

SCL Education & Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

SCL Training and Education Limited (SCL) was awarded an ESFA contract for both levy and non-levy apprenticeships in 2017/18. It currently has 80 apprentices studying at level 2 and 3, the large majority of whom are on sports management and playwork frameworks. Just under 200 directly funded adults study functional skills English and mathematics courses, with a small number studying mental health management qualifications. At the time of the monitoring visit, only a very small number of adults were still on programme as almost all had already successfully completed their learning. SCL also has just over 1000 learners on directly funded 16 to 19 study programmes at levels 1 to 3. Most of these learners are studying sports-based courses.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

Senior leaders have a well-developed strategy to become a specialist provider, offering high-quality apprenticeships based mostly around sports coaching and physical education teaching. They have identified clearly that the apprenticeship pathway better suits sports learners who want to develop their skills practically. They have recognised the need for more sporting staff in schools and sports-based businesses and have developed the apprenticeship programme to provide the next generation of teaching, coaching and physical activity professionals.

As a result of becoming a direct contract holder, leaders and managers have made substantial investments in the company, employing new managers to oversee their apprenticeship provision. Suitably skilled and experienced governors, with a newly-appointed chair, frequently review performance with senior leaders. They check and refine actions to improve key aspects of the provision. They receive detailed reports that enable them to hold leaders to account. Governors know the business well and challenge leaders very effectively to improve the quality of their apprenticeship programmes.

Leaders work closely with the local enterprise partnership to ensure that their apprenticeship offer meets local needs. They have developed highly effective links with sporting associations such as the Bath Rugby Foundation, Hampshire Cricket College, Yorkshire County Cricket Club and Millwall and Reading football clubs. Apprentices have access to excellent professional facilities, which enthuse and inspire them. Leaders and managers have developed strong links with employers, which they use effectively to develop and expand their curriculum. Employers value the close relationship they have with SCL and hold them in high regard. Communication between SCL staff and employers is highly effective.

Leaders recognise that there are currently no standards apprenticeships in the main areas where their apprentices work. They have been heavily involved in the trailblazer groups developing these new standards, working closely with organisations such as the chartered institute for the management of sport and physical activity (CIMSPA). Leaders have already started planning for the introduction of standards apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers work closely with employers when designing apprenticeship programmes. They meet with employers to carry out an initial analysis to identify the skills that employers are looking for SCL staff to develop. Staff from SCL involve employers fully in apprentices' reviews as well as working with them to plan the curriculum. They make sure that employers understand and meet fully the requirements for on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices complete one day every week of off-the-job training as well as additional frequent practical sessions. This improves their sports skills and helps them develop their abilities in areas such as teamwork and confidence building. Apprentices record their training effectively in journals. They evaluate the skills they are developing, both on their own and in meetings with trainers and employers. Managers are developing ways to capture and record more formally the training that apprentices complete.

Leaders and managers assess the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision in detail. They know their business very well. They have improved self-assessment processes, which now involve all staff. Senior leaders identify forensically any weaknesses, and they plan improvements carefully and thoroughly. Governors and senior leaders review the effectiveness of improvement actions frequently. As a result, leaders and managers make fast progress at improving almost all identified weaknesses.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Significant progress

Skilled and specialist tutors provide inspirational teaching, which greatly improves apprentices' aspirations and opportunities for a career in sports. The strong links that leaders and managers have made with professional employers and sporting

organisations excite apprentices and help them progress to either full-time employment, higher education or to creating their own business.

Tutors use successfully a variety of practical and theoretical teaching methods to help apprentices apply theory to practice. They use questioning skills efficiently to check learning, and the brisk pace of most lessons engages learners very effectively. As a result, learners play an active part in learning. Apprentices take pride in their work and produce work of good quality. They develop good vocational skills which they use to good effect in the workplace. Apprentices progress to key roles in their sport as a result of the skills that they develop. For example, one apprentice became part of the England youth football squad. A cricket apprentice represented England and a football apprentice signed a professional contract with a major league club. Apprentices improve their confidence during their courses. They learn skills such as teamwork and the ability to work independently.

Employers value the practical and theoretical skills that apprentices develop during their time with SCL. They appreciate the positive contribution that apprentices make to their businesses. Large numbers of apprentices who start their apprenticeship in assistant coaching roles quickly move to lead roles with better pay and more responsibility as a result of the skills they develop during their courses. Employers know what progress their apprentices are making with their apprenticeships. Staff communicate any concerns quickly to employers and feed back the actions that they put in place to support apprentices who are struggling. Employers appreciate the close communication that they have with SCL staff and feel fully involved in the apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers track the progress of apprentices well. All of the small number of apprentices who started an apprenticeship in 2017/18 completed their course successfully and in a timely manner. Retention of current apprentices is high, and the large majority are making strong progress. Staff identify quickly those apprentices who are making slower progress, and they intervene effectively to enable them to catch up. Managers are refining their progress tracking systems further to enable learners to understand more accurately what they still need to complete so that they can take more ownership of their learning.

Apprentices benefit from the extra qualifications that they take during their apprenticeship. For example, sports apprentices take additional qualifications in child protection, paediatric first aid, food hygiene and mental health awareness. Apprentices appreciate the value and appropriateness of these qualifications. Employers recognise the additional skills that apprentices develop during their courses, which makes them more skilled in their work. Managers acknowledge the need to improve their methods of recording the extra skills that apprentices learn from these activities.

