

YMCA Training

Inspection report

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Name of lead inspector: Mike White HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. YMCA Training is a registered charity affiliated to the national council of YMCAs in England and is a company limited by guarantee. It was founded in 1978 in the north of England in response to the growing number of young people unable to find employment during the recession. Motivated by its Christian faith YMCA Training's vision is to: Inspire individuals to develop their talents and potential and so transform the communities in which they live and work.
2. YMCA Training operates from over 50 community based-locations across England and within eight of the nine English regions with a head office in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Of the total 586 staff employed by the provider, 244 directly deliver apprenticeships, Train to Gain or Foundation Learning programmes.
3. YMCA Training provides Apprenticeship provision and Train to Gain provision, Foundation Learning, programmes supported by the European Social Fund, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded programmes, and private training. The Skills Funding Agency manages the national Train to Gain and Apprenticeship delivery through a single contracting arrangement, led by the South East region. DWP provision was separately inspected in June 2008 and June 2009. Government-funded training accounts for approximately 96% of overall business.
4. YMCA Training offers apprenticeships in health, public services and care; horticulture; engineering and manufacturing technologies; retail and commercial enterprise; sport, leisure and recreation and business, administration and law. It offers Train to Gain provision in health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprise; sport, leisure and recreation; Skills for Life, and business, administration and law. The inspection graded provision in early years apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision and in the Entry to Employment (E2E) employability training provision. Evidence from inspection of the other subjects was used to inform the common inspection framework aspects.
5. YMCA Training provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Igen (employability training)
 - Doncaster Local Authority (Connexions) (pre E2E)
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of YMCA Training:
 - BYPP (employability training)
 - Progress Sports Ltd (employability training)
 - Vale Royal Skills Academy (employability training)
 - Warrington Collegiate (employability training)
 - London Central YMCA (Sports and Leisure)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	397 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment (E2E)	2,422 learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	1,448 learners 2,338 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	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject areas	
Child development and well-being	2
Employability training	3

