

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 June 2018

Mr Stephen North
Managing Director
Span Training and Development Limited
PO Box 718
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 6LP

Dear Mr North

Short inspection of Span Training and Development Limited

Following the short inspection on 9 and 10 May 2018, 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 June 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

During 2016/17, the unexpected and very sudden shutdown of a subcontractor significantly affected a minority of apprentices, and their training ceased. You, your directors and managers acted decisively to support apprentices and continue their training. You and your senior management team took rapid action to appoint well-qualified staff, gain centre approval for training and provide apprentices with close personal care during the interim. Despite this action, around half the apprentices who had been with your subcontractor left their programme without completing it. The remainder completed their apprenticeships but most finished after their planned end date. This considerably lowered your overall achievement rates during 2016/17 and 2017/18. However, analysis of performance shows that achievements for the very large majority of apprentices, excluding those affected by the closure of the subcontractor, are high or very high across most programmes. A high proportion of apprentices progress from level 2 to level 3 programmes.

The senior leadership team continues to set and communicate an ambitious mission and associated values that successfully support apprentices' transition into sustained employment. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the local, regional and national economies. Consequently, they have a realistic rationale for curriculum developments to meet identified skills shortages. For example, managers have introduced physical-education programmes for schools to meet an identified regional need.

You and your senior leaders have a good understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. Managers have effectively dealt with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have made good progress in improving the quality of training, which is good overall. Apprentices enjoy attending their workplaces and their training.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The senior leadership team has established effective operational practices successfully. Consequently, apprentices undertake training within a caring culture that provides good protection for individuals. You have made significant efforts since the previous inspection to raise field-service managers' and assessors' understanding of how to identify welfare concerns. Consequently, staff are very active in monitoring and responding to the few anxieties that apprentices raise.

The designated safeguarding officer takes rapid and appropriate actions to ensure that apprentices are safe and protected. However, managers recognise that they do not evaluate the records of concerns raised by apprentices across years, to develop longer-term trend analysis. When needed, staff refer apprentices to external agencies for appropriate specialist support. Leaders and managers make sure all staff are subject to relevant vetting prior to and during their employment.

Apprentices have a good understanding of how to report incidents should they feel unsafe. They have confidence that staff will deal swiftly and appropriately with any matters they raise. Apprentices demonstrate a good awareness of e-safety, for example when using web-based applications. They have a good or better appreciation of British values and apply them effectively in their work and personal lives. Apprentices have a suitable understanding of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. They can identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and know how to respond to the latter when it occurs.

Inspection findings

- Directors and managers review the quality and effectiveness of training frequently and carefully. Their thorough attention to performance indicators contributes very effectively to raising standards for all apprentices. Directors and managers understand fully the factors that affect the quality of training and the progress of apprentices. They analyse performance in detail, including the progress and progression of relevant groups of apprentices.
- Senior managers make highly effective use of the self-assessment and quality improvement processes to review performance on a weekly basis. This informs the regular and frequent updates you make to the self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan. You accept that the self-assessment report is too descriptive and too long to be a working document. The senior management team uses a very good range of performance monitoring and quality assurance measures in addition to the formal self-assessment report.

- Directors and managers monitor the performance of your current subcontractor very carefully. During 2016/17, you took effective actions to rationalise the range of courses offered by the subcontractor, concentrating on those areas where performance was good and achievement rates were high. As a result, you closed the few underperforming courses last year. Achievement levels on the remaining courses are very high. You provide very good leadership and management support for the subcontractor, which is a new provider.
- The large majority of apprentices receive effective information, advice and guidance that meet their needs successfully. Consequently, they generally have a good understanding of their short- and long-term career objectives. In addition, apprentices develop a realistic appreciation of how they can achieve their aspirations. For example, apprentices studying sports and activity leadership receive useful careers information, advice and guidance on a wide range of available occupations. These include career routes accessible by completing further study such as higher-education programmes.
- In a small minority of cases, apprentices do not receive sufficient guidance to develop their awareness of the full range of available career opportunities. This is particularly the case for apprentices near the end of their programme who need to develop their career management skills.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have acknowledged fully the need to improve apprentices' development of English and mathematical skills. Consequently, apprentices demonstrate good English and mathematical skills development over time. For example, apprentices on early years and care programmes discuss children's progress with parents and care professionals proficiently. Hairdressing apprentices can modify technical language skilfully when they explain the different effects of hair cutting and colouring techniques to clients. Apprentices demonstrate a suitable understanding of mathematics and its application to the workplace. For example, hairdressing apprentices correctly use angles when cutting, and apply volume estimation during colour mixing. Apprentices develop their reading and writing skills to at least the standard required by their programme.
- Apprentices' training encourages them to apply their English and mathematical skills successfully in different contexts. For example, during a competition sports-leadership apprentices taught school children to keep accurate score-tally charts.
- Apprentices' achievement of English and mathematics qualifications is high. They receive very effective individual support to prepare them for examinations. As a result, a large majority of apprentices achieve at their first sitting.
- Managers have only recently introduced an appropriate assessment tool for the identification of a very small number of apprentices' information and communication technology (ICT) skills development needs. Consequently, not all apprentices have undertaken individualised ICT training to improve their skills rapidly and to an adequate standard.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity. They are sensitive in their dealings with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds. For example, hairdressing apprentices are able to give examples of how they might adapt their services and language to meet the needs of different client

