

The Tess Group

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

1–3 February 2017

Overall effectiveness		Good	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have ensured that courses align well to the interests of learners and the needs of employers.
- Learners make good progress in developing the skills that they need to work effectively in security and spectator safety.
- Excellent partnerships with employers and training organisations ensure that learners are prepared very well for their next step.
- Particularly well qualified and experienced staff plan training effectively and ensure that learning sessions are relevant, interesting and of a consistently good standard.
- Governance arrangements provide clear strategic direction but do not support well enough the continuous improvement of the provision.
- Assessors use very effective strategies to develop learners' skills, knowledge and confidence.
- Learners' work is of a high standard and they take pride in what they do.
- All learners make good progress in improving their skills in English and mathematics, but their targets in these are not challenging enough to ensure that they can achieve to their potential.
- Safeguarding is well managed, learners feel safe and have a very good understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and of public protection.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Training Event Safety Solutions Limited, trading as Tess Group, is an independent learning provider based in Northampton. In April 2015 the provider contracted directly with the Skills Funding Agency for the delivery of spectator safety courses at levels 3 and 4 to learners in receipt of 24+ advanced learning loans. The learners are employed mainly in security and spectator safety roles at sports and music venues throughout England. Founded in 2009, the provider delivers a range of courses through subcontracting and privately funded arrangements, mainly in spectator safety qualifications at levels 2 and 3. These courses are not the focus of this inspection.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rigour and challenge of governance to create a culture that enables all learners and staff to excel through:
 - more frequent and thorough observations of learning sessions leading to incisive actions for staff development
 - more specific actions in the quality improvement plans following self-assessment
 - more effective monitoring of learners' progress.
- Introduce more challenging and ambitious targets for all learners in mathematics, English and study skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers are ambitious for the success of all learners and set a clear strategic direction and priorities for Tess Group. Their excellent work with employers and partners ensures that the courses they offer are relevant to the interests of learners and the needs of the security and spectator safety sector. Leaders and managers plan courses carefully to meet the challenges and national priorities of risk management and public protection.
- Leaders and managers use data effectively to set sensible targets for business development and growth. They have successfully introduced 24+ advanced learning loans. They have ensured that the quality of provision is good and that learners make a good rate of progress, developing the skills they need to achieve their qualifications and work effectively.
- Although managers observe the quality of learning sessions frequently and thoroughly, they do not always identify clearly enough how staff can improve learning further. Staff receive good support and encouragement to help them maintain their good practice and very effective arrangements are in place for staff to share ideas and experiences with each other.
- Leaders and managers analyse data and learners' views critically to make self-assessment judgements. Their identified strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are well considered. However, leaders recognise that they do not set specific enough actions within the quality improvement plan to help them raise standards further.
- Learners who have barriers to learning are supported very well and develop the good levels of confidence they need to be successful.

The governance of the provider

- Senior leaders perform the governance of the provider. They use their good expertise in policing, business and education to provide innovative and well-conceived strategic direction and priorities for Tess Group.
- Senior leaders do not receive a detailed or objective enough analysis of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable them to challenge managers effectively on whether improvement made in these areas is sufficient. For example, quality improvement plans from self-assessment are not sufficiently precise and staff development arrangements arising from the observation of teaching, learning and assessment do not always contain specific detail to identify where further action is required.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is well managed. All staff benefit from valuable training which they use to good effect to ensure that learners are safe. Assessors prioritise safeguarding and public

protection during their visits to observe learners at spectator events.

