

TDR Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		3–7 June 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	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:

- Success rates for advanced apprentices, who are the largest percentage of learners at the company, are good with some outstanding areas.
- Learners make good progress, develop very good workplace skills and acquire valuable additional qualifications relevant to their employers' needs.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with outstanding features. Trainers plan learning well, using a good range of activities to stimulate and enthuse, and give good feedback to promote improvement.
- Trainers demonstrate very high industrial knowledge and technical skills to enable the delivery of specialised training. Learners benefit from highly experienced and motivated assessors and trainers, who have high aspirations for their learners.
- TDR Training Limited (TDR) has a clear strategic vision and sense of purpose shared by all staff.
- Partnership working is particularly good, with TDR staff creating bespoke training packages for employers and working highly collaboratively with the wider community, such as schools and voluntary sectors, to raise the profile of engineering in the area.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The number of learners completing their qualifications in the planned timescales needs to continue to increase
- While teaching, learning and assessment is good the proportion at outstanding is not yet high enough.
- Managers are not always using information and data effectively to inform improvements in quality initiatives for decision making, planning of new provision and to raise the quality of teaching learning and assessment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more learners successfully complete their qualifications by monitoring their progress, by intervening with extra support, and by extending the variety of teaching approaches when learners show signs of falling behind.
- Increase the proportion of good or outstanding teaching, learning and assessment activities by improving the use of the observation of teaching and learning process, with a concentration on the development of individual trainers. Develop and share good practice across the provision.
- Improve quality systems further so that they use accurate and appropriate data and information in a timely way that helps to improve teaching, learning and assessment, and management decision making. Develop the staff appraisal model to ensure a closer link to performance management.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for learners are good. Advanced apprentices represent by far the largest group of learners and they achieve their qualifications well, at a much higher rate than similar groups of learners nationally. The small number of learners in health and social care, retail, leisure and tourism achieve their qualifications at an outstanding rate. ▪ In engineering, overall success rates for the large number of apprentices on advanced-level programmes are very good. However, in 2011/12 the success rates for older apprentices were below the national rate. This was due to two companies removing their learners unexpectedly from the training programmes, due to high demands in production at their companies. ▪ Success rates for the very small numbers of learners in business administration and management require improvement. This is relatively new provision, with low success rates in 2010/11, the first year of operation. Current data is showing a significant increase in learners gaining their qualifications and making good progress on their courses. ▪ Success rates for learners on workplace learning programmes require improvement, particularly for qualifications gained within planned timescales. In year data for 2012/13 show a significant improvement but still requiring improvement. ▪ TDR has taken effective actions to remove achievement gaps. Older learners were not gaining qualifications at the same rate as younger learners. That gap has narrowed due to recent management interventions. However, managers do not sufficiently analyse data systematically to further support the closing of achievement gaps. ▪ Apprentices make good progress in their training and develop high standards of practical skills, valued by employers. Engineering learners carry out complex high-level engineering tasks as part of their evidence gathering in the workplace. ▪ Administration learners make valuable contributions within their workplace, are able to take more responsibility and work effectively without supervision. For example, learners produce work orders to ensure stock control is effective. This has a very positive impact on productivity and profits. ▪ Many apprentices join TDR with good levels of literacy and numeracy. They further develop mathematics skills very well with the company, having access to high-level mathematics courses as well as good individual support from employers and assessors. They develop English skills effectively to meet the requirements of the framework. ▪ Learners who speak English as an additional language on bespoke business improvement techniques (BIT) courses develop good oral English to cope in their factory environments well. 	

For example, when their supervisors were not able to come into work, they ran the company efficiently by themselves, fielding external enquiries well.

