

# PM Training

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		11–15 May 2015
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- very effective training programmes improve the life chances of learners and the curriculum offer effectively meets the needs of both learners and the local community
- progression for all learners is good
- learners benefit from the good training, coaching and individual guidance
- both managers and staff have high expectations for the learners
- the promotion of English and mathematics through discrete provision in functional skills and the embedding of mathematics in vocational sessions is good
- strategic and operational partnership working is outstanding in enabling a highly effective curriculum including real experience of work
- governance arrangements are particularly effective in steering the direction of the provider
- safeguarding arrangements are particularly effective
- there is a strong ethos of equality and diversity and social inclusion throughout the organisation.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- written feedback to learners does not sufficiently reflect the high quality of verbal feedback they receive from assessors
- the development of English is not sufficiently integrated into vocational training; staff do not routinely and systematically identify and correct errors in learners' English in their written work
- tutors do not sufficiently exploit opportunities to develop further learners' knowledge of equality and diversity issues.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that assessors provide learners with more detailed written feedback to the same high standard as the verbal feedback they give, so that learners know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further.
- Ensure greater rigour in staff's identification and correction of learners' English in their written work
- Support staff in the integration of English into vocational training to the same high standard as found with mathematics
- Provide training to tutors to enable them to better identify and exploit opportunities to further learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

### Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The contract values for the study programme (including traineeships) and apprenticeship provision are similar. However, at the time of this inspection due to the variation within the year there were four times as many apprentices as learners on study programmes. A little over a quarter of the apprentices are advanced apprentices and the remainder intermediate apprentices. There are similar numbers of 16 to 18-year-old and older intermediate apprentices, whereas only a quarter of advanced apprentices are aged 16 to 18. The largest numbers of current apprentices are working towards qualifications in business administration or construction, the next largest number in engineering. There were smaller numbers working towards qualifications in warehousing and distribution, horticulture or information and communication technologies, and a very few in health and social care.</li> <li>▪ Learners on all programmes develop their personal, social and employability skills well. This is particularly pronounced for those on study programmes, many of whom join the programme with very low previous academic achievement, low self-esteem and a range of behavioural issues. Learners are rightly proud of the high quality of the work they produce; they gain in confidence and become very articulate. They also develop attitudes and behaviours which prepare them well for the next stage of their training and enhance their job prospects, including punctuality and good attendance.</li> <li>▪ The proportion of learners successfully completing their learning goals or intended qualification is high. The percentage of apprentices achieving their frameworks declined in 2012/13 but recovered in the following year to be significantly above the national average; the percentage doing so within the expected time-frame is relatively low but also significantly above the national average in most subject areas. Current apprentices are making good progress. A very large majority of them are making expected or better progress towards completion in a timely manner, and complete their functional skills qualification within the first six months of their programmes.</li> <li>▪ Learners on the study programme achieve their functional skills targets well. Most of these learners and most of those on traineeships achieve the aims of their programmes well, including successful progression to a positive destination such as an apprenticeship.</li> <li>▪ The gap between the percentages of male and female learners gaining their qualifications has closed steadily over the last three years. The achievement gap between White British learners and those from each of any other ethnic background shows no identifiable trend due to the low numbers of non-White British learners. Similarly, the achievement gap between the small numbers of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities and those without has actually reversed.</li> </ul>	

