

Key Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

20–23 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders have made significant progress in all the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection, and in those they have identified through their subsequent self-assessment activity.
- Since the previous inspection, a relentless leadership focus on the experience of all learners has resulted in significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and to levels of achievement.
- Recruiting staff and training consultants work in close partnership with employers to ensure that the training apprentices receive closely aligns with their business needs.
- Training consultants skilfully match learning activities to apprentices' job roles and trainees' development needs to help them to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need in the workplace.
- A very high proportion of trainees secure apprenticeships at or before the end of their programmes.
- Study programme learners, who often have poor previous levels of achievement, make good progress and develop a wide range of valuable employment-related skills.
- The good selection process and high quality of information, advice and guidance have led to an increased proportion of apprentices who sustain their employment, remain on their programmes and progress to higher-level courses.
- Managers have not yet ensured that achievement gaps between all groups of learners are closing.
- A small minority of training staff do not check apprentices', trainees' and study programme learners' knowledge and understanding frequently enough, or in enough depth, in learning sessions to ensure that they make good progress.
- A small minority of apprentices, trainees and study programme learners have no more than a basic awareness of British values and the dangers they might face from those who hold extremist views.
- A small minority of learners in each provision type do not improve their English and/or mathematical skills as well as they should.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Key Training provides apprenticeships for all age groups, both with levy and non-levy employers, traineeships and study programmes. Around three quarters of the provision is apprenticeships, with traineeships and study programmes comprising the remaining quarter in roughly equal proportions. Apprenticeship and traineeship provision is national, with study programmes delivered from a centre in Wellingborough. The apprenticeship and traineeship learner population has the highest density in the east of England and northeast regions.
- Key Training offers accredited training programmes to meet the needs of both young people and adults. Young people have the opportunity to learn in-centre on study programmes or to secure an apprenticeship through the 'talent match' service, which matches 16- to 23-year-olds with employers to complete an apprenticeship. Young learners who are not quite ready for an apprenticeship can follow a traineeship to experience the world of work, with the aim of progressing onto an apprenticeship or other employment.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers need to analyse and use data more effectively to identify and eradicate any gaps in achievement between groups of learners.
- Managers need to ensure that all training staff use and adopt the existing good practice of the majority of training staff in assessment, progress reviewing and target setting.
- Managers should support training staff to improve further apprentices', trainees' and learners' understanding of British values and their awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Managers need to support training staff to better improve learners', trainees' and apprentices' English and mathematical skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have successfully dealt with the vast majority of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Effective actions are in place to deal with the remaining areas of underperformance and further develop the quality of provision. Managers have also discontinued provision that was not meeting standards, including that in the early years and with subcontractors.
- Since the previous inspection, a relentless focus by a strengthened leadership team on the experience of all learners has resulted in significant improvements in quality and levels of achievement. The vast majority of learners are now making good progress. Although plans to reduce gaps in achievement are in place, they are not sufficiently detailed to fully identify all gaps and ensure that they are closing. The level of analysis is currently limited to gender, ethnicity, disability and disadvantage and some gaps are not closing quickly enough, for example those between the male and female learners. All staff are clear about their responsibilities and many contribute well to performance improvement groups to deal with identified challenges to the quality of delivery.
- Managers now use a number of highly effective tools to judge and improve the quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment. These include accurate and detailed data reports, close working between the quality and delivery teams, frequent quality review of online portfolios, effective observations of practice and quality meetings. In the few cases where training staff do not meet high standards, managers identify this quickly and deal with it through sound performance management.
- Managers continue to improve the quality of provision by means of a comprehensive staff development system. This is based on a detailed understanding of staff performance and individual development needs, and of the needs of Key Training.
- Managers now better support learners to develop and improve their English and mathematics skills. Most training consultants now have the right skills to support most learners effectively to improve their skills, particularly in English. The functional skills centre provides a well-managed resource for learners who require additional support. First-time pass rates for functional skills are now high.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Training staff make good use of the in-house system 'RSVP' that offers good-quality online resources and regular updates. Staff embed into learning the key themes of equality, diversity and safeguarding, including British values. Managers and staff ensure that Key Training continues to offer a highly inclusive and nurturing learning environment. Managers work closely with many external partners to help many learners overcome significant barriers to learning.
- Leaders and managers work closely and very effectively with employers. Employers are supported effectively through a well-managed approach to developing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities. The in-house recruitment programme continues to serve employers and learners well in enabling a good match between them.
- Employers engage actively in the development of programmes and in supporting trainees and apprentices to increase their knowledge and skills. Most trainees develop effective employment skills during their placements, and many go on to successful apprenticeships.

