

Hull Business Training Centre Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52402
Name of lead inspector: Sally Palmer, HMI
Last day of inspection: 15 January 2010
Type of provider: Independent learning provider
Address: 5 Spyvee Street
Hull
HU8 7JJ
Telephone number: 01482 211714

Information about the provider

1. Hull Business Training Centre Ltd (HBTC) is a private training provider based in Hull, East Yorkshire. It was incorporated in 1994. HBTC provides work-based learning programmes in business administration, customer service, information technology, direct training and support, and learning and development, supporting teaching and learning in schools and retail. Business administration provision was specifically inspected, although inspectors did look at some aspects of other provision. The company offers training through Train to Gain, apprentice, young apprentice and adult apprenticeship programmes. It also delivers education and training programmes for providers, known as provider train programmes. Programmes are funded by the Yorkshire and the Humber Learning and Skills Council (LSC). About 96% of the company's business is publicly funded.

2. There are currently 176 learners. Of these 19 learners are young apprentices aged between 14 and 16 years, five are learners on Train to Gain programmes and 152 are apprentices.

3. Unemployment in August 2009 in Yorkshire and Humberside was 8.9% compared to 7.9% nationally. In 2009 the proportion of school leavers gaining five or more General Certificates in Secondary Education (GCSE) at grade C or above including mathematics and English in Yorkshire and Humberside was 46.9% compared with 50.4% in England. Just over 2% of the population of Hull are from a minority ethnic background. Over recent years increasing numbers of workers from Eastern Europe have settled in Hull.

4. HBTC provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Avant Partnerships (Train to Gain and young apprentices)
 - West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd (provider train)

| Type of provision | Number of enrolled learners in 2007/08 |
|---|--|
| Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships | 28 learners 286 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 3 |
| | Grade |
| Outcomes for learners | 2 |
| Quality of provision | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |
| Safeguarding | 3 |
| Equality and diversity | 3 |

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of HBTC’s provision is good. Success rates are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The young apprenticeship programme is outstanding. Managers have a clear focus on improving success rates and demanding targets are set and met throughout the organisation. Learners are making good progress. They feel safe and welcome in their workplace and training centre. Teaching and learning are satisfactory although learning strategies are insufficiently varied and topics are not always explored in sufficient depth. Learning resources are insufficiently varied; HBTC does not have an intranet for learners to use to access learning materials. The range of provision is good, learners can choose from a range of programmes and units that match their job role. Support for learners is satisfactory. Partnerships with employers and a local school are particularly good. Arrangements to assure learners’ safety are good. The promotion of equality and diversity and arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Value for money is good.

Main findings

- Success rates are very good. In 2008/09 overall success rates were 12% above the national rate. Timely success rates are outstanding and exceed national rates by 35%. Both overall and timely success rates have consistently improved since the previous inspection. The young apprenticeship programme has consistently outstanding success rates of 100%. Information and communication technology success rates are satisfactory.

- Most learners are making good progress. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners enjoy their learning programmes and are particularly well motivated to succeed. They develop a satisfactory range of work and personal skills and benefit from increases in their levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Learners have a very good understanding of health and safety, and demonstrate a sound knowledge of safe working practices. Learners feel safe and secure in their work environments.
- Training and coaching are satisfactory. Learners acquire good workplace knowledge from supervisors. Some learners receive off-the-job training in HBTC's centre. In the better group sessions learners contribute well and are effectively engaged. However, learning strategies are insufficiently varied and subjects are not always explored in sufficient depth to broaden learners' knowledge.
- Planning for assessment is good. Assessment plans are detailed and learners find these useful in preparing for assessors' visits to the workplace. Some assessors make good use of video and voice recording equipment. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently to support workplace visits. Internal verification is satisfactory. Observation reports on assessor performance are insufficiently evaluative and insufficiently focused on bringing about improvement. Learners' portfolios are of a good standard. Portfolios are well-structured and the quality of evidence is good. Learners do not retain sufficient control of their portfolios and tracking documentation. Individual learning plans are satisfactory and identify long-term aims. Learner reviews are satisfactory; however, some employers are not sufficiently involved in the review of learners' progress.
- HBTC has very good partnership arrangements. Good and productive links have developed with a local school through the very successful young apprenticeship programme. HBTC supports employers by providing them with highly suitable learners who quickly become an asset to the business. HBTC prepares learners well for their placements. The provider has good arrangements with other local training providers to train each others' staff.
- Learners generally receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance. Arrangements to meet additional learning needs are satisfactory. Initial assessment informs the individual development plan. Learners complete good quality worksheets provided by assessors to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and they access support in workshops held at the centre. Resources are insufficiently interactive and varied.
- Managers have a clear focus on improving success rates and demanding targets are set and met throughout the organisation. HBTC uses high quality data well to monitor performance and to meet local and national skills needs.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Safe practices are well promoted. All staff have attended appropriate safeguarding training. Learners' understanding of health and safety is good. Data are not used well to analyse the performance of different groups of learners.