- Recent improvements in the management of the subcontracts have resulted in a closing of the achievement gap between learners in directly managed and subcontracted provision.
- Learners' progression is good. A large majority of learners on study programmes progress to positive destinations, mostly into an apprenticeship, almost all of which are through PM Training. Those placed with other employers during their work experience often gain employment as apprentices with the same firm. The majority gain their work experience through 'Homeworks'. Construction apprentices gain useful additional qualifications which enhance their employment prospects. As is the norm in this sector, relatively few progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships. A small but increasing number of learners are taking advantage of progression routes to gain a second apprenticeship at either intermediate or advanced level. Progression into employment is good. PM Training's own staff include a number of former study-programme learners and apprentices.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting the good outcomes for learners. The subject areas graded cover most of PM Training's provision.
- All learners benefit from good training, coaching and individual guidance, which increase their confidence very effectively so they make good progress in developing communication, personal and social skills. For instance, they improve their skills in engineering, brickwork and joinery, and can use telephones and computers effectively. One apprentice learned not only the importance of good time management in ensuring the correct goods are loaded promptly, but also how time taken to check that customer orders are accurate reduces the financial loss that comes with errors.
- Assessors have high expectations of learners which are reflected in the high levels of learners' success. They are industry specialists, using their workplace knowledge to make learning relevant and show great empathy in their support for learners.
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are good and start well before enrolment through collaborative work with and visits to schools, scout and explorer groups, and a range of local venues. The initial selection process for learners is very thorough and open. Assessors gain a detailed picture of learners' initial abilities in English, mathematics and their existing work skills. They liaise closely with employers to identify and set clear and appropriate workplace objectives that effectively meet the needs of the business and the apprentice.
- These assessments ensure those learners who are in need receive careful support to enable them to complete their study programmes with many then progressing to an apprenticeship. Within the 'Homeworks' programme (working with housing providers delivering maintenance of homes, gardens and community spaces and with public private and third sector organisations I under contract), learners gain real work experience in painting and decorating, gardening and other environmental work. Supervisors are immensely supportive. They have received training in mentoring skills that help learners improve their self-esteem, confidence and practical skills in home and environmental maintenance.
- Employers and apprentices clearly understand what is expected of them and what will be provided. Assessors suggest other training opportunities if the courses they offer are not suitable to meet applicants' immediate needs. Information provided throughout their programmes allows apprentices to plan next steps to meet their long-term goals.
- The quality of learning resources is good. An increasing number of interesting resources are available in the online portfolio. In-group training sessions, resources, such as handouts, are detailed and provide a long-term, useful record for apprentices.
- Most apprentices find the online portfolio system useful because it helps them to present evidence easily and monitor their progress independently. They receive prompt feedback on their work and the majority use this feedback well to improve. Oral feedback is generally encouraging and supportive. However, the records of these discussions are not sufficiently detailed for learners' use later for reference.

- Those learners who lack the required mathematics or English qualifications make good progress toward achieving them during their course. Some assessors link mathematics and English skills into workplace practices well. For example, within engineering apprentices apply their mathematical skills highly effectively. However, too few learners progress to levels beyond those required in the frameworks; across all programmes, there is insufficient emphasis on the development and correction of English.
- Apprentices value highly the strong mutual respect and trust in their working relationships with their assessors. Assessors, however, do not take enough advantage of everyday workplace situations to hold stimulating discussions that raise awareness of equality and diversity beyond the basic requirements of employment rights and responsibilities. Rigorous checks on safeguarding and health and safety in the workplace ensure that apprentices feel safe.

## Engineering and manufacturing

### Apprenticeships

Good

#### **Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering and manufacturing are good because:**

- success rates on engineering and manufacturing are good and improving; timely success rates for manufacturing apprenticeships, the largest cohort, are well above average
- employers value highly the good practical skills learners develop within engineering workshops; this is having a positive impact on learners' employment opportunities and further increases their confidence as they are given more complex tasks within the workplace
- assessment practices within engineering and manufacturing are good; learners benefit from regular assessments which ensure they are aware of their progress, and assessors ensure feedback is delivered in a positive and constructive manner which encourages learners' progress; a very diverse range of evidence is used to confirm learners' competence
- development of functional mathematics is outstanding; learners can readily articulate how their mathematical skills are developing with a view to applying them in the workplace
- a large majority of learners' functional English skills are well developed through routine correction of spelling and grammar
- staff involved with learners' development have very high expectations for learners and encourage them to improve their skills through clear verbal feedback, particularly within the engineering workshop; however, written target-setting is insufficiently precise in a small number of cases
- information, advice and guidance are good; learners are given the opportunity to make informed choices about their career through taster days and extended periods within the engineering workshop
- learners feel safe both in the engineering workshop and within the workplace; safety is well promoted within the training centre environment and in the workplace; learners are actively encouraged to develop high levels of awareness around risk assessments and industry-related safety.