- Learners benefit from a wide variety of additional learning, contributing to their future employability. The majority undertake higher levels of qualifications than is required by their framework.
- Additional qualifications meet the needs of employers well. For example, an engineering apprentice completed customer service qualifications alongside his engineering qualifications. This helped build his confidence and personal, social and employability skills, while improving his communication skills with customers.
- Progression for learners is good with most young learners progressing into employment with their current organisation, into further training or higher education. Learners gain good stable jobs, often with high calibre employers. A third of all advanced-level learners progress onto higher education programmes.
- Progression from schools programmes into mainstream apprenticeship provision is good. Around half of all the 14 to 16 years old learners progress into apprenticeship programmes in related industries.
- Learners on a specialist programme in partnership with a voluntary organisation are gaining good employability skills and entering highly prized jobs in the niche sector of 'heritage engineering', working with specialist museums.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good reflecting the development of good work skills for all learners, the high number of learners gaining qualifications and also the achievement of additional qualifications for engineering and manufacturing apprentices. Through partnership working, TDR has given a small group of unemployed learners exceptional opportunities to develop good traditional engineering skills that would otherwise be lost.
- Trainers demonstrate good vocational experience and are skilled in motivating learners to achieve. In engineering and manufacturing, trainers have high and realistic expectations of learners, encouraging them to enter nationally recognised engineering competitions for future manufacturing. There have been significant successes in the last three years including a winner of the regional final and a runner up in the national final.
- Trainers plan learning well, particularly for those combining an academic knowledge-based qualification with an apprenticeship ensuring that learners' knowledge and understanding are integrated well with learning in the workplace.
- An exceptionally well-planned BIT programme for learners who speak English as an additional language includes well embedded English and mathematics. Learners across the company are enthusiastic, wanting to learn more and developing good knowledge and work skills.
- Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding features. Trainers skilfully use initial assessment to plan and individualise learning and demonstrate good questioning skills, adapting questions to stretch and challenge the learner. Trainers plan sessions well, although in a minority there is insufficient planning for the individual needs of some learners and interactive learning technology is not always fully utilised.
- A large majority of learners complete their portfolio electronically and use the system with confidence, taking responsibility for their learning and progress. Learners work independently to complete assignments making good use of the electronic learning resources available for learning.
- Trainers develop and share resources effectively using the online learning materials which are then combined with drawing on each other's industry-specific experience. For example, a chemistry session for biology laboratory technicians included three-dimensional models to self-assemble reinforced the understanding of chemical bonds that they would not have by just learning on-line.

- Assessment practice is good with a good range of assessment methods and portfolio evidence. Learners have regular access to assessment through frequent trainer visits. Employers are closely involved with the planning of learning and progress reviews. Trainers make effective use of an electronic monitoring system to ensure good progress and offer support for those who need extra help. However, trainers set targets that relate to qualifications and not the learner’s wider personal development.
- Initial assessment is particularly effective in helping to identify the aptitude and potential of learners. This supports the effective matching of learners to an employer. However, for the small numbers of learners in business administration, trainers do not use initial assessment of functional skills well enough to stretch and challenge learners.
- Individual learning plans across programmes give qualification aims as specific targets, but do not outline the broader aspects of learner development such as their communication skills or confidence in dealing with customers.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and linked well to the requirements of learners’ work. In a mathematics session covering integration, the trainer encouraged advanced-level learners to think about how integration can help to calculate displacement and the flow of a volume of fluid. Learners enjoy their sessions and acknowledge the importance of this area of learning. The teaching of English is effective, in line with framework requirements.
- Tutors give good feedback, both orally and written, giving clear guidance on how the learner can improve. It helps learners to reflect on their learning and complete further independent research. The standard of learners work is good. However, trainers do not always routinely correct grammatical or spelling errors.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Learners receive good information and advice about their progression opportunities and trainers effectively pass on their good knowledge and experience of their sector including the requirements of the qualification. An intermediate warehouse and distribution learner who had not taken part in any formal learning for many years described his experience as both easy and enjoyable because of the support and quality of information he received. Induction is adequate.
- Learners demonstrate good awareness of diversity and acknowledge the importance of this in the workplace. Learners treat each other and staff with respect and learners recognise that trainers give support according to their individual needs. The promotion of equality and diversity in reviews is adequate, although questioning does not always stretch and test understanding. Trainers do not consistently promote equality and diversity in taught sessions.

