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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Katie Woods-Ruddick
Head of HR and Training
Hays Travel Limited
9–10 Vine Street
Sunderland
SR1 3NE

Dear Mrs Woods-Ruddick

Short inspection of Hays Travel Limited

Following the short inspection on 13 and 14 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in September 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

You have ensured that apprentices continue to receive good education and training. You provide excellent care, support and guidance, which apprentices value greatly, and which ensures that they make good progress. Trainer assessors know their apprentices well and are quick to respond if they are identified as being at risk. As a result, the vast majority of apprentices complete their training and go on to secure permanent employment, gain promotion or progress on to level 3 apprenticeships in travel, team leading or business management. Achievement rates for the large majority of apprentices are high and the majority complete their programme in their planned timescales. Retention in the current year has improved and is now high.

You have rectified the large majority of improvements identified at the previous inspection. Apprentices now receive a challenging programme through the introduction of your 'customer excellence' programme and the introduction of high standards through the company's 'Smile' initiative, which both align well with British values. You have effective performance management processes in place, which celebrate success, and support staff to improve further. Trainer assessors have received training which has resulted in apprentices now having a better awareness of equality and diversity, and how it applies in their workplace. You have implemented an effective data management system but managers' use of data to analyse and improve the provision requires further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have maintained the effective safeguarding arrangements since the last inspection and have revised them in respect of the 'Prevent' duty. This ensures that apprentices are safe and feel safe. You, your managers and staff continue to prioritise safeguarding. Designated safeguarding officers have received regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty. Managers carry out the appropriate recruitment checks and keep accurate records. Through mandatory training, staff know how to ensure and maintain safe working practices and are very clear how to report any concerns about apprentices' safety. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe, including when working online. They are aware of the requirements to work safely both in the training centre and in their workplace. Staff have ensured that apprentices have an understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism and how these relates to their workplace. Managers have recently introduced changes to the induction programme for new apprentices and as a result, their understanding is good.

Inspection findings

- Teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Apprentices take pride in their work and demonstrate a good understanding of technical skills, customer care, profitability, and health and safety in the workplace. Trainer assessors effectively plan learning so that apprentices gain practical skills and knowledge in the training centre, which they apply to their work in the travel shops. For example, they carry out professional consultations with their customers and take into account their individual needs when recommending holidays and services. Administration apprentices understand and use the systems effectively for ordering, purchasing and completing inventories.
- Trainer assessors ensure that there is effective communication with workplace supervisors so that they are well prepared to support apprentices in their training. Apprentices improve their personal skills and develop high levels of confidence, which prepares them well to work in the travel industry and in meeting the needs of a diverse range of customers.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their studies within the planned time, often from low starting points, is good. Level 2 apprentices are prepared well for work, resulting in the vast majority gaining employment at the end of their studies and progressing to an advanced level apprenticeship. The vast majority of advanced level apprentices progress into sustained employment and a few gain promotion.
- Managers and trainer assessors monitor the progress of each apprentice effectively through regular meetings. Where apprentices are not making good progress, staff put effective plans in place to support them to improve their performance and enable them to catch up.

- Senior managers maintain the good standard of teaching, learning and assessment by accurately assessing the performance of trainer assessors in sessions and providing appropriate support and challenge where necessary. Effective staff development ensures that trainer assessors are up to date in their subject area, which benefits apprentices because they learn the up-to-date skills they need for work.
- The implementation of the standards for apprentices is effective. Trainer assessors plan a programme that includes appropriate on- and off-the-job training with workplace supervisors. As a result, apprentices develop a range of skills and become competent administrators or travel consultants.
- Trainer assessors do not use the results of initial assessment well enough to plan individual learning to develop or extend apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. This means that not all apprentices achieve their full potential in English and mathematics which they need for future progression.
- While managers analyse data routinely and identified accurately the decline in timeliness rates for business management, they do not use the data available well enough to monitor overall performance or to inform the self-assessment process. As a result, managers are not setting clear and measurable targets for improvement.
- Board members do not challenge managers well enough regarding specific trends or timeliness rates, because they do not receive clear reports on overall performance. Board members scrutinise the information they receive on individual apprentice's progress and discuss this regularly with staff.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- trainer assessors use the results of initial assessments to set challenging targets, so that all apprentices, including the most able, extend and develop their skills and knowledge in English and mathematics
- the analysis of data is used to inform the self-assessment process and the quality improvement action plan so that specific and measurable targets are set to sustain and improve achievement and timeliness rates
- apprentices, trainer assessors and workplace supervisors broaden their understanding of working in a diverse sector and of how the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism apply in their lives and work.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Machell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we were assisted by you, the provider's head of HR and training, as nominee. We met with members of the leadership team, trainer assessors, workplace supervisors and apprentices. We observed sessions in the workplace and reviewed apprentices' assessed work and portfolios. We obtained apprentices' views through a Webinar and face-to-face interviews. We reviewed key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to lesson planning and assessment, quality assurance and performance monitoring and safeguarding.