

Skills for Security Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		22 – 26 September 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- the very significant changes at Skills for Security (SfS), since the previous inspection, have not had sufficient impact on apprentices' learning and progress
- too many apprentices do not complete their learning in the planned period and make slow progress due mainly to weak planning of on- and off-the-job learning and weak setting of targets in apprentices' progress reviews
- teaching and learning still require improvement as the initiatives to improve this area have had limited impact and staff are not confident and skilled enough to provide a consistently good learning experience
- the development of English and mathematics skills for apprentices remains weak despite successes in increasing pass rates for these qualifications
- the board of directors has not set a clear direction for identifying and meeting the training needs of the sector and they are not effective at evaluating their own performance and at holding the senior managers to account
- managers do not accurately evaluate the impact of their actions on apprentices' learning and progress and as a result, the self-assessment report and plans for improvement are incomplete.

This provider has the following strengths:

- apprentices develop good practical skills and knowledge for working in the security industry and they progress into well-paid permanent jobs
- the recently opened well-resourced training centre in Birmingham has great potential to enrich off-the-job learning for apprentices
- assessment of learning is good and assessors give clear feedback both to confirm the reasons for apprentices' success and to help them improve further.
- apprentices have a good understanding and awareness of equality and diversity which they use well to provide a good service to a range of ethnic groups.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the accountability of the senior managers by ensuring that trustees:
 - scrutinise rigorously senior managers' performance against clear and ambitious targets
 - have a clear overview of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - and of the performance indicators arising from the monitoring of subcontractors.
- In order to set a clear long-term direction for the organisation, the board of trustees should:
 - work closely with the local enterprise partnerships, national bodies and employers to identify training needs of the sector
 - liaise and work closely and strategically with other providers to facilitate a broad range of work-based training.
- Ensure that organisational changes focus on the intended and actual impact on apprentices' learning and progress; strengthen the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for apprentices' performance.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making better use of the findings of initial and diagnostic assessment to plan to meet the needs of all learners more effectively, focussing on learning rather than on the completion of tasks and activities
 - providing an appropriate level of challenge for the more able and targeted support for those with additional needs
 - equipping tutors with the range and quality of training and support to improve their classroom practice
 - improving the skills of the observers during observations to measure progress and learning for apprentices rather than focus on teaching processes
 - providing clear guidance to staff on how to improve their professional practice further
 - incorporating the observation of progress review into the observation programme.
- Sharpen the rigour and accuracy of self-assessment by:
 - measuring and evaluating the impact of all the key learning interactions with the apprentices and employers,
 - using data to analyse the trends and dips in performance
 - devising a much sharper quality improvement plan to improve rapidly the provision to good.
- Plan apprenticeship programmes to ensure that all apprentices make rapid progress to complete their framework in the planned period through:
 - specifying programme end dates for apprentices which reflect their prior learning and potential
 - providing more effective guidance to apprentices and employers to identify situations where and how theory can be linked to practical work
 - setting specific, timely and challenging targets in progress reviews and ensuring apprentices achieve them
 - providing earlier access to off-the-job training
 - communicating promptly with the employers informing them of changes to the programme.
- Develop a more effective organisational approach to developing and extending learners' English, maths and ICT skills by:
 - ensuring that all tutors identify the opportunities for incorporating these skills in all lessons,
 - work with the employers to identify the tasks and roles where these skills are crucial in the workplace and make it relevant for all learners