#### **Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering and manufacturing are not yet outstanding because:**

- English skills are not sufficiently highlighted by assessors correcting errors in evidence produced for NVQ portfolios
- the quality of written feedback to learners does not always match that of the oral feedback they receive for summative assessments.

**Construction**

Good

**Apprenticeships****Teaching, learning and assessment in construction are good because:**

- success rates are high and outcomes for apprentices are good; apprentices quickly learn good vocational skills and develop in confidence and communication, allowing them to be productive in their working environment; for example, working in a safe and effective manner in teams refurbishing domestic dwellings
- tutors and assessors are vocationally very experienced and use effective techniques to guide learners in workshop sessions and help them to see the relevance of their training to work situations; learners benefit from this process and value the expertise of the training staff
- the promotion of safe working in the training centres is very good; safe working practices and procedures are learnt in taught sessions, applied in workshops and further reinforced during work-based, one-to-one sessions and progress reviews; learners are able to speak confidently about risk assessment and safe working; for example, the need for eye protection and face masks when working in confined and dusty spaces
- verbal feedback to learners is very thorough and supportive; learners understand what it is they need to do to progress; assessment of learners' progress is systematic in training centres and workplaces
- monitoring and tracking of learning in training centres and in the workplace are good; staff set time-constrained targets that drive progress; employers and managers play an active role in setting targets for learners
- advice and guidance are very effective; staff thoroughly test learners to identify support needs; prospects and expectations they may have are discussed in depth; apprenticeships and employment are very clearly explained and learners have a very good awareness of opportunities within the construction industry; PM training's website and information materials are rich in images and stories promoting the many and diverse aspects of construction
- mathematics is very well promoted in apprenticeships and other training programmes; practical work is rich in the application of mathematics relevant to the construction industry; for example, setting out in brickwork, calculation of areas and volumes in painting and decorating and accurate measurement in joinery.

**Teaching, learning and assessment in construction is not yet outstanding because:**

- too few learners complete their frameworks within the expected time-frame
- written recording of feedback and target-setting in review is not precise enough
- English is not sufficiently promoted in work-based review and workshop sessions; staff often do not exploit naturally occurring opportunities.

**Employability Training**

Good

**16-19 study programmes****Traineeships****Teaching, learning and assessment in employability are good because:**

- learners make good progress, many from low starting points and with considerable barriers to learning; the great majority move on to apprenticeships and view their time at PM Training as life-changing

- staff are highly skilled at providing a nurturing learning environment which results in learners developing greatly increased levels of self-confidence and motivation; most gain a clear idea of their future career path and work hard to achieve the necessary skills to succeed
- staff provide an outstanding level of support which helps learners to achieve, including regular visits to the workplace, one-to-one interviews to deal with personal issues, free breakfasts and help with transport and housing; several members of staff are former study-programme learners and provide a very positive role model of what it is possible to achieve
- excellent links to a wide range of supportive employers ensure that learners have access to work trials and apprenticeships in locations close to their home and in vocational areas very well matched to their career aspirations; one learner states she is now able to do the accounts independently in her workplace and considers this would not have been possible without PM sourcing a local job and providing good levels of support
- most learners gain qualifications at an appropriate level in English and mathematics; in a few cases staff miss opportunities to develop and consolidate these skills in a vocational setting
- a comprehensive three-week induction and assessment period leads to staff having a clear understanding of learners' needs and where to focus their training and support; learners easily recall the information they gain during this period; for example, they clearly articulate health and safety information and their rights and responsibilities
- employability training is good; for example, an extremely well-prepared mock interview session using a local employer resulted in learners greatly increasing their levels of confidence, improving their understanding of the importance of body language in communication and the need for high standards of personal presentation
- community workplace supervisors ensure learners develop good professional vocational standards and make exceptional progress with their skills development when taking part in highly valued community work such as gardening, carpet laying and painting and decorating; learners take great pride in improving their local environment and develop their interpersonal skills very well when they interact with householders where they carry out the work
- staff provide good guidance to learners to ensure they are totally clear as to what they need to do to improve, what is expected of them in terms of standards of work and behaviour and potential progression routes
- centre staff and learners work together co-operatively with very high levels of mutual respect; tutors use naturally occurring opportunities to challenge stereotyping and ensure learners are clear as to who they should turn to if they have any serious personal issues.