Managers identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching very effectively. Well-trained and experienced observers check their judgements by observing lessons with colleagues and staff from other contractors. Leaders and managers standardise

observations in team meetings every month to make sure that judgements are correct. Managers set useful and relevant targets for staff from lesson observations. They make sure that most trainers remedy weaknesses quickly through effective staff development sessions. Staff benefit from coaching sessions that identify clearly areas for improvement in teaching and learning. Coaches suggest useful and relevant strategies to enable teachers to improve their skills. Managers have strengthened systems for observing teaching and learning since September 2018 to include developmental and graded observations to increase the speed with which trainers improve their skills. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these measures.

Apprentices benefit from well-planned and interesting English and mathematics teaching, which enables them to make good progress and prepares them well for their assessments. Staff contextualise these subjects well and, consequently, most apprentices understand how to use English and mathematics in the subjects that they are studying. However, trainers do not always correct apprentices' spelling and spoken and written grammar. Consequently, they make the same mistakes in other pieces of work. Trainers do not always make sure that apprentices learn about the importance of referencing work and using bibliographies, particularly for those who want to progress to higher education.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes?

Reasonable progress

Leader and managers plan sensible and useful programmes for learners that meet the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes. Learners enjoy the chance to work practically in professional surroundings. As a result, retention of current learners is very high.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of study programmes effectively. They use frequent quality assurance visits to make sure that teachers have effective schemes of work and lesson plans. They evaluate the health and safety risks of study programmes effectively. Governors receive frequent reports about the quality of study programmes and the progress of learners.

Staff track in detail the progress of study programme learners through their qualifications. They know which learners are at risk of not completing. Staff take effective actions to support these learners. For example, leaders and managers identified that learners in one centre had not had work marked due to the sudden departure of a teacher. They took quick and effective steps to remedy this situation and made sure that all learners received feedback on their work quickly.

Leaders and managers are not yet clear about the number of learners working above or below their full potential. This limits the speed that they can intervene to support

those at risk of underachieving. They are developing ways to improve their knowledge of learner performance.

Leaders and managers receive frequent and detailed reports in board meetings that enable them to monitor the attendance of most learners well. When staff identify attendance concerns they take swift action to improve matters. Attendance for study programme students is high.

Leaders have recently invested in a new team of specialist English and mathematics teachers who have improved teaching in these areas substantially. These teachers contextualise learning well. For example, they use 'fantasy football' scenarios effectively in order to enable learners to develop their numeracy and communication skills. However, as no learners have yet taken examinations in English or mathematics subjects, it is too early to judge the impact of these actions.

Vocational teachers attend specialist English and mathematics sessions with their learners to support them. This also enables them to develop their teaching skills in these areas. Vocational teachers benefit from frequent training to help them understand how to incorporate effectively English and mathematics into vocational lessons. However, currently not all vocational tutors are sufficiently skilled to deliver effective teaching in these areas.

Leaders and managers have made sure that an individualised programme of work placements supports learners well and enables them to develop their knowledge of the world of work. Learners and employers evaluate jointly learners' progress from the start to the end of their work placements. Although learners keep useful logbooks where they record their hours on placement and what they gain from the activities they undertake, not all learners complete these. As a result, a very small minority are less clear about the skills they gain from work placements.

Leaders have developed an effective provision for a small number of learners who were previously not in education, training or employment at Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club. Learners at Worcester develop good skills that enable them to move on to positive destinations. The few who leave the programme early do so to move into employment.

Learners develop their understanding of topics such as hate crime, gang violence and knife crime through effective tutorial sessions. They complete online learning to improve their knowledge of British values, staying safe online and the 'Prevent' duty. Learners receive useful advice about progression routes after their studies. Although managers are developing a suitably wide-ranging careers information programme for study programme learners, it is not currently in place.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers at SCL take safeguarding very seriously. The well-trained designated safeguarding officer keeps detailed records of safeguarding concerns. Leaders are currently in the process of appointing a new head of safeguarding to further strengthen this area. Managers have detailed and current policies on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, which governors have approved. Managers use their links with external safeguarding agencies well to support learners at risk. Leaders are working closely with the Football Association to develop best practice for safeguarding in football academies.

Members of a new 'safe and sound' committee, headed by the chair of governors, examine safeguarding procedures in detail. Staff discuss comprehensive safeguarding reports at all board meetings to make sure that members of the governing body are well informed. The designated safeguarding officer works closely with his counterpart in the early years and childcare part of SCL's provision to make sure that safeguarding managers are up to date with information and that there is always a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff available to deal with concerns.

Senior staff carry out a thorough annual self-assessment of safeguarding to make sure that they are keeping learners safe. Leaders use the results of this self-assessment to develop safeguarding further. For example, a recent self-assessment led to the creation of a policy to alert learners to risks when using social media. Leaders and managers know about local risks to learners around radicalisation and extremism. They develop effective resources to help tutors and assessors discuss these risks with learners.

All staff take online training qualifications in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at induction to enable them to understand their responsibilities around keeping learners safe. Although staff update their training every two years to develop their knowledge of current safeguarding topics, managers do not record the date of refresher training on staff records.

Managers keep a detailed single central record to make sure that all staff have undergone safety checks before starting to teach. All those involved in appointing new staff carry out thorough safer recruitment training. Managers have been slow to gather references for a small number of staff who they have recently appointed, although they have risk assessments for these staff in place. Leaders have very recently employed an external company to strengthen their recruitment processes.

Learners feel safe and are safe. They receive comprehensive safeguarding information during induction. All learners take assessed online learning modules to check their understanding of staying safe online and the 'Prevent' duty. However, a few are not completely clear on the importance of reporting any concerns that they

have about radicalisation and extremism. Most learners develop well their knowledge of how safeguarding relates to their future job roles through units of their main qualification. Although study programme learners complete work placements with their employers, SCL staff do not reinforce the importance of safeguarding during these placements to ensure that learners are completely clear about threats that may face them during their work placements.

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