

University of Sheffield

Further education in higher education

Inspection dates

16–19 May 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Governors do not provide sufficient challenge or hold senior managers to account effectively enough to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers do not use data well enough to evaluate the quality of learning and apprentices' progress.
- Managers' evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision is not sufficiently self-critical and, therefore, does not result in rapid enough improvement.
- Too many apprentices leave their programme early and do not complete their apprenticeships.
- The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme within the planned time is too low.
- Staff pay insufficient attention to apprentices' starting points and do not routinely plan individualised and challenging programmes based on apprentices' prior learning, knowledge and experience. This results in too many apprentices making progress that is not rapid enough.
- Teachers do not routinely identify apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors and, when they do, this does not result in sustained improvements.
- Employers are insufficiently involved in the coordination of apprentices' learning in the workplace.
- The assessment of skills that apprentices gain in the workplace is not rigorous enough.

The provider has the following strengths

- Senior leaders at the university have a clear vision and strategy to deliver apprenticeships to meet the local and regional needs of the Sheffield City Region and engineering employers.
- Apprentices benefit from high-quality resources and facilities that support the development of their skills quickly at the beginning of their training.
- Apprentices benefit from a wide range of additional activities to support the acquisition of personal and work-related skills.
- Apprentices who remain in learning develop self-confidence, take pride in their work and acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to progress to the next steps in their career.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The University of Sheffield delivers apprenticeships at the AMRC Training Centre in Rotherham. The centre was established in 2013 to provide predominantly engineering apprenticeships to meet the skills shortages in the local workforce. The very large majority of apprentices are following an advanced-level engineering apprenticeship on a pathway related to the work of their employer. Small numbers of engineering apprentices study at intermediate level and at higher level. There is also currently a very small number of business administration apprenticeships; however, this programme is being discontinued. The vast majority of apprentices work within the Sheffield City Region.
- In the Sheffield City Region, the proportion of economically active people is lower than the national average. Residents aged 16 to 24 are more likely to be unemployed than those aged 25 or over. The proportion of people who hold qualifications at level 4 is in line with the national average but, at all levels lower than level 4, the proportion is higher than the national average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that those acting in a governance capacity regularly and closely monitor the progress that leaders and managers are making towards improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - receiving reports that accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision
 - setting appropriate and measurable targets for improvement and supporting leaders and managers to achieve these
 - challenging leaders and managers to evaluate the impact of actions to improve quality.
- Rapidly improve the use and accuracy of data in order to evaluate and improve the quality of learning and apprentices' progress.
- Increase the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme, by clearly evaluating the reasons why apprentices leave their programme early and using this information to make improvements to the apprenticeship programmes.
- Increase the pace of progress that apprentices make by:
 - ensuring that all staff use information about apprentices' starting points to plan and deliver individualised learning programmes that enable apprentices to make progress towards clearly defined learning goals
 - ensuring that employers are routinely involved in the development of apprentice learning plans in the workplace
 - improving the quality of workplace assessments by ensuring that apprentices are clear about the criteria which will be used to make judgements on their progress, and have the opportunity to provide clear evidence of the skills they are learning
 - ensuring that teachers consistently identify apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors and support apprentices to improve their skills in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders at the university have a clear vision and strategy to deliver apprenticeships that meet the local and regional needs of the Sheffield City Region, including the needs of engineering employers. The university's industry board comprises key stakeholders and employers in the region. This board provides guidance to leaders and managers on the development of the engineering curriculum and ensures that the programmes are relevant to the local needs and enable apprentices to gain the engineering skills that will benefit them in the workplace.
- The information that managers collect and use to make judgements about the progress that apprentices make is inaccurate. Managers do not systematically ensure that the data they use is correct and precise. Too many reports to senior managers are overly optimistic and do not provide a clear picture of current performance. While managers have detailed information on attendance and progress at individual assessor level, rigorous processes to check the accuracy of this information are not in place. As a result, senior managers do not receive clear reports on the current overall progress of their apprentices and, therefore, cannot identify accurately what needs to improve.
- Managers' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision is insufficiently evaluative. The annual self-assessment process is not sufficiently rigorous to identify accurately the key areas that need to improve. Many statements in the self-assessment report are not supported by evidence and, too often, managers' judgements do not identify the impact on apprentices. Consequently, there is insufficient analysis of apprentices' outcomes to inform judgements. For example, the underperformance of 19- to- 23-year-old apprentices is not identified as a weakness.
- Managers are too slow in securing improvements. Too many targets that managers set are imprecise and do not enable them to hold staff to account or measure progress effectively. Managers do not focus well enough on the specific aspects of the apprenticeship programmes that require improvement; for example, they have not set specific targets to improve the low achievement rates on the fabrication and welding pathway. Managers record whether identified actions are complete but do not assess the impact of actions to secure improvement. As a result, improvements are not rapid enough.
- A subcontractor provides a programme to develop apprentices' theoretical knowledge. Managers monitor the performance of this subcontractor effectively. They review the subcontractor's performance on a quarterly basis. Managers of the subcontracted provision have an accurate view of the progress that apprentices make on the qualification that is used to develop apprentices' theoretical knowledge. Staff intervene swiftly when they identify apprentices who are at risk of falling behind. As a result, attendance is high and the vast majority of apprentices make good progress on this part of their apprenticeship programme.
- Managers ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality resources by providing an excellent range of equipment and machinery in well-equipped workshops. As a result, apprentices receive up-to-date training that very effectively prepares them for work in the engineering industry.