**Teaching, learning and assessment in employability are not yet outstanding because:**

- a small minority of the learners at the two smaller sites do not have the opportunity to take part in community work to develop their vocational and interpersonal skills
- staff do not fully develop and consolidate English and mathematics skills during vocational training.

**Business administration and management**

Good

**Apprenticeships**

**Teaching, learning and assessment in business administration and management are good because:**

- it results in a high proportion of apprentices successfully completing their qualifications; they are making good progress relative to their starting points and producing a good standard of work which is applied well in the workplace and valued by employers
- apprentices are developing a good range of vocational, personal and social skills that meet their employers' and assessors' high expectations; these skills are being used very effectively in

different business contexts, for example, evaluating how to produce better reports for managers and understanding data protection as part of the legal context of business

- assessors very effectively plan learning, deliver teaching, learning and assessment activities at an engaging and appropriate pace, set individualised targets and provide feedback which clearly identifies how the work and practice of apprentices can be improved
- assessors use professional discussions and observations very effectively for encouraging apprentices to share their knowledge and ability to apply this to business principles and best customer service practices; assessors check apprentices' understanding and extend learning very effectively through good questioning techniques; assessment methods are varied and often well matched to meet apprentices' preferred ways of learning
- assessors and employers are committed to providing very good vocational and personal support for learning; most employers are thoroughly engaged in the learning process and successfully provide the right kind of activities in the workplace; assessors are flexible, knowledgeable and experienced and direct apprentices to a good range of resources to further support their independent learning
- assessors provide good additional support for English, mathematics and information and communication technology which complements their other employability skills such as confidence, self-belief, teamwork and adaptability
- apprentices are placed on the right framework through particularly effective initial assessment; they are well informed through induction, good information, advice and guidance and are made very aware of their progress throughout the framework; most apprentices continue on to other frameworks at a higher level
- apprentices work in safe, respectful and inclusive environments.

**Teaching, learning and assessment in business administration and management are not yet outstanding because:**

- progress reviews do not accurately and completely capture the quality of verbal feedback, discussion and cumulative progress made by apprentices, so that apprentices are unable to reflect later on the verbal feedback provided
- assessors do not consistently identify or correct spelling mistakes in apprentices' work.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- Tutors, supervisors and managers at all levels demonstrate their unrelentingly high expectations of what learners can achieve. The company, part of a larger social enterprise group of companies supplying social housing and other services for local disadvantaged people, has a very clear purpose to improve life chances through training. All tutors and managers are fully committed to this vision and have translated it into innovative and much-needed provision which helps transform the lives of many young people, many of whom come from severely disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The board of directors provides effective oversight for company activities and helps steer direction and vision by their complementary experience and active commitment to the mission of the company. Management team meetings are scheduled effectively to promote effective reporting of any issues across the company. Centres are well managed and now make good use of data to review their performance and set targets for future improvement.
- Arrangements for observation of teaching, learning and assessment, recognised as an area for improvement at the last inspection, have improved. Observation is regular, supportive and sufficiently rigorous. The few tutors who receive low grades are supported to secure improvement. Appropriate links between teaching observations and a simplified process of annual performance and development reviews now result in useful actions to improve individual

performance. Selected supervisors now benefit from a very useful mentoring qualification to help them support the young people in their care.

