

Future-Wize Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 51917

Name of lead inspector: Sally Palmer HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 October 2009

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Barnsley Business and Innovation Centre
Snydale Road, Cudworth
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S72 8RP

Telephone number: 01226 780093

Information about the provider

1. Future-Wize Limited (Future-Wize) is a private learning provider based in Barnsley in South Yorkshire. It was incorporated in 1999. Future-Wize provides work-based learning programmes in accounting, business administration, customer service, information technology and management. Also offered are legal secretary and legal studies qualifications. Future-Wize also provides training and consultancy for organisations in the public and private sectors. Eighty-four per cent of the overall business is publicly funded by the South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Provision in information technology was not inspected.
2. Future-Wize has increased learner numbers in business, administration and law since the last inspection. The Employer Training Pilot programme, providing security services is no longer offered. Most apprentices and Train to Gain learners work in administration, accounting and management. There are currently 189 learners on programmes: 64 advanced apprentices; 110 apprentices; and 15 Train to Gain learners. Approximately 16% of learners are men and 3% are from minority ethnic groups.
3. Unemployment in August 2009 in Yorkshire and the Humber was 8.9% compared to 7.9% nationally. In 2009 the proportion of school leavers gaining five or more General Certificate Education (GCEs) at grade C or above including mathematics and English in Yorkshire and Humberside was 46.9%, compared with 50.4% in England.
4. Future-Wize provides training on behalf of the following provider:
 - Barnsley District General Hospital (key skills and technical certificates in administration and care)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2007/08
Provision for young learners: Further education (16 to 18)	47 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	143 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	190 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	Grade
Business, administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of Future-Wize's provision is good. Success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. Learners are making good progress. They feel safe and welcome in their workplace and the training centre. Senior managers provide very good leadership and set clear, ambitious improvement targets. Teaching and learning are good; however, the arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are incomplete. Lessons do not always have clear objectives or include sufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT). The range of provision is wide and provides learners with a good choice of qualifications. Support for learners is particularly good. The planning of individual training and development requires more clarity. Partnerships with employers are particularly effective. Arrangements to ensure learners' safety are satisfactory. The promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity are good.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are good and have shown continual improvement since 2006. Learners attain their learning goals well and make good progress; many exceed expectations and complete their programme before the target completion date. Learners enjoy their training programmes.

- Learners develop good employability skills in the workplace, including wider skills such as increased motivation, confidence and self-esteem which contribute well to their economic and social well-being.
- Learners feel safe and welcome in their workplace and the training centre. They demonstrate a clear understanding of health and safety in the workplace and adopt safe working practices
- Teaching and learning are good. The better sessions use questioning well and include a variety of methods to ensure learners are engaged. However, learners would benefit from improved setting of clear learning objectives to meet individual learner needs, and more use of ILT in lessons.
- Training and assessment and internal verification are good. Learners benefit from frequent and well-focused workplace training and assessment. Assessors give good feedback to help learners to achieve. However, learners do not have a clear, individualised plan of the training and development they need to complete to achieve their learning goals.
- The range of provision is wide and provides learners with a choice of qualifications, subjects and levels. Future-Wize works particularly well with employers. Arrangements for training and assessment are very flexible to meet learner and employer needs.
- Support for learners is particularly good. They receive good advice and guidance about progression, which motivates them well. Learners receive timely support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers have a clear focus on improving success rates and continuously improving provision. Communication is very good; all staff understand exactly what they have to do to contribute to the success of the organisation. Teamwork is excellent.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. All relevant staff have completed a Criminal Records Bureau check (CRB), which is recorded in a single central record. Policies on safeguarding and e-safety are used appropriately to ensure learners are safe at work. However, not all staff have received training on safeguarding, although this is planned.
- The promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity are good. All learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Future-Wize measures the achievements of different groups of learners and works to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve success.
- The monitoring of performance at Future-Wize is very effective. Monthly one-to-one meetings between managers and assessors effectively monitor the progress of learners. Meetings result in very clear effective action plans.
- Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Internal verification is very thorough, although the internal verification strategy requires updating. The process for the observation of teaching and learning is outdated and not used sufficiently to promote improvement.

- Future-Wize provides good value for money. Success rates are good and learners make good progress. Resources for staff and learners are good and well managed.

What does Future-Wize need to do to improve further?

