

Project Management (Staffordshire) Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

21–22 February and 14–16 March 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			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders and governors have created a positive culture that supports some of the most disadvantaged learners in their community to access education and employment, promoting social mobility.
- Leaders and managers have built very strong partnerships with high-quality employers and other stakeholders in the region to align the provision closely with local skills needs.
- Managers have designed programmes that help learners develop the personal and social skills necessary for them to overcome, in many cases, significant and complex barriers to learning.
- Trainees and learners on study programmes develop good vocational skills and progress quickly through their programme. The large majority move on to a positive destination, such as apprenticeships.
- Those learners with particularly low levels of English and mathematics achieve well during their programmes. Attendance at training and work is very high.
- The wide range of interesting enrichment activities helps trainees and study programme learners to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, including in the subcontracted provision. Apprentices benefit from well-planned practical sessions and develop a high standard of vocational skills. Almost all remain in employment on completion of their training.
- Work experience is highly effective for study programme learners and trainees. They benefit from training in a real working environment and develop good employability skills, and this prepares them well for their next steps.
- Leaders and managers do not use information on learners' progress fully to identify all areas for improvement and do not present sufficiently detailed information to governors to support their challenge to improve learners' progress.
- The percentage of apprentices who achieve their learning programme within the planned time requires further improvement.
- The proportion of learners who develop their English and mathematics successfully at the higher levels is not yet good.
- Staff lack the confidence to develop learners' comprehensive understanding in context of fundamental British values and of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Project Management (Staffordshire) Limited (PM Training) is part of the Aspire Housing Group. PM Training delivers training from its two offices in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, where almost all learners are based. PM Training provides study programmes and traineeships via three different vocational pathways. These cover grounds maintenance and property improvements, business administration, and adult social care services.
- Just over half of the pupils in Stoke-on-Trent who left school last year achieved qualifications in English and mathematics at grade 4 or above, compared with 70% nationally. The city has areas of high deprivation where the percentage of working-age people with no qualifications is substantially higher than the national rate. The unemployment rate is also higher than the national average. A large proportion of the learners have a poor experience of school education and low levels of attainment, as well as multiple barriers to learning.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of the information available to leaders and managers to monitor and continue improving the progress that all learners make across a wide range of areas, such as their personal and social development, vocational skills and English and mathematics. Governors should use this information to challenge leaders and managers to continue improving the provision and to reach the highest quality standards.
- Continue raising achievement rates for all groups of learners, including those with learning disabilities and difficulties, across all subjects; enable a higher proportion of apprentices to complete by their planned date.
- Ensure that learners in all programmes develop further their English and mathematics skills and pass qualifications in these areas well, including at level 1 and above.
- Further increase the knowledge staff have of the 'Prevent' duty and fundamental British values so that they can confidently support all learners to improve their understanding of how these topics apply to their work and lives, ensuring that they all become aware of how to avoid the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors are committed to improving the life chances of those learners most disadvantaged in the local community, which is translated into a positive and supportive strategy for learning. They have created a nurturing culture that enables staff and learners to work well together in a harmonious and productive environment. Leaders have devised provision that successfully helps learners who might not otherwise access meaningful training and credible work experience.
- Leaders have created a charitable trust that provides learners and apprentices with additional financial resources, to help them gain access to the training they need and remain on programme. For example, learners may receive travel expenses, bursaries to support living costs, driving lessons, and funds to buy clothes suitable for future interviews with employers. Compared to similar providers, leaders have been particularly successful in helping a very high proportion of their learners to progress to apprenticeships or further learning.
- Leaders use the good knowledge they hold about their learners and their communities to plan the curriculum very well, providing clear pathways for learners' progression into areas such as construction, business administration, and health and social care. In particular, they base their traineeships and study programmes on good work experience placements that allow each individual learner to develop the personal, social and employability skills necessary for them to overcome, in some cases, significant barriers to learning and progress into employment.
- Leaders, managers and staff are ambitious for what learners can achieve regardless of their low starting points. Staff expect and support all learners to demonstrate essential employability skills. They intently and persistently focus on building the small but necessary steps with their learners to ensure that they are ready to progress into an apprenticeship as soon as they can. As a result, learners develop the excellent attendance and punctuality habits required to secure and maintain employment.
- Leaders and managers have developed very strong partnerships with employers and other stakeholders in the region to align the provision closely with local skills needs. They have created a mutually beneficial partnership with their parent company, supplying aspects of the maintenance contract for their housing stock. They work closely with their partners and employers to provide meaningful work experience and placement opportunities for learners to develop and hone their skills. Additionally, as a result of their partnerships, they have led the new apprenticeship standards in housing, providing new progression routes into work for their learners.
- The management of subcontracting arrangements has been strengthened since the previous inspection and is effective. Managers identify quickly weaknesses in performance and act swiftly to either improve the provision or to end these arrangements.
- Managers ensure that initial advice and guidance enable learners to try different vocational pathways that match their skills and future ambitions. Consequently, learners are able to review and change their programmes, resulting in the large majority completing their course and progressing to an apprenticeship or further learning.