- Self-assessment involves staff at all levels and the resulting report provides an accurate, though rather descriptive, reflection of the provision. Managers identify headline improvements accurately and highlight them in the quality improvement plan that includes broad targets. More detailed analysis is achieved through the use of regular position statements and a wide range of plans, working groups and initiatives. Such initiatives include performance improvement groups, targeted short-term groups and local improvement plans. Together, they allow managers to make the required improvements.

The governance of the provider

- Changes in the structure of the board, identified at the previous inspection, have resulted in very effective challenge to, and the resources to improve, the quality of provision across Key Training.
- Leaders have a very clear strategy that is focused around the entire experience of a learner, to ensure that they develop high-quality skills and knowledge with Key Training and the most appropriate employer.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers promote a very strong safeguarding culture that means that the safety and support for learners are at the heart of the provision.
- Managers and staff receive regular and up-to-date training and have good links with local agencies. This means that they effectively and quickly identify and deal with any concerns that could affect a learner's safety or well-being.
- Although the majority of learners now have a better understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, a small minority still only have a basic understanding. An effective range of resources is used increasingly well by training consultants and learners. These include access to online sites and a detailed monthly newsletter that stimulates discussion and further investigation well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Training consultants ensure that apprenticeship programmes, both in standards and frameworks, are planned and reviewed well with employers and apprentices to meet their requirements. As a result, apprentices develop the skills they need for their job roles. For example, training consultants often base themselves within an employer for a full day and skilfully integrate learning into the everyday operations within workplaces. This enables apprentices to rapidly improve exactly the right skills for their job roles.
- Managers and training staff have high expectations for trainees within their job roles. They provide clear job descriptions and good-quality work experience placements. These help trainees to improve their skills, knowledge and behaviours, and subsequently progress to apprenticeships.
- Apprentices benefit from additional training within their workplace. For example, apprentices had training in general data protection regulations and human resourcing.

These gave them a more complete learning experience and enabled them to add value to their workplace. Other apprentices benefited from training in the use of spreadsheets to improve the skills that they use well to design and improve office systems.

- Training consultants and tutors use the results of initial and continuing assessment well to develop personalised programmes for apprentices, trainees and learners. These help support them to make good progress in their learning from their individual starting points. Training consultants plan learning for apprentices that is tailored to their job roles, resulting in them becoming more effective and valued employees. Training consultants set good short- and medium-term targets for apprentices that support them to make good progress towards improving their skills and achieving their overall objectives.
- Tutors use questioning and assessment skills well to check study programme learners' knowledge and understanding. They also check learners' English and mathematics skills frequently to support further learning in vocational and employment-related sessions.
- Tutors provide helpful feedback to study programme learners in lessons to help them improve, although not all learners can remember the feedback tutors have provided. Apprentices and trainees also value the feedback provided by most training consultants. Learners in all provision types benefit from prompt marking and returning of work by training staff. This helps them to make more rapid progress.
- Learners and trainees benefit from good-quality work experience relevant to their skills development needs. Learners and trainees who are not yet ready for external work experience take part in positive work-related learning. Tutors make good links to employment to develop learners' employability skills and improve their opportunities to gain purposeful employment.
- Training consultants track apprentices' progress effectively to ensure that they are on target and to help those who may fall behind to catch up. Consequently, most apprentices and the vast majority of trainees are successful in their learning and make good progress.
- The majority of training consultants support apprentices effectively to improve their English and mathematics skills. They also show apprentices how to apply their skills in practical work situations, for example in producing effective business emails, business letters to customers, costings for invoicing and the preparation of reports. Most apprentices who need further help to improve their functional English and mathematics skills benefit from effective remote support. Tutors in the 'functional skills centre' use information and learning technologies very well to provide individual support to apprentices in their workplaces, using an online system coupled with telephony.
- Tutors support learners to develop their English and mathematics skills well in study programmes. This ensures that they are well prepared to take their functional skills examinations. Improved monitoring of English and mathematics progress has also supported good in-year progress. As a result, the proportion of learners passing their examinations first-time and overall is increasing and is now good.
- Teaching, learning and assessment promote equality, address diversity and tackle radicalisation, bullying and discrimination for the majority of learners, apprentices and trainees. Managers make good use of an online learning tool as part of the e-portfolio system. Tutors promote this consistently in learning and, consequently, learners, trainees and apprentices use the resource frequently to develop their knowledge and skills and further develop their understanding of life in modern Britain.

