

Develop-U

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

20–22 March 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
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 provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not evaluate the quality or raise the standard of teaching, learning and assessment well enough. They do not focus sufficiently on the progress that apprentices make or the skills that they gain.
- Senior leaders and managers do not use data and other information routinely to gain an effective oversight of the progress that apprentices make or of the quality of the provision.
- Since the recent monitoring visit, senior leaders and managers have taken sensible actions to bring about improvements. However, they have not yet had time to demonstrate the desired impact of these actions.
- The company does not have arrangements in place to provide external scrutiny. Senior leaders have only very recently begun the process of forming an external scrutiny board.
- Coach assessors do not routinely make use of apprentices' prior knowledge to plan and provide individual learning activities.
- Coach assessors do not ensure that apprentices receive timely reviews of the progress that they are making toward their targets or involve employers well enough in reviewing the progress that apprentices make.
- Coach assessors do not routinely provide clear feedback to help apprentices improve the standard of their work and make more rapid progress.

The provider has the following strengths

- Apprentices gain good practical and technical skills and develop their personal, social and employability skills effectively during their programmes.
- Apprentices in food manufacturing make good progress and are well prepared for their end-point assessment.
- Coach assessors use their considerable specialist skills and knowledge well to motivate and enthuse apprentices to make at least the progress expected of them.
- Attendance at training sessions is very high.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Develop-U is a small independent training provider with its head office in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. The company provides apprenticeships for large levy-paying manufacturing organisations, mainly in the food manufacturing sector. Apprentices are employed at companies across the north of England and in the Midlands. They follow either standards-based or framework apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 4 in improving operational performance, food manufacturing and advanced process operations.
- Two directors oversee the day-to-day operation of the business and employ a small team of permanent management staff and several associate coach assessors. Develop-U gained a direct contract to provide apprenticeship programmes in 2017. At the time of the inspection, 52 apprentices were in training.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders and managers should continue to implement their initiatives to improve the quality of the provision by:
 - ensuring that apprenticeship recruitment is carefully managed, taking account of apprentices' prior attainment, job role and suitability for the programmes
 - strengthening the self-assessment process in order to evaluate the quality of the provision more accurately
 - completing staff performance and development appraisals that link to effective staff development opportunities
 - evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment more accurately.
- Senior leaders and managers should use data and other information consistently to gain an accurate view of the progress that apprentices make towards completing their programmes.
- Senior leaders should establish arrangements to enable them to benefit from external scrutiny and expertise.
- Coach assessors should improve the quality of teaching and assessment by ensuring that:
 - they use information about apprentices' prior knowledge to plan and provide programmes that meet apprentices' individual needs
 - they review apprentices' progress towards their targets regularly to help apprentices make more rapid progress
 - the feedback that they give to apprentices is developmental and demonstrates clearly how apprentices can improve the standard of their work and identify what they need to do next
 - employers and apprenticeship mentors are involved in the planning of learning and any review discussions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the recent monitoring visit, senior leaders and managers have reinforced their well-articulated vision to provide training for large manufacturing organisations. They are committed to ensuring that their provision is responsive to the needs of the organisations with which they work and helps apprentices to gain the skills and experience to be successful at work and in their daily lives. However, too many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors at the time of the monitoring visit remain.
- Leaders and managers do not use data reports and systems consistently to gain a clear oversight of the quality of the provision. They rely too much on the data and information kept by coach assessors. They do not use well enough their online monitoring tool and, as a result, do not have a clear enough understanding of the progress that apprentices make.
- Senior leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have put in place several positive interventions to improve the provision. However, they do not effectively evaluate important aspects such as the quality of training, employers' and apprenticeship mentors' involvement in the planning of learning, or the quality of the feedback that apprentices receive and the impact this has on apprentices' progress.
- Managers have recently revised the processes for evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and staff performance. Staff appraisal outcomes align well with development activities and training. However, observations of teaching, learning and assessment focus too much on the planning of sessions and the actions of the coach assessor. They do not evaluate well enough the progress that apprentices make or how well teaching and coaching sessions develop apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours.
- Senior leaders and managers have forged strong and effective relationships with their employer partners. Develop-U is respected in the food and manufacturing sectors for bringing about positive interventions through talent development programmes. Managers work well with employers to ensure that the curriculum and apprenticeship standards meet employers' needs and that programmes meet the principles of an apprenticeship. Most apprentices and employers commit to the off-the-job training entitlement. However, a few require more guidance on what activities can be included in off-the-job training.
- Managers and coach assessors ensure that apprentices receive appropriate and detailed information, advice and guidance before they start their programmes. The large majority of apprentices appreciate the benefits that their training will bring regarding future employment or promotions.