Overall effectiveness

7. Overall effectiveness is good. Apprentices and learners on Train to Gain programmes achieve good results and develop good work skills to the benefit of employers. Learners on E2E programmes develop good personal and social skills with a satisfactory and increasing proportion entering employment, education or training. Attention to health and safety is good and learners say they feel safe. A good range of activities supports the understanding of healthy living and enables learners to contribute well to the local and wider community.
8. Teaching, learning and assessment clearly focus on meeting individual needs through thorough initial assessment, good teaching with high quality learning materials and very effective support to develop literacy and numeracy skills. The provider is particularly good at working with a wide range of partners to engage with prospective learners from disadvantaged groups and guide them onto the most appropriate programme. The level of support for those learners on programme is excellent.
9. YMCA Training has a clear vision and mission which is well supported by staff and by the board of trustees who provide rigorous challenge or support as appropriate. The management of projects to meet national and local priorities or to improve provision is highly effective. Arrangements to safeguard learners of all ages are good, whilst the arrangements for promoting equality and diversity are satisfactory and improving. The overall process of self-assessment is satisfactory but whilst considerable investment has been made in the observation of teaching and learning it remains underdeveloped. Overall YMCA Training provides good value for money.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall and timely success rates for most apprentices are increasing and high. Success rates for most Train to Gain learners are high, and in warehousing and distribution, outstanding. Whilst improving, the progression for E2E learners into employment, education or further training is satisfactory, though too much variation exists across centres. The achievement of qualifications on E2E programmes is good.
- Apprentices and learners on Train to Gain programmes make good developments in their work skills to the benefit of employers. E2E learners demonstrate good development of their personal and social skills. Current learners are making good progress towards achieving their qualifications. There are no significant differences in the performance of different cohorts.
- Attention to health and safety is good and learners feel safe in training centres and with employers. YMCA Training has good arrangements to help E2E learners make informed choices about their health and well-being. Good use is made of external agencies to promote personal and sexual health. Pre 16 and E2E learners make a good contribution to the community through a wide range of activities.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Initial assessment is used effectively to plan for learning and assessment. Training methods make good use of effective and stimulating resources. Support for literacy and numeracy needs is particularly strong for E2E learners. Assessment practices for apprentices on child development and well-being programmes are good. Assessors model good practice and set high standards.
- A wide range of programmes effectively links pre 16 provision through E2E to apprenticeships, and in some subjects, level 4 qualifications. Planning and preparation to deliver foundation learning is very good. Work placement opportunities meet learners' needs well. E2E learners benefit from well designed activities to develop their personal and social skills, develop understanding of health and well-being, and engage in community and enterprise activities.
- Work with partner organisations is very effective both at national and local levels. The work with schools, Connexions, and local community groups is very effective in attracting learners from disadvantaged groups. Links with specialist support groups are strong and well used to help learners overcome personal barriers to achievement. Links with the Army and RAF are well used to provide team building activities to E2E learners.
- Individual and personal support for learners is excellent. Staff have a very good understanding of the individual needs of learners and ensure that everything possible is done to support learners to achieve to their potential. Strong links with external agencies benefit learners, ensuring timely and appropriate referral and intervention. Learners receive very good initial information and advice to help them choose the most appropriate programme.
- The leadership team and board have a good vision of the priorities for the company's development. The comprehensive corporate strategy very effectively promotes a culture of inclusion and continuous improvement. Communication of the strategy to staff is good with staff feeling strong ownership of it. Staff feel valued and well supported with good communication within and across centres. Detailed reports and updates from directors enable the board to provide good challenge and support.
- Project management is highly effective in promoting and implementing national and local priorities. Such well planned projects include implementation of a very detailed action plan for the delivery of functional skills. Projects link carefully to the corporate strategy and are very effective in planning for resources. Monitoring and evaluation of projects is good.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. Robust procedures support a clear and detailed policy for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding developments are subject to rigorous internal and external scrutiny prior to implementation. Support for staff is currently being further strengthened through a national team of locally based safeguarding advisers.
- Promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity are satisfactory. YMCA Training is highly effective in widening participation. Monitoring the performance of different groups is satisfactory. Promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is satisfactory. Support for staff is effective although

staff training is not sufficiently systematic. Equality and diversity issues are not consistently identified through the observation of teaching and learning.

- The management of improvement projects is highly effective. The use of data to improve programme performance, the management of underperforming centres and the management of subcontracted provision are all good. While much work has gone into developing the observation of teaching and learning, it remains underdeveloped and reports are inconsistent. Self-assessment is satisfactory overall, however, the quality of local self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans are too variable.

What does YMCA Training need to do to improve further?

- Continue the detailed monitoring of learner progress to further improve apprenticeship and Train to Gain success rates and E2E progression rates to meet those of the highest performing centres.
- Continue to develop and implement the equality and diversity action plan to ensure a systematic programme of staff training to better promote staff understanding of the issues and enable better reinforcement of equality and diversity issues with learners.
- Further develop systems for the systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment, to ensure consistent reporting and challenging actions to promote improvement.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good support and help from training advisers
- feeling protected and being able to talk to anyone about problems
- the encouragement to do their best
- being able to go at their own pace on a programme that fits in with work and home life
- the detailed information provided about the programmes, so they knew what to expect.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the size of classrooms – some are cramped at times
- the range of topics covered as there is too much emphasis on interview skills
- the number of opportunities to meet with other learners to share experiences.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the well planned and coordinated training
- the way that the provider works hard to sort out any problems
- the good communication with assessors
- the good support for learners
- the flexibility to work around our business pressure points
- the professional and knowledgeable staff.