- Managers' actions are rapidly closing the achievement gap for those apprentices with an identified disability, so that they achieve as well as their peers. For the few learners in receipt of high-needs funding, managers ensure that provision is adapted to ensure that they progress at least as well as their peers.
- Leaders and managers ensure that teachers and staff receive training that helps them to promote well topics in relation to equality, and to celebrate diversity. As a result, most learners and apprentices respect each other and work well together, and develop a good understanding of the needs of individuals in society. They know the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation and know how to keep themselves safe. However, too few trainees have a good enough understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and how this topic applies more widely to their work and daily lives.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have prioritised learners' development of English and mathematics skills. They have invested in strengthening the management of this area and provided teachers with specialist training and subject-specific qualifications. As a result, the majority of learners and apprentices improve their skills in these subjects, relative to their starting points. However, learners on study programmes and traineeships do not practise their written English skills enough. Apprentices' development of advanced mathematics skills requires further improvement, and their skills in English are too low.
- Leaders' and managers' self-assessment of their provision is broadly accurate. They take account of all stakeholders' views and use this information appropriately when evaluating the effectiveness of their provision. However, their improvement actions and associated targets are not sufficiently precise to enable them to make rapid improvement to the provision. Leaders and managers do not use the information available well enough to monitor learners' progress fully, for example the progress learners make in developing their English and mathematics skills and how well they develop their vocational skills.
- Leaders use the information from the observation of teaching, learning and assessment well to identify areas of good practice and tackle weaknesses. They provide staff with appropriate continuing professional development to improve their skills. As a result, most teachers and assessors provide consistently effective teaching, assessment and the additional support that meets most learners' and apprentices' individual needs. Managers recognise the need to share better practice more widely, particularly for workplace supervisors, to increase the pace of improvement.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are well qualified and have experience that matches closely with the demands of the provider. They are able to monitor effectively the progress of the organisation and challenge leaders and managers to address emerging challenges and tackle weaknesses.
- Governors have ensured that leaders maintain a strong financial grip to secure the provision. As a result, they can continue to contribute profits to their charity, helping learners to access the training and resources needed to secure employment.
- Governors have a good understanding of the organisation's performance. However, they do not receive sufficiently detailed information to help them monitor how well learners progress, based on their starting points. As a result, they are not able to challenge leaders sufficiently thoroughly in this aspect.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Learners feel safe and work safely.
- PM Training’s comprehensive safeguarding procedures are well informed by the latest government and legal policies.
- The provider has taken the necessary recruitment measures to ensure that all staff, including those of the subcontractors, are suitable to work with its learners.
- Leaders and managers have focused particularly well on ensuring that all staff, including the designated safeguarding officers, receive training that supports them to keep all learners safe. For example, staff have undertaken training on specific topics that allows them to deal well with learners’ allegations or safeguarding complaints.
- The frequent reporting of safeguarding matters to the board enables governors to scrutinise any concerns related to the protection of learners and leads to the sharing of learning on safeguarding across all layers of the organisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, training, learning and assessment are good, including in the subcontracted provision. As a result, learners enjoy their training and are motivated to learn. Apprentices receive very effective training, developing a good standard of vocational skills which they use well at work. The vast majority make good progress. They are confident and professional in explaining what they do at work. Employers value highly the contribution they make.
- Learners on study programmes and trainees are well prepared for work as a result of good teaching. They benefit from good work experience opportunities. They progress to the next stage of training: the large majority into apprenticeships. They receive good support and develop highly relevant skills that prepare them well for working life, such as communication skills.
- Interesting and well-taught learning sessions stimulate learners to achieve. Well-organised, practical training sessions, supported in many cases by industry-standard equipment and good learning resources, result in learners achieving high standards of skills. For example, apprentices in painting and decorating use materials skilfully in designated training areas to achieve high standards of paintwork. The good practical training at the well-equipped PM Training workshop enables them to transfer their learning and skills confidently to the workplace and produce a professional finish in customers’ premises.
- Apprentices receive good coaching and training at work. Employers carefully plan apprentices’ work tasks, and the precise integration of the on- and off-the-job training enables them to learn quickly. Tailored programmes meet individual needs well. For example, one apprentice in performing manufacturing operations trained in three different production areas in the factory, using different equipment and learning new skills in his first six months of training at work.
- Well-organised work experience results in very effective learning for learners in study programmes and trainees. Learners develop good problem-solving skills in responding to

