

The InTraining Group Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number: 58615

Name of lead inspector: Tracey Mace-Akroyd, HMI

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 March 2019

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Rye Hill House
Scotswood Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE4 7SA



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The InTraining Group Limited (InTraining) was inspected in May 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement. Inspectors judged that the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare, and outcomes for learners all required improvement. Inspectors judged that apprenticeships required improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

InTraining is an independent learning provider. It is a division of NCG (the group), which is a very large national education and training provider. This monitoring visit was based at the provider's Wigan centre and covered provision across the regions in England in which InTraining provides education and training to apprentices.

InTraining has 2,474 apprentices. It offers apprenticeship framework and standards-based programmes in areas such as information and communication technology, digital marketing, business administration, customer service and the health and care sectors. Approximately a quarter of apprentices study on new standards-based apprenticeship programmes and the remainder follow apprenticeship framework programmes.

Themes

What progress has the NCG board made in ensuring it provides robust challenge to leaders and managers on areas of underperformance, and what impact has this had?

Insufficient progress

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and the NCG board have strengthened the governance arrangements at the group board level. The group board now has strategic oversight of the divisional board and the quality of provision at InTraining. Group board members have revised the governance terms of reference, and they have a process in place to hold InTraining's board to account.

The focus of the divisional board of InTraining is predominately on the financial performance of the division. Divisional board members do not focus sufficiently on the improvements needed to the quality of training for apprentices. They do not demand information, from leaders and managers, in enough detail about the rate of improvements. Consequently, leaders and managers have not made sufficient progress in improving the quality of training at InTraining.

Group and divisional board members do not provide strong enough challenge to address underperformance. The group board uses quality and performance meetings to review the performance of InTraining but, too often, these reviews focus only on the implementation of actions. Group board members have insufficient oversight of the impact of these actions on apprentices' progress. The reports that leaders and managers produce for board members do not consistently differentiate between the performance of InTraining and the performance of another training provider in the group and, as a result, the overall picture is unclear. Consequently, leaders and managers do not prioritise actions to address weaknesses and ensure rapid improvement.

Governors and leaders have been slow to rectify the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. A delay in making decisions by governors and leaders means that the lack of progress of too many apprentices remains a significant concern.

Recently, governors and leaders have taken a number of actions to improve the performance at InTraining. These include changing the staffing structure and developing further the system for data collection. A recently appointed leader and a new team responsible for quality improvement are starting to implement a range of initiatives to improve performance. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of these actions because they are still in the very early stages of implementation.

How effectively do leaders and managers use quality assurance arrangements to bring about rapid improvement in current apprentices' progress, including that of apprentices based with subcontractors?

Insufficient progress

Until recently, leaders and managers have not used quality assurance arrangements well enough to evaluate the performance of apprentices. As a result, they have been slow to address the concern that the large majority of apprentices do not achieve their qualification within planned timescales. Leaders are right to recognise in their self-assessment that their actions are not yet effective enough.

Approximately three quarters of apprentices who receive training from subcontractors remain on their programme beyond the planned date of completion. Leaders and managers have carefully analysed the reasons for the underperformance of subcontracted provision. They have reduced the number of subcontractors they work with, based on an analysis of potential risk. They monitor the quality of delivery of the remaining subcontractors more closely. Subcontractors work with divisional managers and use the self-assessment process to evaluate their performance more accurately than at the previous inspection. These recent actions are helping subcontractors to focus more effectively on the key areas for improvement. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these actions on the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications on time.

Leaders, managers and staff are unable to demonstrate the progress that current apprentices make from their starting points, or the extent to which they participate in off-the-job training. At the time of the previous inspection and of this monitoring visit, leaders were overseeing a very lengthy transfer of performance data from one system to another. They have not completed this process. This means that they cannot identify the apprentices who are behind in their learning or those who are not developing the skills that they require to do their job well. In addition, leaders cannot ascertain if apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training.

What progress have leaders and tutors made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from challenging tasks that enable them to achieve their potential and prepare them for their next steps? Insufficient progress

Leaders have made insufficient progress in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors do not have a clear understanding about the progress that current apprentices make from their starting points. During individual reviews with apprentices, tutors do not challenge apprentices to achieve beyond the minimum requirements of the qualification or achieve their qualification on time. They do not use assessment information effectively to track all aspects of apprentices' progress. Too often, they do not provide helpful feedback following assessment to support apprentices to improve their work, including their writing skills. As a result, apprentices do not aim for, or gain, the knowledge, skills and behaviours of which they are capable. Leaders and managers are right to recognise this as a priority for action.

Leaders and managers have very recently implemented the 'Great Place to Teach' initiative. This provides clear guidance for staff on the expected standards for the apprenticeship provision and on the professional values required from tutors. Leaders and managers place considerable emphasis on developing the skills of tutors. These include how to improve their planning and teaching of activities that provide challenging tasks and assessment opportunities for apprentices. However, the impact of these very recent actions is not yet evident on tutors' practice or on apprentices' achievements and skills development.

Most apprentices develop and improve their skills and knowledge through the training that employers provide. For example, apprentices on digital media programmes develop high-level skills in the use of design and analytics software. Employers support apprentices to apply their skills well in the workplace. Employers benefit from improved market place information and professional presentation of information for customers, which lead to an increase in profit.

Most apprentices are aware of their possible next steps on completion of their apprenticeship. Most apprentices who complete their apprenticeships remain in employment, achieve promotion or progress to study at a higher level.

What progress have managers and tutors made in ensuring that apprentices understand, and know how to stay safe from, the risks of internet usage, radicalisation and extremism? **Reasonable progress**

Since the inspection, leaders and managers have taken a range of actions to increase apprentices' awareness of internet safety and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They have provided helpful information to employers and subcontractors in relation to online safety. Subcontractors use this effectively to support apprentices to be safe while online.

Apprentices who started in the last six months have completed training on aspects of e-safety, the risks associated with radicalisation and the consideration of fundamental British values. Apprentices understand how to stay safe online. For example, they know that they need to exercise caution when sharing information. They know that some websites contain information that supports radicalisation and extremism. Most of these apprentices understand the general risks of radicalisation and extremism and know how to report any concerns that they may have.

Apprentices who have been on programme longer than six months have a less well-developed understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Too few of these apprentices have sufficient understanding of any risks of radicalisation and extremism in their local areas. The provider's 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan do not consider local risks effectively. These apprentices do not undertake any training relevant to specific local risks. The provider's designated safeguarding lead is right to recognise that these apprentices would benefit from improved training on local risks.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019