

# Training Strategies Ltd

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		10–13 March 2015
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
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:

- the proportion of classroom-based learners achieving their learning aims and qualifications is high
- progression into sustained employment for learners attending pre-employment training is very good
- progress for learners on most programmes is much improved and is now good
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good
- learners benefit from high levels of support provided by all staff and employers
- leaders and managers have effectively addressed the majority of areas for improvement identified at the last inspection
- pre-employment programmes meet the needs of learners and local employers particularly well
- quality improvement arrangements extend effectively to all aspects of the learners' journey and their interactions with provider staff.

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

- the recent improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are yet to be reflected in a high enough percentage of apprentices achieving their frameworks in the planned time
- not enough of the teaching and learning is outstanding; in particular tutors do not always provide sufficient challenge to more-able learners
- the self-assessment process and associated quality improvement plan require further improvement, particularly in the use of evidence to support judgments.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that learners' good progress continues and leads to timely framework completion by closely monitoring progress and making appropriate interventions to accelerate the achievement of those in danger of not completing their qualifications in the planned time and by involving all employers fully in the review process.
- Make more use of the results of initial assessments to plan activities that will challenge learners beyond the qualification requirements and continue to provide clear action points for tutors, following observation, to improve the quality of the teaching and learning sessions.
- Use data and other evidence sources more effectively to support judgments made during self-assessment; ensure the associated quality improvement plan contains challenging targets to improve and enables managers to evaluate the impact on performance of any measures taken.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Training Strategies Limited (TSL) contract is split evenly between funding for apprenticeship training and classroom-based pre-employment training. At the time of inspection, the largest numbers of apprentices are working towards qualifications in health and social care or business management with slightly fewer in early years and playwork. In addition to intermediate and advanced apprentices, TSL has a significant number of higher apprentices in business management. Roughly twice as many classroom-based learners are working towards qualifications to prepare them to work in the security industry as those working towards qualifications required by the local authority to work as taxi drivers. Apart from the early years and playwork provision, which it subcontracts, the provider now delivers all the training directly. TSL delivers large volumes of classroom-based learning under subcontracting arrangements for other providers; this provision was out of scope of the inspection.
- Almost all classroom-based learners achieve their learning aims and gain their intended qualifications. In 2013/14, the percentage of those on security courses doing so was below the high national average, but subsequent effective management action has resulted in all of those who have attended the courses so far during the current year completing successfully. Pre-employment courses give learners the skills required in accessing local job opportunities, for example, the provider is working with a local taxi company; this has resulted in employment for three-quarters of those who completed the course.
- Most apprentices' progress in the current year is much improved. In 2013/14, there was a marked decline from the previous year in the percentage of apprentices successfully achieving their frameworks and particularly of those doing so in the expected time, which was very low. In that year, subcontractors delivered nearly all of the apprenticeship training. In the current year, this has reduced to one fifth, with the remainder being delivered directly, and TSL has only retained one subcontractor. All current apprentices started their programmes within the current academic year. A very large majority of intermediate and advanced apprentices are making at least the expected progress towards framework completion and, unless already exempt, are completing the functional skills element early in their training programme.
- Managers monitor the relative achievement of the different groups of learners closely. The proportion of non-British learners is so small that any differences in achievement rates are not statistically significant. Similarly, there is no significant difference in the achievement rates of male and female learners.