- working closely with the learners to ensure that they fully recognise the importance of these skills for their future employment and progression.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Outcomes for apprentices require improvement. Success rates remain low for apprentices. The percentage of apprentices completing their qualifications in the planned period is even lower; the majority of apprentices continue to make slow progress as identified at the previous inspection. On the recently ended workplace learning programmes, success rates were inadequate compared with excellent rates in 2012/13. In the last academic year, 72% of the learners were on an apprenticeship programme and workplace and classroom based learning comprised 14% of each.
- On classroom-based learning programmes, those on short eight-week courses for employability had very high success rates. However, rates of progression into jobs are very low at 10%. Managers do not know the destinations of the rest of the cohort of learners. SfS has stopped running these programmes. Outcomes for 39 women learners, mainly in customer services and business administration, have been poor. SfS has terminated the contract of the two subcontractors.
- Learners on programmes for NVQ at level 2 in spectator safety with LAPA, another subcontractor whose contract is due to end, develop appropriate skills. They provide safe places for spectators at national events such as the London Marathon and football matches. Having held responsible job roles, learners are able to apply for wide-ranging jobs in spectator safety and in managing public events. However, many learners are making slow progress towards completing their qualifications.
- Those on locksmith apprenticeships make expected progress. They develop appropriate skills such as picking locks and installing new ones and make good use of mathematics to measure the diameters of the locks correctly.
- Most apprentices develop a good level of practical skills and knowledge for working in the security industry. For example, apprentices acquire knowledge of computer programming for security panels, which is beyond the requirements of the qualification. Many apprentices complete additional professional short courses through their employers which helps improve their understanding of security systems. The majority of apprentices who complete their programmes move into permanent job roles within the industry.
- Although the sector provides good progression opportunities for apprentices such as foundation degrees, self-employment and working abroad, especially in Australia, the Middle East and the Far East, the progression into advanced -level apprenticeships remains low. Most apprentices stop at intermediate level and do not progress to higher levels, which restricts opportunities at lower level jobs for new apprentices.
- Apprentices aged 16 to 18 perform less well than their older counterparts. The numbers of women and learners from minority ethnic groups are too small for any meaningful comparison.
- Outcomes for intermediate apprentices at Uxbridge College are excellent and outcomes for a small percentage, 12% of the provision of advanced apprentices, are good.
- Apprentices do not work effectively to extend and develop their English and mathematical skills beyond the achievement of qualifications for the apprenticeship framework. Staff do not convince apprentices fully about the importance of these subjects for their future employment and progression.
- The development of personal learning and thinking skills to enable learners to work independently and improve their employability is good. Apprentices apply their knowledge and

skills well to offer helpful solutions to solve problems and assist their colleagues and mentors in the workplace.

- The apprenticeship provides clear benefits to employers, meeting skills shortages and helping their businesses to flourish in a growing sector such as fire and intruder alarms and closed circuit television monitoring. The standard of workmanship and customer service of the apprentices is good.
- Apprentices are highly motivated. Their attendance and punctuality are high. They enjoy their learning, particularly the practical aspects. Apprentices appreciate the many opportunities to develop a career with good prospects in a rapidly expanding and evolving industry.
- Apprentices feel safe. They understand the key importance of health and safety in their workplace and take full responsibility for their working environment. They develop sound knowledge about the sector, health and safety regulations and the principles of safe working onsite.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching learning and assessment require improvement, reflecting the outcomes for learners. Too few apprentices achieve their programmes within the planned time. However, the majority of current apprentices are making at least expected progress.
- The planning of apprenticeship programmes requires improvement. A delay of up to six months in apprentices being able to access off-the-job training slowed their progress. SfS managers do not offer effective guidance to help apprentices and employers identify work situations where they can apply theory to practical work. This results in insufficiently structured training and assessment opportunities for apprentices to develop and consolidate practical skills regularly.
- Off-the-job training sessions lack sufficient variety of activities to challenge fully the more able. In these sessions, strategies to check understanding effectively are insufficient.
- Individual learning plans are not good enough. Staff place most apprentices routinely on a standard 18-month programme regardless of their starting points or their prior skills and knowledge. Most apprentices do not know what progress they are making and what they need to do. This does not challenge the more able. Support arrangements for apprentices with specific needs are weak. Apprentices are not aware of the support available to them.
- Progress reviews are not helping apprentices to progress rapidly through their qualifications. Staff do not make effective use of information gained from initial and diagnostic assessment to plan or set sufficiently specific, timely and challenging learning targets. Staff simply extend the targets when apprentices do not complete their assignments, leading to slow progress. Apprentices are not fully aware of the importance of progress reviews. Recent reviews are sharper and the apprentices are making expected or better progress.
- The development of apprentices' English, mathematics and ICT skills requires improvement. At lesson planning stages, tutors do not clearly identify which functional skills apprentices will be developing and fail to highlight and reinforce these skills in lessons. For example, in a technical certificate lesson on regulations, apprentices were reading hard-copy documents, reading on-line, and applying their understanding to a work context by preparing a presentation; yet the tutor failed to list these in lesson objectives and reinforce throughout the lesson.
- The teaching of functional skills is unimaginative. The focus of the functional skills tutor is on helping apprentices in classes and remotely through the virtual learning environment to pass English and mathematics qualifications to complete their framework. Other tutors do not check and improve apprentices' understanding of these subjects in their lessons.
- After receiving good initial information, advice and guidance, apprentices enrol on the programme that matches their interests and abilities. However, current information and