Engineering Apprenticeships Other work based learning	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and correlate well with the proportion of advanced engineering apprentices who gain their qualifications. In the well-planned teaching and learning sessions, engineering apprentices benefit from a good range of activities and knowledgeable trainers who maintain the interest of learners throughout. Learners develop good levels of industrial skills and technical knowledge.
- Advanced engineering apprentices receive good training in the workplace. Review and assessment in the workplace are both good. Trainers provide good feedback verbally that is crucial in helping learners to understand how to improve.
- Both learners and trainers use the electronic portfolios well to monitor learning and assessment progress. Learners use this online tool with confidence, understanding not only their own progress but using it to develop independent learning strategies well. However, in some cases, targets to build or extend the learners’ abilities need to be more challenging.
- Learners, assessors and employers work very well together to plan bespoke training and evaluate individual progress. In one case, the employer worked well with TDR to develop additional modules that provide a wider skill set and variety of work experience for the

apprentice. The learner develops a good variety of skills and the employer gains a more flexible worker.

- Trainers give good verbal and written feedback to engineering apprentices. Learners find this very useful and supportive in their learning. In one case, the trainer gave accurate and constructive feedback prior to assessment and following the assessment that aided skill development.
- The teaching of functional skills mathematics is good. The integration of this into engineering related activity is very innovative and learners fully understand the importance of good mathematics skills for their job. Trainers use a wide range of activities to develop learners' understanding of mathematics. The teaching of English is adequate.
- Engineering apprentices receive good information, advice and guidance into engineering employment. Apprentices are advised through initial interviews about the career options available and then supported in their applications. Apprentices receive good support and guidance that leads to a good understanding of their further options in the sector.
- Apprentices feel safe in all aspects of their training and there is a good culture of awareness of health and safety in the workplace. In one review, the trainer used health and safety questions to make good links to equality and diversity to stretch and challenge understanding. Trainers cover equality and diversity at induction and at reviews; however, they do not always use questions that fully develop learners' understanding and to challenge them further.

Manufacturing technologies
Apprenticeships
Other work-based learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This reflects the very good development of workplace skills and in-year progress. Trainers have high expectations of apprentices. Academic and practical sessions are relaxed but focussed, forming sound working relationships that support good learning. Some apprentices use their new skills well at work to develop improved production techniques, benefitting their employers well with regard to cost savings.
- Trainers are vocationally competent in the manufacturing sector, well qualified and have wide experience of manufacturing. Well-planned lessons have clear aims and objectives. Learning materials are good and there is thorough and frequent checking of learning. However, not all session planning includes activities to challenge the more-able learners.
- Well-designed programmes and courses meet the needs of both the individual learners and the wide variety of employers involved. Trainers skilfully match the requirements of the framework with the needs of the apprentices and employers, adding extra units or full qualifications to ensure the training fully matches the demands of the employer and learner.
- Assessment in the workplace is thorough and meets the needs of employers and apprentices well. Tracking and monitoring of progress is systematic and effective. Trainers give good oral feedback that helps learners to understand their progress and how to improve.
- Progress reviews are regular and thorough with a clear and accurate summary of previous work. Challenging short- and long-term targets are agreed and monitored, driving progress. However, these are occasionally time constrained to the next review visit and can slow progress. Employers play an active role in progress reviews.
- The development of mathematic skills is good. Integration of high-level engineering based mathematical training allows learners to develop in their roles and promotes the development of personal learning and thinking skills. Trainers give appropriate individual coaching and support for learners to develop their literacy skills.
- Initial assessment is thorough and effective. Manufacturing apprentices all undergo assessment of numeracy, literacy and additional support needs. Many of the manufacturing apprentices are adult, new to learning and lack confidence. Trainers give good one-to-one initial assessment and support.