– often difficult – situations when, for example, water is leaking from an unknown source. They display resilience when dealing with this type of work and demonstrate good customer service skills in resolving matters to achieve clients' satisfaction.

- Many more learners participate in English and mathematics than at the time of the previous inspection. All learners develop these skills through work experience and in their apprenticeships. Learners in study programmes use and develop mathematics skills in classroom activities. Staff are increasingly effective in promoting English and mathematics skills development in appropriate contexts. However, in many cases, learners still make slow progress, particularly in the development of their English skills.
- Learners' progress monitoring and reviews are effective and informative. Apprentices' progress is accurately identified through regular reviews. Employers are closely involved. The actions agreed are implemented quickly to ensure that most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them. On work experience in study programmes, employers participate well in progress reviews, providing constructive feedback and contribute to setting learning goals.
- Most learners behave in a positive manner and put their good understanding of the principle of equality into practice, especially in the workplace. For example, plumbing apprentices discussed enthusiastically the importance of taking individual differences into consideration when fitting radiators at an accessible height for wheelchair users, to enable them to reach heating switches and buttons. Apprentices also discussed the importance of fitting electrical sockets at a convenient height and the importance of working towards British Standards for the building industry.
- Initial assessment is thorough and leads to the effective planning of suitable programmes for learners. Learners on study programmes benefit from an extended induction period where they sample a range of tasks and work tasters. This further enhances the provider's understanding of the individual's needs, both personal and vocational. Initial assessment identifies well those learners who need to improve their English and mathematics skills. However, assessors and tutors do not routinely plan learning to help all learners to improve these skills beyond their starting points, particularly for the higher level learners.
- Assessment practice across all programmes is good. Learners value these assessments and find them very beneficial, particularly the prompt verbal feedback to help them develop and improve. However, the written feedback that learners receive to improve their written English is not yet of a consistently good standard although it is improving in frequency and quality. Tutors do not consistently use their questioning effectively to stretch and challenge all apprentices and trainees, noticeably in English.
- Staff are well qualified and experienced and understand well the barriers many learners have to overcome to learn and achieve. They have good subject knowledge and learners respect the experience that staff bring. They provide good role models for learners. Leaders and managers recognise there is more to be done to achieve higher levels of confidence in all staff to enable them to help all learners understand, and put in context, the role of fundamental British values and how to avoid risks of radicalisation and prevent extremism.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners conduct themselves well and respond to staff and others in a very positive manner. The working ethos created by staff promotes high standards of work, and is reflected in learners' conscientiousness and productivity. Learners quickly develop confidence and demonstrate respect for each other and staff.
- Learners on study programmes and trainees receive a very good range of benefits. These include free breakfasts, travel expenses, assistance with housing, buying clothing and equipment, and all learners receive the offer of free driving lessons.
- Learners develop good employability skills through good training working as apprentices in employment settings and through work experience on study programmes and traineeships. For example, staff quickly establish and reinforce throughout the programme the key discipline of attendance being ready for work and punctual.
- Learners show respect for themselves and take pride in their work. They act professionally and are confident to deal with stakeholders at all levels. For example, a learner who is involved in creating a metal sculpture for a client has attended meetings with managers at the local city council to explain the technical specifications of his work and the installation requirements. Learners describe how being treated as adults in the working environment has helped them appreciate their responsibilities and be motivated to learn.
- Apprentices develop good vocational skills and apply them well in the workplace. Employers value the contribution apprentices make and support their development in the workplace. For example, customer service apprentices in one workplace produce a risk analysis report. This supports their teams in car valeting services to gather and assess relevant information, for example on how to extend their knowledge about life in modern Britain and how to better identify customers' needs.
- Learners follow health and safety practices diligently. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe in work and how to ensure that others are safe. For example, whenever they transport bark chippings from their service vehicle to a garden, learners make sure that they keep the pathways used clear from mud and debris to minimise the risk to themselves and customers of slips, trips and falls.
- Learners benefit from high-quality impartial careers guidance. They have a good understanding of short-term and longer-term options they can gain access to both within the provider and in the wider labour market. The provider has developed a strong capacity for delivering a high standard of careers advice by ensuring that a key group of experienced staff are well qualified and by working in partnership with a local external agency. In a very few cases, external staff do not always receive sufficient background information about individual learners, although this is quickly rectified when identified.
- Learners benefit from well-planned and relevant personal and social development which enriches and broadens their experience. In many cases, this is individualised and tailored to reflect the local labour market and community requirements. For example, learners engage in local projects, volunteering to improve the environment. Leaders and managers are committed to a comprehensive strategy of personal and social development, which enables learners to participate in, and access, a wide range of highly useful activities,

