

Seymour Davies Ltd

Interim visit report

Unique reference number: 1270749

Name of lead inspector: Derrick Baughan, HMI

Visit date(s): 30 September - 1 October 2020

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 12 Ramsay Court
Hinchingsbrooke Business Park
Huntingdon
PE29 6FY

Interim visit

Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

Information about the provider

Seymour Davies Ltd is based in Huntingdon and operates under the name of Opps Development Training. At the time of the visit, Seymour Davies Ltd provided education and training for six apprentices on a standards-based apprenticeship at level 3 in business administration. It also provided education and training for 21 apprentices on a standards-based apprenticeship in care at either level 2 or 3, and four apprentices on a framework-based apprenticeship in care at level 5. In addition, 108 adults who work in the care sector are enrolled on short-duration qualifications in care.

Seymour Davies Ltd provides education and training in London, the East Midlands, the South West and the East of England. They use a subcontractor, Lead Edge Training, to provide apprenticeships for 37 apprentices at levels 2 and 3 in carpentry and joinery. Lead Edge Training provides these programmes in Halesowen.

What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?

Leaders told us that they did not have to make major changes to the courses they provided because of the pandemic. However, they did provide extra accredited courses in infection control in response to employer's needs. Leaders talked to us about the immediate change from a face-to-face model of training to one provided solely online, even before the national lockdown commenced. They said this was primarily because many of the learners work in care homes.

Leaders are positive about the benefits of the online model. They feel it has helped learners develop resilience and enhanced their abilities to learn independently. Staff

told us that leaders provided good support to help them adapt their teaching. Staff said that because of moving to an online method of learning, they have developed even better working relationships with learners and employers. They feel that they can share information much more effectively.

Leaders told us that the main remaining challenge was how to carry out essential workplace assessments. They told us that for carpentry apprentices with their subcontractor, arranging end-point assessments was taking considerable time. However, leaders believed this would be resolved by the end of the year.

Leaders felt that Skills for Care, the health and social care sector skills council, and the Care Quality Commission, had provided helpful information and guidance to providers. Leaders are working closely with employers to identify when they can resume any face-to-face activities.

Leaders are confident that learners have developed additional skills during the pandemic. Leaders say learners are now more able to establish their own peer networks to help each other. Leaders have changed carpentry apprentice groups so that each group consists of apprentices who have similar abilities in online learning and can therefore help each other.

What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?

Leaders told us they provide support for staff in the safe and effective use of a range of online platforms. Staff told us they highly valued this additional support. Trainers feel that they are now able to work more closely with learners to ensure their individual needs are being met.

Staff believe their ability to use technology has rapidly improved. This makes them better able to support learning. They are more confident to try online solutions, for example using video clips and recording feedback, which learners can review at a time that suits them. Trainers feel that they are supporting learners effectively and scheduling more frequent contact because the technology allows them to do so.

Trainers told us that they are better able to monitor learners' progress and share this information with each other. Trainers state that very few learners have fallen behind. Learners told us that they have benefited from a more flexible approach to learning and can study at times more convenient to them.

Leaders believe they give learners useful careers information advice and guidance. Trainers start these discussions at induction and continue them during courses. Trainers say that they help learners use the online platforms to share information and discuss their different work settings. For example, apprentices in business administration discussed how the job of an administrator in the retail sector differs from that of one working in the care sector.

Leaders told us that they have continued to sign up new learners. Leaders state that learners are engaging better with the online enrolment process, which is one of the changes they will keep.

Leaders believe that their new ways of monitoring the quality of provision, particularly how well staff are implementing training plans, are more effective than was the case prior to COVID-19. Leaders feel that they are better able to monitor all aspects of their provision.

How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

Leaders told us they modified their approach to risk assessments and immediately identified learners' elevated levels of anxiety and stress. Leaders believe this was due to a combination of factors related to working in care homes: the lack of personal protective equipment; the risks to them and their families; and the risks to those for whom they provided care.

Learners and employers told us that they valued the extra support provided by trainers. Employers stated that it helped learners deal with the additional risks to their physical and mental well-being. Leaders say that they increased the scope and depth of online safety training. This now includes the safe use of the different online platforms.

Leaders told us they have focused more on ensuring learners know who to contact in the event of problems. The learners we spoke to confirmed this; they were clear about who to contact.

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 2020