

Seymour Davies Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Ruth Harrison HMI
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers that are funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Seymour Davies Ltd has provided adult learning and apprenticeship training over a number of years as a subcontractor to a further education college and an independent learning provider. In 2017, the company gained registration to receive public funding for the delivery of training in its own right.

At the time of the monitoring visit the provider was working with 39 apprentices. Almost all are enrolled on the new standards apprenticeships. Most apprentices work in the care sector, and the majority are studying to achieve lead adult care worker or adult care worker apprenticeships. A few are enrolled on business administration apprenticeships. In addition, the company offers diploma and short courses funded through the adult education budget, predominantly to those working in the adult care sector.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have a clear vision to provide high-quality apprenticeships and adult education courses to serve the adult care sector. They intend to create sustainable job outcomes and to enhance existing workers' knowledge and skills. Leaders use their considerable previous experience of providing such provision, as a subcontractor, as a platform for managing their direct contract.

Leaders work effectively with employers to ensure that the training they offer meets employers', apprentices' and learners' needs. They focus on developing programmes to reduce skills shortages and to further the careers of those working in the adult care sector. For example, residential managers who run homes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities study mental-health awareness to help them to identify symptoms of depression in their clients. As a result, they now have a greater understanding of local support services available to their clients.

Leaders ensure that apprentices and adults enrol onto learning at the correct level and that they receive an effective induction to their studies. Consequently, most

learners have realistic expectations of the commitment required for successful completion. Leaders and managers have developed sound processes that enable them to effectively monitor the progress of all apprentices and learners.

Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They monitor some aspects of the provision and intervene appropriately to secure improvements. However, they have yet to secure sustainable and continual improvement in the quality of the provision. Staff who are new to the company do not receive sufficient training during their induction to ensure that they provide effective teaching and assessment to enable apprentices and learners to make rapid progress. Too many staff are not sufficiently aware of the outcomes of observations of their teaching and assessment or how they will be supported to rectify identified weaknesses and ensure that their practice improves.

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders ensure that apprentices receive their on- and off-the-job learning entitlement. Where apprentices are taught by experienced staff, they make good progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They are enthusiastic to learn and to make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses. For example, some apprentices enrolled on business administration programmes seize opportunities to make their organisation's invoicing and payment systems more efficient or devise revised processes to calculate the use of stationery and meeting room facilities.

Most trainers enable their apprentices to develop good work-related knowledge, skills and behaviours. Most apprentices are visited regularly by their trainers. At progress reviews and assessments, most trainers ask searching questions that challenge apprentices effectively to deepen their knowledge and hone their industry-specific skills and behaviours.

The majority of trainers provide incisive feedback that stimulates apprentices to improve their work. As a result, the majority of apprentices produce good standards of practical and written work. These apprentices fully understand what they need to complete and study to meet the demands of their end-points assessments. However, not enough trainers take their apprentices' starting points into account when training and assessing them. Too many adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that impedes the most-able apprentices from making more rapid progress. A few apprentices do not receive sufficient contact from their trainers or benefit from challenging progress reviews underpinned by precise targets that demand the very best of them. As a consequence, they do not know what they need to do to make good progress and achieve high grades.

Leaders and managers place a high priority on the improving apprentices' English and mathematical knowledge and skills. All apprentices undergo effective assessment to determine their starting points. Leaders ensure that apprentices in need of additional support receive individual tuition. As a result, they make good progress and achieve their functional skills qualifications, many at their first attempt. However, vocational trainers seldom promote these important skills and, as a result, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. Not enough apprentices value the contribution that English and mathematics make to their job roles.

Leaders ensure that most apprentices receive appropriate information, advice and guidance to help them make informed choices as to their next steps in achieving their career aspirations. A high proportion of apprentices have aspirations to secure promotion in their employers' businesses.

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals? Reasonable progress

The majority of learners make good progress in improving their knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to their work settings. For example, learners studying dementia care demonstrate a greater understanding of the impact of environmental factors on dementia patients' welfare. They can now articulate how they use their new knowledge to ensure that their clients are supported sensitively and appropriately in risk-free settings. Most learners are very enthusiastic to learn and are keen to improve their contributions in the workplace. However, too many learners do not make swift progress. They do not make the progress of which they are capable because trainers do not challenge them to deepen and consolidate their learning.

In the majority of lessons, trainers provide stimulating tasks that motivate their learners to apply themselves fully and develop their higher-level thinking skills. Trainers build on most learners' high levels of enthusiasm and keenness to improve by providing thought-provoking activities that spark further interest. This results in good gains in knowledge. Most learners, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, improve their understanding and use of technical vocabulary relevant to the care or business sectors.

Some trainers do not provide demanding teaching and assessment to challenge their learners to extend their understanding and apply it in the workplace. They dominate lessons, rush through subject matter and do not provide learners with enough opportunities to think independently and arrive at solutions and answers. At times, these trainers move too swiftly from topic to topic without ensuring that their learners understand fully what has been taught.

Most learners produce written work of a good standard because their trainers challenge them diligently to hone their knowledge, increase their understanding and improve their work. These trainers monitor the quality of their learners' work assiduously and provide good prompts that motivate learners to reflect more deeply and write with clarity. However, some trainers do not promote high expectations. They are content that their learners work to achieve only the minimum standards in their qualifications. A few learners copy text from course handbooks without analysing the content critically and applying learning to their work roles and settings.

Some trainers' feedback is cursory and does not challenge their learners to reflect fully and excel in the work they produce. Not enough trainers ensure that their learners improve their writing skills sufficiently. These learners' misspellings, poor structuring, and incorrect grammar and punctuation are seldom corrected. As a result, they continue to repeat errors. A few learners do not attend their lessons punctually.

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding arrangements, particularly those pertinent to apprentices and learners working in the care sector. They have established effective safeguarding policies and procedures which they review regularly.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. Leaders keep an accurate up-to-date single central register and all relevant staff have appropriate enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices working in care homes are appropriately checked and authorised to work in such environments.

Staff undertake appropriate 'Prevent' duty and 'staying safe online' training. They make good use of this training to ensure that apprentices and learners know what to do if they are worried about anybody's safety or well-being and how to report any concerns they may have. Trainers ensure that learners and apprentices have a good awareness of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism and how these issues relate to their workplaces.

Most trainers effectively promote the welfare and safety of learners and apprentices. However, a few trainers do not know which procedures to follow in the event of a fire or ensure that learners and apprentices register their attendance at the care homes where the learning sessions take place. Leaders ensured that this specific concern was rectified fully during the monitoring visit.

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