

YMCA Training

Not-for-profit organisation

Inspection dates

17–20 January 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have developed robust ways of improving the quality of the provision and its outcomes, which have transformed the culture of YMCA Training and significantly increased learners' and apprentices' progress.
- Leaders and managers know what they want to achieve for the organisation, and collaborate very well with employers to develop courses that successfully meet local, regional and national priorities.
- Very thorough initial assessment of learners' skills ensures that learners join appropriate programmes based on their starting points and aspirations; as a result, a much improved and now high proportion of learners remain on their programmes.
- Tutors rigorously reinforce the skills that learners need for employment; they relentlessly encourage learners and apprentices to work towards achieving their potential.
- Learners following study programmes and traineeships improve their vocational, English and mathematical skills well; through their learning they gain in confidence and improve their social and communication skills. As a result, a high proportion progress to further education, apprenticeships or employment.
- As a result of management improvements, apprentices who started their programmes within the last 18 months are making good progress towards achieving their qualifications within planned timescales.
- The very large majority of learners and apprentices of all ages enjoy their learning and work, develop good attitudes and behaviour, and take pride in their progress and achievements.
- A minority of tutors do not challenge or support learners sufficiently to fulfil their potential, particularly the most and least able.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes and traineeships who achieve accredited qualifications in English and mathematics, although improving, is still too low.
- Although managers have increased significantly the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned time, a minority continue to make slow progress.

Full report

Information about the provider

- YMCA Training is a registered charity and is one of Central YMCA's operations. It delivers programmes from regional centres across England. One of its aims is to enable young people to overcome personal difficulties which inhibit their participation in education and training, and to find employment through its study programme and traineeship provision. YMCA Training also delivers apprenticeships which account for around three quarters of all learners. A growing adult learning programme caters for adults who take out learning loans to pay for their learning.
- Since the previous inspection in March 2015, YMCA Training has reduced the number of learning venues that it uses. The provider has also reduced the number of subcontractors that it works with.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should provide appropriate training and support to improve tutors' planning and teaching, so that learners of all abilities make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that staff who provide teaching, learning and assessment activities in English and mathematics have sufficient skills and experience to do so.
- Managers should use lesson observations and quality improvement procedures to ensure that tutors plan and provide high-quality learning and assessment, so that more learners achieve functional skills qualifications or improve their grades at GCSE in English and mathematics.
- Tutors on apprenticeship programmes must work diligently with the minority of apprentices who are making slow progress to agree targets for the completion of outstanding training and assessment activities, and to provide the additional support that apprentices require so that they can achieve their goals.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the future of their organisation, which is to enable young people, through education and training, to flourish and fulfil their potential. They have now underpinned this vision with well-considered operational strategies which aim to meet ambitious targets set by trustees, leaders and managers.
- In the last year, trustees and leaders have taken bold and decisive action to close down centres and discontinue subcontracted arrangements where outcomes for learners were poor. This process, aligned with substantial investment in a new quality improvement team and structure, has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the majority of learners now make good progress.
- Leaders and managers have tackled most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have only partially tackled the weakness relating to the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications for learners on study programmes.
- Leaders and managers have made wholesale changes to quality improvement systems, a previous area for improvement; these are now robust and effective. Leaders have put in place a new quality team, headed by a quality director. This team has been instrumental in improving standards and performance across all centres.
- The quality team has introduced rigorous and frequent internal reviews of centres, using observations of teaching, scrutiny of learners' work, audits of records, interviews with learners and employers, and performance data, so that they can assess the risk of poor outcomes for learners at each centre. The subsequent reports identify areas for improvement in great detail. Quality managers closely monitor progress made by centre management teams in bringing about improvements. Leaders and managers have transformed the culture of YMCA Training as a result of this much-increased focus on quality and learners' outcomes.
- The self-assessment process provides accurate judgements on the quality of provision. However, it focuses too much on the actions managers are taking and not sufficiently on the impact on learners. The quality improvement plan has a better focus on outcomes for learners; it is a working document that managers use well to check continuously on the impact of actions to improve provision. At their monthly meeting, quality managers monitor rigorously learners' retention, attendance and their progress in achieving components of their programme.
- Senior managers rigorously review and manage the quality of tutors' and managers' work. Staff have embraced a culture of high expectations and are held to account for learners' outcomes and progress. Appraisals of the work of individual staff members now make good use of the outcomes of observations of teaching and learning by setting clear targets for tutors' ongoing improvement and development.
- Managers have made a significant investment in staff training to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learners' outcomes. All tutors have or are working towards a teaching qualification, and managers have appointed qualified mentors who provide good support for learners, contributing to greater numbers remaining on their courses.