- Managers identify when staff do not meet required standards and take action to improve their performance or remove them from their role. For example, during the previous year, managers recognised concerns in the performance of staff in a number of posts and, as a result, have made well-considered changes to the current staffing structure. Most observers accurately identify the key strengths and areas for improvement in lessons; however, they often underestimate the significance of the weaknesses in their evaluations.
- Staff benefit from a range of professional development activities, such as use of a 'hub' that provides resources for staff to improve their practice. New staff recruited from industry receive training to prepare them better for their role. The newly appointed teaching and learning manager has developed a number of initiatives; however, it is too early to see the impact of these and, as a result, teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good.

The governance of the provider

- Governors do not currently provide sufficient challenge to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers from the centre report to an industry board that advises on the curriculum, and also to the university's learning and teaching board. Senior leaders recognise that there is a need for a more formal board of governors and have very recently established a new group with clear terms of reference. However, the group has not yet had its first meeting.
- The learning and teaching board do not review the self-assessment report early enough in the year to be able to identify improvements needed in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. At the time of the inspection, members of the board were still waiting to receive the final quality improvement plan and, as a result, they were unable to set priorities for leaders and managers to work towards.
- Governors do not receive sufficiently detailed and accurate reports from the leadership team. Reports give an overly positive evaluation of the quality of learning, and governors have an inaccurate view of what leaders and managers need to improve.
- Governors at the university chair a well-established industry board that oversees and advises on the strategic direction of the apprenticeship provision. This results in the curriculum meeting the local and regional priorities and providing good progression opportunities to degrees for apprentices.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding processes in place that enable them to meet their statutory duties. Managers and staff place a high priority on safeguarding their apprentices. As a result, apprentices are safe and know what to do if they do not feel safe.
- Designated safeguarding officers have appropriate training, and teaching staff receive regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff have ensured that most apprentices have a good understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. An appropriate 'Prevent' duty action plan is in place and is monitored by

senior leaders at the university.

- Teachers promote health and safety very effectively in workshops. Consequently, apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of how to apply health and safety in all aspects of their training. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe when working online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Staff do not plan sufficiently individualised and challenging apprenticeship programmes. They do not take into account apprentices' prior learning, knowledge and experience, and many apprentices are allocated too long to complete their programme. As a result, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Apprentices are often insufficiently stimulated and motivated by the training to develop their theoretical knowledge and understanding. Activities are insufficiently varied and many lack challenge to arouse and maintain apprentices' interest and attention. Often, apprentices work at too slow a pace, and they are not set sufficiently demanding targets to accelerate the progress they make within lessons.
- Teachers and trainers do not develop apprentices' higher-level thinking skills sufficiently well, particularly when apprentices are learning engineering theory and in workplace reviews of progress. Too often, apprentices are not challenged when they provide brief or superficial responses to questions in lessons, and too many do not have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the topic.
- Assessors' reviews and evaluation of apprentices' progress in the workplace is not consistently good. Too often, assessors do not identify clearly the skills that apprentices are required to demonstrate and the assessment criteria that they will use. Apprentices do not have enough specific information before the assessment begins to enable them to perform well. Feedback on workplace assessments does not routinely provide advice on how apprentices can improve their skills, and in a minority of cases, assessments rely on limited evidence. Too few apprentices have opportunities to consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and British values in the workplace.
- Employers are insufficiently involved in the planning of apprentices' learning in the workplace. Managers and assessors do not have a clear enough indication of apprentices' progress in developing and using skills in the workplace. Identification of apprentices who are at risk of falling behind is not systematic or robust enough. As a result, interventions to support apprentices are not planned effectively, routinely recorded or followed up, which leads to a minority of apprentices making slow progress.
- Staff in the provider's training centre develop very effectively the practical skills that apprentices need for work. They ensure that apprentices work methodically through a range of practice tasks prior to completion of their final product, and they provide helpful and constructive feedback on these tasks. As a result, apprentices are well prepared to start the work-based element of their programme.
- Teachers and trainers in the training centre provide very useful feedback that helps apprentices to improve the quality of their written and practical work. Apprentices in the training centre workshop are clear about what they have achieved and what they still

need to do. Teachers and trainers develop apprentices' specialist engineering vocabulary very effectively. Most apprentices demonstrate good levels of knowledge and produce written work of an appropriate standard.