- All learners develop a wide variety of personal, social and employability skills. Those on pre-employment programmes use a star chart updated at review to quantify their improved skills. The visible reminder of their progress further motivates them and builds their confidence. Attendance rates for both classroom-based learners and apprentices are very high.
- A large majority of classroom-based learners progress into jobs in either security or taxi driving. In both areas, this meets a particular local need in Merseyside for appropriately qualified and licensed staff in these sectors and meets the learners' immediate needs of paid employment in an area of particularly high unemployment.
- Progression between intermediate- and advanced-level apprenticeships is low. Apprentices are aware of the progression routes; however, the apprenticeship provision and particularly the change to predominantly direct rather than subcontracted delivery is too new for many apprentices to have yet had the time to progress to the next level. Apprentices do take on additional responsibility at work and several have been promoted.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Managers, tutors and support staff all have high expectations of the learners. All of the classroom-based learners are unemployed and many start the programmes with low self-esteem and confidence. They benefit from the high levels of care and support from TSL staff and, as a result, are well motivated.
- The well qualified and motivated staff draw on their broad vocational and teaching experience and skills to plan and deliver the teaching and learning well to meet each learner's needs to achieve their intended qualification or learning aims.
- Initial assessment is good. Staff use initial assessment well to identify the learners' starting levels. They provide good additional support for those who need it, especially those on the pre-employment courses. However, too often they do not provide sufficient challenge for the more-able learners. In group sessions, although staff use a useful cohort analysis and plan for differentiation through the availability of additional tasks or material for faster learners, the planning documentation does not specifically identify which groups or individuals would benefit from additional challenge or differentiate by expected outcome.
- In classroom-based learning the learners receive continuous feedback during sessions and progress reviews to help them improve, prepare for assessment, and assist them to get jobs and be effective employees.
- Most apprentices get feedback at, or following, the frequent assessor visits, which helps them understand exactly what needs to be done to progress through their framework. In most cases, the feedback is detailed, evaluative and constructive, but in a few instances, it does not help learners to understand what they are doing well or how to improve the quality of their work. Feedback on the quality of the English in their written work is limited.
- In the classroom-based learning programmes, tutors encourage those learners identified with low levels of numeracy or literacy to attend additional support sessions. Those who attend benefit greatly. However, in the vocational sessions of their programme the tutors do not sufficiently identify incorrect spelling, punctuation or sentence construction.
- Functional-skills training and assessment now occurs early in apprenticeship programmes and tutors help learners well with context specific language and calculations. Useful resources are available to assist learners' skills development. However, tutors do not always correct errors in other written work or promote further development of either English or mathematics for those who have achieved the required functional-skills level or are exempt from doing so through their possession of relevant GCSE English and/or mathematics certificates.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. They are particularly good for pre-employment learners, who benefit from good pre-course advice as to which programmes will best support

their employment aspirations and on the opportunities available to them in either of the vocational areas on offer.

- In most programmes, staff promote equality and diversity well. Equality and diversity topics are well embedded in each of the subject areas offered as all entail interacting with a wide cross-section of the community. However, in some cases tutors do not always adequately record any promotion and consolidation of learner knowledge through the review process.

## Health and social care

Good

### Apprenticeships

#### Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are good because:

- health and social care apprentices are in good workplace settings where they quickly gain good skills that support their progress against their framework completion
- apprentices develop good work-related and interpersonal skills from participating in work experiences that enable them to develop their professional working standards; for example, managing their own client case load confidently, providing personalised care planning in partnership with clients, their families and external agencies
- learners develop good skills in numeracy that support the vocational skills needed in the care sector; for example, using calculations to ensure the correct administration of medicines and calculating distance and time requirements when travelling between clients' homes
- tutors provide apprentices with good feedback to raise the quality of their written English skills to ensure it meets the standards expected in the sector
- intermediate- and advanced-level apprentices receive good information, advice and guidance, which supports their career aspirations and progression routes; for example, they are clear about job roles, further training and promotion opportunities
- tutors draw on their extensive industry experiences very effectively to ensure apprentices practical work is to the standard expected in employment; for example, they can bring real examples from their own experiences that the apprentices would not as yet have; this encourages discussions and widens their understanding
- assessment practices are good; apprentices benefit from frequent, informative and helpful tutor feedback, as a result, they understand which criteria they have achieved, what they have learnt and what they need to do next due to clear smart targets
- tutors embed equality topics very well in sessions, which equips the learners with a thorough understanding of the very diverse nature of work with adults with often complex and diverse needs; for example, how to personalise care plans to meet clients' unique needs
- apprentices have a good understanding of their responsibility and duty of care to maintain their own and their service users' safety and well-being in their work setting. They can discuss their clear duties as employees and undertake safe working practices; for example, the large majority of apprentices undertake additional training on administration of medicines, safeguarding, moving and handling, conflict management, risk and health assessment training.

#### Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are not yet outstanding because:

- tutors do not use a sufficient range of strategies in sessions to challenge and check learning; for example, advanced apprentices struggle to apply critical thinking skills with regard to care practice and their work is more explanatory than evaluative
- teaching and learning assessments do not always meet the individual needs of the learners that have been identified during initial assessment; for example, advanced apprentices completion of

workbooks do not challenge and encourage individualised learning beyond the standards of their apprenticeship.

