

Biffa Waste Services Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 50697

Name of lead inspector: Charles Searle, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 10–11 July 2019

Type of provider: Employer provider

Address: Accuracy House
Coronation Road
Cressex Business Park
High Wycombe
HP12 3TZ

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.

Biffa Waste Services Limited (Biffa) is a large national company that collects, recycles and disposes of business and household waste. It started to deliver its own levy-funded apprenticeships in November 2017, starting with level 2 large goods vehicle (LGV) and customer service practitioner standards. All 40 apprentices on the customer service practitioner standard were withdrawn from the programme in November 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 21 apprentices on the LGV driver standard programme.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have developed a delivery programme for the LGV level 2 standard that meets the business needs of the company. The apprenticeship programme addresses the company's shortage of LGV drivers by offering waste operatives the training to become drivers. All of the very small number of apprentices who have completed the programme have been promoted to LGV drivers with the company.

Leaders' and managers' implementation of the LGV standard apprenticeship is weak. They do not ensure that apprentices in different parts of the country receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. At too many depots, local managers allow the operational demands of the business to take precedence over the apprentices' need to have time to train and study. As a result, the great majority of apprentices make slow progress and just over a third have withdrawn from the programme.

Leaders and managers have not organised the delivery of functional skills to apprentices effectively enough. Apprentices did not receive support to develop these skills until five months after the start of the programme. More recently, the subcontracted provider delivering functional skills went into administration. As a

result, current apprentices are not being prepared to take their functional skills tests. This has further hampered their already slow progress.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient control over the quality of training in different parts of the country. Following a recent restructure, managers in the company's learning and development team are no longer responsible for the performance management of trainers. As a result, poor-quality delivery has not been tackled quickly enough.

Although managers in the learning and development team know what needs to be improved, they do not receive sufficient support from the company's senior leaders to address these issues effectively.

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

Too many line managers and supervisors at depots do not support their apprentices' learning and development. They do not release apprentices from the operational demands of their day-to-day jobs to enable them to study at work. They do not take part in the planning of their apprentices' learning or in the reviews of their progress. As a result, line managers do not plan on-the-job activities that allow apprentices to apply the theoretical knowledge and practical skills that they acquire through their limited off-the-job training.

Trainers do not use the information they collect on apprentices' starting points well enough to plan and deliver effective programmes of learning. They failed to identify that many of the apprentices recruited at the start of the programme did not have the literacy and numeracy skills to meet the requirements of the standard. As a result, many of these apprentices withdrew from the programme or have made very slow progress.

Trainers' feedback to apprentices at reviews and on their written work focuses too much on the completion of tasks and the recording of activities. It does not challenge apprentices to improve the standards of their work or to develop their skills and knowledge beyond the minimum requirements of the standard. As a result, of the very few apprentices who have completed the standard, only one has received a distinction.

The small number of apprentices who have completed the standard do develop useful new skills and knowledge that enable them to move from being waste operatives to becoming LGV drivers. Apprentices learn how to drive Biffa's waste collection lorries in a safe and fuel-efficient way that meets the requirements of road traffic legislation. Apprentices benefit from the knowledge of their trainers who draw

on extensive experience in the waste management industry to make training vocationally relevant.

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

Safeguarding arrangements at Biffa are appropriate for an employer provider. The company's human resources division has well-developed procedures to enable any employee, including apprentices, to report safeguarding concerns. The company has a wide range of assistance programmes to provide support to employees with health and welfare issues.

The company has a high level of commitment and emphasis on developing safe working practices. The development of apprentices' knowledge and awareness of health and safety is a major component of the LGV level 2 standard.

Although managers have only just developed a policy in response to the 'Prevent' duty, they have ensured that it has been part of apprentices' induction onto the programme and that it is reinforced through discussions at reviews. As a result, apprentices have a reasonable awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

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 children looked after, 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