

SYTG Ltd

Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates		11-14 November 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- the success rates for the vast majority of learners improved to become good in 2013/14
- a large majority of learners gain confidence, make good progress, and develop successfully their personal, vocational and communication skills
- high numbers of learners progress to higher-level qualifications, further education, the armed services or jobs
- dedicated staff provide very good pastoral support to learners who have to overcome many personal and social difficulties in order to learn effectively
- inspiring teaching in vocational contexts, supported by good staff expertise and learning resources, helps learners develop good practical and employability skills
- learners have a good knowledge of equality and diversity and show respect for the individual needs of fellow learners
- the very positive working relationships with partners ensure learners are placed on the right programme and receive guidance enabling them to progress to higher-level courses
- the introduction of the study programme has ensured that learners enjoy a curriculum that is coherent, that meets their needs, those of employers and the local community.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- not enough learners successfully achieve their functional skills qualifications and progress to higher levels
- not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding or consistently good
- not all quality assurance arrangements, including self-assessment, are yet sufficiently rigorous or applied to all aspects of the programme
- arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently thorough or challenging.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the overall success rates in English and mathematics functional skills so that they become as good as the high success rates on vocational programmes.
- Raise the profile of functional skills that are not linked to vocational programmes by investing in a wider range of current and interactive learning resources.
- Improve the rigour and application of quality assurance procedures so that they become more successful by drawing on best practice in the sector. Ensure that they are applied fully to all aspects of learners' outcomes including attendance and punctuality.
- Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-assessment to ensure that judgements are well supported by evidence and that external partners validate the findings.
- Improve the quality of functional skills teaching and learning so that learners are successful in all parts of their programme by sharing the best practice in SYTG across the organisation.
- Develop more effective systems for recording feedback to teachers following observation with clear action plans which are monitored and linked to performance management. Use external providers to moderate observation findings and grades.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- All current learners attend the study programme and at the time of inspection 43 were enrolled. About three fifths of these attend the entry to uniformed services vocational training. The majority of this is subcontracted to QPD in Hull. The remainder seek to improve their English, mathematics and employability skills at SYTG's main training centre. SYTG also provides vocational taster days in music technology for 25 school pupils in Years 9 to 11. These learners are not in scope for this inspection although a few are planning to progress to the study programme.
- Outcomes for learners are good. A large majority of learners, including those who face particularly significant personal and social barriers, make good progress towards achieving their learning goals. Many enjoy their learning, develop a strong work ethic and improve their work-related skills and practices through work placements and programmes that nurture their employability skills. Very many learners gain in confidence through improving their speaking and listening skills and produce good standards of work. The support offered to learners is progressively reduced as they become more confident and independent.
- The vast majority of learners on the Entry to Uniformed Services programmes acquire good discipline, team-building and vocational skills through practical exercises such as guided 12 mile walks that they practise outside of the classroom. These learners develop particularly good employability skills through the experience of working in an army barracks.
- The proportion of learners completing successfully their main qualification in 2013/14 is high and substantially better than the low and declining success rates of previous years. Learners' retention rates were also high in this year although learners' attendance and punctuality require further improvement. Managers recognise the need to increase these rates. Attendance and punctuality are particularly good for current learners on subcontracted programmes.
- In 2012/13 female learners achieved less well than male learners and those with learning difficulties or disabilities achieved much better than the rest of learners. The gap between male and female learners reduced considerably in the following year. SYTG analyses systematically and monitors the difference between the outcomes for particular groups of learners. For current learners gaps are narrowing.

