

Freight Transport Association Limited

Address: Freight Transport Association Limited, Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1NU

Unique reference number (URN): 2804849

Inspection report: 19 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance

Expected standard	
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Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have successfully created a culture of inclusion. They have thoughtfully considered the barriers to learning that apprentices face, including those relevant to the transport sector. Leaders and staff have created an inclusion toolkit that provides helpful strategies for supporting apprentices. Staff receive relevant professional development, so they can apply these strategies effectively.

Leaders and staff quickly identify apprentices with barriers to learning, including those that emerge during the apprenticeship. They accurately assess apprentices' needs and provide apprentices with well-considered support. Specialist staff plan support very carefully for apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with barriers to learning due to their English or mathematical skills. They use effective strategies to reduce these barriers. When apprentices' confidence has increased, staff set them further challenges to help them develop their skills and confidence further. This is a well-embedded process of identifying needs, planning support, supporting apprentices and reviewing the impact of the support that staff use effectively. Leaders plan to use this systematic process for apprentices who face other barriers to learning, such as short-term, significant life events.

Leaders know the progress that apprentices make. They have plans to use their data even more effectively to enable them to understand apprentices' needs and develop their inclusion toolkit further.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders' vision to provide their association members with well-trained apprentices aligns closely with national skills priorities. Their collaboration with association members is very effective. It shapes the evolution of the training that apprentices receive. It informs leaders in their discussions with government about transport, logistics and workforce training needs.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement of the provision. Their actions and decisions are in the best interests of apprentices. For example, they prioritise inclusion to reduce the barriers to learning that apprentices face. Governors know the quality of training that apprentices receive because they visit teaching sessions and speak with apprentices and staff. This means they can support and challenge leaders effectively on progress relating to improvement actions.

Leaders provide staff with generally well-planned professional development that helps them in their work. Staff maintain their specialist knowledge when they complete training, such as in conviction and traffic commissioner appeals. They develop their pedagogical skills when they receive training for conducting reviews with apprentices. Staff new to teaching complete a well-considered programme of training and support that builds their confidence and competence. Leaders plan to strengthen quality improvement further and use their evaluation of the quality of teaching to enable them to provide tailored professional development for staff.

Leaders value staff highly and care for their welfare and workload. They provide staff with employee assistance programmes to support their health and wellbeing. They manage caseloads fairly, so staff are not overwhelmed. Leaders celebrate staff successes through, for example, 'value awards'.

2. Apprenticeships

Expected standard

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Apprentices, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress from their starting points. Nearly all apprentices are on track to achieve their apprenticeship and professional qualification in the time planned. Leaders have well-focused action plans in place so that the very small number of apprentices who are behind with their work can catch up quickly. Apprentices, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve very well, although they do not achieve distinction grades.

Apprentices generally develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours and apply what they have learned well in their jobs. They develop their English, mathematical and digital skills well. The work that apprentices produce is typically at a standard expected for their level of training and point in their course.

Apprentices are very well prepared for their jobs and next steps. When they qualify, they take on further responsibilities, including compliance, and they manage larger teams.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders provide curriculums that are highly relevant to the training priorities of their association's members. The online training sessions, one-to-one meetings with staff and high-quality resources make learning easily accessible to apprentices, especially as they are geographically widespread or work shifts.

Leaders and staff design the curriculums well so that they build apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours securely. Level 3 transport apprentices learn management skills and operating licensing law early in their training, which helps them to manage staff and comply with legislation. Tutors work effectively with employers to make sure that apprentices have the opportunities to practise what they learn at work.

Tutors are experts in the transport industry. They use their extensive experience to provide apprentices with in-depth specialist knowledge for their jobs. Tutors generally teach well, using a range of strategies and resources, such as research activities, video clips and presentations. They break down subject content into manageable topics so that apprentices learn and remember what they have been taught.

Tutors largely use assessment well to provide apprentices with constructive feedback that helps them improve their work and develop their understanding. Apprentices learning about operating licences improve their understanding of the difference between executive and non-executive directors because of the feedback they receive from tutors.