such as job search and external specialist support.

- Learners experience a rich variety of trades in study programmes. They participate in work trials in a variety of settings and take part in work experience, through which they develop their prospects for employment. Apprentices benefit from partnerships developed with schools and employers to provide opportunities to deliver early advice and guidance to prospective learners. Events such as employer markets support learners to develop both their aspirations and personal plans for progression.
- Attendance is high both at the training centres and at work. Learners are ready to learn when they attend sessions and have the correct equipment. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the provision. Staff and learners act in a manner which ensures that this continues.
- A significant minority of learners do not have a sufficiently good awareness of fundamental British values and how these apply to their lives and work. Despite the provider ensuring that learners receive regular information, take part in discussions and engage in learning opportunities throughout their programme to deepen their knowledge of these topics, not all are confident in demonstrating their understanding.
- Learners' progress in the development of their English and mathematics skills is slow in too many cases. However, the provider's current strategy is already having a positive impact on how learners develop these skills. For example, learners on study programmes are confident in demonstrating skills developed in mathematics, such as calculating the lengths of carpet required for different levels of stairs. However, learners, and in particular those at higher levels, do not develop and practise sufficiently their English and mathematics skills.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The majority of learners on a traineeship or study programme arrive at PM Training with serious and complex barriers to learning, such as low academic ability and very poor previous engagement in education. Learners soon begin enjoying learning and consequently they attend their learning activities well, demonstrating essential employability skills such as punctuality and reliability.
- Learners make particularly good progress with developing the personal and employability skills necessary for successful employment. Learners on study programmes and trainees now complete their programmes more quickly than they did at the previous inspection, with many progressing on to a positive destination much earlier than planned when they started their learning journey. This restores their pride and gives them a sense of achievement and realistic ambitions for their next move in their careers.
- A key strength of the provider is the very high proportion of trainees and learners on study programmes who progress into employment or further training after having completed their learning programme. This proportion has further increased since the previous inspection. Last year, the large majority of these learners went on to completing an apprenticeship, with about a third progressing on to further training.
- More than a third of all trainees and study programme learners at PM Training arrive with particularly low levels of English and mathematics. During their time at the provider, they

develop these skills further and all achieve a qualification in English and mathematics, which prepares them well for beginning their apprenticeship.

- The small number of learners for whom passing a functional skills qualification in English and mathematics is not an achievable target successfully achieve smaller awards in these subjects. Even those learners who leave without progressing successfully do so having developed these skills considerably.
- Last year, the large majority of the trainees and learners on study programmes who had planned to take a mathematics qualification at level 1 achieved well, but only a small minority passed their English test.
- Following the previous inspection, the proportion of apprentices who achieved their framework declined, but this began to improve again last year. This trend of improvement has been maintained for the current year, when the large majority of apprentices have achieved their framework, according to the provider's own data. The proportion of apprentices that complete their programme by the expected planned date is lower, although still considerably higher than the latest available national average.
- Many apprentices have undertaken additional qualifications than was the case at the previous inspection, and a considerable proportion have progressed through the levels from a level 2 to a level 3 apprenticeship. Almost all apprentices remain on employment after having successfully completed their learning programme.
- Last year, there were no significant differences in the rate of achievement between male and female apprenticeships; similarly, the small group of apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds achieved as well as their peers. The achievement gap for those learners with a learning disability is narrowing.
- The standard of learners' practical and vocational work is good but their written English work is not of the same quality. After a decline last year, the proportion of apprentices achieving their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications is rising but this requires further improvement. This is particularly so in English at the higher level, where only a minority of the apprentices achieve well.
- Differences remain in the performance of apprentices in different subject areas due to the poor staff performance identified by leaders and managers. The provider's own data indicates a trend of improvement for all apprentices, with the exception of a very small group in business administration.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, there were 226 learners on study programmes, of which a large majority were receiving learning from subcontractors. Most were undertaking work experience-based programmes in the vocational areas of home maintenance and adult social and health care; a few were following diploma qualifications in sports and art performance.
- Leaders and managers plan a curriculum that matches closely the learners' individual needs and develops their confidence and employability skills, such as teamwork and personal accountability. The study programmes enable learners to overcome their

