

KATS Limited

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement	6
Main findings.....	7
Achievement and standards	7
Quality of provision	7
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like.....	11
What learners think could improve	11

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' monitoring 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:

- Vocational Training

Description of the provider

1. Kats Ltd (KATS) is a privately owned work-based learning provider based in Havant in Hampshire. Founded in March 2003 to provide courses for managers and practitioners of work-based learning, it started to offer government-funded training in March 2008 through a Train to Gain contract with Hampshire and Isle of Wight LSC. It offers qualifications in management, business administration, hospitality, health and social care, education and training and customer service. These are delivered flexibly in the workplace or as individual sessions in other venues. KATS has 105 Train to Gain learners across Hampshire, including 30 studying customer service, 27 learning and development, and 14 on social care qualifications. Many are enrolled concurrently on literacy and/or numeracy qualifications. Learners on learning and development programmes assist teachers in local schools or support work-based learning.
2. The company is managed by its founder, assisted by three permanent staff. Further part time assessors and tutors are contracted to support learners as necessary.
3. Although Hampshire is a prosperous county, it has pockets of deprivation. A growing elderly population is developing an increasing demand for social care workers. KATS' learners work either in care homes or in domiciliary care.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Vocational Training	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. KATS provides good provision for Train to Gain learners. Vocational training is good, as are achievement and standards, and the quality of provision. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as are the capacity to improve and equality of opportunity. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory, as is the self-assessment process.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. KATS demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. The company has expanded and diversified considerably since its inception in 2003. A clear, effective strategy and a flexible outlook enable it to respond rapidly to changing demand. Its passion for learning has expanded local opportunities for mature workers in a range of sectors. It is building further capacity through a productive programme of assessor training. Effective and prompt action was taken to deal with a poorly performing subcontract. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and is informed by input from assessors and learner evaluations. The report is brief, but the resulting quality improvement plan is concise, clear and practical, and identifies many of the characteristics found by inspectors. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. However, other measures to monitor the quality of provision are inadequate. Although many initiatives have recently been introduced to improve the planning and recording of progress, they have yet to take effect. Systems have been designed to do this but have not yet been implemented fully. Targets for learners are not clear, and some are making slow progress. KATS' use of data is underdeveloped and unreliable.

Key strengths

- Good success rates in social care in 2008/09
- Good acquisition of skills
- Highly responsive provision to meet learner and employer needs
- Good guidance and continuing support
- Effective partnership working to promote learning
- Clear and effective strategy and mission

Key areas for improvement

- Low success rates for learners in learning and development in 2008/09
- Insufficient recording of learners' progress
- Insufficiently rigorous systems to monitor quality
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

6. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates in 2008/09 were satisfactory at 80%. In social care success rates were good. Nine of 11 learners in this area were retained, and all achieved their qualification within the planned time. In 2009/10, of 17 learners, three have completed and 14 are still in training. However, success rates for learning and development NVQ programmes in 2008/09 were low. Only eight of 18 learners achieved a qualification. However, a further seven partially achieved, gaining the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) award, and/or an assessor award (A1). Two further learners achieved adult literacy and numeracy awards, as did one learner who transferred to another programme. Nine learners due to complete in 2009/10 have already achieved PTLLS and another three have achieved certification in Adult Literacy and Numeracy.
7. Nearly all learners are making satisfactory progress. They are highly motivated and keen to progress both with their qualification and at work. However, a few social care learners have not made sufficient progress to complete by the planned end dates.
8. Learners acquire good skills and employers report clear improvements in their work. Learners' show greater confidence and appreciation of the wider implications of their actions. They work more effectively in teams and are increasingly able to work on their own initiative. Hospitality learners handle difficult situations with greater diplomacy.
9. Many portfolios are well presented and managed. Evidence is selected effectively to minimise paper records. However, some social care portfolios show too narrow a range of evidence.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The quality of provision is good; a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Social care learners receive good training at work. Supervisors are well qualified and experienced and give good guidance to expand learners' knowledge and understanding. Employers offer good opportunities to attend workplace training and gain additional qualifications. Learning and development learners have weekly off-the-job training for the PTLLS award as well as regular sessions for individual NVQ units. Customer service learners at one employer benefit from individual training from their training manager, a qualified assessor. However, much of the training is ad hoc and individual learning plans in this area contain no definite training schedule.

