

PGL Training (Plumbing) Ltd

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Construction, planning and the built environment

Description of the provider

1. PGL Training Plumbing Ltd (PGL) is a private company, established in 2004. It provides specialist training for the construction industry offering basic to advanced programmes with employers, jobcentres, and colleges as partners and advisors. It is based in Exeter and has a contract with Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver work-based learning in plumbing across the whole county.
2. The company is headed by a managing director with senior managers for plumbing, electrical, and construction. Other senior managers include centre manager, quality co-ordinator, and a finance manager. Sixteen tutors are responsible for the on site tuition.
3. The main offices and classrooms are currently located on a site on the outskirts of Exeter city centre which belongs to another training provider. The provision will move to new purpose built accommodation on a nearby industrial estate.
4. PGL Training provides apprenticeships in plumbing for young people and adults. There are a total of 79 learners on programme with 40 apprentices and 39 advanced apprentices. Of the total learners there is one from minority ethnic groups and four are female. All apprentices have employed status, with learners attending off-the-job training sessions at PGL's own training centre. PGL assessors carry out assessment both on and off the job. In addition to apprenticeships PGL also offers a range of training on a commercial basis including water regulations and ACS gas centre.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The quality of provision, including the quality of teaching and learning and the support and guidance of learners, is good. Leadership and management of the provision are good as is capacity to improve. Social inclusion is good but equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. PGL has demonstrated it has a good capacity to improve. Success rates from the single year of data are outstanding. Current learners are retained and making good progress. PGL has not been inspected before. Progress against the development plan is good. Quality improvement is good and the development plan is comprehensive. Staff have a positive attitude at all levels and the management team is very responsive to suggestions and learner feedback. A strong informal system provides good information about improvements and problems. Internal verification is thorough.
7. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Employer feedback is used effectively to inform judgements in the self-assessment process. Staff discussed the self-assessment report at their meetings and also completed a related questionnaire. The director, quality manager, and work based manager used the evaluations to develop the report. The process is satisfactory, but the report lacks focus and does not link to the quality improvement system or the development plan. Inspectors found strengths and areas for improvement within the sector subject area were broadly accurate, and awarded higher grades than in the report. The procedure to regularly review progress of the development plan is new.

Key strengths

- Outstanding framework success rates for 2006/07
- Good development of learner's practical skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good leadership
- Open and supportive management
- Particularly effective management of learners
- Good quality improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Inadequate recording of targets in learners workplace reviews
- Insufficiently focused self-assessment report

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Overall success rates for learners are outstanding. This was identified in the provider self-assessment report. For advanced apprentices overall success rates were 100% in 2006/07, and for apprentices they were 90%. Success rates for advanced apprentices were 63% above the national rate, and for apprentices they were 42% above the national rate. Learners are making good progress towards their qualifications with 33% ahead of their planned end date and a further 58% making satisfactory progress towards achieving their full framework. Pass rates for key skills are outstanding. In 2006/07 96% of learners achieved key skills qualifications.
9. Learners develop good practical skills. This was identified in the provider self-assessment report. Employers provide good opportunities for learners to develop and progress their skills across a range of domestic and commercial work. Learners carry out tasks under the direction and supervision of skilled staff in their workplace. Tasks allocated to learners are appropriate to their level and they engage in practical skills appropriate to their ability. Some learners have good opportunities to work independently but supervised from a distance. Learners develop a good sense of achievement and confidence upon being able to complete specific tasks for the first time.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The standard of teaching and learning is good. This has been identified in the self-assessment report. Most learners demonstrate a good understanding of their materials, components, working processes and their application in the workplace. Co-ordination of on and off-the-job training is very effective. The integration of practical and theory teaching is good. Learners are encouraged to take an active part in both practical and theory sessions allowing them to apply what they have learnt. Training co-ordinators have good relationships with employers and work to ensure learners are engaged in as wide a range of tasks as possible. The delivery of key skills is good. PGL staff deliver key skills through relevant and specific assignments. These are differentiated to meet individual learner needs. Additional support enables learners to develop their portfolios through individual and group support and effectively prepare for the external on-line tests.
11. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Workshops and classrooms are appropriate and meet lead body requirements. Space in the lead work area is restrictive and classrooms are dull and uninspiring. Learning areas lack visual displays to promote visual learning.