complex barriers to learning and to make good progress, often from very low starting points. Learners benefit from good employability training that prepares them exceptionally well for the workplace and for future life. As a consequence, the large majority remain on programme and achieve their learning aims; their progression into an apprenticeship or further training is high.

- Learners value, enjoy and benefit from the opportunity of learning in a real working environment. They receive good support and are developing useful personal and highly transferable employability skills. For example, learners redecorate houses and have to meet their clients' requirements. They quickly adopt a professional attitude and demonstrate good customer service skills, in particular when dealing with any complaints.
- Learners complete a thorough initial assessment of their English, mathematics and employability skills and personal needs. Tutors use this information to plan learning activities that challenge learners sufficiently to acquire new knowledge. For example, in plumbing lessons, learners develop good knowledge of the theory underpinning the practical skills developed in previous lessons.
- The very few learners with high needs on study programmes access suitable courses with appropriate support, which relate closely to the objectives in their education, health and care plans. For example, learners with Asperger's syndrome receive good learning support to enable them to work well with others and cope with change, while attending employability skills lessons alongside their work experience placements.
- Learners benefit from specialist support to combat homelessness, alcohol misuse and other complex issues. Learning support coordinators work closely with local specialist partners to provide specific, personal support that enables learners to remain on programme and make progress in their course and work experience. Learners who are not making the progress expected are provided with additional support that may include a variety of interventions from financial support to extra English lessons. This helps them catch up and make at least the same progress as their peers.
- Learners receive good levels of supervision and can demonstrate a good standard of work. For example, they proudly show how to measure and cut carpets accurately before completing the task effectively, and also calculate the necessary heating requirements according to the size of each room.
- The provider has developed excellent links with partners and employers to ensure that learners have access to work trials and apprenticeships in vocational areas matched to their career aspirations and goals.
- Subcontractors plan their learning sessions well and offer learners creative and inspiring materials that stimulate learning. In subcontractors' lessons, learners use and develop good mathematics skills in classroom activities. For example, learners describe the complex task of measuring heart rates and breathing rates during different types of performance.
- Attendance in lessons and at work experience placements is high. Learners gain good personal skills, are polite and articulate, and demonstrate respect for all. They benefit from attending a well-structured enrichment programme. For example, learners benefit from national trips to major visitor attractions and visits from specialist groups to the centre.

- Learners receive impartial careers advice and guidance that highlight a wide range of employment options to help them make informed choices, get back on track – or change direction – where required. Many learners are from disadvantaged backgrounds with complex needs and they particularly value this type of information. They are well-informed and motivated about their career options.
- Tutors embed equality and diversity themes in progress reviews effectively, which results in learners demonstrating a good understanding of how these topics affect them, other colleagues and customers. For example, learners can confidently describe how to assist customers with physical disabilities and language barriers.
- Tutors assess the progress that learners make regularly. Once learners have achieved a good level of personal and employability skills, they progress quickly on to apprenticeship programmes and other positive destinations. The pace at which learners progress has improved over previous years.
- Learners have an appropriate understanding of how fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty apply to them in the workplace and in their life. For example, a learner knew what signs might indicate radicalisation and how to report this appropriately. Learners feel safe and are aware of safe working practices.
- Those learners with a low base in mathematics develop these skills at work better than those learners at level 1. However, learners do not sufficiently develop or practise their English skills beyond what is achieved in classroom sessions. They complete very little written work and do not develop a good use of technical language skills.