Apprentices have frequent meetings with tutors and employers to review their progress and set actions for the future. These actions are generally focussed, though they are not yet consistently high quality.

Participation and development

Expected standard 

Leaders set high expectations for professional behaviours. Apprentices conduct themselves professionally at work and are studious in their learning. Apprentices' attendance at online sessions and reviews is high. In the small number of instances when apprentices are unable to attend, leaders and staff make sure that apprentices reschedule their reviews and attend other sessions to catch up with work they have missed.

Leaders provide apprentices with suitable opportunities beyond their apprenticeships that support their wider development. These include transport conferences, trade association membership with its range of additional learning and benefits, and high-quality industry speakers from, for example, the national vehicle crime investigation agency.

Leaders provide apprentices with an age-appropriate curriculum, complemented by a wide range of high-quality resources, that supports their personal development. Much of what apprentices learn is contextualised well to the transport industry. For example, when apprentices learn about healthy lifestyles, they explore strategies that drivers might use to improve dietary choices and cope with high volumes of physical inactivity.

Apprentices receive coherent and helpful careers advice from staff and employers and through the use of high-quality online association membership resources. This helps them make informed decisions about their next steps. However, this advice and these resources are not yet fully embedded throughout the curriculums.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Apprentices become confident in using the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they learn, improving their performance in their jobs. They become catalysts for improvement and change at work. They make teams more productive and inspire others to carry out apprenticeship training. Employers value greatly the qualities and contributions that apprentices bring to their businesses.

Apprentices enjoy their training and are motivated well to succeed. They feel welcomed by staff, who understand their needs and barriers well and support them effectively to overcome these.

Through the high-quality online resources, the sector-specific support organisations and the experiences that tutors share, apprentices develop their understanding of how to keep themselves and the people around them mentally healthy. This is important in the transport industry, where roles often involve lone working at night and being a long way from friends and family. Apprentices learn about the effect of metabolic disruption on sleep patterns and the consequent risk to mental health. They know about industry initiatives that support and provide advice and counselling to people in the industry.

Apprentices develop a deep contextual understanding of radicalisation and extremism. Industry experts help them understand themes such as people smuggling, cargo crime and the terror threats posed by vehicles being in the wrong hands. This helps apprentices to consider how they keep themselves and their colleagues safe from these threats.

Apprentices become increasingly confident in their English and mathematical skills, which they use every day in their jobs. They use their mathematical skills to plan and manage complex deliveries of concrete to multiple sites. They develop their skills of communication and accuracy in punctuation and grammar, which help when they are writing reports and managing staff.

Next steps

- Leaders should monitor closely the progress of all disadvantaged groups of learners and make effective use of this data to support apprentices further.
- Leaders should tailor highly the professional development that tutors receive, so they continually improve their teaching skills.
- Leaders should ensure that teaching and action setting in tripartite reviews are of a consistently high quality.
- Leaders should take action to sustain high rates of achievement in all apprenticeships and increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve distinction grades.
- Leaders should embed careers advice and guidance fully throughout all apprenticeships.

About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with leaders, managers, governors, tutors, apprentices and their employers during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the provider:

Freight Transport Association Limited is a trade membership organisation operating nationally. It has a main office in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. There are currently 153 apprentices, of whom 128 are on the level 3 transport and warehouse operations supervisor standard, 18 are on the level 5 operations manager standard and 7 are on the traffic operator standard. All apprenticeship training is online and at work.

Chief Executive: Ben Fletcher

Lead inspector:

Mark Hillman, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ben Sheridan, Ofsted Inspector

Christopher Dearnley, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 19 May 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

153

Apprenticeships

153

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	S	65	S

'This provider' and 'national average' figures are taken from the publicly available DfE achievement rates. Where the DfE have suppressed the figures, usually due to small cohorts, this has been mirrored in the Report Card and will be shown by an 'S'.

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2024/25	S	98

'This provider' and 'national average' figures are taken from the publicly available DfE achievement rates. Where the DfE have suppressed the figures, usually due to small cohorts, this has been mirrored in the Report Card and will be shown by an 'S'.

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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