12. The process to select learners is effective and ensures they are placed on the right programme. Learners are also required to contract with PGL with regards to behaviour, attendance and commitment to their learning. This approach has made a positive impact on motivating learners.
13. Learners undertake a satisfactory induction at the start of their programme and the monitoring of learner progress is satisfactory. Assessment of learning is satisfactory. PGL assessors plan on site assessment to ensure it meets the award body criteria, and is appropriate to the tasks being carried out in the workplace. Assessment includes a wide range of evidence sources. Learners complete written answers to questions while on site or take part in a professional discussion and good use is made of photographic evidence. All assessors are appropriately qualified and provide learners with good feedback. Internal verification is satisfactory.
14. The development of learners' understanding of health and safety issues is satisfactory. It is introduced in induction and reinforced in off-site training and the workplace. PGL staff quickly deal with all minor infringements of best practice. Not enough is done to develop this understanding in workplace reviews. The development of issues relating to Every Child matters is weak in formal teaching and progress reviews. There is inadequate recording of targets in learners' workplace reviews. This was partially identified in the self-assessment report. Targets are often vague and are not time limited.
15. Progression opportunities for apprentices are good. In 2006/07 77% of learners progressed from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship programmes. Learners receive particularly good individual support from training co-ordinators. Staffs provide learners with their mobile phone numbers to enable issues to be quickly resolved and help keep learners on programme. In addition to the contractual learner progress reviews learners have free access to training officers when they attend off-the-job training. This has impacted positively on learner attendance and retention. Learners particularly value the support they receive from training co-ordinators.
16. Some employers are not sufficiently aware of the requirements of the training programme. This can impact on learners not gaining appropriate work experience or assessment opportunities that could enable them to make better progress. Responsibility for learning is often given to the learner, and learners are expected to explain their training to employers. Employers have insufficient understanding of performance criteria to manage this in an effective manner.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. PGL has good leadership. The managing director, head of department and training staff and all qualified plumbers have a clear focus on learners' achievement and employers' needs. PGL has a good understanding of this business sector, very effective links with employers in the area as recognised in the self-assessment report, and a good vision towards developing trends such as solar systems and opportunities from train to gain. The company has benefited from secure and steady growth. A major investment to move the centre to new buildings is advancing fast. PGL's current facilities are old, cramped and worn but fit for purpose. They are managed well and do not inhibit progress of learners. The funding contract is carefully managed. PGL manages change well and staff are kept informed of new initiatives, progress of projects and problems. The management team keep staff well motivated.
18. PGL has an open and supportive management style and all staff readily highlight opportunities to improve training or share their problems with the senior team who listen and are responsive. PGL has good communications. Frequent day to day informal conversations take place, in addition to formal staff meetings that have effective action points. Training staff are particularly suitable for their task and provide good role models for learners. Staff qualities are well known by managers and used to good effect to help learners progress. Staff recruitment, induction, appraisal and development are satisfactory.
19. PGL manages learners effectively. PGL has recently appointed an experienced work based co-ordinator who has implemented an effective proprietary finance and monitoring system. Regular monthly reports now highlight learner progress or lack of it in the technical certificate and key skills. Monitoring of NVQ progress is satisfactory and based on learner files held by staff. PGL is developing a new computer monitoring system. PGL sets clear standards and expectations for new learners in a signed agreement and they respond positively to this. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory.
20. PGL's arrangements for the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactory. This was partially identified in the SAR. PGL has a designated member of staff responsible for equality of opportunity. Staff training in the past has been insufficient but each member of staff has been issued with a comprehensive equality and diversity document and all staff will attend training planned in June. Data is used to identify learners with any difficulties as well as to monitor learner's performance by age, gender, and ethnicity. PGL has developed some good variations of learning materials to meet the differing needs of learners. Promotional materials contain images appropriate to promote gender

and ethnicity and promotional events are targeted at under-represented groups. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues is weak but they are clear about their rights and responsibilities. Currently equality and diversity issues are not explored in the classroom or at reviews but a comprehensive system of tutorials has been introduced including topics and activities relating to gender, disability, sexuality, and ethnicity. The existing equality of opportunity statement is inadequate and does not refer to current legislation but this is now being updated.

21. PGL has good quality improvement. Learner success is outstanding and data is accurate and readily available. There is a good informal system for quality improvement based on regular contact between staff and learners. This is appropriate for the organisation's current size. Issues and suggestions for improvement are raised at regular staff meetings or more immediately if urgent. The managing director is very responsive to requests that will help learners progress. PGL has plans to develop a more formal and systematic quality process better suited to larger numbers of learners. Internal and external verification outcomes, feedback from questionnaires and staff generate a very effective improvement plan which has practical and achievable targets. The lesson observation system has been dormant for two years. The self-assessment process is satisfactory, but the report is descriptive and not sufficiently evaluative.

What learners like:

- 'A good mix of practical and theory teaching really help me understand my work'
- 'What I learn here is really helpful on site'
- 'I know [they] will sort out any problems I have'
- 'The way we learn here is really good. We do the theory and then try it out in practice'
- 'It's a good safe place to work'
- 'It's easy to learn from a good teacher'
- 'I like learning a skill'
- 'It's easy to contact staff'
- 'PGL have been a real life saver for me'
- 'I like day release attendance, more time to work things through'

What learners think could improve:

- 'We need bigger workshops'

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider **2006 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	06-07	overall	6	100%	64%	100%	58%
		timely	6	100%	43%	100%	37%
Apprenticeships	06-07	overall	21	90%	65%	90%	61%
		timely	22	86%	47%	86%	44%

- * Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
- ** College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'