

# SR Education

## Independent learning provider

|  |                         |                               |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection dates</b>                      |                         | <b>2–5 June 2015</b>          |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>This inspection:</b> | <b>Requires improvement-3</b> |
|  | Previous inspection:    | Not previously inspected      |
| 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:

- success rates are not yet consistently high and are low for advanced apprentices
- trainers do not embed functional English and mathematics sufficiently into vocational training so apprentices make slow progress in these subjects
- trainers do not review apprentices' progress rigorously so they and managers are poorly informed about what corrective action is needed
- advice and guidance focus on the needs of employers rather than those of apprentices; too many apprentices are on the wrong level of course and do not receive adequate impartial advice about future career steps
- trainers do not require apprentices to take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and as a consequence many apprentices make slow progress
- managers' interventions to bring about improvement are informal and too slow; many areas for improvement identified through self-assessment have not been rectified
- arrangements for recording staff safeguarding checks and for cover when the designated officer is unavailable are not sufficiently systematic.

### This provider has the following strengths:

- most successful apprentices and many early leavers are employed in relevant employment and many have enhanced their career prospects through training
- success rates for intermediate apprentices in health and social care are high and all apprentices gain good work related skills
- trainers provide excellent and flexible support for apprentices; off-the-job training for sports and business apprentices is well planned and effective
- leaders and managers have taken decisive action to address under-performance and have established productive partnerships with employers to ensure their needs are met.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall success rates for advanced apprentices and timely success rates for all apprentices by improving the management information systems so that apprentices who are not making the progress expected of them are identified early and intervention is implemented quickly.
- Improve the planning of learning by using the results of initial assessment, setting challenging targets for apprentices, accurately monitoring their progress and building effectively on the training and assessment opportunities provided by employers in the workplace.
- Build apprentices' confidence and independence and their understanding of the apprenticeship programme so that they can participate more effectively in progress reviews and lessons, and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure apprentices receive impartial advice and guidance about their programmes to ensure they can choose the right programme and make informed choices about the next steps in their career.
- Improve the teaching and learning of English and maths so that apprentices develop their skills and do not just pass tests.
- Improve the management of safeguarding by improving recording of staff checks and ensuring adequate cover for the designated lead officer.
- Improve the quality of training for trainers to enable them to overcome the weaknesses identified and deliver the learning programme more successfully.

### Inspection judgements

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Outcomes for learners</b> | Requires improvement |
|------------------------------|----------------------|

- SR Education (SRE) provides intermediate and advanced apprenticeships for younger apprentices and adults. There are currently two higher apprentices in training. The majority of apprentices are health and social care apprentices, with smaller numbers on business, team leading, customer service, retail and supporting the delivery of physical education (PE) in schools. The provider also delivers classroom-based learning and apprenticeships under contracts from other providers.
- Success rates for intermediate level health and social care apprentices are high but those for advanced apprentices are below the national rate because of a low success rate at one employer with which SRE no longer works. The proportion of apprentices achieving their qualifications within planned deadlines is similar to the national rate.
- Current apprentices enjoy their training and are making the progress expected. Health and social care and sports apprentices receive good quality training from their employers which provides a valuable enhancement to the training they receive from SRE and further develops their skills.
- In 2013/14 many apprentices at one employer did not complete their apprenticeship because they did not complete functional skills English and maths. The provider no longer works with this employer. Managers have made changes to the delivery of functional skills, introducing English and maths earlier in the training programme and appointing a specialist English and maths tutor. As a result current apprentices are passing the tests earlier but they are still not developing their skills in these subjects well enough.
- Managers monitor the performance of different groups of learner regularly and there are no significant differences between men and women and different ethnic groups. Managers are now

working effectively to ensure that apprentices on all programmes have an equal chance of success.