What employers would like to see improved:

- Better communication of learner progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. YMCA Training demonstrates a good capacity to make and sustain improvement. Since the last inspection, the provider has made good improvements to the provision. Success rates are now good overall and satisfactory for E2E learners. While some variations exist, a rigorous process systematically uses detailed data to monitor and improve progress. The current year's data indicates a continued improving trend.
11. Strategic management of the provision and oversight by the board is highly effective. The strategic use of data to monitor progress is good. National and local priorities are promoted well, through highly effective project management. The development and use of management information is particularly effective in supporting management processes. Partnerships are good and enhance the learner experience very well.
12. At the last inspection, sharing of good practice to raise standards was insufficient. YMCA Training now has a range of processes to share good practice. Staff have the opportunity to undertake training and to be involved in the observation process. Other staff act as equality and diversity advisers or become involved in quality improvement groups. Effective sharing of good practice takes place through the monthly operational update newsletter which shares information as well as celebrating achievement.
13. The process for the observation of teaching and learning is now well established. Although aspects of it remain underdeveloped, an evaluation by YMCA Training has identified and introduced necessary improvements. Thorough training supports the development of the process.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

14. Outcomes for learners are good. The large numbers of apprentices and advanced apprentices in childcare, learning and development, and in retailing and wholesaling have high overall and timely success rates with a three-year trend of improvement. Horticulture, a small programme offered at one centre, is highly successful and continuing to further improve in 2009/10.
15. For the large numbers of Train to Gain learners in childcare, learning and development, and in retailing and wholesaling, both overall and timely success rates are high. For those in warehousing and distribution overall and timely success rates are outstanding.
16. Overall and timely success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices in business administration, customer service, and the small numbers of learners in engineering are improving but remain satisfactory.

17. Most learners on the E2E programme have good achievement of qualifications and good development of personal and social skills although their progression into employment, training, or further education, whilst improving, remains satisfactory.
18. Where programmes are recognised to be underperforming, such as health and social care, the provider has made significant changes to the programmes, including altering the delivery methods, or where appropriate, removing provision, resulting in improved success rates during 2009/10.
19. YMCA Training has a good understanding of variations in the performance of different geographical locations, taking carefully considered actions to address these. Where locations showed underperformance during 2008/09, figures for 2009/10 indicate that the actions taken to improve them have been successful. There are no significant differences in the performance of different cohorts where numbers are large enough to make comparison appropriate.
20. As confirmed by employers, learners make good developments in their work skills, self confidence, and increased motivation to the benefit of their employers. E2E learners' achievement of personal and social development is good and many benefit from a well designed range of enterprise activities. Most current learners are making good progress towards achieving their chosen qualifications.
21. Learners confirm that learning environments are safe and welcoming. Personal safety has a high profile and arrangements to ensure that vulnerable learners remain safe are good. Attention to health and safety is good. Informative leaflets provide useful guidance on remaining safe whilst using communication technology such as the internet, social networking sites and mobile phones.
22. Arrangements to ensure learners are able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being are appropriate for each type of learner. For example, E2E learners benefit from weekly sessions aimed at developing knowledge of healthy eating and nutrition. Good use is made of external agencies to provide information and guidance on a range of personal and sexual health, drugs awareness and well-being issues. E2E and pre-16 learners make a good contribution to the community, including activities to raise money for charities and increase local awareness of issues such as cyber bullying.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

23. Teaching, training and assessment are good. Learning plans clearly focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. In the better sessions, learners are fully engaged and actively learning. There are examples of very good learning resources for sex education and healthy eating, which includes DVDs, films and games. Assessment and verification of learner work is good. Written documentation is prepared well and planning for learning is effective. Staff involved in training and assessment are well qualified, experienced and receive good continuous professional development. Technology is used appropriately in

