

Inspection of Seymour Davies Ltd

Inspection dates:

1 to 4 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Seymour Davies Limited, known as Opps Development Training (Opps Training), provides standards-based apprenticeship programmes in health and social care and business administration for care homes and care service providers. Most apprentices are employed within East Anglia and the East Midlands. Opps Training has been providing training for apprentices since 2005.

At the time of the inspection, 88 apprentices were on apprenticeship programmes ranging from level 2 to 5. Of these, 58 apprentices were currently in learning and 30 were on a break in learning. 21 apprentices study the lead adult care apprenticeship at level 3, 18 study the leader in adult care apprenticeship at level 5 and 14 study the adult care worker at level 2. Fewer than five apprentices study lead practitioner in adult care at level 4 and business administration level 3. Apprentices are over 19 years of age and there are no apprentices with high needs.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Too many apprentices are not making good progress. Apprentices become frustrated by the time it takes to achieve their qualification. They quickly become demotivated by their lack of progress.

Apprentices struggle with the workloads they have in their care settings. As a result, they do not attend enough training sessions to make rapid progress. Apprentices have been adversely affected by the frequent staff changes at work and at Opps Training. Apprentices do not get the support they need from trainers at Opps Training because of trainers' high workloads. Reviews and teaching sessions are not frequent enough.

Most apprentices quickly grow their confidence and their ability to do their jobs better. They take on extra responsibilities in the workplace. They become highly valued by their employers. Apprentices develop the skills to care for and manage patients' complex needs, such as dementia.

Apprentices value the support and training they receive from their employer. Employers enable apprentices to develop the skills they need to advance their careers. Apprentices receive useful work shadowing and extra responsibilities related to the smooth running of the care home.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe at work. They know who to report concerns to if required. Apprentices value the mental health support they receive from their employers and provider staff.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have failed to rectify the significant areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Too many apprentices do not achieve their qualification in a timely manner. Apprentices experience in learning is negatively impacted by the loss of trainers and high levels of trainers' sickness.

Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the quality of the education and training they provide. Leaders know the weaknesses of individual apprentices. However, leaders do not gather or analyse data at an organisational level. For example, leaders do not analyse the progress or attendance of apprentices. As a result, they are unable to identify trends or patterns of weakness in the quality of education and training or take the action required to improve any weaknesses.

The apprenticeship curriculum at Opps Development Training lacks ambition. Trainers do not have high enough expectations of what apprentices can do. Trainers focus their efforts on apprentices completing units. Too often trainers do not challenge apprentices to achieve high grades. Too many apprentices are not aware of the higher grades that they can aspire to. Apprentices who have English as an additional language, do not get the help they need to achieve.

Leaders work effectively with employers to plan their curriculum. Leaders work closely with employers to shape the content and sequence of the apprenticeship programme. They select specialist units that meet business and apprentices' development needs. Leaders have ensured appropriate progression routes from level 2 to level 5.

Most apprentices promptly acquire relevant new practical knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their job roles. Level 5 apprentices often take on more complex tasks and higher levels of responsibility. They conduct investigative work related to abuse or neglect of clients. They use research to learn how best to care for their clients and to understand their conditions better.

Apprentices provide high-quality care for their clients. Apprentices understand their responsibility for those in their care. They know the importance of person-centred care, advocacy, respecting family cultures and religion. Apprentices learn about the importance of respect, individual liberty and human rights. They apply this knowledge appropriately to clients in their care. Apprentices work effectively with residents who have different faith needs, for example by providing an adapted diet or supporting clients to attend faith celebrations.

Trainers do not plan learning effectively. They do not take account of apprentices existing skills and knowledge. Trainers do not routinely review what apprentices have learned and what they need to learn next. Trainers do not plan effectively for apprentices' development of English, mathematics and digital skills. As a result, apprentices are not consistently improving these skills.

Leaders do not ensure that staff have sufficient time to carry out their roles effectively. Staff morale is low and negatively affects apprentices' progress and achievement. Trainers' caseloads are prohibitively high. This adversely affects their ability to teach and help apprentices. For example, trainers only provide teaching to those apprentices who do not pass their assignments or who ask for help. Trainers do not ensure that apprentices are prepared for their final assessments.

Trainers do not return apprentices' marked work promptly. Consequently, apprentices wait too long to understand what they can do better. The feedback that trainers eventually provide is detailed, constructive and helpful.

Leaders do not monitor off-the-job training effectively. Leaders agree with employers the time required by an apprenticeship for independent study at the start of the programme. However, too many apprentices do not receive their entitlement to time away from work to study due to staff shortages in the care homes.

Governance arrangements are ineffective. Governors do not receive the information they need to hold leaders to account. For example, governors do not have accurate data on the proportion of apprentices beyond their planned end date or the proportion of apprentices who achieve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a positive culture of safeguarding. Leaders work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices receive the training they need to stay safe.

Leaders ensure that staff remain up to date with current safeguarding issues. For example, staff have recently received training on the risks associated with the extreme views of involuntary celibates (Incels). Staff share their knowledge appropriately with apprentices.

Staff responsible for safeguarding deal with any disclosures appropriately. They monitor closely apprentices for whom they have cause for concern. Staff involve employers in the monitoring of their ongoing well-being.

Staff responsible for safeguarding have effective links with external agencies to gather information on national threats relating to radicalisation and extremism.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must take effective actions to rapidly improve the quality of education so that apprentices make swift progress and achieve. Leaders should ensure that the workload of their trainers enables them to provide apprentices with the teaching and support apprentices need to develop the full range of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to succeed in their chosen career.
- Leaders should improve the range and quality of the management information they gather. Leaders should continually measure the impact of their actions on improving the quality of education and training. Governors should hold leaders to account for bringing about rapid improvements.
- Leaders and staff must ensure that they have high ambitions for their apprentices. Leaders must ensure that trainers provide swift and detailed feedback on apprentices' written work. Trainers need to prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessment and inspire them to achieve high grades.
- Leaders must ensure that teachers plan learning effectively in order to develop apprentices' English, mathematics and digital skills based on apprentices' prior competence and knowledge.
- Leaders need to ensure that apprentices receive the off-the-job training time they are entitled to. Leaders need to ensure that apprentices complete the off-the-job training activities agreed with the employer at the start of the apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270749
Address	12 Ramsay Court Hinchingsbrooke Business Park Huntingdon PE29 6FY
Contact number	01480 415930
Website	www.oppsdevelopments.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Barbara Seymour
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 29 November 2019
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the manager of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Shane Langthorne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Fawcus	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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