

Mode Training Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

26 February–10 May 2019

Overall effectiveness		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Apprenticeships Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	
Outcomes for learners	Good	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders have a very good oversight of the quality of the subcontracted provision. They support and challenge leaders and managers of subcontracted provision effectively to improve.
- Leaders and managers work closely with stakeholders and employers to develop a curriculum that benefits the region and the local community.
- Tutors are skilled professionals. They use their experience and expertise successfully so that apprentices develop industry standard skills and knowledge.
- Leaders, managers and tutors provide highly effective support for vulnerable apprentices. Consequently, these apprentices remain on their course and make good progress.
- Apprentices develop rapidly their confidence, communication and customer service skills to a professional standard, which benefits the employers' business.
- Business administration apprentices make very good progress on their courses.
- The proportion of current apprentices who remain on their programme is high. The proportion who drop out of subcontracted courses is extremely low.
- Apprentices' first-time pass rates in functional skills English and mathematics examinations are high.
- Governance arrangements are insufficiently developed. They do not include independent scrutiny of the quality of provision to drive forward improvement.
- A small minority of hairdressing apprentices on programmes delivered directly by Mode Training Ltd make slow progress because they do not have a sufficient range of clients for assessment or attend their lessons frequently enough.
- Teaching, learning and assessment on the hair and media make-up course for adults are not good enough. Consequently, too many leave their course early, make slow progress, or attend infrequently.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Mode Training Limited (MTL) is an independent training provider that operates in Liverpool. It recruits apprentices and learners from the Liverpool City Region. MTL offers apprenticeships at intermediate, advanced and higher levels. Over half of apprentices study hairdressing and around a quarter study business administration. The rest enrol on apprenticeships in management, beauty therapy, health and social care, customer service, manufacturing, warehousing, teaching and learning, and accounting. Approximately two thirds of apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and around two thirds study at level 2. MTL subcontracts over half of its apprenticeship provision to two subcontractors. Most apprentices on subcontracted courses are on hairdressing or business administration apprenticeships. The company offers a small provision for adults funded through advanced learner loans. Most of these learners study on a hairdressing and media make-up course.
- Around a third of the working-age population in Liverpool City Region have qualifications at level 4 or above, which is lower than regional and national averages. Levels of unemployment in the City Region are similar to those found regionally and nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Establish effective governance arrangements which include independent challenge and scrutiny of the quality of provision to drive forward further improvements at a rapid pace.
- Ensure that attendance is high for all apprentices and learners.
- Increase the number and range of clients so that hairdressing apprentices make expected or better progress.
- Ensure that tutors on adult learning programmes provide high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- MTL leaders set high expectations and have a clear vision for the development of the company. They succeed in meeting their aim to be a high-quality, inclusive provider of courses for vulnerable young people and adults. Consequently, the provision meets the needs of Liverpool City Region's economy and its community. For example, they work very effectively with two local schools to design and deliver a hairdressing programme for young people aged 14 to 16.
- Leaders work well with a broad range of employers so that apprentices gain high-quality jobs. They provide a clear outline of the expectations they have of employers and support them well to meet these standards. Leaders do not hesitate to stop working with employers who are not committed to, for example, enabling enough off-the-job training for apprenticeships.
- Leaders know the strengths and development needs of their staff. Leaders support staff well to improve their practices through one-to-one support and extra meetings. Performance management arrangements are rigorous and have led to a small number of weaker staff leaving the organisation.
- Following the observations of the delivery of their training sessions, managers do not always set tutors clear actions to improve their practice. Staff take part in group and individual training and development sessions, but these activities are not sufficiently focused on individual tutors' needs to bring about rapid improvements.
- Senior leaders and managers know what they need to do to improve the provision but do not reflect this accurately in the self-assessment report. The accompanying quality improvement plan is too descriptive. It does not clearly capture the actions that managers take which lead to the greatest improvements. Managers do not review targets frequently enough to ensure that they are bringing about rapid improvements.
- The arrangements that MTL leaders have in place to check the quality of provision at their two subcontractors are comprehensive. A thorough set of performance indicators and targets enable MTL leaders to provide effective challenge to leaders at the subcontractors. They put actions in place to get those who are falling behind back on track. Consequently, most apprentices at the subcontractors are making good progress.
- MTL leaders use a comprehensive management information and tracking system to provide a broad range of data. They use this data to monitor the quality of courses and review apprentices' and learners' progress. Leaders do not always use their systems and processes as well as they could because they are too complex. Consequently, they are not making improvements to the quality of provision as rapidly as they could.
- The revised English and mathematics strategy that leaders put in place in September 2018 has resulted in almost all apprentices gaining first-time passes in their functional skills examinations. Leaders' ambitions to embed the development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills into one-to-one and group delivery sessions require further improvement. Consequently, too many apprentices continue to make the same mistakes in their written work and in calculations.