- most lessons. As recognised by the provider the use of e-learning is underdeveloped with appropriate plans in place to address this. The promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity is broadly satisfactory, however, some staff miss opportunities to reinforce key messages with learners.
24. Support for literacy and numeracy is very effective. Learners speak positively about the sensitive way support is provided. Initial assessment is thorough and leads to careful planning of learning matched to the needs and interests of learners. On apprenticeship programmes key skills arrangements are good. For example, in health and social care, key skills are effectively mapped to the technical certificate and contextualised to aid learner understanding.
 25. A good range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. YMCA Training is able to offer a broad range of qualifications across a wide range of occupational areas, including level 4 qualifications in some subjects. Programmes effectively link pre-16 provision to E2E programmes and apprenticeships. There are many examples of learners starting their learning with YMCA Training on 14-16 provision and progressing through the levels to permanent employment.
 26. Work placement opportunities are good and vary from world wide recognised organisations such as Premier League football clubs and major retail organisations, through to micro organisations. Generally, employers are fully involved in the learning process and work well with YMCA Training staff. Assessment activity is flexible and meets the needs of employers and learners. Very good use is made of alternative funding streams to add enrichment activities for the benefit of learners. Some examples include driving lessons for learners, tractor driving lessons for horticulture learners, and use of industry comparable equipment within motor vehicle programmes.
 27. YMCA Training works very effectively with partners and other organisations. At a national level, senior managers are active members of steering groups working with awarding bodies and other policy making groups. As a result, YMCA Training is well prepared, organised and informed in relation to developing functional skills provision.
 28. Locally, managers and staff are fully involved in working with community groups. Clear links exist with specialist support groups to ensure that the needs of learners with identified barriers to learning are effectively met. YMCA Training is very effective in working with schools and within communities to attract learners from disadvantaged groups, or those with negative previous experience of education and training. Partnerships with employers are also extremely successful. The provider has expanded and adapted its provision well in response to national priorities. In addition to the strong links with employers, the provider works very well with the Connexions Service. YMCA Training also has successful partnership arrangements with public services bodies such as the RAF at Chester and the Army at Warrington, which are well used to aid team-building exercises for E2E learners.

29. Learners receive outstanding individual and personal support. Learners make excellent use of individual support and advice on practical issues to help them access and complete their courses. Staff have very good links with external support agencies and are very effective at judging when it is appropriate to refer learners for specialist advice and guidance. Support staff have a very good understanding of learners' specific difficulties and/or disabilities and learners generally make good progress. For example, YMCA Training staff successfully negotiated a part-time programme for one learner in a carefully selected work setting, to enable the learner to remain on programme. Learners receive very good initial information and advice to help them choose the most appropriate programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

30. Leadership and management are good. Very effective use is made of YMCA Training's comprehensive corporate strategy and detailed annual plan to develop a business that promotes a culture of inclusion and continuous improvement. Internal communication is good. A variety of channels are used very well to communicate the corporate strategy to staff, including an initiative for staff to outline formally how they can contribute to one objective each. The monthly operational update newsletter provides comprehensive information on a range of organisational topics and priorities. The management structure is well defined. The role of the leadership team is very clear in relation to monitoring progress towards challenging strategic objectives.
31. Operational managers feel well supported by senior managers. A highly supportive leadership development programme is in place. Centre management and communication across centres are good. Staff feel valued and well supported. Comprehensive and regular performance reviews take place at all levels, link well to the annual plan, and identify clear individual staff targets. The annual appraisal is detailed and thorough. The strategic use of data to monitor performance is good. The development and use of the management information system is particularly effective in supporting management processes. The management of facilities and health and safety is satisfactory.
32. YMCA Training promotes and implements national and local priorities through highly effective project management. Such well planned projects include implementation of a very detailed action plan for the delivery of functional skills. Projects link carefully to the strategy document and are very effective in planning for resources. Monitoring and evaluation of projects is good.
33. The YMCA Training board and leadership team have a good vision of the priorities for the company's development. The reporting schedule to the board and committees is highly effective. They receive detailed reports and up-dates from directors. Good use is made of data to inform the board and strategy committee about performance across the provision. Board members challenge directors and provide good leadership and direction.

