

FW Solutions Limited

Independent training provider

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2019

Overall effectiveness		Good	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to the early years sector and have appointed experienced, specialist staff who develop effective workplace skills for adult learners and apprentices.
- Most adult learners remain in sustained employment and progress to higher levels of study on completion of their course.
- Regular and effective support from teaching and learning coordinators ensures that the large majority of apprentices and most adult learners make good progress from their starting points.
- Good-quality teaching and assessment help apprentices to develop high levels of practical skills and behaviour that enable them to make valuable contributions in the workplace.
- Leaders and managers work well with employers and local authorities to ensure that the provision meets local, regional and national needs.
- Learners and apprentices receive good impartial information, advice and guidance throughout their programmes.
- Data monitoring and reporting do not provide staff with a clear understanding of the overall progress of groups of learners and apprentices, particularly those who receive additional help and support.
- Feedback on work is not consistently clear in explaining to learners and apprentices what they need to do to improve and to reinforce and develop their learning.
- Learners' and apprentices' skills in English and mathematics are not developed sufficiently, particularly for those who have already attained a relevant qualification in these subjects.

Full report

Information about the provider

- FW Solutions Limited's head office is in Harrogate. It was formed in 2008 as a subcontractor delivering early years, customer service, management and teaching assistant apprenticeships for main contractors and colleges. It secured main provider status in May 2017 and began the delivery of levy-funded apprenticeships. In January 2018, it began the delivery of non-levy-funded apprenticeships. It began delivery of provision funded through advanced learner loans in August 2016.
- FW Solutions has 183 apprentices on frameworks and standards-based programmes. Most apprentices are female and study frameworks. The vast majority follow programmes in children and young people's workforce at level 2, children's learning and development (early years educator) at level 3 and children and young people's workforce (residential childcare) at level 3. Apprentices also follow programmes in hospitality, catering, customer service, business administration, playwork and teaching assistant. Twenty-two adult learners study programmes funded through advanced learner loans. The majority of adult learners study a programme in children's learning and development (early years educator) at level 3 and the diploma in advanced childcare and management at level 4.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that data monitoring and reporting provide staff with information on the overall progress of all learners and all groups, including learners who receive additional support, so they are able to prioritise and implement interventions.
- Improve the use of information gained at the start of programmes to ensure that all learners and apprentices develop their English and mathematics skills in preparation for their next steps.
- Ensure that feedback makes clear what learners and apprentices need to do to improve the quality of their work and that it reinforces and develops learning and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have a very clear vision and ambition for the business and have created a culture that demands high levels of performance from all staff. As a result, teaching and learning coordinators (TLCs) have high expectations for learners and apprentices. They promote an inclusive ethos where good behaviour is expected, and learning and development take place in a culture of tolerance and respect for others.
- Learning programmes successfully meet the needs of local communities and businesses. Curriculum planning draws effectively on regional intelligence and local authority reports. For example, the planned reduction in the curriculum offer allows further growth of early years and childcare programmes at levels 2 and 3 in the west of the region and at levels 4 and 5 in the north.
- The management of adult programmes and apprenticeships is good. Most learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the progress that they make. They can explain how far they are through their programme of study and the skills, knowledge and behaviours that they develop. Employers track the progress of individuals well through a shared management information system.
- Leaders, managers and TLCs have very good working relationships with employers. Workplace visits are frequent and flexible. As a result, employers have a good understanding of the activities that apprentices need to carry out to make good progress and improve their vocational skills and knowledge.
- Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Staff who observe lessons provide reliable and accurate evaluations about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, TLCs understand what they need to do to improve when delivering training. Managers deal with any underperformance effectively, and they accurately identify and provide suitable professional development and mandatory training for staff.
- Leaders and managers accurately evaluate the quality of all aspects of the provider's work. The self-assessment report is an accurate reflection of the provision and includes the views of staff, employers, learners and apprentices. A comprehensive improvement plan provides leaders and staff with a good understanding of the key areas for improvement. However, the report does not provide a clear evaluation of the quality of individual programmes.
- Data monitoring and reporting do not provide staff with a clear enough understanding of the overall progress of groups of learners and apprentices. For example, the progress of learners and apprentices who receive additional learning is not monitored or reported on. Staff use data well to monitor the progress of individual learners.

