

Whitby and District Fishing Industry Training School

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like.....	12
What learners think could improve	12

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Description of the provider

1. Whitby and District Fishing Industry Training School Limited (WDFITS) is a non-profit making, private training company. The school is located in Whitby. Premises consist of a self-contained suite of rooms comprising two training rooms with an information technology suite and a chart room/library. Restaurant/café facilities are available on the ground floor. The school currently employs three full-time staff members, one part-time staff and six sessional part-time trainers under contract. WDFITS is overseen by a governing board comprised of local business people.
2. The company was established in 2002 to provide new entrants to the coastal fishing fleet in the northeast, covering Whitby and its immediate district. Learners are recruited nationally and are placed in local accommodation for the duration of their programmes. It has a contract with North Yorkshire LSC to provide apprenticeship programmes in sea fishing. The school is now the only training provider within the UK delivering the full level 2 apprenticeship in marine vessel support deck hand for the fishing industry. WDFITS currently has 13 learners, all following this qualification.
3. Learners work towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in marine vessel support deckhand (sea fishing), and key skills qualifications at level 1 in communication, application of number, working with others, and problem-solving. Learners also work towards additional certificates essential for employment within the fishing industry. All off-the-job training is delivered at WDFITS's premises. On-the-job training is provided by the skippers of local fishing trawlers and potting boats. WDFITS also offers a range of commercial short courses. Approximately 85% of WDFITS's income is derived from LSC funding.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management are all good. Provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is good. Equality of opportunity is good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. The provider has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection, learners' success rates have continued to improve and are now just below national averages. WDFITS has introduced more effective systems to monitor performance and uses data well. Observations and audits of the key learner processes provide an accurate assessment of the quality of provision. Learners' feedback is used well to monitor and quality assure the learners' experience. Learner data is used effectively to monitor the performance of different groups of learners. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. WDFITS has taken effective steps to improve the provision. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been resolved. The specialist support needs of most of the learners are effectively met.
6. The self-assessment process is good. It is consultative and includes the views of key staff. The views of learners and employers are collected informally through discussions and questionnaires. The development plan identifies key responsibilities and timescales for implementation and achievement of specific actions. It is closely monitored. Inspection findings matched most of the strengths and grades identified in the self-assessment report. However, the self-assessment was insufficiently critical when evaluating areas for improvement in the sector subject area.

Key strengths

- Very good skills development by learners
- Good achievement of additional qualifications
- Very good support for learners
- Very clear strategic direction
- Successful management actions to improve achievement and standards
- Outstanding employer engagement
- Good use of data to monitor and improve provision
- Good social and educational inclusion

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient strategies to engage and challenge all learners
- Incomplete arrangements for safeguarding

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates are now good as identified in the self-assessment report. Apprenticeship success rates have improved significantly over the last three years, rising from 16% to 58% in 2007/08. Most WDFITS learners enter the course with no prior qualifications and leave home to study, living in local accommodation sourced by WDFITS. The proportion of learners who complete within the planned period of study is high. Timely apprenticeship success rates have also improved significantly over the last three years, rising to 57% in 2007/08, compared with a national average of 48%. Success rates for learners taking basic skills qualifications have been high with 90% of learners achieving qualifications in 2007. Currently the success rate for basic skills qualifications is 100%.
8. Learners acquire good skills as identified in the self-assessment report. Skills development is very good. Learners acquire very good workplace and personal skills and also build self-esteem and confidence. Learners clearly demonstrate a greater understanding of the skills and knowledge required and have good health and safety awareness. Trawler skippers report that learners are effective in their roles on board. Learners exhibit noticeably increased confidence, better communications skills and a keenness to demonstrate their ability and work with minimal supervision. Several learners have already been promised jobs on local fishing boats upon completion of their qualifications. The standard of learners' work is very good, particularly in lobster pot and net making, and in rope splicing. No significant differences in performance exist between different groups of learners.
9. Learners gain a good range of additional qualifications as identified in the self-assessment report. This was a strength at the previous inspection and has been maintained. All learners gain a wide range of additional qualifications during their time at the school. These include health and safety qualifications such as first aid, fire fighting, health and safety for new entrants to the industry and sea survival techniques which are essential to obtain employment on board fishing vessels. An additional range of occupationally relevant qualifications, include short range radio and care of the catch courses which complement learners' studies.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning in the fishing school are good. Sessions are planned well and lesson plans and schemes of work are shared with learners. Resources to support learning are good. Learning is consolidated through well focused educational visits which learners enjoy. On-the-job training is satisfactory. Trawler skippers take care to ensure learners

experience a wide range of tasks but learning is planned and monitored insufficiently by WDFITS.