Apprenticeships

Good

- PM Training has 778 apprentices. Some 441 study at intermediate level, and 333 at advanced level. There are a further four higher apprentices. The majority of apprentices are aged over 19. The provider offers seven apprenticeship standards; all other apprenticeships are frameworks. Fifty apprentices are currently on standards, and the largest apprenticeship area is business management and administration. A quarter of all apprentices are studying with subcontractors.
- The provision meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship well. Leaders and managers have approached with integrity the implementation of the new apprenticeship standards resulting from the reforms, and they have created an appropriate model to support delivery in the workplace. Recently introduced, new apprenticeship programmes are particularly well planned and precisely set out the off-the-job training apprentices will receive in preparation for their end-point assessment.
- The small minority of apprentices taking the standards understand the skills they are developing and demonstrate positive professional behaviours aligned to the standards. For example, an apprentice on the housing standard can demonstrate how she develops trust when faced with a challenging client by working in an empathetic manner with common sense and a professional attitude. However, it is too early to assess the overall outcomes for these programmes.
- At the start of their training, apprentices arrive well-equipped for the world of work. Tutors and assessors use their good coaching and mentoring skills to develop further the

apprentices' confidence in their own abilities, and this raises their self-esteem. On entry, many apprentices have significant barriers to learning, including poor achievement at school. Tutors and assessors have appropriately high expectations of each apprentice. All apprenticeship programmes are planned well in order to meet the apprenticeship requirements.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Tutors focus on planning learning that leads to clear skills development. They similarly plan assessment activity well and offer apprentices comprehensive and constructive feedback, which helps apprentices to understand their next steps. However, in a few theory lessons staff do not use their questions well to challenge or probe apprentices' understanding and in these instances, apprentices do not accelerate their learning or deepen their knowledge.
- Apprentices know how to produce good standards of work and the vast majority make the good progress expected of them. They engage well in learning activities and aspire to do well.
- Tutors and assessors have very good vocational knowledge and experience that they use well to aid apprentices' progress. They are enthusiastic and motivate the vast majority of apprentices to develop a good understanding of their vocational subject and to apply vocational skills competently and confidently in their workplaces, adding value to the business. As a result, almost all apprentices remain in employment on completion of their training.
- Employers engage well in the training programmes by contributing to the development of apprentices' skills and knowledge in the workplace. As a result, apprentices improve their knowledge and integrate well into the workplace. The large majority of apprentices gain confidence in their abilities and can demonstrate the practical skills and vocational skills development that they use well in the workplace to make a positive contribution. The apprentices are placed in established and highly recognised, good-quality employers. They are respectful and have good standards of behaviour in the workplace.
- The good integration between on- and off-the-job training supports apprentices to further develop their skills and workplace behaviours. The effective training supports apprentices to gain relevant industry knowledge and experience, helping them to plan for their future careers and aspirations. Employers are very supportive of the blocks of training apprentices receive at the provider, as this helps them to develop skills well by working and learning on a wide range of trade areas.
- Training subcontractors work well with PM Training and value the partnership. They mostly deliver high outcomes for the provider and meet regularly to identify swiftly any underperformance relating to the progress expected from apprentices.
- Apprentices receive good initial information, advice and guidance. Consequently, they enrol on the most suitable apprenticeship programme at the correct level. Staff give good advice to apprentices that helps them choose the most suitable optional units. For example, business administration apprentices select units that help them to become confident in their presentation and organisational skills. In one instance, an apprentice created a reception handbook for front-line reception staff to use on a daily basis. Similarly, they receive impartial careers guidance that enables them to make relevant choices and develop clear plans for their future.
- Apprentices feel safe and are courteous and respectful towards each other. They

understand how to report an issue if they identify safeguarding concerns, including those aspects relating to the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices work in safe, high-quality, working environments, they demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety, and work safely. For example, they use a large brick cutter safely and ensure that others in the workshop are working to safe practices.

- The large majority of apprentices make good progress and achieve their main goals and learning aims on time. However, a very small group of apprentices in business administration are not currently making similarly good progress.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity. However, assessors lack the confidence to support apprentices in making the links between fundamental British values and their working practices.
- Apprentices produce work to a high standard within their vocational area. However, the quality of their English written work requires further improvement. Tutors do not focus sufficiently on the planning and the development of advanced apprentices' English and mathematics skills from their starting points. They do not prioritise individual learning sufficiently to allow the most able apprentices to reach their full potential. As a result, the advanced apprentices' achievement rates in English are low, and also require improvement in mathematics.

