictionaries for those with dyslexia. They highlight well-known people who have the same or similar individual needs as learners and apprentices as examples of how they too can succeed.

Managers have effective quality assurance arrangements in place for apprenticeships. They use their end-point assessment expertise to scrutinise apprentices' work and tutors' assessment practices. Across all the provision, managers use the results of lesson observations to plan helpful peer mentoring sessions for tutors, which tutors use to inform their practice. However, leaders and managers do not use these processes well enough to identify accurately what tutors do well or what they need to do to improve. They do not set precise enough targets for tutors to develop their teaching practice.

Leaders and managers do not have clear enough oversight of the quality of education on study programmes. Leaders have not identified clear lines of accountability or responsible people to manage the programme effectively. They do not have thorough enough quality assurance procedures in place to identify what needs to be improved, such as the lack of meaningful work placement for study programme learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Identify the reasons why too many learners on study programmes do not attend well enough and implement actions to swifty improve attendance.
- Improve the approach to observation of practice to ensure that tutors receive precise actions to inform the development of their teaching skills.
- Improve oversight of study programmes to ensure that all learners have access to meaningful work experience, the proportion who progress to positive destinations improves and a higher proportion of learners achieve their functional skills qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54006
Address	Trent Valley Business Centre 28 High Street Long Eaton Nottingham NG10 1LL
Contact number	0115 9835825
Website	www.prostartuk.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Denise Newcomb
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

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

Sarah Lonsdale, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Fraser	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Biddulph	His Majesty's Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector

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