- Managers continue to be responsive to local, regional and national needs and priorities. Local centres have good links with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and use them to identify and respond to local skills needs well. One centre has developed advanced apprentices to meet training needs identified by the local National Health Service Trust, and another has developed warehousing apprenticeships in response to a LEP priority.
- The study programme and traineeship programme are designed well and effectively meet the needs of disadvantaged young people. Three quarters of learners on the study programme are not in employment, education or training when they start their programmes, and the vast majority of them progress to employment or further training.
- The culture of the organisation is inclusive and tolerant. The well-designed curriculum prepares learners well for living in a diverse society. Managers monitor well the differences in achievement between particular groups of learners at the end of the year. However, they do not routinely monitor or report on different groups of learners' attendance, retention and in-year progress.

The governance of the provider

- Since the previous inspection, the board of trustees has been rejuvenated with new trustees who bring a good range of skills to the board. Trustees have been fully engaged in recent decisions to rationalise and refocus the provision and are appropriately involved in shaping the strategic direction of the organisation.
- Trustees receive detailed and useful reports on learners' experience of their courses and on learners' outcomes, which give them a good understanding of the quality of provision. As a result, they are able to challenge senior leaders and managers effectively and scrutinise data knowledgeably.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding arrangements are well established and effective. YMCA Training has designated officers in place supported by local heads and deputy heads in each centre. Managers responsible for safeguarding have good links with local safeguarding children boards. Managers record and deal with incidents swiftly and appropriately and refer cases to external links where necessary.
- Trustees receive regular reports and have a safeguarding committee which oversees safeguarding across all of the YMCA's remits, including YMCA Training.
- All staff receive regular and appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Managers ensure that at induction, tutors make learners aware of the importance of on-line safety, modern British values and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. As a result, most learners have a good understanding of British values and of how to keep themselves safe from extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors and learner support mentors carry out thorough assessments of the current English and mathematics skills of learners aged 16 to 18 at the start of their programmes,

and provide detailed advice on appropriate options for them based on their future career ambitions. They use this information very effectively to plan suitable programmes for learners. At the end of a four-day induction, learners commence study programmes or traineeships at appropriate levels based on their starting points. Since the introduction of these arrangements at the start of the 2016/17 academic year, a much improved and now high proportion of learners remain on their programmes.

- All staff set high expectations for the standards they expect learners and apprentices to achieve. They are positive role models, especially for younger learners, some of whom join programmes with low aspirations. Staff plan activities that encourage learners and apprentices to work collaboratively, solve problems and share discoveries with their peers.
- Tutors rigorously reinforce employability skills and relentlessly encourage learners and apprentices to work towards achieving their aspirations and potential. They link learning very effectively to younger learners' future employment ambitions. They expect learners to view themselves and behave as trainee professionals. Work experience is well planned, and tutors use feedback from employers effectively to monitor learners' progress in improving their work-related skills.
- Managers have made substantial investments since the previous inspection to support their aim of improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors and support staff are required to be well qualified to meet the varied needs of their learners and apprentices. Accommodation and specialist resources, including information and learning technology, are very good. Tutors use them well to engage learners and apprentices in interesting learning activities.
- Through whole-organisation curriculum planning, including the detailed planning of learning by tutors, the large majority of staff succeed in enabling learners to overcome previous difficulties which prevented their participation, and to improve their attitudes to learning. Learners make good progress studying in small groups where tutors get to know their individual needs well. Most tutors are insistent that learners adhere to the well-publicised 'get ready to learn' requirements in lessons.
- Staff at all levels place a strong emphasis on the necessity for learners and apprentices to develop good English and mathematical skills. They regularly reinforce the importance of these skills in learners' and apprentices' everyday life and work.
- Tutors provide good verbal feedback to learners and apprentices on assessed work. Most written feedback helps learners and apprentices to understand how they can improve their work and make further progress. As a result of raised expectations through quality and compliance monitoring processes, tutors now keep detailed records of the progress that learners and apprentices make through the various aspects of their programmes, and identify appropriate actions when they fall behind.
- Tutors integrate equality and diversity themes well into learning activities. Tutors constantly highlight modern British values and their importance in society, reinforcing and insisting upon learners' good behaviour and mutual respect for each other.
- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not plan activities, or manage their questioning of individuals or groups of learners sufficiently well, to take account of the often wide variations in the abilities of the learners attending. In these lessons, many reluctant learners participate insufficiently in discussions and, at times, tutors do not challenge the most able learners sufficiently. As a result, a minority of learners, particularly those who