11. WDFITS is meeting the needs of its learners, the industry and the local community. Success rates have improved significantly and learners acquire good industry skills. Links with the industry are excellent as is collaboration with other providers. The school is the only one of its kind still fully operational in the UK and it attracts learners from all parts of the country. A broader range of sea fishing provision is planned to complement the valuable specialist training currently on offer.
12. Support for learners is very good as identified in the self-assessment report. This was a strength at the previous inspection and has been maintained. WDFITS sources appropriate local accommodation for learners. Learners can access a 24 hour support line for help with issues. Individual support on academic matters are timetabled within the time at the school. Small group sessions are organised frequently outside of sessions to help learners who are struggling to keep pace. Support for the learners with additional learning needs is good. Learners are taught by specialist well qualified and experienced basic skills tutors. Learner monitoring is good. Individual learning plans are fit for purpose. Comments from learners together with improved success rates indicate an increasing learner proficiency in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Leadership and management are good. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that leadership and management are effective. The board of directors and management team have set a clear strategic direction for WDFITS and are making good progress in achieving the strategic objectives set. Success rates are improving and the plans for expansion are progressing smoothly. Negotiations to obtain additional accommodation are well advanced and directors are carefully considering opportunities to acquire assets such as training vessels and appropriate new staff to increase the income of the school.
14. Management actions to improve achievement and standards have been particularly successful. Success rates over the last three years have improved from 16% to 58%. All staff work well to improve retention. Initial assessment and advice and guidance have improved significantly. All learners are now initially assessed using appropriate methods before enrolment. Basic skills assessment and support are now good. Support for learners has improved at all stages of the learning process and on-course support in areas such as portfolio building has been introduced. Induction has been improved and now learners have a much better understanding of the expectations of the provider and the demands of the course.

15. Employer engagement is outstanding. The board is made up of influential individuals who are committed to the success of the school and its learners and currently hold key positions in the fishing industry locally, nationally and internationally. Organisations represented on the board include the largest trawler fleet in the area, large fishery companies, the local Business Development Agency and Chamber of Trade, the Mission to Seafarers, the National Federation of Fishing Organisations and the Sea Fish Industry Authority. Board meetings are well attended. Discussions are centred on detailed reports from the chief executive covering all aspects of the provision including learners' performance. An extensive network of sea-going skippers supports the school and provides essential practical experience and on-the-job training for learners.
16. Managers and staff make very good use of data to monitor and improve the provision. All staff have access to detailed data on the incoming attainment of all learners and use them to target support effectively. Data on performance of cohorts of learners is used effectively by managers to give the board of directors an accurate and fair analysis of performance. WDFITS effectively monitors learners performance at all stages of their training, both individually and as a group. For example initial assessment and advice and guidance have been improved by a careful examination of how many candidates progress from the initial enquiry to achieving their qualifications. Achievement of additional qualifications, performance against individual learning plans and the destinations of leavers are all monitored carefully and effectively.
17. Communication within the school is satisfactory. The small numbers of staff, most of whom are part-time, are well informed and kept up-to-date through regular newsletters. Formal staff meetings are sufficiently frequent, have appropriate agendas and are well recorded. Board meetings are regular and well attended.
18. Appraisals and staff development are satisfactory. An established appraisal system successfully contributes to the detailed staff development plans for each individual staff member. Staff are well qualified, suitably experienced and are up-to-date with the latest developments in the industry and in the sector.
19. Quality assurance systems are satisfactory. An appropriate range of policies cover most aspects of the training. Policies are regularly reviewed and are adhered to throughout the organisation. Learners' views are collected and acted upon to improve the provision. The arrangements for observing teaching and learning are satisfactory.
20. The arrangements for safeguarding learners are incomplete. All staff and landladies are Criminal Records Bureau checked but not all skippers have gone through the process. A draft safeguarding policy has been produced but has not been approved by the board. Training in child protection has been identified in the staff development plan but none has been carried out yet.
21. Equality of opportunity is good. Educational and social inclusion are good. Learners from areas of social deprivation and of low academic attainment are welcomed into WDFITS and into the community. Learners are recruited from all parts of the country. Most learners are living away from home and are well cared

for by a carefully selected network of landladies who introduce them to the local amenities and social activities. The school is making considerable efforts to promote the industry to groups that are not well represented within the industry. One female learner in the current cohort has received specialist individual support in preparation for life at sea. Monitoring of equal opportunities data is good. The school has carried out extensive research into the number and location of women and minority ethnic deckhands and crew in the UK. It uses the data to work with deckhands trained overseas to provide the additional training and experience necessary to supplement their training, particularly in health and safety. The complaints system is well managed and complaints are swiftly and effectively dealt with. Appropriate bullying and harassment policies are in place and effective.

What learners like:

- Highly relevant studies which provide good preparation for going to sea
- Gaining additional qualifications essential to working in the fishing industry
- Being treated like adults
- Very good individual support from friendly tutors who listen
- Good balance of practical work and theory sessions
- Being kept well informed of individual progress through reviews
- Good relevant computer software
- The fishing school arranged accommodation
- Developing independent living skills

What learners think could improve:

- The heating in school as it is often too cold
- More comfortable chairs in classrooms
- Money issues during training
- More practical work in preparing fish