guidance, particularly with regard to longer-term career progression, is insufficient to raise the aspirations of learners.

- Assessment practice is good. Assessors give clear feedback that confirms the reasons for apprentices' success and helps them improve further. Well-qualified assessors use their extensive vocational expertise to challenge apprentices that are more able. For example, apprentices demonstrate their knowledge and competence about different types of alarm installation for commercial premises using different manufacturers' products. This is in excess of the qualification requirements. Apprentices make effective use of technology for the submission of written work and, tutors' feedback to apprentices is timely and constructive.
- Resources have improved significantly since the previous inspection with a new training centre in Birmingham. A new practical area with a good range of fire, intruder and wireless alarm system enables apprentices to develop good practical skills. Staff do not make effective use of practical resources at subcontractors' sites to further extend and develop apprentices' practical skills.
- Most apprentices have a good understanding of a wide range of equality and diversity topics related to their job roles, including dealing sensitively with all people including customers from different ethnic backgrounds. They understand bullying and harassment well and demonstrate respectful behaviour to each other and their employers. Assessors check and reinforce apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity effectively during progress reviews.
- With the recent introduction of an electronic software programme, assessors track apprentices' progress more effectively using the centrally held database, prioritise their caseloads and manage current apprentices' performance. However, this has not had a positive impact on increasing the rates at which apprentices complete their qualification in the planned period.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management continue to require improvement. Since the previous inspection leaders and managers have used short-term business plans effectively to bring about significant changes. These include a considerable reduction in the size of the organisation, several key appointments, a new specialist training centre in Birmingham and new or revised systems, processes and information technology arrangements. In many of these areas, leaders and managers have laid sound foundations. It is too soon to evaluate the full impact of these changes.
- The operational management, particularly of the subcontracted provision requires improvement. Leaders and managers have rationalised the provision to focus on providing apprenticeships and have terminated the contract of 11 of the 14 subcontractors, because they were performing poorly. In the process, learners from one subcontractor did not receive necessary support in good time to complete their programmes. The new contracting arrangements are sound with clear requirements, performance and quality measures.
- The board of directors do not effectively evaluate their own performance and hold senior managers to account for underperformance. While focussing effectively on how to deal with the short-term, the board has not conducted longer term strategic planning to develop and improve learning programmes and services. The board members are highly knowledgeable of the industry and have high expectations and a shared ambition to raise standards to benefit all apprentices.
- Training to support improvements in teaching practice is insufficient. Management action to support staff to achieve actions resulting from lesson observations requires improvement. Staff have good access to training to help them update their sector specific skills. Assessors share good practice well.