- A small minority of training consultants do not check apprentices' knowledge and understanding frequently enough or in enough depth to ensure that they are making progress. In a minority of study programme lessons, tutors do not explain activities well enough and, as a result, a small number of learners do not fully understand their short-term learning objectives. Nor do these learners understand their medium- and longer-term progress and learning targets, and this slows their progress.
- A small minority of training consultants do not promote and reinforce mathematics skills and English skills well enough to help apprentices to practise and develop their skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Most apprentices, trainees and learners on study programmes take pride in their work or learning and rapidly improve their levels of self-confidence.
- Most trainees are confident and professional in their approach to their work.
- Apprentices, trainees and learners feel safe and are safe. They have a good understanding of who to talk to if they have any concerns.
- A thorough recruiting process helps match the right potential apprentices with employment opportunities. These apprentices receive good information, advice and guidance and most are well prepared to meet the demands of their programmes. Training consultants make apprentices aware of where there are opportunities to progress to higher-level courses.
- Most learners on study programmes behave consistently well. Tutors challenge instances of inappropriate behaviour quickly and help these learners to improve their behaviour to meet learning and workplace expectations.
- Learners on study programmes and traineeships benefit from sufficient purposeful work-related learning.
- The attendance of study programme learners has improved significantly and, for most, it is now good.
- Employers report that their apprentices and trainees rapidly develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need from their employees.
- A small minority of learners in all provision types do not develop their mathematics skills or are not well supported by training staff to improve their English skills.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Apprentices, trainees and learners on study programmes enjoy learning and most make good progress in realising their potential.
- Most current apprentices make at least the expected progress from accurately identified starting points. This follows a three-year overall improvement trend in apprenticeship achievements. In many, but not yet all, subject areas, overall achievement rates are high and nearly all of the apprentices in these subject areas achieve on time.
- A very high proportion of learners on traineeship programmes secure apprenticeships.

- The large majority of study programme learners, many of whom have low levels of previous achievement, successfully secure employment or places on education or training courses.
- A good proportion of apprentices progress from intermediate apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships, where they are available. The very large majority remain in sustained employment at the end of their apprenticeships.
- Apprentices' and learners' work meets or exceeds the requirements of their qualifications and, where relevant, industry standards.
- Apprentices improve their skills, knowledge and workplace behaviours. These help them improve their performance at work and enable them to gain extra responsibility.
- There are a number of achievement gaps between identifiable groups of learners, and these are not closing quickly enough.
- The proportion of trainees who make good progress in improving their English and mathematical skills is increasing but requires further improvement.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Learners benefit from good probing and directed questioning from tutors. Such questioning provides learners with the opportunity to expand on their answers and to fully participate in oral feedback.
- Tutors assess accurately what learners achieve in learning sessions. Learners are able to demonstrate their learning and improved knowledge and understanding through a variety of assessment methods, including written self-assessment.
- English and mathematics are embedded appropriately into vocational and work preparation sessions. For example, numerical coding was used to good effect as part of a 'Prevent' duty session. Tutors encourage learners to use dictionaries to check spellings and the definitions of technical vocabulary.
- Tutors make good links to employment and local employment sectors. Learners understand the need to develop their employability skills in order to secure good-quality jobs.
- Tutors promote British values, equality and diversity and the 'Prevent' duty well throughout the study programmes. As a result, the majority of learners are able to articulate their good understanding of these matters, as well as confidently and sensitively exploring and discussing the topics in group activities.
- Learners make good progress from their starting points. Improved monitoring and tracking of English and mathematics show clear in-year progress and achievements. The large majority of current learners have already completed and achieved their speaking and listening elements of functional skills qualifications very early in their programmes.
- Learners benefit from well-planned and well-structured meaningful work experience. Learners follow their preferred career choices and are supported well by employers and the work experience coordinator.

- Learners benefit from robust learning support which includes four-weekly one-to-one meetings with the learning support coordinator to review their support plans. Training and support staff identify learners' additional learning needs and develop appropriate, comprehensive support plans for each learner.
- Learners benefit from good initial and continuing careers advice and guidance from the recruiting team and their tutors. This helps them to prepare for their next steps. The majority of learners have a clear understanding of their long-term goals and aspirations.
- Tutors do not always make the best use of learning activities and handouts to stretch and challenge most-able learners. Managers have recognised this and a recent 'do more' initiative has been implemented to improve both the quality and range of activities and the learning materials tutors use. It is too early to judge the full impact of this on the quality of teaching and learning or on learners' progress.
- A minority of learners do not know their short- or medium-term targets indicated in their individual learning plans and this slows their progress. Learners know their long-term goals for achieving an English and/or mathematics qualification or securing an apprenticeship or employment, but they are not able to identify any targets that relate to their progress towards that long-term goal. A minority of learners, therefore, do not use their individual learning plan as a meaningful progress-related document.
- Tutors do not take a consistently thorough approach to the marking of learners' work to identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Too few tutors provide written developmental feedback which gives learners a record that they can consult at a later date to help them improve their work.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Training consultants have high levels of expertise, are enthusiastic and reflect current work and professional practice well. They have a clear focus on linking learning and the world of work. This supports apprentices to see how their learning benefits their current work role and allows employers to see direct benefits from the apprenticeship programme.
- Staff and apprentices use technology very well for learning and to record and understand progress. Training consultants and apprentices use the e-portfolio well to monitor and track progress. Recordings are made of progress reviews, which usually involve the training consultant, apprentice and employer. The format and protocols for these recorded reviews ensure that apprentices have a clear and accurate record of their progress and achievement relevant to their learning and work role.
- Training consultants deliver teaching, learning and assessment that enable the large majority of apprentices to make good progress, preparing them well for progression and their career. For example, a former apprentice now holds a supervisory role and manages a current apprentice after progressing through level 2 and level 3 with the same employer.
- Employers are actively involved in the planning and review of their apprentices' learning. Training consultants work well with employers to develop and provide learning that is highly contextualised to the apprentices' work role. This supports learning, progress and