- Apprentices demonstrate good vocational skills; retail apprentices develop good customer service and sport apprentices make good progress in their practical coaching, activity leadership and employability skills and communicate effectively with the school pupils they teach.
- Apprentices develop good skills for employment. Health and social care apprentices gain in confidence and the knowledge to care for service users with complex issues. Some apprentices take on additional responsibilities; for example one is now the safeguarding officer in a care home and another is the activities coordinator. However, trainers do not encourage apprentices to develop independently and apprentices do not take enough responsibility for their own learning. They are too dependent on their trainers to plan their learning and assessment programmes for them.
- Employers value the progress made by apprentices who often contribute to improvements in working practices and have a positive impact within the workplace. For example sports apprentices deliver coaching and other activities successfully to diverse groups of primary school children. Business administration apprentices are able to resolve conflicts and work successfully to reduce customer complaints.
- All completers from last year are now in related employment or have progressed to higher levels of study, many from the intermediate apprenticeship to the advanced apprenticeship. Some have received promotion at work. A few sport apprentices have progressed well to assessor and teacher roles with SRE. Many of the early leavers remain in related employment and a small number of the sports apprentices have now joined professional football teams.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, which reflects the slow progress that apprentices make toward their qualification outcomes. SRE staff recruit mainly employed apprentices and place them on a qualification at a level appropriate to their current job role. Some apprentices have already spent a significant amount of time in their current employment before they enrol, yet despite being very experienced in the vocational elements of the programme, they make slow progress.
- Health and social care assessors are well qualified and have good subject expertise and experience that enhance their teaching and enable apprentices to develop a good awareness of the needs of their service users.
- The best teaching, learning and review sessions are inclusive and well planned with embedded functional English. Employers participate effectively in the better reviews; they provide concrete examples of where the apprentice has met assessment criteria and are informed of the targets set for the apprentice to complete before the next review. Trainers manage reviews for business administration apprentices well: most apprentices in this area are able to learn independently, they are up to date and they use their individual learning plans effectively to set precise short-term targets. SRE has not yet shared this good practice across all curriculum areas. In other areas, trainers do not use reviews effectively to plan learning to ensure apprentices' progress is maximised.
- Trainers provide very good pastoral support. Their visits to meet with apprentices and employers are helpful and frequent. Many trainers, especially those in health and social care, visit and assess apprentices on night and weekend shifts to ensure they capture all assessment opportunities.
- Assessment practice requires improvement to ensure that more learners complete their apprenticeship quickly and in the time allocated. For example, apprentices on supporting PE in schools are almost one third through their programme and have not yet been assessed in a school setting.

- Target setting, action planning and progress monitoring to ensure apprentices all make good progress are weak. Trainers liaise effectively with employers and apprentices to determine the qualification and the units which best meet learner and employer needs. However, planning of learning requires improvement. Trainers do not always use the results of the initial assessment or their knowledge of the workplace to sequence learning or plan learning that is sufficiently challenging. Trainers visit apprentices frequently, but they do not always set targets for what apprentices should achieve before the next visit. This lack of precise targets restricts accurate progress monitoring and consequently apprentices do not always achieve in the allocated timeframe.
- The standard of health and social care apprentices' written work is too variable; many apprentices are unable to demonstrate effectively their full understanding of their practice in writing.
- Trainers give good verbal feedback and encouragement to apprentices. However, the quality of written feedback on marked work requires improvement: in the best examples, written feedback helpfully shows apprentices what and how to improve, but too much is brief and does not explain what the learner has done well.
- Apprentices make satisfactory progress with functional English, however functional mathematics are less well developed. In the weaker sessions, tutors do not integrate English or mathematics well. In health and social care, tutors' development of apprentices' written English skills is weak. Trainers do not routinely reinforce the importance of written English by identifying spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in apprentices' work.
- Trainers do not always use initial assessment or apprentices' prior experience to place apprentices at the correct level; for example, a learner with a level 3 qualification is now completing a further level 3 apprenticeship in a similar type of programme. SRE staff did not offer this apprentice the opportunity to consider a higher-level apprenticeship. Other apprentices are enrolled onto programmes that reflect their job role but either at too high or too low a level for their needs. SRE does not provide completing level 3 apprentices with impartial advice on further study available to them.
- In health and social care trainers use apprentices' experiences and work settings well to develop their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. Trainers in other areas of provision have not received adequate training or updating on equality and diversity to be able to provide consistent advice and guidance, prepare suitable learning resources or assess certain units within the apprenticeship. In business and sport, too many apprentices do not fully understand their responsibilities under equality legislation. However, in a supporting PE in schools lesson the teacher taught equality themes well, relating barriers to child development effectively to social deprivation. Sports apprentices demonstrate they can successfully provide health and fitness activities to very diverse groups.
- Safeguarding is a unit in supporting PE in schools but SRE has not included appropriate safeguarding guidance to reinforce apprentices' understanding in the Employer Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) workbook for these apprentices.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Requires improvement

