

Inspection of Skills North East

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 February 2025

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Skills North East provides adult learning programmes at its centres in Doncaster and Glossop. It also provides apprenticeships in level 2 financial services customer service advisor and level 3 financial administrator in the Newcastle and Northumberland area. Adult learners study courses in nail technology, nail services, beauty therapy massage and make-up artistry at level 3, using adult learner loans. At the time of the inspection, there were 7 apprentices and 43 learners on adult learning courses.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners and apprentices have positive attitudes and enjoy their learning. They come prepared for their lessons and take notes to support their learning. Apprentices learn how to organise their time effectively by combining their independent study with the demands of working full-time.

Apprentices grow in confidence in their many interactions with customers on the telephone and face-to-face. They learn how to be polite and how to handle complaints calmly. Learners work in groups, which supports them to develop their communication skills. As a result, they confidently answer questions during class discussions.

Learners and apprentices feel safe while studying and in their workplaces. Apprentices have a good understanding of relevant local risks, particularly how to protect themselves and their businesses from online fraud and scams. Adult learners discuss the impact of trolling and how to report this when learning how to complete show reels to advertise their nail art.

Apprentices benefit from high quality on- and off-the-job training. Employers provide useful opportunities for apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills by exposing them to the different roles within their companies.

Tutors provide helpful careers advice and guidance for learners and apprentices. They advise learners on self-employment, including how to rent a chair in a salon, the legal requirements they must follow and how to develop a client base. Apprentices explore their aspirations with tutors and experience a range of disciplines in the finance industry.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear intent for the courses that they offer. They provide training for low-skilled and unemployed adults in community-based venues to develop skills for employment and career advancement. Leaders fill provision gaps for adult learners who would not usually access training in colleges and larger providers. They have recently started to provide apprenticeships in financial services with small- and medium-sized employers in the local area to meet skills needs.

Managers have designed curriculums that follow a sensible sequence that enables learners and apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills. Make-up artistry learners initially learn about skin types, skin tones, skin conditions and products. Tutors then teach foundation matching, eye shadow blending and application techniques. Learners subsequently progress on to more complex techniques, such as airbrush makeup.

Apprentices, who are new to the financial services industry, start with the fundamentals of effective customer service before they move on to a range of more technical subjects, such as legal regulations, ethics and industry products.

Tutors have extensive industry knowledge and expertise in the subjects that they teach. Beauty tutors continue to work in industry as an employer or as self-employed. They use this experience to provide real-life examples in lessons to make learning relevant to the industry. Apprenticeship tutors have working knowledge of the financial services sector, which means that they understand the occupational contexts in which apprentices work.

Tutors use a wide range of effective strategies to make their teaching enjoyable and engaging for learners and apprentices. They use demonstration and modelling to show learners on beauty courses how to undertake practical tasks. For example, nail technology learners use recorded demonstrations to perfect their skills in creating three-dimensional acrylic flowers on nails. Apprenticeship tutors use recap exercises and group discussions, which help apprentices to absorb often complex technical information and concepts, such as dealing with insurance policy renewals and pension updates.

Tutors use assessment carefully to identify what learners know and can do. They use tools such as quizzes and matching activities, and they check learners' practical work to see how their knowledge and skills are developing. Tutors use questioning to rectify misconceptions, and learners respond well to this by making changes to their work.

Most tutors on beauty courses provide learners with useful feedback while carrying out practical activities. Nail technology learners use the feedback to alter their techniques. For example, they now use nail art brushes to apply smile lines on French manicures. Feedback to apprentices is effective in helping them to improve the standard of their assignments. However, in a few instances tutors do not provide sufficiently helpful feedback on learners' written work. A few learners continue to make the same errors in their work.

Most learners and apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills on their courses. For example, in beauty massage, learners know how to complete effleurage techniques. They use this knowledge as a basis for all massages to ensure that they warm up the tissues, improve blood flow, stimulate the peripheral nerves and relax the muscles. Apprentices gain an understanding of the purpose for the systems and procedures that underpin the delivery of financial services to meet the legal requirements of the Financial Conduct Authority.

In the previous academic year, most learners achieved their qualifications in make-up artistry and beauty therapy massage, but too many learners left their nail technology course early. Leaders carefully analysed the reasons why learners left early and have put in place support for learners to continue their courses. In the current year, fewer learners have left their course early. Most learners progress to

positive destinations. Over three quarters of learners become self-employed or employed in the beauty industry.

Leaders have in place effective governance arrangements. Governors have extensive experience in the further education sector, which they use to provide support and to challenge leaders on the quality of education and the progress that learners and apprentices make in their studies. Governors have a clear overview of the provider, including its strengths and areas for improvement. They closely monitor action plans and ensure that leaders make improvements swiftly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide consistently effective feedback to learners to help them to improve their work.
- Continue to implement actions to reduce the proportion of learners who leave their course early.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1237128
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Contact number	0191 2504590
Website	www.skillsnortheast.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Michael Winship
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 October 2019
Main subcontractors	N/a

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. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Jonny Wright, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys	His Majesty's Inspector
Charles Searle	Ofsted Inspector

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