achievement and allows the apprentices to make an increasingly valuable contribution to their employer's business.

- Teaching, learning and assessment promote equality, address diversity and tackle radicalisation, bullying and discrimination. An e-learning tool is used well by apprentices to develop their understanding of these key topics. The vast majority of apprentices can readily state and apply the key concepts of equality and diversity. The majority also have a good understanding of British values and concerns related to the 'Prevent' duty.
- Training consultants promote good English skills among apprentices. During vocational learning sessions, they develop apprentices' English abilities well. Training consultants and employers recognise the importance of further developing apprentices' English skills for higher qualifications. For example, a level 4 apprentice explained how their training consultant had supported them to improve their essay-writing ability, a skill they did not need to complete their level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships.
- Apprentices on new standards-based programmes are supported by training consultants to achieve higher grades through effective stretch-and-challenge activities. These include the good use of formative assessment and detailed feedback on how to achieve a high grade in preparation for end-point assessment.
- Training consultants support the majority of apprentices to further develop and strengthen their mathematical skills through learning which is linked well to work activities. For example, an apprentice on a business administration apprenticeship performed complex linear and special calculations in their role with a building surveyor, and an apprentice for a cleaning supplies company calculated accurately the volume and size of packages that would fit onto a pallet. However, in a minority of reviews and learning activities, the development of mathematical skills is not consistently encouraged or related sufficiently to the job role. Consequently, a small minority of apprentices do not get the opportunity to practise these skills or relate them to the skills they need in the workplace.
- A few training consultants do not frequently check progress in learning sessions. The questions asked of apprentices at times lack challenge or sufficient precision to ensure an accurate assessment of learning or progress made.

Traineeships

Good

- Trainees speak positively about the advice and guidance they receive and their induction onto programmes. Training consultants use information from initial assessments effectively to plan learning sessions and develop individual traineeship programmes.
- Managers and staff have high expectations for trainees, who are provided with job descriptions and thorough inductions. This helps trainees settle into work and learning quickly. Training consultants introduce trainees immediately to their workplace and training so that they quickly learn how to collaborate and work as part of a team.
- Traineeships are well planned to ensure that trainees have meaningful and engaging learning opportunities that help them progress onto apprenticeships. Trainees benefit from 12 weeks of work experience that develop their employment skills.
- Training consultants deliver teaching, learning and assessment that enable trainees to progress and prepare them well to move on to an apprenticeship. By the end of the

traineeship programme, trainees can perform complex tasks such as administering employee timesheets or compiling compliance files for National Health Service clients.

- The progress made by most trainees is frequently and effectively checked by their training consultants. Employers are closely involved in ensuring that learning and skills development activities meet the needs of each trainee. Trainees diligently and effectively record and act upon the feedback they receive, which leads to rapid progress for most.
- Most trainees improve their basic English and mathematical skills and apply these skills effectively in everyday life and at work. Most training staff are skilled at planning learning that helps trainees to practise these skills. For example, trainees can make accurate calculations, compile client files and communicate clearly.
- Employers provide trainees with well-designed workplace training that provides plentiful opportunities for trainees to develop their skills further. For example, trainees make and receive telephone calls confidently, take messages and communicate with clients clearly and purposefully.
- In a small minority of learning sessions, training consultants do not thoroughly check trainees' progress.
- In a minority of learning sessions, training consultants do not routinely plan for the development of trainees' English and mathematical skills. Consequently, not all trainees get the opportunity to prepare well for functional skills qualifications during their traineeship. For a small minority of trainees, progress in becoming fully prepared for an apprenticeship is slow.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52847
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,302
Principal/CEO	Jim Clarke
Telephone number	01344 830 100
Website	www.keytraining.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)	192	11	-	4	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	638	296	140	348	3	74		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	112		10		122			
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 quality director, 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

Mark Shackleton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Gavin Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Terri Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Jonny Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Howard Browes	Ofsted Inspector

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