- Apprentices use mathematics very effectively when working in practical environments, such as when annotating working diagrams with precise measurements and tolerances to ensure that an accurate end product is made. Teachers do not routinely identify apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors and, when they do, this does not result in sustained improvements.
- Teachers and assessors are knowledgeable about engineering and they have good industrial experience. They are very aware of employers' expectations and they readily share their awareness with apprentices to prepare them for working in the engineering sector. As a result, apprentices are highly motivated to improve their practical skills.
- Apprentices take part in very relevant projects that benefit their workplace. A large number of apprentices' projects link to workplace improvements. For example, apprentices have designed a temperature monitor for aluminium billet melters to detect temperatures that are rising too rapidly and an early warning flood detector for cellars.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices working in the provider's training centre are self-confident. They fully understand how the skills they are developing are relevant to the workplace, and they take pride in the work that they complete. They know how to plan thoroughly, inspect work continually and reflect on the quality of the work. The vast majority can articulate what they did well and what they could improve, such as when producing items using milling and turning machines.
- The majority of apprentices are ambitious. They want to progress to higher-level courses and to develop skills to enable them to secure promotions to more senior roles. They understand fully how the apprenticeship prepares them for their future and receive good information about the range of training and career pathways. The majority of students on the higher education provision offered within the training centre have progressed from the apprenticeship programme.
- Staff ensure that apprentices benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that develop apprentices' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, apprentices learn how to manage their finances appropriately and about skin hygiene in the workplace. They are aware of the risks of misuse of alcohol and drugs. Apprentices also benefit from studying additional technical topics that prepare them well for the workplace. For example, they learn about working at heights, machine safety, bearings technology and gearboxes.
- Apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding and the dangers of radicalisation. They are very well prepared to follow safe working practices in the training centre and in the workplace, and they know that they must report accidents and near misses.
- Apprentices receive effective support to develop mathematical skills where necessary. They use these skills appropriately to complete accurate engineering operations in the practical engineering workshops. For example, they use the Pythagorean theorem when

designing angles for inputting into machines and to calculate diameters and lengths. Extra sessions are in place for apprentices who struggle with the advanced mathematics on the centre-based vocational qualification to ensure that this is not a barrier to achievement.

- The recruitment process is thorough. Only applicants who complete successfully mechanical and spatial reasoning assessments, a manual dexterity test and an interview are shortlisted for suitable apprenticeship vacancies. Applicants have opportunities to meet employers and gain awareness of different engineering training routes. Employers have regular opportunities to discuss the most relevant training programme and optional modules with managers and trainers in the centre.
- Behaviour at the training centre is exemplary in workshops, classrooms and social areas and replicates expected workplace standards. Apprentices attend their training regularly. However, a few apprentices do not continue to exhibit the required standards of attendance and conduct in the workplace, and are dismissed as a result.
- Too many apprentices struggle with the transition from the centre-based training early in the programme to their employer-based training. Managers have identified this aspect of the training as a key area for improvement and have implemented a range of support measures, but it is too soon to judge the impact of the changes made. At the time of the inspection, the return-to-work sessions do not provide apprentices with sufficient opportunities to evaluate the work-related skills that they have gained during their centre-based training so that they fully understand how these will be of benefit when in the workplace.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of apprentices who completed their programmes successfully in 2015/16 was slightly above the rate for all providers. However, only slightly more than half did so within the planned timescale. Apprentices aged 19 to 23 did not achieve as well as their peers.
- The proportion of apprentices who have achieved so far during the current year has declined from 2015/16. Of those who have achieved, a higher proportion have achieved within the planned timescale compared with the previous year. However, this proportion remains lower than in similar providers.
- Teachers and assessors monitor the progress that apprentices make on individual components of the course. However, they do not effectively monitor and review apprentices' progress across the full programme. As a result, too many apprentices make progress that is not rapid enough.
- Staff do not obtain and record systematically data on progression to determine the number of apprentices who progress to a higher-level course or secure promotion as a result of their training. As a result, leaders and managers are unable to evaluate their provision and make changes as appropriate.
- Advanced-level engineering apprentices quickly achieve a level 2 qualification in practical skills at the beginning of their apprenticeship. Teachers ensure that apprentices achieve high grades in their theory qualification and the majority make good progress based on their GCSE achievements. The small proportion who already have qualifications beyond

GCSE are not encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge further.

- The achievement rate on functional skills qualifications in information and communications technology has improved for the current cohort and is now high. The very small minority of apprentices who need to obtain English and mathematics qualifications do so successfully. Most apprentices produce written work of a high standard.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and appreciate the way in which their teachers make the learning activities relevant to a range of workplaces.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133872
Type of provider	Other further education and skills
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	401
Principal/CEO	Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Telephone number	0114 222 2000
Website	www.shef.ac.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	17	5	285	109	1	9		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	–							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Barnsley College							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of training, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Rachel Angus, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Ronksley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynda Pickering	Ofsted Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-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.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a 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.

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 learners 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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, 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 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017