are the most or least able in the group, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- In a minority of cases, tutors do not do enough to help learners and apprentices to stop repeating the same errors in their written work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The very large majority of learners and apprentices enjoy their learning and work. They take pride in their progress and achievements.
- Through well-planned and appropriate work experience, learners on study programmes and traineeships improve their work-related skills and attitudes. Most of these learners join programmes after a period of disengagement from education, training or employment. Through their participation in learning, they overcome personal difficulties which inhibit their learning, improve their social and communication skills and gain in confidence.
- Attendance, which was low at the previous inspection, has improved and is now high. The attendance of learners in English and mathematics lessons on study programmes and traineeships is at the same level as in other lessons.
- Learners and apprentices of all ages are well behaved and punctual. They develop a good awareness of the importance of these behaviours in ensuring that they will be successful in their learning and their current or intended employment.
- Through well-planned enrichment activities, learners on study programmes and traineeships develop a good awareness of the steps they can take to improve their physical and emotional well-being.
- Apprentices are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They are keen to learn new skills and knowledge and apply these in their work, recognising that this will improve their career progression prospects.
- Apprentices and learners of all ages improve their awareness of life in modern Britain and how this relates to them in their work and personal lives. They develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their peers and colleagues safe.
- During learners' and apprentices' introductions to their programmes, tutors take effective steps to raise awareness of the risks of radicalisation. Tutors regularly reinforce this during learning and assessment activities throughout learners' programmes.
- Learner support mentors and tutors provide learners and apprentices with good careers information, advice and guidance at the start of and during their programmes. Learners and apprentices have a good awareness of how their programmes meet their progression needs and as a result, they make realistic plans for their futures.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of learners following study programmes and traineeships have remained in learning in the current year and are making good progress, despite the fact that when they joined their programmes, the large majority had difficulties which inhibited their participation in education and training. This is a significant improvement on

previous years when too many learners left early and did not complete their study programme or traineeship.