- Support for apprentices who have personal or emotional needs is very effective in helping vulnerable individuals to stay on their course. Apprentices who are children looked after or care leavers receive additional help, for example guidance about financial issues. Staff refer apprentices with mental health issues promptly to appropriate external agencies. Leaders ensure that staff monitor the welfare of these apprentices closely.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are not yet fully in place. In this small training provider, the three senior leaders challenge each other on what needs to improve. Leaders recognise rightly that they need to develop arrangements to have independent scrutiny of the quality of provision at MTL to drive forward further improvements at a rapid pace.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have developed thorough arrangements for safeguarding. They have in place a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. Disclosure and barring service checks are in place and leaders adhere to safer recruitment practices. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy undertake appropriate training. They have established strong links with external agencies and share best practice locally.
- Apprentices feel safe in and out of work. They have regular updates about how to keep themselves and others safe. Employers understand their duties regarding safeguarding. Tutors receive formal training on safeguarding annually. They report any concerns promptly, using the appropriate paperwork, to the DSL.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of learners and apprentices enjoy their learning. Tutors are well qualified and highly skilled. Most use their industrial experience and expertise successfully to motivate apprentices and learners to make at least the progress expected of them. For example, hairdressing apprentices develop new skills in creative styling for short hair, and balayage colouring techniques.
- Apprentices attend regular off-the-job training sessions and benefit from individual coaching. They use the knowledge and skills they gain successfully in the workplace. For example, management apprentices use theoretical techniques such as 'decision tree' analysis to manage projects more effectively at work.
- The support that apprentices receive is very effective because tutors know their apprentices well. Tutors guide apprentices skilfully and sensitively so that they remain on their programmes and achieve their learning goals. They arrange more frequent appointments and extra support for those apprentices identified as at risk of leaving their course because of personal or social issues. As a result, very few of these often-vulnerable apprentices drop out.
- Most tutors monitor closely the progress that apprentices make on their course. During reviews, tutors and apprentices use this information to set realistic, yet challenging, targets. Consequently, most apprentices understand what they need to do to improve and

make the progress of which they are capable. In a few cases, hairdressing apprentices at MTL make slow progress because tutors do not check they complete their work on time.