The governance of the provider

- The introduction of new governance arrangements is almost completed. Leaders have followed guidance from a leading trade association to strengthen the governance of the business. As a result, the quality assurance of the provision has been bolstered and independent financial oversight of the business has been added. Meeting agendas and

reporting requirements for the new arrangements, as well as dates and times of governance meetings, are soon to be finalised. It is too early to judge the impact of these new arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The designated safeguarding officer has suitable qualifications and is knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. Managers carry out appropriate checking of all staff to ensure their suitability for their roles. They maintain an up-to-date single central register. Managers monitor the incident-recording process closely. They have dealt effectively with all the logged incidents.
- Learners and apprentices have a good awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, feel safe and know what to do if they have concerns. Apprentices' understanding of safeguarding is particularly good.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors are well qualified and knowledgeable and have up-to-date experience in their subject specialisms. They use their skills and knowledge well to support learners and apprentices to develop relevant knowledge and skills and transfer this new knowledge into their places of work. Learners and apprentices value the experience of their tutors. Units of study are relevant to the workplace, resulting in improved job performance and a deeper understanding.
- TLCs work well with employers to provide relevant advice and guidance to help learners and apprentices improve performance at work. They also make regular links between theory and practice within the workplace. Suitable arrangements for close mentoring and buddy support in childcare centres help apprentices to make good progress in the workplace.
- TLCs use a wide range of assessment strategies to check individual progress. Most TLCs use effective questioning strategies to check learning and develop understanding. They assess progress and performance well through one-to-one meetings and via the electronic portfolio system.
- TLCs provide very good levels of support. Learners and apprentices value this support, which enables them to stay on their programme, especially when they experience periods of sickness or personal issues. TLCs are available via email and the electronic portfolios system between visits, and keep in regular contact with learners, apprentices and employers.
- Feedback to learners from TLCs focuses mainly on unit completion, target-setting and the completion of tasks, and less on reinforcing and extending learning or personal development. This means that, for a minority of learners and apprentices, feedback is not effective enough.
- Learners and apprentices are well supported to achieve English and mathematics qualifications. The support for learners who already hold relevant qualifications to develop

their literacy and numeracy skills further is less effective. Staff are aware of additional support needs but the level of support provided is not monitored by staff to ensure that learners and apprentices are not disadvantaged.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices develop good work-related skills that improve their job performance and effectiveness. Particularly in early years and childcare settings, they apply what they have learned in earlier training sessions. For example, when working with children during nursery snack times, they encourage communication and discussion so that children understand the benefits of healthy eating and the impact of cultures and allergies on diet. The standard of work is at the level of study expected, and often higher.
- Learners and apprentices take pride in their work, enjoy their learning and grow in confidence because of their studies and the support that they receive from their TLCs. They see the impact of their increased skills on their effectiveness in the workplace. They are positive about learning, exhibit good behaviours and are keen and ready to learn.
- Learners and apprentices are respectful and promote an inclusive environment, both within their learning and at work. They value teamworking during training sessions and in the workplace. Apprentices have a very good understanding of equality and diversity and their application in the workplace. TLCs promote cultural awareness well and provide updates on different cultures and festivals during reviews. Learners have a good awareness of British values.
- Good impartial careers advice and guidance continue throughout all programmes. TLCs use their specialist subject knowledge to support adult learners in making decisions about their progress and career and employment goals. As a result, most learners progress to higher levels of study.
- Attendance and punctuality are good. Learners and apprentices come well prepared to training sessions and one-to-one review sessions. They behave well and show respect to their tutors. They often carry out extra coursework and submit it via the electronic portfolio system.
- Leaders and managers have recently provided a range of services to support the health and well-being of learners via a social media platform. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The great majority of learners and apprentices complete their programmes and achieve their qualifications. The large majority of apprentices make good progress from their starting points. Most current learners and apprentices are on track to achieve within the planned timescales.
- Most learners use their qualifications to take on more responsibility and gain promotion in the workplace or continue with further education and training.
- The proportion of apprentices on level 2 functional skills courses in English, mathematics and information and communication technology who achieve their qualifications is high.