- During workplace visits, trainers provide good detailed information, support and guidance on all aspects of training programmes. They are knowledgeable and are able to motivate and support apprentices to achieve their qualification outcomes.
- Apprentices feel safe in their working, training and educational environments. Workplaces are safe and employers promote and monitor health and safety well. For example, one employer is engaged in the production of hazardous chemicals, all work is risk assessed and apprentices have a very good awareness of health and safety regulations whilst on site.
- Equality and diversity are promoted adequately in the programmes and content of the courses. However, further reinforcement is required during some teaching sessions. Trainers use a good selection of questions to raise apprentice awareness of equality and diversity during the review meetings. However, these do not stretch the apprentices' awareness of issues outside of the engineering sector.

Administration and business management

Apprenticeships

Other work-based learning

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This reflects the need to improve the outcomes for learners where too many do not complete their qualifications within the planned end dates. Recent improvements to programme planning and assessment practices are having a positive impact on learners' progress.
- Trainers have high expectations of their learners, raise their aspirations and provide good encouragement, which motivates them very effectively. Most learners quickly gain in confidence. They improve their communication and team-working skills and make valuable contributions in presenting information on health and safety procedures and in the company's daily production meetings.
- Apprentices benefit from good training in the workplace and, as a result, they soon extend the range of tasks they are able to carry out confidently such as identifying cost savings for postage or reorganising the stock control area to contribute to improved productivity. Off-the-job coaching is effective and complements well the workplace training. However, the trainers do not always make enough use of the learners' workplace activities when planning training.
- Learners enjoy their learning and are motivated to succeed. Trainers meet with the learners at least monthly, are well-prepared for the workplace visits and carefully plan assessments to ensure apprentices make good progress.
- Assessment is thorough making good use of a range of evidence sources. Apprentices appreciate the speed and efficiency of the e-portfolio system, and the good tracking ensures that they are clear about their progress. Assessment plans do not always provide learners with enough clear actions for development.
- Initial assessment is adequate and for most learners identifies their literacy and numeracy levels. However, the practice is inconsistent. The assessment tests are set at too low a level, which does not sufficiently challenge all learners or provide the level of information to meet individual development needs.
- Individual learning plans are adequate in identifying components for the framework and expected achievement dates. Apprentices' choice of a good range of units for the qualification reflects their work roles very well. Apprentices' targets focus on unit completion, functional skills or technical certificate tests and not sufficiently on the learning or personal development needed to achieve their short-term goals.
- Learners receive good constructive oral and written feedback that highlights how they can improve. Apprentices review their progress regularly and engage well in discussing what they have achieved. Employers meet regularly with the trainers and they review apprentices' progress thoroughly. However, the reviews overly focus on framework achievement and insufficiently on the learning or the workplace training that has taken place.

