

Gordon Franks Training

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Nigel Bragg HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: St James House
1 St James Place
Birmingham
B7 4JE

Telephone number: 0121 333 3001

REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Gordon Franks Training (GFT) is a private company based in central Birmingham offering work-based training within the West Midlands region. GFT currently provides apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes leading to qualifications in retailing, wholesaling, warehouse and distribution, business administration and customer service. In addition, GFT offers foundation learning programmes and Key Stage 4 young apprenticeships.

The most recent inspection report was published in August 2010. The provider was graded as satisfactory for its quality of provision, leadership and management, safeguarding and equality and diversity. Inspectors assessed the overall effectiveness, capacity to improve and outcomes for learners as unsatisfactory. The preparation for life and work provision was graded satisfactory. Provision in retail and commercial enterprise and, business administration and law was judged to be unsatisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in implementing an appropriate self-assessment process and associated action plan that secures improvements?

Reasonable progress

GFT has improved its self-assessment process which is now more inclusive of staff and learners views. All staff are actively involved in the compilation of the self-assessment report and are encouraged to identify strengths and areas for improvement at programme level. However, the provider recognises that the most recent report is overly descriptive and does not use data sufficiently to support judgements. GFT has reviewed staffing arrangements and appointed a quality manager to better focus the organisation on quality improvement. Following the previous inspection, the company has implemented a detailed action plan that addresses well all the identified areas for improvement. The plan is comprehensive and clearly written with named individuals given responsibility for each area for improvement. The provider effectively communicates the outcome of monthly quality improvement plan monitoring at management, team and staff meetings. However, the provider has only recently introduced many of the actions identified in the plan and it is too early to judge their affect on improving the learners' experience.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has Gordon Franks made in improving success rates and the proportion of apprentices who complete in their planned time? **Reasonable progress**

GFT now gives a higher priority to the identification and support of learners who are not achieving at an appropriate rate. At the previous inspection, success rates were low and too few learners completed their programmes in the planned time. For the current year, the overall success rates for apprentices show an improving trend though they are still generally below the comparable national rates. However, the success rate for 19-24 year old apprentices is good. The overall proportion of learners who complete their programmes by the agreed date has improved since the previous inspection and is at the national rate. Progression rates from level 2 to level 3 programmes are satisfactory. Recently, GFT has introduced a range of new initiatives aimed at improving learners' success rates. However, it is too early to make a judgment on their impact.

Quality of provision

How much progress has Gordon Franks made in improving and using target setting for learners and staff to aid performance management? **Reasonable progress**

GFT has introduced more comprehensive setting and monitoring of a wide range of targets to inform performance management. The provider now makes good use of visual displays to keep all staff informed of progress made in achieving relevant targets. In addition, GFT has introduced monthly monitoring of individual assessors performance that includes a useful assessment of progress against agreed targets that is driving improvements. Very recently, the provider has included the assessment of target use in progress reviews through a process of quality assurance by direct observation of practice. However, GFT recognises the need to extend this process to assess other key aspects of the learning journey. As noted at the previous inspection, the use of target setting for learners is still not consistently effective. Not all staff routinely set learners targets that allow for a clear identification of achievement at progress reviews and following assessment. Some targets are not sufficiently challenging. GFT uses too few milestones targets to help learners monitor their progress. The provider recognises that it has yet to effectively set and use targets within individual learning plans to promote effective learners success.

What progress has Gordon Franks made in developing and introducing effective initial and diagnostic assessment arrangements? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, GFT has continued to develop both initial and diagnostic assessment of learners. It has introduced an appropriate assessment tool

which effectively identifies learners skill development needs. The initial assessment of learners is thorough and includes an assessment of literacy and numeracy, their vocational skills and learning styles analysis. Learners receive appropriate support in the workplace and at the training centre where initial assessment identifies if there is a need for further development. However, and as noted at the previous inspection, GFT does not use fully the results of initial assessment to inform the planning for teaching, learning and assessment. Screening and support arrangements for dyslexia and learners competence in the use of computers is incomplete. GFT has yet to implement a Skills for Life strategy that includes an adequately detailed action plan to drive improvements.

Leadership and management

What progress has Gordon Franks made in the use of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to focus staff development on the improvement of training delivery?

Significant progress

The company has developed and implemented an effective strategy for the improvement of teaching and learning. Tutors clearly understand the newly introduced role of tutor mentor which has made a good contribution to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Provider staff now more effectively plan classroom sessions. Tutors meetings are purposeful and allow for effective sharing and discussion of best practice. Staff are encouraged to identify specific training needs which are appropriately addressed. At the previous inspection, inspectors judged that schemes of work were not consistently effective. This weakness has been rectified with the introduction of an appropriate standardisation process. GFT has introduced an effective assessment of the quality of teaching and learning through observation. In addition, the provider has improved recording documentation to better identify area for further skills development. Outcomes of teaching and learning are now clearly linked to tutors appraisal and continued professional development. Peer observation is used well to encourage the sharing of good practice between tutors and assessors. This has nurtured a supportive learning environment for both tutors and assessors.

What progress has Gordon Franks made in improving its use of appropriate management information to help ensure all learners achieve within their target time?

Significant progress

GFT now makes good use of management information to monitor and review staff performance and the progress of learners. The provider exploits its management information system well to provide timely and relevant reports that inform decision-making. GFT very effectively shares this information during team meetings. Good use is made of a colour coded system to identify any learners who are at risk of not achieving their agreed targets. The provider now uses data as an effective tool to monitor staff performance. Each assessor receives a detailed report that clearly details their performance and focuses on relevant learners' progress towards agreed

outcomes. This ensures that staff take appropriate individual responsibility for the progress of learners under their care. GFT makes good use of the monthly reviews of staff performance to focus on learners' progress. The meetings effectively review and set further targets for individual staff that aim to improve learners' outcomes. The provider also shares this information with the internal verifier to inform decisions on the provision of support or further training for assessors.

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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