- All staff attend effective monthly quality workshops, during which improvement actions are identified. Arrangements for the quality assurance of some processes require updating. The quality of the reviews, individual learning plans, and teaching and learning is inconsistent. The self-assessment process does not clearly identify key strengths and areas for improvement and does not adequately lead to appropriate actions in the quality improvement plan.
- Value for money is good. An appropriate environmental policy is in place which focuses on conserving resources. Resources are managed effectively to meet the needs of learners.

What does HBTC need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates for ICT programmes to meet or exceed national averages.
- Review and update quality assurance policies and processes to better inform and drive quality improvement.
- Improve the self-assessment process to accurately identify areas for improvement and develop an effective quality improvement plan.
- Improve the quality of teaching, training and learning to increase variety and provide challenge to learners by utilising a good variety of learning resources and methods that sufficiently challenge and engage all learners.
- Increase the use of technology to improve the efficiency of assessment and access to learning resources.
- Ensure more employer involvement in the planning of training and the review of learners' progress.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- gaining employment, the work roles and the good working relationships
- not having to spend a lot of time in gathering evidence as it happens naturally in the work role
- the very understanding assessors
- the gains in confidence
- gaining a qualification
- improving skills.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the delays in starting on the programme due to changes in the assessors
- time spent in the training centre, some of the activities aren't useful or challenging
- the literacy and numeracy work is not challenging enough

- learners would like to have their portfolios with them so that they can work on them, on their own, in between assessor visits
- not having a copy of the reviews.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- assessors are good and explain things well
- the excellent service HBTC provides
- professional and friendly staff.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more information on the programme
- insufficient involvement in and information about their learners' national vocational qualification.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

6. HBTC has significantly improved success rates since the last inspection. Overall success rates are now very good and timely success rates are outstanding. Ambitious targets for success rates are set and met. The organisation has a clear mission and appropriate strategic priorities. At the last inspection equality of opportunity was outstanding; HBTC has not maintained an outstanding approach to equality of opportunity. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Arrangements for quality assurance and improvement were good at the time of the last inspection. The current arrangements have not been successful in identifying inconsistencies in the quality of provision.
7. HBTC has a written self-assessment process, which is insufficiently detailed. Staff contribute well to the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Many judgements are not clearly supported by evidence. The self-assessment report does not identify areas for improvement to be addressed in the quality improvement plan. However, the actions identified in the plan are relevant.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Success rates are very good. Both overall and timely success rates have consistently improved since the previous inspection. In 2008/09 overall success rates were very good at 81%. Timely success rates were outstanding at 79%. For business administration, which has the largest number of learners, overall success rates were 82% which is 12% above national rates, timely success rates at 81% exceeded national rates by 35%. The young apprenticeship programme has consistently outstanding success rates of 100%. ICT success rates in 2008/09 were satisfactory at 74%. Progression from level 2 to level 3 is satisfactory.
9. Most learners make good progress when taking their prior attainment into account. They make good progress with key skills and the technical certificates. However, some learners who had changes to their assessors made slow progress. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners enjoy their learning programmes and are particularly well motivated to succeed. Some learners attend additional courses and gain qualifications through their employers. They are ambitious to progress at work and to study higher level qualifications.
10. Learners develop a good range of work and personal skills. They benefit from increases in their levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Employers appreciate learners' increased skills and the useful contribution they make to the workplace.

11. Learners have a very good understanding of health and safety and demonstrate a sound knowledge of safe working practices. Learners feel safe and secure in their work environments. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity and safeguarding is satisfactory. Learners have the information that they need to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Learners' success is celebrated well at the apprentice award ceremonies. Learners take part in fund-raising and charitable work both in the centre and with their employers.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners receive effective coaching in the workplace to develop their skills. Good individual learning support is provided to learners in ICT workshops. Learners contribute well to discussion in group sessions and are effectively engaged most of the time. Learning strategies are insufficiently varied to maintain learner interest and challenge the more able learners. Topics are not always explored in sufficient depth to broaden learners' knowledge.
13. Assessment planning is good. Visits by assessors to learners' workplaces are regular and productive. Some assessors make good use of video and voice recording equipment. A satisfactory range of assessment methods are used and assessors provide particularly detailed reports on the outcomes of their visits. Learners do not have access to their portfolios in the workplace between assessor visits. They cannot easily track the progress they have made or know what work they need to complete. Assessors do not use their laptops on assessment visits to record details of assessments efficiently. Following some assessment visits, there is delay in feeding back the outcomes of assessment. Portfolios are satisfactory; they are well structured and presented.
14. Internal verification is satisfactory with regular and thorough sampling of evidence in portfolios. Comprehensive feedback is provided to assessors, however, reports on the performance of assessors are insufficiently evaluative and too few actions are identified that focus on improving assessor practice.
15. Individual learning plans are satisfactory; they clearly identify the contents of the learners' apprenticeship framework and longer term qualification aims. Most employers are involved in negotiation around the units that are most appropriate for the learner. However, there is insufficient planning and co-ordination of on- and off-the-job learning. Reviews are satisfactory. However, some employers are not sufficiently involved in discussion and review of the learner's progress. Learners are not given a copy of their review documents.
16. The range of provision is good. There is a good range of programmes, units and levels that learners are able to choose from that match their job role. A very good citizenship module is undertaken by young apprentices. However, some ICT learners find that the qualification is not appropriate for their job role.

