

Xtp International Limited

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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:

- Health, public services and care

Description of the provider

1. Xtp International Limited (Xtp), originally Portfolio Plus Limited, is a private company established in 2003. Its head office is in Didsbury, Manchester. In January 2004 the company was acquired by the current managing director.
2. Since 2004 Xtp has held contracts with Greater Manchester LSC to provide government-funded Employer Training Pilot and more recently Train to Gain provision in civil enforcement, security, skills for justice (policing and custodial care) and spectator safety. Learners work towards National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 in controlling parking areas and in providing security. Since the start of the contracts 684 learners have received training in this provision.
3. All 85 learners are based in Sheffield, Bradford, Greater Manchester and Greater Merseyside. Of the learners, 61 are male, 13 are from minority ethnic backgrounds and one has declared a disability. Xtp works with eight employers across England.
4. The managing director is responsible for the management of the company overall. The company employs three managers, four full-time and 10 part-time assessors who plan and deliver the provision.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of Xtp is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are consistently high. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory as is equality of opportunity.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Xtp has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Overall success rates are consistently high. Timely success rates have improved and are satisfactory. The company has developed a detailed quality improvement plan and implementation is progressing well. However, arrangements for quality improvement overall are not sufficiently developed.
7. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It takes appropriate account of the views of staff, learners and all other stakeholders. The self-assessment report is accurate and the identified areas for improvement broadly reflect the inspection findings. Inspection grades matched self-assessment grades for achievement and standards and equality of opportunity, but differed on other grades. The quality improvement plan prioritises appropriate actions to resolve the areas identified for improvement.

Key strengths:

- High success rates
- Good individual coaching

Key areas for improvement:

- Insufficient planning and monitoring of training and learning
- Insufficiently developed arrangements for quality assurance and improvement
- Insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

8. Achievements and standards are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Overall success rates are consistently high at 94%, 93% and 95% for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 respectively.
9. Learners develop satisfactory skills for the workplace. Learners develop appropriate knowledge and confidence in enforcing parking regulations and protecting property and individuals.
10. Learners' progress is satisfactory. The standard of work in learners' portfolios, which are computer-based, is satisfactory. Portfolios contain a sufficient range of satisfactory evidence for their NVQs. In most portfolios the evidence clearly shows that learners have increased their knowledge during the programme. However, a few indicate learners' have gained little knowledge through their training. Timely success rates for learners in 2007/08 are satisfactory at 74%. However, timely success rates for 2006/07 were low at 66%.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The quality of provision is satisfactory, a lower grade than proposed in the self-assessment report. Teaching, training and learning are satisfactory. Individual coaching is good, provided by assessors who have good, relevant occupational experience. Coaching is particularly effective for learners new to the security industry. Learners receive very effective practical demonstrations of how to recognise infringements of parking regulations. Assessors provide good up-to-date information for learners on topics such as the new Traffic Management Act, and show them how to secure the most effective evidence to enforce the legislation.
12. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Assessors make effective use of digital audiovisual media to record evidence of learners' competence in the workplace. Learners respond well to this method of assessment especially during discussions with assessors. Storage of this evidence is quick and simple for the assessors who upload data files to Xtp's computer-based portfolio system. Xtp staff use the computer-based portfolios extensively and effectively, but learners and employers do not receive sufficient encouragement to use them. Learners do not routinely evaluate their evidence of competence and reflect on how to improve it.
13. The planning and monitoring of learners' training and learning are insufficient. The learning objectives set by assessors when planning learners' training are too broad. Assessors do not set interim targets to help learners prepare for and effectively take part in the planning of their training. Learners do not receive a copy of their individual learning plans. Learners do not receive sufficiently planned

off-the-job training. Assessors do not use reviews sufficiently to monitor learners' progress and to inform them about their individual progress. Learners' immediate supervisors do not receive information about individual learners' progress. These supervisors do not formally comment on or contribute to the planning of training or assessment. Learners and employers do not receive details of the outcomes of individual progress reviews. Xtp has identified this area for improvement and is progressing well to remedy it.

14. Arrangements for initial assessment and the use of the outcomes of assessment are adequate. Xtp assesses learners' support and learning needs thoroughly at the beginning of their programme. This includes establishing individual learning styles and any barriers to learning. However, Xtp does not use this information systematically to plan learners' training. Diagnostic assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy needs is routine but arrangements to meet those needs are not fully established. Xtp has identified this in its self-assessment report and is making appropriate progress in improving literacy and numeracy support, for example by employing additional staff.
15. The provision meets learners' and employers' needs and interests satisfactorily. Xtp has expanded the number of programmes to cater for employers' training needs concerning security and control of parking areas. The company is working well with partners to develop new qualifications for aviation ground security operatives and supervisors. Learners are involved in choosing units appropriate to their workplace and role but employers are involved insufficiently in the process. Programmes provide useful training and coaching to learners who are in the process of changing careers.
16. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance at the start of the programme are clear and guide learners to appropriate programmes. Assessors are sensitive to learners' anxieties about learning, and provide satisfactory pastoral and academic support. Xtp provides a range of appropriate learning aids for learners with dyslexia support needs.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory, a lower grade than proposed in the self-assessment report. Xtp has introduced revised systems recently to improve the provision following a thorough review of its operations. It has put in place new individual learning plans and progress review processes. Revised arrangements for liaison with employers provide learners' immediate supervisors with better information about individual learners' progress.
18. Operational management is satisfactory. Communication with staff and external partners is effective. Staff development and appraisal arrangements are satisfactory. However, until recently the development of assessors' capacity to support learners' literacy and numeracy support needs has been slow.

19. Xtp makes appropriate use of management information. Learner data is accurate, however, the system for the collation, analysis and monitoring of learners' progress is insufficiently developed. For example no central system provides an overview of visits scheduled to learners in the different regions. Xtp has identified this in its self-assessment report. It is at the advanced stages of developing its management information system. However, it is too soon to assess the effectiveness of these developments.
20. Internal verification is satisfactory and the arrangements to improve assessment practices are broadly adequate. The company seeks learners' and employers' views, although often informally, and acts on them effectively. However Xtp's arrangements for quality assurance and improvement are insufficiently developed. The company has not set clear standards for the quality of its training activities. The arrangements for monitoring standards of teaching and learning through observation are not thorough or implemented systematically. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of learners' induction and progress reviews are not fully and formally operational.
21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and inclusive. It involves all the main partners, managers and full-time assessors. The current self-assessment report is the first the company has produced. It is clearly structured and evaluates all aspects of the provision. However, some of the reports' judgements are insufficiently supported by evidence and in parts the focus on the affect on learners and training is insufficient. Some grades in the report were higher than inspection grades.
22. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. The managing director has overall responsibility for equality and diversity matters. Learners are adequately informed of their rights as learners and the company's equality policies during their induction.
23. Xtp does not promote equality of opportunity and diversity sufficiently. Learners are not supported sufficiently to understand and apply equality and diversity matters in their job roles. Staff have an adequate understanding of equality and diversity, although little staff training has taken place in this area.
24. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The company has satisfactory policies and practices for safeguarding vulnerable adults. The managing director is the designated officer. All staff in contact with learners have had appropriate background checks.

What learners like:

- 'Getting qualifications'
- 'Very helpful tutors'
- 'Learning new things'

What learners think could improve:

- 'Knowing what comes next week and next month so I can plan'