

Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited

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

Unique reference number:	50193
Name of lead inspector:	Sue Hasty, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Head Office 75 to 77 Main Road Hockley Essex SS5 4RG

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Seetec Business Technology Centre was inspected in July 2024. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

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

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 420 apprentices studying at levels 2 to 5. The largest proportions of apprentices were studying level 3 international freight forwarding specialist, level 3 business administrator, level 3 team leader and level 5 operations manager. There were 86 apprentices who were aged 16 to 18 years.

Leaders work with one subcontractor. There were 11 apprentices studying the level 2 credit controller and collector standard, and 28 apprentices studying the level 3 senior credit controller and debt collection specialist apprenticeship standard.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that those responsible for governance provide suitable scrutiny and challenge to senior leaders to improve the quality of education and training rapidly?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken effective action to strengthen governance arrangements since the previous inspection. They broadened the membership of the quality committee to include relevant senior leaders, who appropriately support managers to make improvements to the quality of education. Senior leaders are in the process of recruiting governors external to the organisation who have experience in apprenticeships.

Senior leaders revised quality committee discussions to focus on key aspects of their quality improvement plan. Senior leaders now receive clear monthly management information on how well apprentices achieve their apprenticeship. Leaders appropriately challenge staff to increase the number of apprentices who achieve their qualifications. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching across apprenticeships.

Leaders carefully considered the purpose of their provision after the inspection. They quickly took strategic decisions about the rationale for the courses they offer. For example, they have stopped teaching adult skills courses. Leaders have reduced substantially the number of training providers they work with through subcontracting

agreements. Leaders reviewed the range of apprenticeships on offer and selected the subjects they specialise in.

Leaders and managers closely analyse apprentices' retention and achievement rates monthly. Leaders' indicators show that while most apprentices achieve their apprenticeship, achievement rates remain low on a small number of apprenticeship standards.

How much progress have leaders made in strengthening their oversight of subcontracting arrangements?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have improved the arrangements for monitoring most aspects of the subcontractor's work. For example, they identify apprentices with additional learning needs at the start of their apprenticeship and put appropriate support in place.

Leaders meet monthly to track apprentices' progress. They receive weekly attendance registers from the subcontractor. This means that they know immediately when apprentices are at risk of falling behind. Leaders work together to agree suitable support plans for apprentices to help them catch up. They also plan additional revision sessions when apprentices fail exams.

Leaders appropriately challenge the subcontractor about low achievement rates on the level 3 senior credit controller and debt collection specialist standard. They identified that apprentices did not complete their apprenticeship once they had passed the professional qualification. Leaders plan to change the timing of the final assessment with the introduction of the new standard.

Leaders have a suitable overview of the quality of teaching at the subcontractor. They receive reports about the strengths and areas for development for tutors. However, leaders do not carry out their own observations of teaching and learning. This means that they have limited scope to directly improve and develop tutors to their own standards.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that learners and apprentices receive high-quality education and training that motivates them to attend?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have taken a range of appropriate actions to improve the quality of education across the apprenticeships. They appointed curriculum leaders with relevant sector expertise, who have made a start on revising the curriculum. Leaders have introduced monthly group action learning sets across all apprenticeships. Tutors use these effectively to share subject expertise and develop curriculum content.

In a few apprenticeships, leaders have changed the content of lessons. Apprentices receive well-designed workbooks and reading materials in advance of online lessons.

These resources help apprentices learn new knowledge, which tutors usefully reinforce in lessons. Apprentices value this new way to learn. It helps them develop their research skills. Curriculum leaders have plans in place to broaden this approach to all apprenticeships.

Most tutors lead helpful progress review sessions for apprentices. On the level 3 international freight forwarding specialist, tutors encourage apprentices to show what they have learned. Apprentices skilfully present about the risks of handling dangerous goods.

Leaders identify the main areas for developing tutors' skills through tutor observations. They ensure that tutors receive relevant training to broaden their skills. In lessons, tutors use questioning techniques effectively to challenge apprentices about their knowledge of the differences between marine and freight insurance.

Tutors give apprentices helpful verbal feedback that encourages them to reflect on what they have learned. Tutors' written feedback is often too complimentary and lacks suggestions for improvement.

Apprentices' attendance at lessons and progress reviews has suitably improved. Leaders have set appropriately ambitious targets to further improve apprentices' attendance rates.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors provide unbiased careers information, advice and guidance to learners and apprentices so that they know the range of opportunities available to them for their next steps?

Reasonable progress

Most apprentices have a clear understanding of their next steps. They receive frequent opportunities throughout their apprenticeship to discuss potential career pathways with their tutors.

Most tutors draw effectively on their wide-ranging and relevant experience in the sector during online lessons. They describe in detail the various roles apprentices could progress into within their business. A few tutors make sure that apprentices know about the higher-level qualifications they can take. Apprentices keenly exchange information with their peers from other companies about different career opportunities at work.

A high number of apprentices gain permanent employment with their company after completing the apprenticeship. A few rapidly gain promotion to higher level positions, including at director level.

Leaders have appropriate plans in place to train all tutors to provide apprentices with effective careers advice and guidance that meets their individual goals and aspirations.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors systematically plan and coordinate effective on- and off-the-job training for apprentices?

Significant progress

Leaders have taken swift action to make sure that tutors plan highly effective on- and off-the-job training for apprentices. Since the last inspection, managers and employers worked jointly to review the curriculum content for each standard. Managers discuss thoroughly with employers the range of opportunities apprentices have at work to practise what they learn in lessons. Employers routinely arrange additional training, cross-departmental visits and practical tasks to help apprentices broaden their skills and knowledge.

Managers have reshaped discussions held between tutors, apprentices and their line managers at progress reviews. On business administration apprenticeships, tutors talk about the topics in online lessons planned for the following month. Employers have an improved understanding of what apprentices study. They identify in advance apprentices' potential options to apply their new knowledge and skills at work. On the level 3 international freight forwarding specialist apprenticeship, employers place apprentices in different offices across the country. Apprentices gain high-quality diverse work experiences on the air, ocean and road pathways.

Apprentices value the close links between their off-the-job training and their work experiences. They rapidly gain substantial new skills, such as organising road freight shipments and managing export and import customs requirements. On the level 5 operations manager standard, employers set apprentices more complex and demanding responsibilities. For example, apprentices take the lead on motivating teams to improve performance.

Leaders have tracked carefully employers' attendance at tripartite reviews and this has now improved. Employers now have a much greater involvement in meaningful discussions that help apprentices' personal and professional development.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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