34. YMCA Training has good arrangements for effectively promoting the safeguarding of learners. The provider has a clear and detailed policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults supported by robust procedures. An updated policy and procedure has been recently implemented following rigorous internal and external scrutiny of draft updates. An external organisation is used to ensure that all staff are CRB checked every three years with the results held in a central register. Safe recruitment procedures have recently been further strengthened ensuring all new staff have received enhanced CRB clearance and basic safeguarding training prior to taking up employment. An online basic awareness training package has been supplemented with additional training in response to staff comments in the annual staff survey. A designated member of the senior management team is responsible for safeguarding throughout the provider. Arrangements to promote safeguarding are further strengthened through the employment of a national safeguarding manager and development of a national team of safeguarding advisers to provide guidance and support to locations across the country. Locations have developed good links with local Safeguarding Children's Boards or, dependent upon the make up of learners, other relevant bodies.
35. Arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory overall. YMCA Training is highly effective in widening participation to vulnerable learners and pre-16 young learners excluded from school, providing good support to meet individual needs and helping learners to overcome barriers to progression. A wide range of partnerships is highly effective in promoting inclusion in deprived local communities and developing career pathways for learners. Satisfactory policies and procedures are in place for equality and diversity, including anti-bullying. Equality and diversity advisers are effective in supporting staff at local centres. Advisers have received satisfactory training to levels 2 and 3 in equality and diversity. They now meet formally to review equality and diversity matters and to implement and monitor the improvement plan. YMCA Training monitors the performance of different groups of learners satisfactorily at national and centre levels.
36. YMCA Training creates a positive, caring learning environment for all learners and staff based on mutual respect. Promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is satisfactory overall. E2E learners increase their understanding of equality issues through a wide range of community activities and projects. The management of incidents and complaints is effective. However, regular training to increase staff understanding of equality and diversity issues is not sufficiently systematic. The observation of teaching and learning process is not consistent in identifying equality and diversity issues.
37. Arrangements for the collection of learners', employers' and staff feedback through questionnaires are satisfactory. Surveys are adequately analysed and the outcomes used effectively in the self-assessment report. A detailed participant engagement policy and procedure is in place. The good use of focus groups enhances learner feedback. Arrangements to work, support and engage with local partnerships are good.

38. The management of improvement projects is highly effective through a range of quality improvement groups with detailed project plans. The use of data to monitor and improve programme performance is good. The management of underperforming centres is very good. The management of subcontracted provision is good. Subcontract managers make weekly visits to subcontractors to carry out monitoring activities. Subcontractors have clear performance targets which are monitored at quarterly formal performance meetings. Underperformance leads to targeted support with decisive action for continued underperformance. While much work has gone into developing the process for observing teaching and learning, it remains underdeveloped and inconsistent in reporting. A review early in 2010, identified some issues and modified the process, however, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of changes.
39. The self-assessment process is satisfactory overall. The process is inclusive and takes account of stakeholder feedback. The 2009 national self-assessment report is generally clear and detailed. It accurately identifies many of the strengths in the provision, including the good strategic and operational management as well as the good focus on continuous improvement driven by the annual plan. However, it fails to identify the areas for improvement in equality and diversity and the process for observing teaching and learning. The SAR executive update prepared for inspection is accurate in most grades, but over estimates the grades for leadership and management, capacity to improve and equality and diversity. The annual plan and national quality improvement plans are detailed. However, the quality of the local self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans varies across centres.
40. YMCA Training has good resources for teaching, training and assessment. Staff are well qualified and have relevant vocational experience. Appropriate use is made of information technologies (IT). Learner outcomes are good and improving. Very good use is made of alternative funding streams to enrich the curriculum. The range of staff training and development to support individual learning needs and the curriculum is good. Good arrangements are in place to promote sustainable resources. The policy and practice on recycling materials is good. The provision represents good value for money.