- Managers work productively with partners to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective and to inform policies, procedures and training. Managers and staff deal with incidents swiftly and appropriately.
- Leaders and managers implemented fully the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and ensure that all learners fully understand the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Assessors have appropriately high expectations of learners. They use effectively their industry-standard skills and experience in security and policing to enable learners to make good progress in their learning and achieve good standards. Assessors visit learners in the workplace very often and make good use of public events to observe the effectiveness of learners' work, such as how accurately they scan groups to look for signs of disturbance. They make very good use of the summer festival season, timing direct observations when the learners are busy managing events.
- Assessors make sure that learners are well prepared for their assessment visits and learning activities. Learners look forward to and enjoy their assessments and progress reviews because they can see the progress they are making and get involved in setting new targets for their next visit. Assessors make sure that learners improve their information communication technology (ICT) skills as they get to grips with using electronic portfolios to store their completed work. Discussion of short-term targets to extend English, mathematics and study skills is a feature of visits, but assessors do not always clearly document these in learning plans and monitoring records. As a result, learners do not always make progress in these areas according to their potential.
- Assessors use effectively learners' prior attainment and initial assessment results to plan each visit and to inform learners' skills and knowledge development. Assessors provide learners with sound advice on selecting the most appropriate optional units of the qualification to benefit their next steps and career aims, particularly in supervisory and management roles within the security sector.
- Assessors ensure that all learners make good progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics. For example, learners conduct complex calculations to measure the number of people within confined areas so that they can assess risk and ensure public safety. They also plan evacuation routes for wheelchair users and produce clear, detailed written instructions for staff and high-quality reports for senior managers.
- Assessors' questioning strategies are very effective, deepening learners' understanding and extending their learning. Learners experience appropriate challenge, reflecting on discussion topics and searching more deeply to find the correct answers. As a result, learners make good progress in their careers and in learning. Assessors work very effectively with employers to help plan rich learning activities and to seek further opportunities for the learners to increase their knowledge and experience. Learners and employers alike rightly have a high regard for the assessors as experts in their field.
- Assessors facilitate very effective discussions with learners on safeguarding strategies at public events, such as identifying and looking after unaccompanied or lost children at football matches. Learners gain useful experience of identifying signs of extremist

behaviours and radical influences. Learners' knowledge of these key government priorities and their adherence to statutory health and safety requirements are of a particularly high standard.

- All assessors promote equality and diversity particularly effectively, and this helps learners to consider the most appropriate strategies to use in their work. For example, learners understand that when they use their discretion in deciding who to search they must not be influenced by popular stereotypes or display unconscious prejudice in targeting people from particular groups, as this can cause offence. They also understand the importance of respecting privacy as they search people and of looking out for the interests of vulnerable people in large crowds.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners develop good social and communication skills. They show good levels of self-confidence and are motivated to do well in their studies and job roles. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Learners make sure that they get full benefit from their assessors' time and expertise.
- Learners make good progress in developing the skills and knowledge required for security and spectator safety roles. They respond very well to the assessors' coaching and quickly improve their ability to deal effectively with large numbers of people. They are courteous, respectful and concerned for the safety and welfare of visitors at events.
- Learners take great pride in their work and although they make good progress, this is not always recorded sufficiently well for learners and managers to gain a clear enough picture of the progress made towards achieving the qualification, or the extent to which learners are acquiring skills in English and mathematics relative to their potential.
- Learners' academic work is of a high standard and is presented well. They develop good skills in English and mathematics, which enable them to be more effective in their job roles. Feedback on how learners can improve their work is very effective.
- Learners make well-informed choices about the next steps in their learning and careers, with the majority gaining higher-level jobs with their current employers. They use their well-developed management and supervisory skills effectively and pay very good attention to public protection, safeguarding and fundamental British values when planning large public events and festivals.
- Learners feel safe and know what to do and whom to contact should they require support or feel they have been treated unfairly. They have a good understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Learners achieve well. Tess Group has only recently started delivering the 24+ adult learning loans-funded courses. As a result, only a few learners have completed their course. All of these learners achieved their qualification within the expected time and most have gained promotion at work. Current learners are making good progress.

- In June 2016, one group of nine learners had to withdraw from the course shortly after their induction because their employer ceased trading. The provider supported these learners well but they were unable to continue on the course and their loans were cancelled.
- Assessors successfully encourage learners to tackle new and difficult tasks, observing their progress thoroughly. Learners develop very effective teamwork skills. They act responsibly and with integrity, communicate clearly and carry out mathematical calculations independently. Learners become more effective in their job roles as they work their way through the course.
- The few learners in need of support achieve well. Assessors provide effective help to ensure that these learners do not fall behind. They make good use of initial assessment results to plan for individual needs very effectively. All groups of learners achieve at a similar rate.
- Learners produce good standards of work. They complete detailed portfolios of work, which demonstrate well what they have achieved. Learners studying emergency evacuation procedures produce detailed risk assessments of route plans to support operational command.
- Learners develop strong management and supervisory skills in a variety of public event environments. This includes leading teams of security staff, assessing risk at large public events efficiently, calculating large crowd capacity and developing evacuation plans.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1237215
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7
CEO	Mr Rod Doyle
Telephone number	01604 210500
Website	www.thetessgroup.com

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)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	11
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
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	–							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Not applicable							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the commercial director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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 a progress review. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Dan Grant, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Deary	Ofsted Inspector

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