11. Assessment is satisfactory. It is well planned and flexible to meet learners' needs and take account of work schedules. All appropriate methods of assessment are used. Customer service learners make good use of case studies to develop reflective practice. Assessors are supportive and give learners clear action plans for the next assessment. Learners can contact assessors out of hours if they need help. Assessors based at several employers provide instant support where needed and capture evidence very effectively as it happens.
12. Some learning and development learners focus on gaining their A1 qualification and do not collect sufficient evidence for other units. Some assessors do not include employers in their assessment planning. Others delay assessment feedback by taking files away for marking, limiting learners' opportunity to learn from their assessment and plan their progress. Some learners are not clear about what they must do to achieve their qualification.
13. Many progress reviews are insufficiently recorded. They are mainly informal and verbal only. Reviews are not regular or systematically planned. Learners have no record of their targets. However, learning and development Learners' reviews are frequent with prompt and clearly recorded feedback by email. Individual learning plans are inconsistent. While learning and development learners' plans are good, detailed, time constrained and are revised each visit, other plans are inadequate and not updated. KATS has identified this and has devised new review procedures but these are not yet implemented. Internal verification is satisfactory.
14. Support for literacy and numeracy is good. Learners without appropriate qualifications take comprehensive diagnostic tests. Where a need is indicated, they are encouraged to take certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Pass rates on these tests are high. Learners have good access to individual support and can start additional study at any time during their programme. Although KATS has purchased materials to support NVQs they are not routinely used and literacy and numeracy skills are not taught as an integral part of the programme.
15. KATS is highly responsive to learner and employer needs. A particularly flexible approach supports learners to gain accreditation of existing skills as well as those aspiring to change role or progress in their chosen career. KATS raises learners' aspirations and enables them to seek promotion or progress to higher level qualifications. Most can study for additional qualifications to broaden their understanding. For example, many learning and development learners undertake an additional NVQ, such as customer service or administration. Opportunities to gain PTLLS certification are offered to all learning and development learners. KATS works closely with employers to ensure that programmes meet their needs. For example, offering customer service in one organisation, hospitality in another, and short, focused learning awards in a third. Progression routes for social care learners are satisfactory. Employers and learners receive appropriate information about programmes and how to access funding.
16. Learners receive good guidance and continuing support. They recall their two-day induction well. They are well supported by assessors and other staff. One learner with poor computing skills received support in her home to raise her skills so that she could complete her programme. Learners with poor health have been

sensitively supported and motivated to resume learning when they recovered. KATS maintains regular email contact with all learners. When necessary, learners can visit KATS premises to work on topics they find difficult. KATS provides very good continuing pastoral support and career guidance for learners who have completed their training. Links to other agencies have been successful in career development.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory. KATS has clear and effective strategies to promote learning and development. Over the seven years of its existence, it has continually diversified and adapted to changes in the sector. By providing a non-traditional route to accreditation for vocationally experienced potential staff, it has successfully built its capacity to respond to local needs and national initiatives and provided responsive training for local companies. A good range of up-to-date learning resources includes electronic portfolios, workbooks, software and equipment. Communication is good with regularly minuted meetings with staff and partners. The company has introduced many initiatives for improvement, including improved screening at induction and better monitoring of assessor activity. Prompt and effective action was taken to deal with a poorly performing subcontract in construction.
18. Partnership working to promote learning opportunities is good. KATS networks very effectively with other providers and awarding bodies. It has good knowledge of the sector and understands the needs of local businesses, enabling it to negotiate effectively customised programmes for their employees. A flexible and responsive approach gives employers and employees a good choice of learning to match their job roles and aspirations. Marketing, in events such as adult learners' week, has opened learning opportunities for many local people.
19. Self-assessment is satisfactory and is informed by learner evaluation and feedback from staff and associates. Effective and practical plans derived from this are beginning to have an impact, although it is too early to evaluate them fully.
20. Systems to monitor quality are insufficiently thorough. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory and observations of learning lead to improvement. However, the learner targets are inconsistently recorded and not rigorously monitored. Interim progress is difficult to measure. KATS has no standard way to record progress or to measure it and targets for learners are often vague. The use of data is underdeveloped. Statistics about current learners are difficult to compile and unreliable. KATS cannot easily monitor the differences between groups of learners or identify individuals making slow progress. It does not analyse sufficiently the factors that lead to learner success.

21. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.
22. KATS is highly committed to widening participation in learning. Its individual approach to supporting learners builds their confidence and encourages them to progress. Many learners with poor previous experiences of education develop high aspirations and gain a range of useful skills and qualifications. Publicity materials show an appropriate diversity of images, although all current learners are white, matching the demographic background of the areas where they are recruited. KATS has clear policies and procedures covering equality and diversity which are regularly reviewed. Learners receive a satisfactory introduction to these and to relevant legislation at induction. Many also expand their understanding of equality and diversity topics as part of their learning.
23. However, KATS does not sufficiently promote equality in the workplace. Reviews do not systematically check whether learners are experiencing discrimination or ill treatment nor reinforce their understanding. When learners declare a disability, KATS makes appropriate adjustments to meet their needs but there are no current arrangements to diagnose or support dyslexia. Although meetings routinely discuss equality of opportunity, some staff have not received recent training. KATS has recognised this and has plans to remedy it.
24. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory. All learners are adults. All full time employees and every associate who works with children or vulnerable adults are vetted. Plans to comply with new regulatory requirements are satisfactory. Staff and learners receive regular updating on safeguarding, as do employer-based assessors. Risk assessments are carried out but do not include employer premises as all learners are fully employed. A satisfactory procedure to deal with complaints is covered at induction. Complaints are resolved appropriately.

What learners like:

- 'It's like a puzzle that fits now'
- Good guidance from helpful and supportive staff
- Opportunity to learn at work and do the job better
- Gaining the confidence to learn new things
- Well presented information that is easy to access
- Flexible learning that is fitted round their lifestyle
- Not being made to feel stupid
- Good contact after illness
- 'Fantastic individual support that makes me want to learn'

What learners think could improve:

- More early information about what they need to do
- Set days for assessments and a clear end date
- More time to sit down and talk about things
- Shorter wait to start assessment
- More training in the centre