Subject areas

Child development and well-being

Grade 2

Context

41. Currently 799 learners are working towards level 2 and level 3 qualifications in child development and well-being. Of these 640 are on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships and 159 are on Train to Gain programmes. The significant majority of learners are employed. Training takes place either in the training centre or in the workplace to meet learners' and employers' needs. Assessors regularly visit learners at work to provide assessment and to review their progress.

Key findings

- Outcomes for the majority of learners are good. Both overall and timely success rates are high showing a clear trend of improvement. Timely success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices have improved significantly over the last three years. Current learners' progress towards completion is very good.
- Learners enjoy their learning and make good progress in developing self-confidence, new skills, and knowledge valued by their employers. Portfolios are well organised and contain a good standard of learners' work. Progression onto higher qualifications is good. Many learners discover new methods to help overcome problems and learn new ways of doing their jobs to the benefit of employers.
- Learners understand their rights and responsibilities and make a greater contribution in the workplace, which is valued by employers. Learners say they feel safe in their workplaces and at YMCA Training centres. Attention to safe working practices and awareness of health and safety guidance and procedures are good.
- The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good overall. Initial assessment is used effectively to plan for learning and assessment. Careful selection and interview processes ensure learners are placed on an appropriate level of course and that training is matched to learners' needs and interests. However, some opportunities are missed to encourage Advanced Apprentices to take more active ownership of their learning.
- The opportunity to share experiences of different workplaces to improve their own practice is greatly valued by those learners attending workshops. These very well planned sessions match the needs and interests of the learners. Learners particularly enjoy developing key skills, readily applying them to their work with children.
- Assessment practice is good and assessors are very experienced, have good subject knowledge and sector skills. Coaching is well crafted and learners look forward to meeting with their assessor, finding the experience rewarding.

Assessors model good practice and support which motivates learners through their professionalism and by setting high standards.

- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. YMCA Training has a culture of care and support within the organisation which is highly valued by learners and employers. Trainers proactively encourage personal growth and development alongside achievement of the award. The provision is very well planned to provide progression routes from pre-16 to level 4.
- The majority of learners are clearly aware of the rate of progress they are making and what they have to do to complete their course. Assessors are flexible and use initial assessment information very well to set a well matched pace for each learner which best suits their individual needs.
- Resources to support learning are good. Training materials are of a good standard and are used well by trainers. In some centres they have developed very good training materials which are issued to learners in workshops or during reviews in the workplace.
- There are many good and supportive employers. A minority of employers are not sufficiently involved in planning and reviewing learning. In other areas, for example Salford, employers have a strong working relationship including the selection of staff.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff are well qualified and vocationally experienced. A highly supportive team ethos within a culture of continuous improvement very effectively meets the needs of each learner. Staff are well supported by managers across local and regional areas in particular. Staff consider YMCA Training to be a good employer.
- Regular monitoring of all aspects of provision uses data effectively ensuring timely success. In some areas additional funding is actively sought to provide a breadth of experience for the learners. Involvements in an inclusive Self-assessment report (SAR) process combined with very effective quality assurance methods have improved quality and success rates.
- Employer and learner feedback is strong and evaluative. Good analysis of this information is used well to introduce improvements.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. In one area staff training is overdue and there are some poor resources used with learners during induction. Equality and diversity are promoted during reviews but some good opportunities are missed to further reinforce this learning.

What does YMCA Training need to do to improve further?

- Further embed the understanding and application of equality and diversity by more detailed questioning during reviews and a review of learning materials.
- Further enable individual ownership of learning for Advanced Apprenticeship by encouraging individuals to explain how they might provide evidence to meet performance criteria.

- Further share best practice to ensure all employers are fully involved in planning and reviewing learning.