The governance of the provider

- Develop-U does not have any arrangements in place to provide external scrutiny. Senior leaders have an ambitious and clear strategic vision for the development of the company based on a good understanding of the training needs of their employer partners. They have approached prospective members of a proposed advisory board with the intention of

considering support and challenge from external experts.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and managers have ensured that effective and comprehensive safeguarding arrangements are in place. They ensure that records are confidential and up to date and any referrals or concerns are seen through to a successful conclusion for the apprentice.
- All staff and associates have participated in safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training and updating. Leaders and managers promote the importance of keeping apprentices safe in all aspects of the apprenticeship programmes.
- Leaders have implemented comprehensive safer recruitment processes to ensure that staff working with apprentices are suitable and do not pose a risk.
- Apprentices receive and recall effectively useful information about how to stay safe, the importance of good mental health, and the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and managers liaise effectively with the human resources departments of the large employers with which they work to ensure that apprentices are safe. Apprentices know to whom they should report any concerns at Develop-U and at work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the provision and, in too many instances, is not good enough.
- Coach assessors do not routinely use the information that they have about apprentices' starting points, prior knowledge and understanding well enough to plan and deliver effective individual learning programmes. The assessment of apprentices' prior skills, knowledge and behaviours, including for English and mathematics, has recently improved, resulting in managers and coach assessors having a better understanding of apprentices' starting points.
- Too often, coach assessors do not provide apprentices with timely reviews of the progress that they are making towards their targets. This impedes the progress that apprentices make.
- Coach assessors do not ensure that apprentices consistently receive clear and meaningful feedback on their work to help them to improve. Employers and workplace mentors are not routinely involved in the reviewing or planning of apprentices' next steps. Consequently, they are not well informed about apprentices' current progress or what apprentices need to do to improve their skills, knowledge and behaviours.
- Coach assessors do not routinely encourage apprentices to improve their English and information and communication technology (ICT) skills beyond that required by their apprenticeship. A large proportion of apprentices use a high level of mathematical skills in their job roles. However, too few improve their English or ICT skills as an integral part of their training.
- Most apprentices enjoy learning through well-planned off-the-job activities delivered in

the workplace. Apprentices attend sessions regularly and develop the skills that they need to be successful. For example, apprentices implement lean manufacturing principles that they have learned and complete case studies and projects to demonstrate their understanding of business improvement concepts.

- Coach assessors use their extensive and relevant industrial knowledge and experience effectively. They help apprentices to understand the specific skills, knowledge and behaviours that are expected and needed in their job roles. For example, coach assessors with lean manufacturing backgrounds have recently undertaken additional training in business improvement techniques. They use this additional knowledge effectively to enable apprentices to incorporate improvement techniques into their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices' attendance at training sessions, assessments and employer training is very high. Apprentices value the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours. Employers ensure that apprentices can participate in training activities, and provide sufficient time during the working week for them to do so.
- Coach assessors improve apprentices' mathematical skills effectively for their job roles. For example, apprentices analyse and compare different sets of data in relation to business improvement techniques, and staff attendance and absence records in relation to productivity.
- Apprentices feel valued in the workplace and make effective contributions to their employers' businesses. For example, apprentices were given additional responsibility to evaluate the implementation of a waste reduction strategy in their department. Following their evaluation and presentation to senior staff, the strategy was successfully implemented, and waste was reduced.
- Most apprentices produce work that is in line with their company's expectations. They work to stringent deadlines and have a good understanding of the critical aspects of lean manufacturing processes to ensure that the product is produced to high standards and on time.
- Apprentices benefit from effective advice and guidance on the relevant career pathways and the opportunities available to them at the start of their training. They speak confidently about the benefits that completing their apprenticeship will bring in enabling them to progress in their careers.
- Most apprentices have a good understanding of British values and treat each other and colleagues with respect and tolerance. They benefit from useful information from employers about personal safety and the need to adhere to their respective health and safety requirements.
- Apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe. They have a good awareness of the possible risks from radicalisation or extremist groups.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- At the time of the inspection, no apprentices had reached the end of their programme. However, almost all were making the progress expected of them. Those nearest to completing their standards-based apprenticeship were well prepared and ready for their end-point assessment.
- Almost all apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications at the first attempt. As part of their job roles and training, apprentices improve their communication skills and use mathematics well in the workplace.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of job-related skills, produce a good standard of work and quickly become valued members of the workforce. For example, apprentices gain the confidence and skills to work on different biscuit production lines and can produce accurate food mixes to meet stringent food safety requirements.
- Most apprentices are aware that, through developing new skills, knowledge and behaviours, they will increase their opportunities of gaining employment or promotion on completion of their programmes. They talk confidently about the opportunities that completing an apprenticeship will bring them.
- Coach assessors and managers ensure that apprentices from different groups make at least the progress expected of them and achieve equally well.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58242
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	N/A
Managing Director	Sam Morris
Telephone number	01709 789568
Website	www.develop-u.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	25	0	20	0	7		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations manager, 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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