- Managers have established several new processes including a calendar of activities, quality audits, revised sign-up process and introduction of new electronic portfolio systems to improve the quality of provision successfully. However, these are new and apprentices have not yet had the benefit of these processes. It is too soon to evaluate fully their effectiveness. Managers focus sharply on quality audits, but do not fully evaluate the quality of action planning and target setting in progress reviews.
- Observations of teaching and learning require improvement. Observations are insufficiently evaluative. Observers do not observe learners' progress reviews. They focus on teaching and pay insufficient attention to learning and the progress apprentices make. They fail to identify some key actions that tutors can undertake to improve the learning of apprentices.
- Management of staff performance needs further improvement. Leaders and managers are not sharp at setting targets to measure the effectiveness of quality improvements and other performance objectives. Monitoring of apprentices' progress has improved, but it is not yet fully effective at identifying those at risk of slow progress and offering them timely support. The recently introduced monthly operations reports do not cover key areas of performance such as feedback from stakeholders and the standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Self-assessment requires improvement. The latest draft of the self-assessment report does not take full account of the data on learners' performance. It does not present an accurate evaluation of the on-and off-the job learning and its impact on learners. Staff and other stakeholders make an effective contribution to the development of self-assessment. In recent months, leaders and managers have begun undertaking thorough reviews of the post-inspection quality improvement plan and progress.
- Sfs does not meet the training needs of the sector fully. In a rapidly changing and expanding sector, Sfs's leaders and managers have shrunk its provision to concentrate on three apprenticeship programmes and the contract for the workplace learning is due to end. The current provision meets the needs of the apprentices and employers well. Leaders and managers have not worked with the local enterprise partnerships or the national bodies in determining the needs and providing training for the sector such as cyber security.
- Managers and leaders have put in place a strategy to improve functional skills of its apprentices, although it is too early to measure its effectiveness. A newly recruited functional skills tutor has successfully provided intensive support to apprentices who need to achieve qualifications in English, mathematics or ICT. New cohorts of apprentices receive tuition for functional skills alongside their main training programme to ensure that they complete their framework in time. However, not all tutors are confident or skilled in integrating functional skills in their lesson planning and teaching.
- The approach of leaders, managers and staff to the promotion of equality and diversity is good. The majority of apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity relating to their work and assessors promote these well during progress reviews. Managers use service level agreements with employers well to set out employers' responsibilities and expectations regarding equality and diversity.
- Leaders and managers have recently introduced challenging performance targets to improve the low participation rates of minority ethnic groups and females in apprenticeships. Their strategies to widen participation in the sector include the use of positive imagery on promotion materials and involvement on an international working group to promote women into the industry.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Sfs meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. The board of directors and staff receive regular updates. Good and detailed incident reporting allows managers to identify apprentices at risk and for them to take prompt action when needed. An effective safeguarding committee regularly reviews these reports.
- Apprentices say they feel safe at work and in the training centre. They have a good understanding of safe working practice. Sfs's managers and staff make good use of service level agreements so that employers understand their duties and responsibilities for the safety and well-being of their learners.

- Managers have taken effective steps to safeguard apprentices when away from work on learning programmes in Birmingham. These include recommending accommodation that has been risk-assessed for its safety and providing transport to and from the training centre. Apprentices receive an introduction to e-safety, but managers have not ensured how apprentices can stay safe when using the internet.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Skills for Security Ltd

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3						3		
Outcomes for learners	3						3		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3						3		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3						3		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Public Services	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all apprentices over the previous full contract year	416							
Principal/CEO	Ms Terri Jones							
Date of previous inspection	June 2013							
Website address	www.skillsforsecurity.org.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	81	97	10	19	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uxbridge College ▪ Trade Centre Training Harlow ▪ Preston College ▪ LAPA Security Solutions Ltd ▪ DCET Training (Exeter College) ▪ The Training Impact ▪ Stanmore College ▪ Gloucester College ▪ The Training Impact. 							

Contextual information

Skills for Security along with its parent company, the British Security Industry Authority, (BISA) is responsible for licensing individuals undertaking a range of security activities. While BISA has a remit to provide a range of business support and representation activities, SFS has a specific focus on the provision of publicly and commercially funded training and assessment services. The head office for both organisations is located in Worcester. A training centre in Birmingham provides off-the-job training. An extensive network of colleges of further education and independent training providers across the country provides the majority of SFS's public funded training services. SFS is in the process of terminating all but two of its contracts. A board of non-executive directors drawn from across the private security industry oversees SFS.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Harmesh Manghra HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Compliance Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent position statement, business and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of apprentices and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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