- The standard of work that learners and apprentices produce is generally at the level expected and, in a few instances, at a higher level.
- Following completion of their courses, most adult learners remain in sustained employment and progress to higher levels of study.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Most learners are employed in early years and childcare settings and use advanced learner loans to further their careers.
- Learners make good progress in improving the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need for their work through monthly one-to-one training sessions with their TLCs. For example, learners on the level 3 diploma in children's learning and development can explain the differences in physical development between a one- and two-year-old child holding a drinking cup.
- Most learners are very enthusiastic about learning and are keen to improve their contributions in the workplace. TLCs build on learners' high levels of enthusiasm by providing thought-provoking activities that spark further interest during training sessions. This results in good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, a level 4 learner was able to explain the importance of different ways in which people learn and linked this effectively to performance management reviews in the workplace.
- Assessments are well planned and meet the needs of learners. This results in high levels of motivation to achieve.
- In a few cases, feedback from TLCs is cursory and does not challenge learners to reflect fully and produce work of a high quality. As a result, in these cases, learners are unsure of what they need to do to improve.
- TLCs do not ensure that their learners improve their writing skills sufficiently. They seldom correct learners' misspellings, poor structuring and incorrect grammar and punctuation.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The provision meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Most apprentices are employed in early years and childcare settings and receive good on- and off-the-job training in their place of work. TLCs make frequent and well-planned visits to the workplace and respond flexibly to apprentices' and employers' requests and workplace demands.
- TLCs promote learning and understanding well through good contextualisation of topics and reinforcement of their importance in the workplace. Units are selected by TLCs, apprentices and their employers to ensure that they are relevant to workplace duties and interests. This results in improved job performance and a deeper understanding of the job role.

- Apprentices enjoy their learning and can see the impact of their work in their daily interactions with children in their care. They are encouraged by TLCs and employers to support each other and develop good teamworking skills and behaviours. This enables apprentices to provide more effective care and support for children in the nurseries.
- Partnership working with employers is very good. Employers are involved effectively in planning the training required to deliver apprenticeship programmes and during reviews. Employers gain well-skilled, valued and knowledgeable staff who contribute effectively to the nurseries where they work.
- TLCs have high expectations of each apprentice. This encourages apprentices to produce a good standard of work, and most make at least the progress expected of them. Apprentices become more confident and articulate. For example, they gain in confidence by working with children to help them to understand the risks involved in executing a safe road crossing.
- All apprentices benefit from the very good support given during frequent and comprehensive visits by their TLCs. Useful contact between visits provides additional support to help apprentices improve and make progress. Apprentices find the use of a buddy and mentoring system in the workplace helpful in making good progress.
- Most apprentices work in high-quality, safe working environments and demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety and how to work safely with children. They have a sound understanding of the 'Prevent' duty, safeguarding, British values and equality and diversity. Although all apprentices have a full-time job offer, it is too early to judge whether they remain in work, gain promotion or move on to higher qualifications as almost all have yet to complete their apprenticeships.
- The standard of teaching, learning and assessment is good. As a result, most apprentices are able to demonstrate and articulate their learning and development well. However, in a small minority of sessions, TLCs use too much verbal instruction without sufficiently checking learners' understanding, and time is lost writing instructions that could have been prepared in advance.
- The support for apprentices' English and mathematics functional skills development is good for those who do not have an appropriate GCSE pass grade. As a result, the proportion of apprentices who achieve their functional skills at the first attempt is high. However, for a minority of apprentices, the further development of their English and mathematics skills requires improvement.
- The focus of target-setting is on completing units and, as a result, a few apprentices and employers do not have a clear understanding of the personal skills needed to make effective overall progress. Most TLCs provide good verbal feedback to apprentices and give clear guidance on how apprentices can improve their performance. However, written feedback is less effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1247990
Type of provider	Independent training provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	16
Managing director	Sandra Hardy
Telephone number	01423 536 672
Website	www.fwsolutions.net

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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	4
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	48	20	33	42	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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

Bob Hamp, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Bob Busby	Ofsted Inspector
Maria Rayworth	Ofsted Inspector

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