groups. Apprentices following sports-related programmes demonstrate a good awareness of how to change coaching plans to suit the needs of children who have disabilities. Childcare apprentices have a good understanding of how to apply their equality and diversity knowledge as it applies to the children in their care.

- Apprentices continue to receive good-quality training. The standard of training in hairdressing salons is particularly good. Individual coaching and frequent technique demonstrations by stylists help apprentices to become more confident, while challenging them to reflect on how they can improve their techniques. Employers and assessors make sure that apprentices are able to use competently the new methods they have learned, such as hair glossing, wet-look waves, crimping and texturizing.
- Apprentices benefit considerably from free additional training provided by their employers. For example, hairdressing apprentices participate in regular product-knowledge training delivered by manufacturers. They use this training to discuss confidently, and choose accurately, the best products for their clients. Childcare apprentices are involved in a good range of developmental opportunities that reinforce and extend their learning and professional effectiveness.
- Apprentices develop good independent study skills. For example, hairdressing apprentices make good use of the online learning facility to share photographs of the styles they create at work with other learners. This provides opportunities to gain useful feedback on their own performance from their peers. Apprentices following sports-related programmes make very effective use of the electronic portfolio to monitor their progress and access learning resources for independent study.
- Staff make effective use of apprentices' target achievement reviews to accelerate the pace of learning. Most apprentices have a good understanding of their targets. They know what is required to ensure successful completion. Field-service managers ensure established targets are monitored regularly and swift improvement actions are instigated when required.
- Employers are effectively involved in apprentices' assessment and progress reviews. However, a minority of hairdressing employers do not always know which topics their apprentices are studying during off-the-job training. This limits the effective linking of theory to practical tasks using salon work and on-the-job training.
- Apprentices receive very good support from their trainers during off-the-job training sessions and between these sessions. Apprentices value this support, which gives them confidence to develop new skills and attempt more advanced work. When apprentices experience difficulties, field-service managers, trainers and workplace assessors are quick to support them and to find solutions. For example, a hairdressing apprentice struggled with cutting techniques because she was left-handed. This apprentice received very good support from a specialist trainer who was able to demonstrate left-handed cutting and styling. As a result, the apprentice continued to make good progress and succeeded in her training.

Next steps for the provider

Directors, leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all apprentices receive sufficient and effective guidance to develop their career-management skills and awareness of the available career opportunities
- apprentices have an appropriate assessment of their ICT skills development needs so that, where relevant, the assessment outcomes can be used to inform individualised training programmes for improvement
- a full long-term evaluation of the concerns raised by apprentices is undertaken that effectively informs trend analysis and future decision-making
- all hairdressing employers are fully informed about the topics apprentices study during off-the-job training so that tasks carried out in the salons during on-the-job training can be better linked to theory that is taught off the job.

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

Yours sincerely

Nigel Bragg
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection you assisted us, as nominee. We met with senior leaders, field-service managers and workplace assessors. We observed training and reviewed apprentices' work. In addition, we collected apprentices' and employers' views by conducting interviews in their workplaces. The findings from these activities informed the judgements contained within this letter. Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of key documents, including those relating to achievement data, the planning of training, quality assurance, performance monitoring and safeguarding. In addition, they took account of your organisation's policies, procedures and development plans, and the previous inspection report.