- Study programmes and traineeships prepare learners well for their next steps. A high proportion of learners on study programmes, and a high proportion of trainees who complete all aspects of their programmes, now progress to further education, an apprenticeship or employment.
- Current learners are making much better progress in developing English and mathematical skills in their vocational and specialist mathematics and English lessons than those who followed study programmes and traineeships in previous years. In 2015/16, too few learners achieved accredited qualifications in English and mathematics, and only a small minority taking GCSEs in these subjects improved their grades.
- Leaders and managers have brought about recent improvements to learners' outcomes in English and mathematics through a number of good initiatives. They have recruited eight specialist mathematics and English tutors and plan to recruit more. Vocational tutors are now required to achieve mathematics and English qualifications at level 2 and receive training to enable them to do so. Improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of English and mathematics is a key priority for the quality improvement team through their regular monitoring and support activities.
- A high proportion of adults who follow health and fitness training programmes funded through learner loans make good progress in gaining the skills they need to improve their employment prospects and achieve qualifications.
- Apprentices who started their programmes after the start of the 2015/16 contract year are improving their skills and knowledge at a good pace. The large majority are making good progress towards achieving their qualification goals within the planned timescales.
- Apprentices work to high standards. This enables them to meet commercial and industrial requirements which their employers value. A high proportion of apprentices remain in employment, the majority with their existing employer, when they complete their apprenticeship.
- Although managers have reduced significantly the numbers of apprentices who take longer than the planned time to achieve their qualification goals, a minority, particularly those who have been on programmes for more than 18 months, make slow progress. Following the previous inspection, leaders and managers took action to end the apprenticeship programmes of a high number of apprentices aged over 24 years of age who had been enrolled on programmes for a significant length of time and had no intention of completing their programmes. This resulted in a marked decline in 2015/16 in pass rates on apprenticeships in health and social care, administration, and children and young people's workforce.
- In 2015/16, only a small proportion of adults who took employability and functional skills qualifications achieved these successfully. YMCA Training has ceased to deliver this provision.
- Few differences exist between the achievements of different groups of learners or apprentices, other than for those with a recognised learning difficulty and/or disability who achieve less well than their peers.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Approximately 266 learners are on study programmes, the large majority studying at level 1 or below. YMCA Training aims to engage with young people who are not currently in education, employment or training, or who are at risk of becoming disengaged. Learners attend one of 11 local centres across England where they follow programmes in horticulture, child care, business administration, health and social care and vehicle maintenance.
- Study programmes are well planned, managed effectively, and meet the needs of the learners who follow them. Tutors use initial assessments of learners' starting points well. They provide good careers advice and guidance and ensure that study programmes are personalised and challenging. They make sure that learners gain work-related skills, including in English and mathematics, which prepare them well for their next steps.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are well planned. Tutors have high expectations of learners. They use a range of interesting and challenging teaching and learning activities to motivate learners, enabling them to make good progress.
- The large majority of learners attend well. They develop good attitudes to learning and work, behave well and treat their peers and staff with respect.
- YMCA Training has strengthened the arrangements for assessing learners' starting points and using this information to place learners on programmes that are appropriate to their needs and ambitions. As a result, an improved and now high proportion of learners have remained on their programme.
- Learners receive frequent and good careers advice and guidance from staff and regular input from employers who visit YMCA Training centres. These visits help learners to prepare for their next steps. The vast majority have a clear understanding of their goals and career aspirations. For example, learners following programmes in childcare have ambitions to work with young children in pre-school provision, and some learners studying on the vehicle maintenance course have ambitions to run their own garages.
- All learners who are ready carry out well-planned work experience placements. A large majority of learners join study programmes with YMCA Training because they are not participating in other education, training or employment. Through work experience, they improve their attitudes to learning and work and gain in confidence. A high proportion of learners who complete their study programme progress to further education, an apprenticeship or employment.
- Learners who have commenced study programmes since September 2016 are making much better progress in improving their English and mathematical skills than learners in previous years. Learners now regularly develop, reinforce and consolidate a range of specific English and mathematical skills in discrete and vocational lessons. Childcare learners use professional vocabulary to describe key stages in a child's development, and learners carrying out vehicle maintenance checks confidently interpret data to set specific torque settings on hand tools.
- The proportion of learners who achieved accredited qualifications in English and

mathematics in 2015/16 was too low, and only a small minority taking GCSEs in these subjects improved their grades. Although pass rates are improving for the small number of learners who have taken tests or examinations this year, managers recognise that pass rates in English and mathematics need to improve further.

- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not plan activities sufficiently well to meet the needs of the most able or least confident learners in their lessons. As a result, a minority of learners do not make as much progress as they could.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Just under 300 adults are on programmes with YMCA Training. The large majority are on level 3 health and fitness qualifications and a small minority follow programmes at level 5 in management. Adults take out learning loans to fund their participation on these programmes.
- Leaders and managers have developed a clear rationale for adult learning programmes. Managers and tutors develop programmes in consultation with employers. As a result, courses successfully enable adult learners to achieve vocational qualifications and either gain employment, or progress to higher levels of responsibility in their existing workplace.
- Tutors identify and establish learners' starting points and individual needs accurately at the start of their programmes. They use this information well to provide high-quality training and enable most learners to achieve their future plans.
- Tutors deliver sharply focused lessons that link directly to the learning and assessment outcomes that learners need to achieve. The pace of learning is good, and the quality of learners' discussions when working with their peers is very high.
- Support for learners is good and enables those with identified additional needs to participate successfully and achieve. In contrast to previous years, learners in the current year with additional needs are making similar progress to their peers towards completing their programmes successfully.
- Most learners make good progress towards achieving their qualifications. Achievement rates are high and the proportion of adults who complete within the planned timescale has improved significantly since last year.
- Adult learners receive comprehensive and timely initial advice and guidance that enables them to receive the funding they need to develop and accredit their skills. This guidance effectively informs the development of personalised learning programmes which prepare learners well to achieve their qualification goals and career aims.
- Learners are confident and articulate. They work well together and support each other in their learning. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour and very high levels of respect for each other and the staff they work with. For example, in one fitness session all learners engaged in helping their peers to practise their newly learned demonstration techniques.
- Tutors promote the understanding of equality and diversity effectively. They have successfully promoted a culture of mutual respect that learners respond to willingly. Learners from diverse backgrounds treat each other and the clients they work with courteously and respectfully.
- Tutors provide good verbal feedback on ongoing and completed work, but written

feedback for learners on level 3 programmes does not enable learners to understand what they need to do to improve. For example, learners draft written assignments with the support of tutors but, once the work meets the standard required, only a small minority receive additional feedback on how they could have improved their work further.