- Improvements in learners' English and mathematics skills present a more mixed picture. There were some improvements in learners' English and mathematics in 2013/14 but this was not at all levels. Some learners initially struggle to give the same priority to improving these skills that they give to the practical and vocational components of their programmes. Learners make progress in improving their language and writing skills, although spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes in their written work are not routinely corrected. Many of these learners struggled to improve their English and mathematics while at school and their progress is slower than in their practical and vocational work.
- Learners' progression into positive destinations including higher-level qualifications, further education, the armed services and jobs has improved and is now good. Programmes and their progression routes meet local needs and engage learners who are not all yet ready for more formally structured training. This work is helping learners' successful transition to the next stage and increasing their chances of gaining employment. SYTG monitors learners' destinations effectively through an improved use of data. Several learners progress from supported environments to be able to live and travel more independently. Few learners progress to higher levels in functional skills.
- Learners' success is not formally celebrated publicly although teachers know where their learners go and can provide anecdotal evidence of individual success stories. Where learners improve their self-esteem they make much better progress. The vast majority of learners know how well they are progressing and demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this has led to good progress and significantly improved outcomes for learners. The vast majority of learners develop good personal, social and employability skills that prepare them well for employment or higher levels of study. Learners on vocational courses build their self-confidence and readiness for employment and improve their practical and study skills.
- Support is effective and helps learners make good progress towards their individual targets and achieve their goals. On vocational courses teachers give learners good individual support to improve their writing skills so that they can submit well-written curriculum vitae and letters to potential employers. Sports Certificate Award instructors offer strong support to learners to ensure their personal fitness levels meet the standards required to pass the army basic fitness test. Teachers have high expectations of learners and set them challenging tasks to extend their knowledge and increase their confidence in their abilities.
- Vocational teachers skilfully use a variety of teaching methods to enable learners to develop the necessary practical skills for employment and higher levels of study. Teachers use their good subject expertise and stimulating resources to maintain learners' interest and support their progress. In one lesson learners, working both independently and collaboratively, produced a range of scale drawings using dimensions from various local buildings which they had visited in a previous lesson. This gives them a practical opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of ratio and how it is used by soldiers to calculate distances when navigating.
- Teachers plan to meet the needs of individual learners and set learners work which develops their communication and employability skills through discussion and problem solving. They encourage learners to use learning technology in the classroom which maintains their interest and extends their understanding. Learners regularly use their smartphones to help solve calculations and develop their research skills.
- The teaching of functional skills is not consistent across programmes. Subject and functional skills teachers plan together learning activities that integrate English and mathematics successfully with their vocational studies in uniformed services courses. Consequently, these learners successfully develop their spatial skills when planning exercise routes, enjoy their learning and make good progress.

- In a small number of English and mathematics lessons, teachers spend too little time ensuring that learners understand the relevance of these skills to their employability. Not all functional skills teachers routinely correct learners' grammatical errors or use relevant learning resources, relying too much on generic worksheets. These teachers fail to stimulate learners and a few learners find it difficult to stay interested and make slower progress. Teachers do not clearly link functional skills targets for these learners to their main programme of study.
- Teachers make good use of initial assessment and their knowledge of learners' starting points and career aspirations to inform their individual learning plans. The assessment of uniformed services learners is comprehensive and includes their attitude, physical fitness, and mathematics and English skills. Discussions of learners' short- and long-term targets in weekly reviews motivate learners on vocational courses to achieve their aims. These learners understand their learning objectives, receive constructive feedback on their progress and know what they need to do to improve further. Vocational teachers give learners positive feedback in lessons which builds their confidence, sustains their interest and encourages them to try more challenging tasks.
- Advice and guidance for learners' next steps and progression are good. Staff collaborate with referral agencies to ensure good transition plans are in place for vulnerable learners with complex learning needs. Independent careers guidance sessions are integrated into tutorials and lessons and give learners a good understanding of the next steps available to them.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is good. Teachers encourage learners to express their views in a supportive environment. Learners from different backgrounds work together on diversity projects and discuss their opinions on race and ethnicity openly in a positive way. Teachers plan learning activities skilfully to engage learners in topical discussions and learners show they have an informed awareness of cultural diversity. For example, learners on the Preparation for Army Life programme demonstrated their knowledge of diversity in a debate on the importance of dress code, behaviour and appropriate language when serving in the armed forces abroad.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. SYTG offers the study programme to enhance its vocational offer and to improve outcomes for learners. The stronger focus on practical and vocational work raises learners' expectations of what they can achieve and increases their performance. Through investing resources in locally based accommodation and specialist resources the provider has increased provision for uniformed services training and music technology. The good subcontracting partnership with QPD results in a highly successful programme which brings in new learners and the quality of this provision is monitored well. The ambitions and expectations of these learners are high.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good, although observation arrangements are still insufficiently rigorous. Differences remain in the quality of teaching and learning between vocational and functional skills. Observers give helpful feedback to teachers following observation but do not identify sufficiently precisely what improvements are needed. Teaching quality is not linked firmly to performance management and staff development. Managers do not monitor systematically how teachers improve and action planning is weak. Observation records and grades are not moderated or externally validated. SYTG recognises the need to learn from the rigorous observation procedures used by QPD which contribute to good teaching.
- Professional development opportunities for staff are good and meet both their individual needs and mandatory training requirements. Staff assess their own performance and identify personal development needs during annual appraisals but do not discuss teaching performance.
- Self-assessment practice has improved, and includes the analysis of outcomes data and staff and learner views. The current self-assessment report contains brief evaluative comments but