- The Managing Director has a strong vision that the quality of the apprenticeship provision should be high and in line with that of the provision which SRE delivers as a subcontractor for other providers. Managers share the strategic plan with key staff. The strategic plan sets out the challenging targets and key developments for the future. For example, the target for timely achievement in 2015 is a significant increase on the previous year.
- Managers have established a lesson observation process which is thorough and detailed and leads to action plans which are designed appropriately to help trainers improve. However, they are not robust enough at ensuring these action plans are implemented sufficiently quickly, and improvements in training are too slow. Managers do not ensure that all newly appointed trainers

are observed soon enough and in some cases there is considerable delay between when a trainer commences training and the first observation of their work. Observations of training and assessment are not sufficiently frequent to ensure that the quality of these activities improves.

- Performance management requires improvement. Whilst managers take decisive action when underperformance is identified, for example by removing trainers, identification of underperformance is too slow. Meetings between managers and trainers are not sufficiently performance related and even though trainers self-assessed their performance in early spring their line manager had not discussed their performance by early June or provided formal feedback on how they could improve their performance.
- The self-assessment report is largely accurate, although some strengths are overstated. The resulting action plan is detailed but managers have not implemented the actions quickly enough. Many of the areas for improvement have not yet been rectified and the impact of those actions which have been taken has not been fully evaluated.
- Staff regularly monitor and audit individual learning plans and apprentices' monitoring documents. However, this activity is ineffective in improving the way trainers complete the documents to improve their work and to improve the speed at which apprentices complete their training.
- Apprentices and employers provide very positive feedback and the quality team uses this information effectively to inform self-assessment and improvement planning. Managers do not use data effectively to monitor the quality of the provision; for example, numerical systems tracking apprentices' progress are imprecise.
- The curriculum offer is in line with local and national priorities. Managers select the employer partnerships they work with carefully and strategically. There is a clear rationale for new provision and new partnerships. The Managing Director researches new curriculum areas thoroughly and consults employers well to ensure there is a demand for employees and workplace training.
- Equality and diversity are included in the induction programme for apprentices and staff, and in many of the apprenticeships. Most apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity but for some the understanding is superficial. Managers do not ensure that assessors reinforce apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity by embedding them consistently into apprentices' reviews of their progress. Staff do not tolerate bullying. Managers monitor achievement gaps and are taking action to eradicate the achievement gaps between different qualifications.
- Safeguarding arrangements require improvement. All staff have an enhanced DBS check. Many apprentices, including those in health and social care and sport, have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. Statutory arrangements are in place in the workplace. However, recording arrangements are not systematic and arrangements for cover when the designated safeguarding officer is unavailable are not secure. Safeguarding is embedded in many frameworks but staff have not adapted all materials, for example "Employer Rights and Responsibilities" workbooks to include appropriate guidance relevant to the occupational area.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### SR Education

| Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:<br><br>1: Outstanding<br>2: Good<br>3: Requires improvement<br>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 |
|---|-------|
| Health and social care  | 3     |

|  |   |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
|--|---|-----|----------|-----|---------|-----|-------------------|-----|--|--|
| Type of provider   | Independent Learning Provider           |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
| Age range of learners  | 16-18,19+                               |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year                  | 114                                     |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
| Principal/CEO  | Dave Mantle                             |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
| Date of previous inspection  | N/A                                     |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |
| Website address  | www.sreducation.co.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+ |  |  |
|  | N/A                                     | N/A | 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+ |                   |     |  |  |
|  | 17                                      | 51  | 11       | 44  | 0       | 2   |                   |     |  |  |
| 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: | <div> <div></div> <div>N/A</div> </div> |     |          |     |         |     |                   |     |  |  |

## Contextual information

SR Education is a medium sized national provider based in rural Nottinghamshire. Most apprentices are based in the East Midlands and in the North West. The provider delivers intermediate, advanced and higher apprentices on its own contract but subcontracts from other providers to deliver further apprenticeships and classroom based learning. SRE works successfully with a number of employers to deliver apprenticeships for their staff. Most apprentices are adults and are employed.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Bryan Davies AI

Three inspectors, assisted by the Managing Director of SR Education as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors also used data on apprentices' achievements over the last two 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:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



Learner View is a website where apprentices can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other apprentices think about them too.

To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk)



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

To find out more go to [www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk)

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 apprentices 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, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, 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 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2015