- Feedback from tutors helps apprentices to improve their practical skills and develop professional behaviours. For example, hairdressing apprentices use different cutting techniques to produce the desired style while talking to their client and using their scissors safely. Most apprentices' written work is neatly presented and of a good standard.
- Tutors work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices receive enough off-the-job training and high-quality on-the-job support. Most employers work flexibly to ensure that this happens. Tutors have started to use a new monitoring system to record and plan more effectively apprentices' training. The impact of this is not yet evident.
- In vocational sessions, tutors do not develop apprentices' and learners' English and mathematics skills consistently across all programmes. Apprentices and learners develop good verbal communication skills on most courses, but only a few develop proficient writing skills. A minority of apprentices at MTL and Montebello do not know what they need to do to improve and continue to make the same mistakes in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Managers have high expectations of what apprentices and learners can achieve. However, tutors do not always use the initial information on what apprentices and learners know and can do routinely to plan teaching and training. As a result, tutors fail to challenge a minority of apprentices and learners to achieve their full potential.
- Tutors work successfully with apprentices to develop their skills in working with a diverse range of customers. For example, apprentices use hair classifications to explain different hair types, ethnic origins and how to adapt techniques to get the best results.
- Adult learners studying hairdressing and media make-up make slow progress because the quality of the teaching they receive at MTL is not of a consistently high standard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices and learners become self-assured and confident because of their courses. They communicate articulately with peers, tutors, clients and visitors. For example, management apprentices present reports to their board of directors and answer questions confidently about project costs and risk management.
- Apprentices are proud of the skills they develop and most demonstrate high professional standards. The knowledge and behaviours they develop benefit their employers' business greatly. For example, business administration apprentices use social media effectively to raise the profile of their organisation, resulting in a rapid increase of followers.
- Tutors and specialist independent careers advisers provide apprentices with effective information, advice and guidance about their choice of course and next steps. Improvements in initial advice and guidance have led to a significant reduction in apprentices who leave their course early. Apprentices benefit from guest speakers who talk about future career options such as working on cruise ships.
- Apprentices develop their social skills and respect for others through a range of pastoral and additional activities. For example, apprentices who worked on a community project

for the homeless changed their attitudes towards vulnerable individuals. Apprentices put into practice in the workplace what they learn about British values. For example, sales apprentices demonstrate respect when making cold calls to customers.

- Apprentices and learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. They know how to keep themselves safe and understand the risks of online grooming and bullying. Apprentices work safely, in line with professional standards. They demonstrate good practice in the workplace such as using chemicals safely in hairdressing salons.
- Most apprentices and learners have a sufficient understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. Tutors reinforce apprentices' understanding regularly and make effective links to current events. For example, in a tutorial session apprentices discussed recent terrorist attacks in New Zealand.
- In a minority of lessons, attendance is too low, despite leaders' and managers' efforts to improve it. This is particularly the case for adult learners studying hairdressing and media make-up and a few hairdressing apprentices on programmes delivered directly by MTL. Attendance is high for apprentices who attend off-the-job training on subcontracted courses. Most apprentices and learners arrive on time to lessons.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The proportion of current apprentices who remain on their programme is high, particularly on subcontracted courses. Leaders' and managers' actions to reduce the number of level 2 hairdressing apprentices, on programmes delivered directly by MTL, who leave early have been successful.
- Most apprentices are making expected or better progress in their apprenticeship. Business administration apprentices make very good progress and develop good skills which benefit their employers' business. For example, they protect data and client confidentiality effectively while working in doctors' surgeries.
- A small minority of hairdressing apprentices on programmes delivered directly by MTL are making slow progress because they have limited opportunities for assessment. Leaders and managers have begun to address this by increasing the number and range of clients. However, the impact of this is not yet evident.
- Programmes for adult learners are not good enough. Adult learners account for a very small proportion of the provision and most enrol on a level 3 hairdressing and media make-up course. Around a third of learners on this course have left early and the remaining learners are making slow progress. Leaders have decided not to run this programme in the future. Most adult learners on music, assessor award and hairdressing courses make expected or better progress.
- Nearly all of the small number of apprentices who take functional skills examinations in English and mathematics pass first time.
- Leaders and managers support apprentices well in their next steps. The vast majority of those who left early have gained alternative apprenticeships, got jobs or continued in education.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53411
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	64
Principal/CEO	Debbie Tagoe
Telephone number	0151 709 4640
Website	www.modetraining.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)	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	52	15	8	15	-	7		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
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:	Asset Training and Consultancy Limited Montebello Training Limited							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing 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, employers and staff; 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

Alison Cameron Brandwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Philippa Firth	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bev Barlow	Her Majesty's Inspector

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