Employability training

Grade 3

Context

42. Currently 666 learners are following the E2E programme nationally from 23 YMCA Training locations and 4 sub-contracting arrangements. Learners receive an induction lasting up to 6 weeks. Most learners complete a period of work experience in a chosen vocational area. In addition to receiving support to improve their skills in literacy, numeracy, language and ICT skills, learners have the opportunity to achieve a vocational and/or employability qualification.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Progression rates from E2E to employment, training or further education are satisfactory. Action to improve the rates has had an impact and progression rates have increased from 54% in 2007/08, and 52% in 2008/09 to a current rate of 57%. Progression rates are highest at the largest centres but there remains too much variation across the centres, the lowest at 33% and the highest at 74%.
- Achievement of personal and social development goals is good. The development of employability skills and job seeking skills is particularly strong with learners overcoming multiple barriers to succeed. Learners change their life styles to maintain their health and well-being. The achievement of qualifications for most learners is good. The celebration of learner success is very good.
- Learners feel very safe and are constantly reassured that their safety is important both in training centres and the workplace. Learners have very good involvement in community-based developments and projects. These activities inspire the young people to value themselves and understand the importance of their role in, and contribution to, the community.
- Most teaching, training and assessment are good. Initial assessment is used well with all learners to plan all aspects of their development. It is particularly strong for their literacy and numeracy needs.
- Training methods are appropriate and use very effective and stimulating resources. The promotion and consideration of equality and diversity is effectively planned into learning sessions. Contributions from a wide range of external sources are also used well to engage and inform learners.
- Staff are well qualified and have good opportunities for personal and professional development including gaining qualifications in teaching and delivering basic skills. Their involvement in functional skills development groups impacts positively on learners.
- Verbal feedback to learners is good. It is individual, supportive, and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Progress reviews take place regularly and are recorded well. Employers contribute positively to the review process. In some cases, however, personal learning objectives are not sufficiently broken down into specific and measurable milestones that capture all aspects of their development.

- The provision is extremely effective in meeting the needs of a wide range of learners, many of whom are at risk. The provision is structured to ensure seamless progression routes for 14-16 year olds through to the apprenticeship programmes. The planning and preparation to deliver the requirements of foundation learning is good.
- Work experience opportunities are good, responding well to learners' preferences and development needs. YMCA Training works very effectively with a network of employers to offer a good range of work experience, work placement or volunteering. Learners receive good support during their work experience. A good range of enrichment activities inspires learners and broadens their experiences.
- Partnership arrangements are good. YMCA Training works very closely with Connexions to provide an overall package of support for learners before, during and after their programme. It networks effectively with other training providers to address the needs of young people who are not in employment, education or training.
- Learners receive particularly good individual support and care. The approach ensures that everything possible is done for the learners to support them to reach their potential. Information and advice is timely. YMCA Training works with a range of local specialist agencies that contribute well to the programme, giving very effective individual support.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team work at centre level is good, as is communication across centres. Managers raise expectations and have prepared very well for the transition to functional skills and foundation learning. Staff feel valued and well supported and take up opportunities for training and development and progression within the organisation. Safeguarding is satisfactory. Management ensure that learners are safe and promote its importance to learners well.
- Staff contribute well to self-assessment but the quality of the centre level SAR and quality improvement plans vary across centres, with some improvement plans having limited actions. Centres are at different stages in the development of their observation of teaching and learning process but it is not yet sufficiently effective across all centres.
- Effective use is made of learner focus groups but there is insufficient use of the national feedback from learners and employers to fully involve them in programme development.

What does YMCA Training need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the use of data to reduce variability in progression to employment, education and training between centres to further close any achievement gaps.
- Consistently break down personal learning objectives into specific and measurable targets with clear milestones against which progress can be measured.

- Continue to improve the process of self-assessment and action planning to secure improvement.

Information about the inspection

43. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Director of Quality, 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 local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
44. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. 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)
YMCA Training

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	16-18 Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	901	672	0
Part-time learners	1838	0	1838
Overall effectiveness	2	3	2
Capacity to improve	2		
Outcomes for learners	2	3	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		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?*	2		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2		
Quality of provision	2	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?	1		
Leadership and management	2	3	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?*	2		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
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

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