17. Very effective links and partnerships have developed with a local school through the highly successful young apprenticeship programme. HBTC supports employers well, providing them with suitable apprentice applicants for their business. Learners are well prepared by HBTC for job interviews.
18. Support for learners is satisfactory. Induction is satisfactory. Health and safety and equality of opportunity is adequately covered and learners get a satisfactory insight to the programme they are about to embark on. However, some ICT learners are not guided well at the beginning of their programme. Most employers are very supportive of their apprentices. Support for learners with additional learning needs is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient variety in the resources used and learners find the work tedious and insufficiently challenging.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

19. Leadership and management are good. Managers have a clear focus on improving success rates which have continuously improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Staff contribute well to the strategic plan which identifies appropriate objectives and is aligned to the mission statement. Objectives are well matched to LSC priorities; HBTC evaluates its contribution to meeting these priorities annually. The organisation structure supports good communication, teamwork and the achievement of strategic objectives supported by responsible financial management. Realistic and demanding targets are set and generally met throughout the organisation. Progress against targets is monitored well. Progress made by learners is reviewed by managers and assessors at weekly assessor meetings. Staff are appraised annually, targets are set but they are not always sufficiently specific and detailed. Appropriate staff development needs are identified and staff benefit from a very good range of relevant staff development.
20. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Policies covering safeguarding are used appropriately to ensure learners are safe at work. HBTC works well to raise awareness of safeguarding with employers and learners. During the bi-monthly reviews of learners' progress, safeguarding issues are discussed with both employers and learners; these discussions are recorded. All relevant staff have completed a criminal records bureau (CRB) check, which is recorded in a single central record. All staff have received training in safeguarding. A designated senior member of staff is in charge of safeguarding. Effective arrangements ensure the health and safety of learners and staff. Safe working practices are well promoted; learners receive good information and training on health and safety.
21. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity issues. All staff have completed accredited training covering equality and diversity. Equal opportunities are reinforced well with both employers and learners during reviews of learners' progress. All employers are given good information on

- equality and diversity. There is some analysis of the performance of different groups of learners but this is analysed by leavers not by comparing success rates of different groups of learners. Participation by different groups of learners is analysed and has led to good actions to increase the numbers of male learners. The equality and diversity policy and complaints and compliments policies are appropriate, and complaints are dealt with appropriately.
22. HBTC has very good partnerships with employers. There is an excellent partnership with a local school through which an outstanding young apprenticeship programme is offered. Employer and learner questionnaires are used to gather feedback on the quality of provision.
 23. All staff attend an effective monthly quality workshop during which they consider a good range of accurate, timely performance data and benchmarking data. Staff identify actions to bring about improvement which they work to complete in the following month. Their progress is reviewed at subsequent workshops. Arrangements for the quality assurance of some processes require updating. HBTC has not identified the inconsistencies in the quality of reviews, individual learning plans or in the standard of teaching and learning identified by inspectors. The observation process is not used effectively to identify staff development needs, to ensure they are addressed or to continuously improve the quality of provision. Observation reports are insufficiently evaluative. HBTC do not produce a summary analysis of grades awarded or use this information to set improvement targets.
 24. Value for money is good. There has been a consistent improvement in both overall and timely success rates. Success rates are above the national average in most areas. Resources are well managed. Learners feel safe and secure, equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted and safeguarding is prioritised. An appropriate environmental policy focuses on conserving resources.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's centre 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.
26. 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)
Hull Business Training Centre 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 | Employer responsive |
|--|---------|-------|---------------------|
| Approximate number of enrolled learners | 176 | 19 | 157 |
| Full-time learners | | | |
| Part-time learners | | | |
| Overall effectiveness | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Capacity to improve | 3 | | |
| Outcomes for learners | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning? | 2 | | |
| How well do learners attain their learning goals? | 1 | | |
| 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 | | |
| Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?* | - | | |
| How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?* | 2 | | |
| Quality of provision | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development? | 3 | | |
| 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? | 3 | | |
| Leadership and management | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation? | 2 | | |
| How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?* | - | | |
| 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? | 3 | | |
| 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? | 3 | | |
| How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money? | 2 | | |

*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2010