- The standard of learners' written work is good. Trainers routinely correct errors of English grammar, spelling and punctuation in learners' written work and following their oral presentations. Learners develop effectively their functional skills in information technology required for the frameworks. Trainers do not sufficiently plan to extend learners' levels of English and mathematics beyond what is required for them to complete their courses.
- The apprenticeship recruitment process is good and apprentices are well-matched to the workplaces, which provide good opportunities for sustainable employment. Personal and learning support is satisfactory. Induction is effective though insufficiently interactive.
- Apprentices have a clear understanding of equality and diversity and can explain the relevance to their workplaces. They have a good awareness of their rights and responsibilities. However, there are missed opportunities to promote and discuss wider equality and diversity issues throughout the apprenticeship programme.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- TDR has a clear strategic vision and strong sense of purpose shared by all staff. It is highly ambitious and aspirational for its learners. The motivation and enthusiasm of staff are outstanding. The company has excellent partnerships with employers that have enabled TDR to grow its apprentice provision following the end of its successful young apprentice and other 14 to 16 years old programmes.
- Financial management is strong. The company is investing in a new state of the art training centre to strengthen and better resource its training delivery. TDR's board maintain an effective strategic overview, providing appropriate support and guidance.
- TDR recognised the need to increase the accountability of its management team. A stronger performance-management process through the introduction of frequently monitored performance indicators has shown good impact.
- Performance indicators focus closely on key elements of learners' programmes that needed improvement, such as timely progress reviews. This has resulted in increasing success rates. Performance indicators and interventions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment need further development.
- The monitoring and management of sub-contractors is adequate; however, the process requires further strengthening, particularly with regard to the larger sub-contractors.
- TDR has a very supportive culture in which staff skills, knowledge and welfare are valued highly. It specifically recruits staff with particularly good industrial knowledge and technical abilities. This equips them well to deliver highly relevant, specialised training and to provide learners with good role models.
- Staff development is a high priority, with a particular focus on developing teaching and assessing skills. Staff induction is well structured and thorough. Staff turnover is low. Evaluation of performance is good and monitored through annual appraisal, in which managers make good use of feedback from learners and employers. However, appraisal does not routinely consider the results of observations of learning.
- Over the last six months, TDR has strengthened its quality assurance arrangements with the adoption of a self-critical approach to help drive improvement. This includes feedback from learners and employer groups. Good contributions from staff 'away days' contribute to the self-assessment process. Staff changes delayed the preparation of the self-assessment report and the resulting quality improvement plan has not yet proved effective.
- Training programmes meet the needs of learners and employers well. The provision of high quality bespoke engineering training to employers' specific needs, provides specialised staff resources for employers. Employers respect and value the training highly for this individualised approach and often see TDR as their preferred training provider, even when they re-locate out of the area.
- Managers have not always considered the implications that new programmes might have on learner success and this has led in the past to dips in performance. Tighter controls have been

introduced to ensure that programmes are carefully planned in advance of delivery, without stifling the creativity of staff to develop often innovative provision

- Excellent partnerships exist with local schools and the wider community. TDR works well with children from primary to sixth form to encourage their involvement in the practical application of science, engineering and mathematics, which has resulted in good progression into apprenticeships. Under its remit as a charitable trust, TDR has established wider partnerships, for example with the local authority, that foster interest in engineering and education through successful family learning projects.
- The use of management information and data for planning and decision-making requires improvement. TDR's sometimes narrow focus on engineering apprenticeships has led to the weaker performance in areas such as business administration and good practice in areas such as business improvement techniques to go unrecognised. TDR does not effectively analyse the performance of different groups of learners or systematically gather data to support the measurement of progression.
- The learner induction process promotes equality and diversity well. However, the opportunity to reinforce equality and diversity sufficiently within the training periods is often missed.
- TDR monitors the application of its own equality policies and procedures effectively and sets out expectations of sub-contractors. A brief action plan outlines the company's approach to the promotion of equality. However, this plan concentrates too narrowly on TDR's very successful work to encourage learner involvement in projects with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. It does not always sufficiently recognise wider aspects of its work with other disadvantaged groups.
- Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices. Management of health and safety is strong. TDR meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Learners are aware of what to do if they have any concerns and safeguarding is prominent with learners of all ages.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

TDR Training Limited			
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	2
Manufacturing technologies	2
Administration	3
Business management	3

Provider details

Provider name	TDR Training Ltd
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 638
	Part-time: 77
Principal/CEO	Ian Young
Date of previous inspection	July 2008
Website address	tdrtraining.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	61	N/A	16	N/A	3
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	29	229	259	121	N/A	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ South Tyneside College ■ Tyne Metropolitan College ■ Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council ■ North Country Leisure 							

Additional socio-economic information

TDR Training is a national provider of apprenticeships, with the majority of their provision based in the north east of England. The focus while on engineering based apprenticeships is on regional partnerships for the benefit of the local community. Courses for the engineering sector and current initiatives are in place with local schools and community groups. Unemployment rates in the north east of England are significantly higher than national averages, while school leavers achieving grade A* to C in English and mathematics are below the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Stephen Hunsley HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the engineering solutions manager 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 of the 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:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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