- Following a decline in performance within subcontracted provision, PM Training has revised its processes to improve effectiveness. Monitoring is now much more vigilant and this is beginning to improve subcontractors' performance.
- Following the last inspection, evaluation processes have been strengthened and a quality manager appointed. Managers now make good use of data to understand and improve the progress of learners and the performance of different areas. Useful feedback from learners and employers is obtained using on-line surveys, learner forums and from the regular assessor visits to employers premises.
- Self-assessment continues to be accurate and sufficiently self-critical. However, managers and external partners now have a better understanding of self-assessment and of the meaning and significance of judgements made, and this supports the more systematic improvement planning introduced since the last inspection.
- Strategic and operational partnership work with councils, external agencies and employers is outstanding. The curriculum offer for learners is innovative and most effective. High-quality arrangements to promote and deliver training are very extensive, established with over 1,000 companies and employers across Staffordshire.
- Creative approaches to recruitment and marketing utilise the experience of current and past apprentices and employers to explain and demonstrate skills inherent in the workplace. Case studies on successful apprentices are sent to the relevant school to encourage pupils to understand the skilled jobs their predecessors have gained and help them understand the range of options open to them on leaving.
- Strong and creative partnerships are used very skilfully so that allocations of public funding effectively encourage councils, contractors and their subcontractors to offer outstanding training opportunities in construction, engineering and other occupations. Learners' personal attributes and work-readiness are carefully developed using workplace visits and work experience. A carefully designed curriculum offer provides opportunities for school pupils aged 14 to 16, following on to study programmes, and from there to apprenticeships and skilled, worthwhile and sustainable employment.
- As many young people arrive at PM Training with significant personal barriers to employment, their work-readiness is carefully and progressively developed using the 'Homeworks' service. This excellent programme comprises house and garden maintenance contracts with social housing providers and others.
- The 'Homeworks' training offered for the vast majority of learners from the two largest centres is outstanding. Learners' personal and social skills and their work-readiness are carefully developed and relationships and much needed trust between different parts of the local community built, for example as learners maintain gardens of vulnerable older people living in social housing. PM Training continues to work to develop the service across all centres.
- A strong culture of mutual respect across all PM Training centres means most learners have an appreciation of equality and diversity; bullying or discrimination are actively and effectively countered. Staff do not plan or exploit opportunities to maximise learners' understanding of diversity issues by incorporating relevant ideas and themes into the curriculum during lessons or progress reviews. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Regular visits by police representatives to talk to learners, and excellent close working with police and other agencies are well designed to counter an emerging gang culture and other forms of extremism. Learners feel safe at PM Training and they, together with past learners, often feel they can share otherwise confidential information and views, for example on drug use. This high degree of trust helps identify and resolve issues quickly, removing barriers to learning and progress.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### PM Training

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding                  2: Good                  3: Requires improvement                  4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Construction crafts</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Employability training</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	2,041							
<b>CEO</b>	Mr Will Nixon							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 January 2011							
<b>Website address</b>	www.pmtraining.org.uk/							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	173	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	252	274	47	139	N/A		N/A	
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	7		3		10			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	NA							
<b>Full-time</b>	NA							
<b>Part-time</b>	NA							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	NA							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	NA							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Taylor Services Subcontractors</li> <li>■ North Staffs Engineering Group</li> <li>■ Rebus Training</li> <li>■ Stoke-on-Trent College</li> <li>■ Stepping Stones Education &amp; Training Ltd</li> <li>■ E.Quality Training</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

PM Training is part of Enterprising Futures, the social enterprise arm of the Aspire Group. Its registered name remains Project Management(Staffordshire) Training Limited. The company provides study programme and traineeships primarily in the form of pre-apprenticeship training and delivers apprenticeship training in Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire. It has four training centres in Stoke-on-Trent, Leek, Stafford and Chesterton. Stoke has a population of some 250,000. Unemployment rates are higher than both West Midlands and national rates, particularly for women. The percentage of working-age people in the local authority who have no qualifications is more than twice as high as the national rate. The county of Staffordshire has a population of some 850,000. As a whole, the county has relatively low unemployment rates and qualification levels are more comparable with the region and national rates than those for Stoke. However, there are areas of high deprivation within the county.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Clifford Rose HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the director for quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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