## Public services (security)

### 19+ learning programmes

Good

#### Teaching, learning and assessment in security are good because:

- success rates for learners in the current year are good; to date this year, all leavers have achieved their learning aims, qualifications and license to practice in the security sector with the vast majority of leavers gaining employment
- in 2013/14 success rates were below the high national rate; managers identified and resolved the issue resulting in the improved performance in the current year
- learners attendance and punctuality are good; they develop very good communication skills and improved confidence during their course, contributing effectively to developing effective customer service and strong relationship building skills needed to work with the public in door supervisory, concierge, site or retail security job roles
- learners are acquiring high levels of security 'work ready skills' appropriate to the sector which employers value highly; employers commented that TSL staff are 'brilliant and very experienced going above and beyond to help learners develop the right skill levels and knowledge to work successfully in the security sector' and, as a result, employers consistently recruit new workforce members from TSL
- occupationally competent assessors use their skills and knowledge to plan very successful practical sessions providing high levels of care, guidance and support to help all learners acquire the employability skills demanded of them to gain their license to practice in the security sector
- learners develop a good ability to self-reflect and analyse skill and knowledge development during their course and are skilfully coached by their tutors to acquire complex technical physical intervention skills; they quickly learn how to block aggressive moves made by customers, deal with adverse and volatile behaviour through engaging in interesting simulating case study scenarios which challenge technical expertise in guarding people against assault and premises and property against unauthorised access
- all learners appreciate the opportunity provided through good referral partners' advice and guidance to move from a position of being unemployed to successfully achieving relevant qualifications and gaining employment in the security sector.

#### Teaching, learning and assessment in security are not yet outstanding because:

- tutors do not pay sufficient attention to improving learners use of English in their written work when they will potentially be tasked with writing reports as part of their job roles in the security sector
- tutor feedback on the quality of written work does not always identify clear targets to help learners understand what they need to do to improve their knowledge or deeper understanding of theory relating to security practice.

## Early years and playwork

### Apprenticeships

Good

#### Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are good because:

- apprentices are making good progress and have either completed or are on course to complete their frameworks in the planned time; they are developing a good understanding of childcare because assessors and employers work very closely to ensure childcare theory and practice are integrated throughout the courses
- good workplace settings with managers committed to high-quality training enable apprentices to develop good skills to work with children; this support enables them to develop the skills and confidence to sing and tell stories to groups of children as well as discuss children’s progress with parents and carers
- skilled assessors have sufficient time to coach apprentices and get them to explain how to put the material they have learned into practice in their settings so that they are developing a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities as childcare workers
- apprentices work hard on their assignments and produce a lot of good quality work, which is assessed regularly, with detailed feedback, which enables learners to make good progress towards achieving their qualifications
- apprentices who are taking functional skills are succeeding well in passing their qualifications and this is giving many the confidence to enrol on courses to retake their GCSEs in mathematics and English
- initial advice and guidance are very thorough; prospective apprentices are encouraged to spend time in the attached nursery to establish their aptitude to work with children before committing to the apprenticeship programme
- assessors and employers work closely to give support, advice and guidance promptly to apprentices enabling them to complete their courses successfully and with aspirations to progress in their careers in the future
- apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding and the confidence to apply what they have learnt; for example, completing ‘nagging doubt’ forms where they have concerns about children’s welfare.

**Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are not yet outstanding because:**

- apprentices, who are not required to take functional skills, are not given sufficient encouragement or guidance to improve the quality of their written English
- apprentices are not always given a record of the targets to improve their work set with their assessors at review meetings; this means that they cannot always remember what they are and so do not always do the work necessary to achieve them.

<b>Business management</b>	Requires improvement
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	

**Teaching, learning and assessment in business management, administration & law require improvement because:**

- the proportion of apprentices that successfully completed their qualification last year was low, and a very large majority did not complete in the expected time
- all current higher-level apprentices are making slow progress, but the large majority of intermediate and advanced apprentices are making the progress expected of them
- tutors do not always use effective questioning techniques to challenge apprentices or support them to extend their learning
- tutors do not consistently provide detailed written feedback to apprentices that identifies how they can further improve the quality of their work; they do not always communicate to

employers the outcomes of observation and assessment visits to ensure apprentices’ managers are informed

- progress reviews do not contain enough detail about progress against qualification units or the development of skills; consequently, progress for the large majority of apprentices is not being sufficiently monitored, reported or advanced; assessors do not identify clear and challenging targets, and not all employers are encouraged to be involved in the review process
- apprentices are not demonstrating their understanding of equality, diversity and safeguarding and how they are applied in practice because tutors are not placing sufficient emphasis on their promotion.

**In business management, administration and law the provider has the following strengths:**

- a large majority of apprentices produce a standard of work that reflects clearly their increasing understanding of the principles and practices of management; this is also evidenced through meaningful discussions between tutors and apprentices
- a large majority of apprentices, particularly at intermediate and advanced level, are well supported by almost all tutors, who share their expertise and experience to support learning and skill development such as self-belief and team leading, and tutors work well with apprentices to promote more independent learning and cross-referencing of evidence
- employers and mentors provide help for their apprentices and contribute well to their understanding of theory and practice and acquisition of skills, which supports them to manage and lead teams of staff more effectively.