- Increase the use of technology to support learning. Ensure learners and assessors can more easily access learning materials and information and enjoy a wider range of teaching and learning methods.
- Improve the planning of individual training and development so that learners are clear about what they need to do, by when, to achieve their learning goals.
- Develop an effective teaching and learning observation strategy and process to drive forward improvements in the quality of lessons.

Summary of the views of learners as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- Very supportive assessors who are always available.
- Being able to gain a qualification in the workplace.
- Developing skills which help them in their jobs.
- The wide choice of programmes.
- The additional qualifications they can gain.
- The individual support that helps them to succeed.
- The teaching and learning.

What learners would like to see improved:

- A better explanation of key skills at the start of the programme.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- Discussions which are open and honest, enabling them to deal with potential problems with learners before they have any impact.
- Future-Wize's professional, friendly and organised approach.
- The assessors ensure that there is no disruption to the work routines during their visits.
- The way in which Future-Wize develops employees' social skills in motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The help in improving the employers' training programmes.
- Future-Wize's good coverage of occupational competencies that reduces the need for extensive in-house training.
- Being involved in the choice of the learners' next step in training.

What employers would like to see improved:

- There is too much paper; they would like an electronic copy of the learners' documentation.
- Would prefer e-portfolios.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. Future-Wize has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The organisation structure successfully supports the business priorities. There is a culture of continuous improvement. Ambitious targets are set and achieved. A good management information system provides timely information which is used well to monitor achievement against targets. Teamwork is excellent; staff are motivated and enthusiastic and understand exactly what they have to do to contribute to the success of the organisation.
7. Self-assessment is used well as an improvement tool; the arrangements for self-assessment are good. The self-assessment process is thorough and effective. Staff at all levels are involved and although there is no written employer or learner involvement strategy, the views of learners and employers are incorporated in the development of the report. The self-assessment report informs a good quality improvement plan which contains clear targets. Progress against the plan is monitored regularly and well. Resources are good; however, there is insufficient use of ILT. Both timely and overall success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Success rates have shown continuous improvement and are good. Since 2006 overall success rates for advanced apprentices have increased from 29% and are now high at 88%. In the same period success rates for apprentices improved from 61% to 76%. Success rates have shown continual improvement in this period. In 2008/09 timely success rates were 82% for advanced apprentices and 68% for apprentices, both of which are well in excess of national averages.
9. Learners make good progress and many exceed expectations and complete their programme before the target completion date. They make good progress with key skills and the technical certificates. Apprentices make good use of on-the-job training and additional vocational courses to extend their knowledge and skills and gain additional qualifications. Examination results on the Association of Accounting Technicians' (AAT) courses and Institute of Legal Executives' programmes are good. The standard of learners' work is good. Portfolios are well organised and well evidenced and work is assessed regularly. Learners enjoy their learning and are well motivated in responding to challenging targets.
10. Learners develop good employability skills in the workplace, including communication and information and communication technology skills. Additionally they develop wider social skills such as increased motivation, confidence and self-esteem, which contribute well to their economic and social well-being. They develop their workplace skills well and many progress in their careers. Some previous learners have achieved supervisory roles with their

employers and now line manage current learners. Progression rates to further learning programmes are high.

11. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work. They demonstrate good, safe working practices and have a good understanding of health and safety procedures at work. Learners feel safe and protected from harassment and bullying. Health and safety and equal opportunities are effectively promoted and reinforced during training. Learners' understanding is routinely checked in reviews.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. Teaching and learning are good. The better sessions use questioning well and include a variety of methods and activities. Tutors' enthusiasm and good subject knowledge ensure learners are engaged and motivated. Learners would benefit from better setting of clear learning objectives and planning for individual learner needs. Visual aids and ILT are used insufficiently.
13. Training and assessment are good. Learners benefit from frequent and well-focused workplace training and assessment. Learners have challenging targets linked to prior knowledge and skills. Assessors give good feedback to help learners to achieve their learning goals. Key skills assessment is good and integrated well into learners' programmes. Planning for individual training needs is incomplete. Learners do not have a clear plan of the training and development needed to complete their learning programme.
14. Assessors use a good variety of assessment methods and most make effective use of technology such as voice recording, video recording and digital cameras. Learners do not use e-portfolios, which would better meet the needs of some employers and learners. The tracking of learner progress in achieving the units of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and their frameworks is particularly effective.
15. Learning resources are good. Assessors draw from a comprehensive and well-produced range of paper-based activities for underpinning knowledge for all parts of the apprenticeships. Learners and assessors are not able to access the materials remotely.
16. The range of provision is wide and provides learners with a choice of qualifications, subjects and levels. Future-Wize works particularly well with employers to provide a programme that effectively meets their needs and local labour demand. Arrangements for training and assessment are very flexible to meet learner and employer needs. Communication with employers is effective and includes a good awareness of individual learner achievement. Learners progress well to a higher level qualification or to another appropriate qualification. They develop well the workplace skills and knowledge which support their career progression.