little evidence to support these judgements. The provider does not seek the views of external partners including the subcontractor, QPD, and self-assessment findings are not moderated or validated. The report fails to address several important features of teaching and learning. Inspectors did not agree with some of the grades awarded.

- Good progress has been made in improving aspects of the programme but the quality improvement plan has been too readily signed off as completed. The plan has few measurable targets. The scrutiny of progress is not always sufficiently self-critical. Good progress has been made in improving the proportion of learners successfully completing programmes, the development of learners' vocational skills, the use of data, and teaching. Less progress is evident in the rigour of self-assessment, the application of quality procedures to all stages of learning, and in the teaching of functional skills. Not enough good practice is shared between different parts of the service.
- SYTG provides a responsive curriculum to meet the needs of its learners, employers, local priorities and Sheffield City Council. SYTG is well recognised for its valuable support to vulnerable and at risk learners and learning activities which boost their confidence and help them plan their next steps. The provider offers good access to army training courses on-site in an army barracks through its subcontractor.
- Managers maintain good working relationships with partners who help vulnerable learners participate and stay in learning through personalised study programmes. Good guidance helps ensure learners are correctly placed on the right programme. However, numbers are currently low and SYTG does very little direct marketing to recruit new learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Managers ensure that learners are treated fairly and with respect. Teachers promote diversity through regular, planned discussions about other cultures. Learners, interviewed by inspectors, showed good and sensitive understanding of diversity and the particular needs of individual learners. The provider welcomes learners from a wide range of backgrounds. The gaps between the outcomes of particular learner groups are reducing. Trained staff quickly spot potential problems of aggression or poor behaviour between learners, and channel these into positive outcomes.
- SYTG's arrangements to safeguard learners are good and meet all statutory requirements. Its practice is supported by detailed policies and procedures and strong links with the Sheffield Safeguarding Board. Staff attend training regularly to update their knowledge. Good team working ensures that concerns are raised promptly and action taken swiftly. Learners feel safe and know well how to raise any concerns. Appropriate guidance helps ensure learners work safely with learning technologies. Appropriate checks are applied to ensure employers understand their responsibilities in employing young learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**SYTG 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	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Study Programme (Employability training)	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16-18								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	127								
Principal/CEO	Stuart Depledge								
Date of previous inspection	May 2013								
Website address	www.sytgltd.com								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level (classroom based learning)	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (classroom based learning)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	123	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	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	Education Funding Agency (EFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ QPD								

Contextual information

Sheffield is the third largest metropolitan district in England and has a population of over 550,000. Sheffield has a higher proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) than many other cities. NEET numbers are unevenly spread across the city. Most SYTG learners come from the Darnall, Arbourthorne, Burngreave and Manor Castle wards which are areas of high unemployment and deprivation. The majority of learners have low levels of prior attainment in English and mathematics when they commence their training programmes. Sheffield's local economy retains a strong advanced manufacturing sector but most employment is in the service sector, particularly in healthcare, business, financial services and education.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Fred Brown

Three additional inspectors, assisted by the Programme Manager as nominee, carried out the re-inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report, the quality improvement plan, and previous inspection reports. Inspectors used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision in scope at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area 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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