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	Good
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- Since the last inspection, managers have worked hard to address successfully the majority of identified areas for improvement. Significant investment has resulted in the appointment of staff to lead in areas such as subcontracting, apprentice programmes, functional skills and quality improvement. TSL reduced the subcontracted and out-of-area work significantly so that the provision meets local needs better.
- Senior managers have a clear ambition to provide high-quality education and training to improve the local economy and enhance the quality of life and aspirations of local residents. They work successfully with local employers, particularly those in the security industry, to create jobs for local people. They meet the local enterprise partnership priorities in providing training for the visitor economy and the security aspect of the Liverpool Superport. They respond well to meet the needs of local employers. TSL works particularly well to develop the skills of disadvantaged learners through its work with the local jobcentre.
- Board members bring a range of business skills and expertise to the board; they are well informed and have a good understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement, including any areas of particular concern. They provide challenge by asking searching questions of senior leaders and hold them to account. Board members support managers well in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning by investing in resources and staff development.
- Since the previous inspection, the observation of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and impacted positively on their quality. Managers’ monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment now identifies staff underperformance or areas for improvement. Consequently, they identify underperformance quickly and take prompt action to eliminate it. Managers now ensure that all aspects of the apprentices’ programme including, for example, induction or progress reviews are observed and their quality improved.

- Managers make good use of data to monitor progress against a range of key targets. Clear lines of accountability enable managers to tackle individual underperformance well. Tutors, whose performance is identified as requiring improvement, receive good coaching and support to improve their practice. Staff development is good; for example, all tutors have recently updated their English and mathematics skills and their awareness of safeguarding issues. Arrangements to share good practice across the provision are effective.
- Self-assessment is now more effective; however, it requires further improvement. Arrangements to gather apprentice and employer feedback are well established. Views are analysed and appropriate action taken; for example, tailoring programmes to meet employers' needs better. Managers identify underperforming courses through detailed self-assessment and their evaluation of the provision is mostly accurate. However, the process over grades a minority of aspects and does not sufficiently identify all areas for improvement.
- The quality improvement plan steers change well and much more effectively than at the last inspection. Actions have, for example, led to more learners completing their programmes within the planned time. However, targets within the plan are often insufficiently measurable. Senior managers monitor the action plan closely to ensure that improvements happen. The majority of programmes have improved; however, business management, and in particular higher apprentices, require further improvement.
- Senior managers now monitor subcontractor performance closely. Since the last inspection, they have strengthened the quality assurance arrangements to ensure that, in most of the provision, learners now achieve in line with or exceed national performance. They monitor learners' progress effectively and make effective interventions when needed so that the progress of the large majority learners is now good.
- The resources and accommodation for learning are fit for purpose. Tutors and assessors are well qualified and experienced and this benefits learners in developing skills and knowledge for the workplace.
- The promotion of equality and celebration of diversity is good and is at the heart of the work undertaken by TSL. The inclusive training successfully increases learners' awareness. Learners with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds receive a high level of support to overcome any personal barriers to learning. Following recent staff training, tutors understand how to promote equality and diversity; however, not all confidently develop learners' understanding of its application to the world of work.
- Safeguarding arrangements for learners require improvement. Policies are effective and the senior designated person is very experienced; however, her recent training was not at a sufficiently high level. A recent policy revision now includes consideration to tackling child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. All staff have had recent appropriate safeguarding training and promote it well to learners. Staff and designated officers carry out risk assessment of all aspects of activity and take relevant precautions to minimise incidents. Managers enforce the safer-recruitment policy well. Staff have created a safe environment for learners. The e-safety policy has a strong focus on online security. The links with local agencies that support vulnerable people, including the local safeguarding children's board are under-developed as, until recently, TSL only provided training to adults.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Training Strategies Ltd

<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	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Health and social care</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Public services (security)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Early years and playwork</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Business management</b>	<b>3</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>	201							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Tim Lynch							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	September 2013							
<b>Website address</b>	www.tsl.eu.com							
<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+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	44	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+		
	6	23	4	17	N/A	9		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train 2 B</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

In 2013 the city of Liverpool had a population of 470,800. At the 2011 census 14% of the population belonged to a minority ethnic group compared with 19% nationally. Liverpool is the most deprived local authority area in England. Persistently high levels of deprivation, worklessness and multiple disadvantages characterise the city. The level of deprivation is particularly widespread in neighbourhoods in north Liverpool. The percentage of people of working age in the city who are unemployed is 12.2% compared to 7.4% for the North West and 6.5% nationally. The proportion of adults without a qualification at foundation, intermediate or advanced level is considerably higher than for England as a whole.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Cliff Rose HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Subcontractor 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 two 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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