17. Future-Wize has good partnership arrangements to develop the provision. The provider works well to source employers and is proactive in promoting the programme. It works with some employers to deliver aspects of their training and gives good advice to employers on developing their training provision.
18. Support for learners is particularly good. Learners receive good advice and guidance which motivates them well and helps them to achieve. Training staff are readily accessible to learners and are very approachable. Initial assessment of prior learning and experience, and literacy and numeracy, informs individual learning programmes well. Learners receive timely support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. A specialist tutor works effectively to support learners who have additional learning needs. Learners on AAT courses benefit from attending tutorials for extra help in their course work and for key skills. Learners receive good advice on progression when they have completed their programme.
19. Learner induction is good and effectively covers health and safety, equal opportunities and knowledge of the NVQ and frameworks. Learners achieve safe learner and equality and diversity awards. The induction effectively introduces learners to the structure and demands of their programme and their rights and responsibilities as learners. Learners' success is celebrated well.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

20. Leadership and management are good. Managers have a clear focus on improving success rates and continuously improving provision. The organisation structure supports the achievement of the good, clear mission and appropriate strategic priorities, which are realistic and supported by responsible financial management. Communication is very good and all staff understand exactly what they have to do to contribute to the success of the organisation. Teamwork is excellent. Realistic and demanding targets are set for appropriate key performance indicators and performance against targets is monitored well. Success rates have improved significantly and are good.
21. Future-Wize's monitoring of performance is very good. The management information system is well used by managers and staff. A very effective process is used to monitor the progress of each learner, during monthly one-to-one meetings between managers and assessors. These meetings result in very clear action plans and are very successful in supporting assessors to improve overall and timely success rates. A good appraisal system is focused on performance. Appraisals contain clear quantified targets for staff to achieve, which are clearly linked to the company's overall objectives.
22. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. All relevant staff have completed a CRB check, which is recorded in a single central record. Policies on safeguarding and e-safety are used appropriately to ensure learners are safe at work. A designated senior member of staff is in charge of safeguarding arrangements and has good links with Barnsley safeguarding board. Not all staff have received training on safeguarding; this is planned. Safe working

practices are well promoted and learners have a very good understanding of health and safety.

23. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. During the induction period, all learners achieve an internally certificated equality and diversity award which helps them to relate equality and diversity issues to their workplace. Equality of opportunity is reinforced well during reviews of learners' progress. Staff benefit from regular training in equality and diversity, which is organised by the two equality and diversity champions. An appropriate equality and diversity policy which includes bullying and harassment ensures and promotes equality of opportunity. Learners demonstrate good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Future-Wize is making good progress on their single equalities action plan; progress against the plan is reviewed regularly. Data are analysed regarding the participation of different groups of learners. Success rates of different types of learners are analysed. Learners receiving additional learning support achieve slightly less well than others, but the numbers are very low. There are no significant differences in the success rates of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Males achieve less well than females and this is being investigated by Future-Wize.
24. Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. There are policies and procedures for key processes, although all processes have not been finalised. Internal verification is very thorough; it covers a wide range of activities and is used to inform improvements, although the internal verification strategy requires updating.
25. The process for the observation of teaching and learning is outdated and not used sufficiently to inform improvements. The documentation is out-of-date and some of the comments do not match the grade awarded; there is no moderation; the system is too reliant on one observer; and there is insufficient training for observers. Currently there is no formal method of sharing good practice in teaching and learning.
26. Resources are well managed and Future-Wize provides good value for money. Success rates are good and learners make good progress. Assessor caseloads are reviewed regularly and are appropriate. Resources for staff and learners are good. Good additional learning support is provided to learners by specialist staff.

Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the LSC, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Future-Wize Ltd

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time learners	190				190
Overall effectiveness	2				2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2				2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>					
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>					
Quality of provision	2				2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2				2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>					
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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