Traineeships

Good

- At the time of inspection, there were 68 trainees in learning. Nine trainees were following a learning programme in adult health and social care, and the rest were on the grounds maintenance and home improvement programmes.
- Managers have developed traineeship programmes tailored to the needs of local young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with a strong focus on work preparation, the development of English and mathematics skills, and personal and social development. In the vast majority of cases, trainees are acquiring useful industry skills that allow them to progress on to a positive destination. For example, on the 'Homeworks' programme, gardening trainees develop their skills with relevant industrial equipment, and painting and decorating trainees develop their technical skills in different methods of paint application.
- The provider ensures that all trainees undertake a significant and individualised work placement. In particular, the small minority of trainees who are on the 'Careworks' programme benefit from a thoroughly planned and well-structured work placement and they can clearly articulate the progress they make. For example, one trainee progressed through various roles on their placement, demonstrating increasing independence and culminating in being able to provide personal care to adult care service users with confidence and professionalism.
- Leaders, managers and supervisors have high expectations of trainees and have established a clear ethos of work readiness. As a result, trainees demonstrate good development of work-related skills and attitudes, such as attendance and punctuality, and are productive.
- Staff work hard to facilitate the accelerated progress of trainees through their

programme. Many are progressing well before the expected end date. Their progression into apprenticeships, sustained employment or further study is good. The large majority of trainees in the current academic year have already progressed to an apprenticeship.

- Trainees benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment, which prepare them well for their functional skills examinations. Trainees with low starting points in English and mathematics make particularly good progress towards developing these skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson, trainees were able to work out the area of the walls to build a garage, calculating the cost of materials. In an English class, they were able to synthesise information relevant to their prospective career path.
- Trainees enjoy their traineeships and receive good and wide-ranging support from the provider. For example, supervisors provide trainees with continual direction and coaching, which help them to stay on track with their activities. Transgender trainees have received particularly effective support from the provider's trained staff and specialist external agencies, thus demonstrating the provider's strong commitment to diversity.
- Trainees receive good initial guidance and complete highly effective evaluations of the initial taster sessions to ensure that they progress to the appropriate next step. As a result, trainees are placed in appropriate work placements in relation to their planned next steps.
- Trainees benefit from a comprehensive personal and social development programme that supports their development of wider skills, identified through six-weekly reviews. They also receive a well-planned and very supportive enrichment programme, which enables them to develop independence and broaden their cultural awareness. For example, trainees visit the Houses of Parliament and take a tour that explores the workings of a modern democracy; they visit the V&A museum to explore cultural diversity; and they develop their skills and confidence in independent travel, using public transport in an unfamiliar city.
- Small group sizes allow good individual support for trainees, ensuring that they remain engaged throughout the sessions. In particular, the standard of trainees' written work in functional English for those at the lowest levels shows clear improvement over time. However, tutors in English do not use their questioning effectively to stretch and challenge all trainees, so that not all trainees contribute actively and learn in these sessions. As a result, trainees' achievement of mathematics qualifications at level 1 requires further improvement, and their achievement in English is too low.
- Trainees feel safe and are safe and they know how to report any concerns that they may have for themselves or for others. Trainees on the 'Careworks' programme can confidently explain safeguarding concepts and how fundamental British values relate to their chosen profession in a meaningful way. However, the majority of trainees on the 'Homeworks' programme have only a superficial understanding of these topics, mostly based around the notion of respect. The very large majority of trainees do not have a clear understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53992
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,795
Principal/CEO	Will Nixon
Telephone number	01782 279121
Website	www.pmtraining.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+
	153	-	150	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	207	234	91	242	-	4		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	68		-		68			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	9							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Academy for Theatre Arts Equality Training Elite Form Newcastle Town FC North Staffs Engineering Group Rebus Training Sale Sharks Community Trust Stoke-on-Trent College Stepping Stones Education & Training Ltd.							

Information about this inspection

This was a short inspection that converted into a full inspection. The initial inspection team was formed by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors, assisted by the provider's business development director, as nominee. The subsequent conversion phase of the inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of operations, 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

Maria Navarro, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kay Hedges	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Cadman-Marks	Ofsted Inspector
Derrick Spragg	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Whittaker	Ofsted Inspector

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