- Tutors do not use questioning consistently well to challenge the most able learners. For example, the content of some aspects of lessons are a re-cap for a few learners and new knowledge for others depending on their previous experiences. Tutors do not tailor the questions they pose for the more experienced learners to develop their understanding further.
- Tutors do not always effectively develop learners' English skills within lessons or through their feedback on written work. For example, a few exercise and fitness learners repeatedly misspell technical words that they are required to write on clients' records.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Around 1,566 apprentices of all ages are following apprenticeship programmes with YMCA Training. Around one fifth are aged 16 to 18, just under one third are aged 19 to 23 and the remainder are aged 24 or older. Just under half of the apprentices follow programmes at intermediate level. Most of the remainder follow programmes at advanced level with a very small minority following higher level apprenticeships. Most apprentices follow programmes in health and social care, children and young people's workforce, early years educator, sports and fitness, business administration, horticulture and leadership.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have taken decisive actions to improve the quality of apprenticeship provision and the outcomes for apprentices. They have successfully restructured apprenticeship programmes, reduced the amount of subcontracted provision and implemented a range of strategies to improve the practice of tutors.
- Since the start of the 2015/16 contract year, tutors now use robust tracking processes to monitor the progress that apprentices make. Managers use these to hold tutors to account effectively for the outcomes of their apprentices. Apprentices who started their programmes after the start of the 2015/16 contract year are making good progress towards achieving their qualification goals within the planned timescales, demonstrating a significant improvement on previous years when too many made slow progress.
- Managers and tutors engage effectively with employers across England. They develop apprenticeships that meet employers' business needs well, both at a national and local level. As a result of gaining good professional and work-related skills, a high proportion of apprentices remain in employment when they complete their apprenticeship.
- Most tutors use highly effective and flexible training and assessment activities. For example, tutors schedule visits to accommodate the business needs of employers and apprentices' shift patterns.
- Through skilfully linking off-the-job training and assessment activities with apprentices' work, tutors enable apprentices to improve their technical skills and understanding of the industrial and commercial standards that their employers require of them.
- Most apprentices are confident and articulate. They develop good personal, technical and employability skills that make them valued members of the workforce. For example,

horticulture apprentices quickly build the self-confidence necessary to maintain sports pitches to a good standard. They confidently and safely use a range of pedestrian and ride-on mowers and ground aerators. They use digital line-marking lasers competently to assist them in the accurate marking out of pitches.

- Strategies to improve the teaching and assessment of English and mathematics have resulted in most apprentices now making at least the required progress towards achieving functional skills qualifications. For example, apprentices on the early years educator programme who lack confidence in their written English skills at the start of their programme now confidently complete written reports.
- Assessment of apprentices' work is thorough and accurately records the skills that apprentices develop and the progress that they make. The quality of most apprentices' practical and theoretical work is of a good standard. Verbal feedback from tutors to apprentices is constructive, providing good encouragement to help them improve further.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in training and at work.
- Tutors promote the understanding of equality and diversity well in apprentices' progress reviews, and apprentices demonstrate an informed understanding of life in today's diverse British society. For example, apprentices working with young children in nurseries gain a good understanding of how to involve newly arrived children from various cultural backgrounds into the play and learning activities of other children to make them feel welcome.
- Through strengthened management of apprenticeship provision, managers have reduced significantly the proportion of apprentices who take longer than the planned time to achieve their qualification goals. A minority however, particularly those who have been on programmes for more than 18 months, continue to make slow progress.
- Tutors involve apprentices' employers well in planning training and reviews. However, they do not all provide sufficient clarity to employers, through apprentices' learning plans, about how they could meet their obligation to provide protected time for apprentices to complete required off-the-job learning activities.

Provider details

Unique reference number	57598
Type of provider	Not-for-profit organisation
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,850
Principal/CEO	Andree Deane, Managing Director
Telephone number	0207 343 1801
Website	www.ymcatraining.org.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	224	19	42	10	-	248	-	19
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	197	563	96	699	-	11		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	58		10		68			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Prestige Training Skills North East YMCA (West Kent) YMCA (Fairthorne) YMCA (Downslink)							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Derek Whitehead	Ofsted Inspector
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