

SIGTA Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 54385

Name of lead inspector: Mark Shackleton HMI

Inspection dates: 20–21 June 2018

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 26 Abinger Road
Portslade
BN41 1RZ



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers that are funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

SIGTA Limited is a group training association comprising a range of engineering companies in the south east, many in the coastal area. The association has until recently been providing mainly engineering apprenticeships to members as a subcontractor to 'Lookfantastic Training'. This subcontract will continue alongside the new direct provision of apprenticeships for levy-paying employers. Inspectors evaluated the quality of the new directly funded apprenticeships which, at the time of the inspection, comprised 26 apprentices, approximately one quarter of the overall provision.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have built on their extensive previous experience in providing framework apprenticeships to introduce 'levy-funded' provision under their new direct contract successfully. Leaders have plans to introduce standards-based apprenticeships, where appropriate, from September 2018. They continue to work closely with the colleges that provide much of the off-the-job training to ensure that they meet this target.

SIGTA managers provide a thorough recruitment process by working in close partnership with employers. Their engagement and communication with employers are good. Employers value the recruitment process highly and the proportion of apprentices who remain on their programmes is high. A key element of this high retention is the thorough initial assessment through which training officers accurately identify apprentices' starting points and place them on the right programme.

Relevant managers at each employer have an appropriate involvement in review meetings and are aware of the progress their apprentices are making. Where necessary, they act as a liaison between the SIGTA training officer, apprentice and team leader to ensure that apprentices have all the opportunities they need to make good progress.

Employers contribute to off-the-job training and give the apprentices the time they need to complete employer-related activities. These activities include online short courses in data protection, responsible writing, mutual respect and the responsible use of social media and confidentiality.

Training officers use their professional judgement during progress reviews to track apprentices' progress accurately. This progress tracking is effective in ensuring that all apprentices are on track to achieve on time. Training officers are experienced assessors. They are very proactive in going on to the shop floor frequently to assess apprentices' progress, carry out assessments and ensure that on-the-job training is effective. Training officers are well qualified and make effective use of their industry expertise and experience by drawing on real life examples to bring a discussion topic to life.

The chief executive uses a 'qualification-in-progress tracker' to monitor unit and full framework completion. He provides this information to the SIGTA board for their members to review at their frequent meetings. The board uses this data to give effective support and challenge to the SIGTA team.

Apprentices benefit from good training facilities and resources at SIGTA and at the colleges they attend for one day a week to complete the qualification element of their programme.

Managers and training officers do not monitor apprentices' progress during their college-based courses consistently well. As a result, a small minority of apprentices do not make their expected progress to achieve their qualification.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Apprentices undergo a thorough and competitive recruitment process which SIGTA staff carry out in close partnership with employers. Staff prepare apprentices well for interviews with prospective employers. This preparation includes a thorough initial assessment of their English, mathematics and technical skills and knowledge in order to establish their suitability for the programme. Training officers then place apprentices on the qualification element of their programmes at the right level. Apprentices benefit from a thorough induction with both the provider and their employer and are clear about the expectations of the programme.

Training officers visit apprentices frequently in their workplace and undertake detailed progress reviews in conjunction with apprentices' line managers. Training officers ask the right questions to check apprentices' understanding and to extend their knowledge. For example, one training officer questioned an apprentice to explore his understanding of health and safety in the workplace and whether he had learned anything as a result of a 'near miss' incident in the apprentice's workplace.

Training officers pay good attention to correcting English errors in apprentices' written work. Progress reviews include an examination of the actions set at the previous review meeting. Training officers review the work completed towards these actions in detail and give apprentices constructive feedback. However, the targets set by the training officers are task-orientated and do not clearly identify the specific knowledge, skills or behaviours that apprentices should develop. As a result, the tracking of the development of these individual skills, knowledge and behaviours is not as detailed as it should be. Target setting does not include specific mathematics and English extension tasks to develop apprentices' skills.

Training officers make effective connections between off-the-job learning and the apprentice's activity at work. Detailed and specific discussions take place during progress reviews to relate the learning the apprentice undertakes off-the-job to the day-to-day activities the apprentice does in the workplace. Training officers also find out whether the apprentice has been able to work independently or take on more responsibility in their job role since the previous review. For example, one apprentice can now enter all the relevant information into a computer to run emissions tests on a vehicle engine.

Apprentices undertake several additional courses to gain skills and knowledge relevant to their job. Examples include manual handling and hazardous substance courses. In addition, they undertake short courses provided by their employer which contribute to their portfolio of evidence. Apprentices rightly feel that all aspects of their programme tie together well. They are confident and articulate and can describe in detail the new skills, techniques and knowledge they have developed while on programme.

Line managers make valuable and effective contributions to progress reviews and give apprentices appropriate feedback. Examples include feedback from work colleagues and constructive points for development on topics such as reliability and time keeping, following instructions, attitude to work, organisation skills, working with others and the quality of their work. Training officers and line managers give good support and direction to apprentices on how they should gather evidence for their portfolio. Training officers have effective relationships with employers to ensure that employers are aware of what learning apprentices need to complete at work.

Training officers give constructive, accurate and helpful feedback to apprentices on their portfolio work. They do not always identify opportunities for apprentices to improve the standard or level of their work beyond the requirements of the task or criteria.

Managers carry out frequent observations of the progress reviews and assessments carried out by training officers. The majority of these observations focus effectively on learning and are used to give feedback which helps training officers improve. Managers have a reasonable insight into the quality of college-based provision through frequent visits and information from college managers' observations of

teaching sessions. They also use the frequent feedback they receive from apprentices to identify any concerns about the quality of the provision. They do not have first-hand knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Training officers support apprentices well to help them improve their English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills and to pass functional skills qualifications. They provide intensive programmes of study and examination preparation prior to apprentices taking the online test.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers focus strongly and effectively on ensuring that SIGTA staff and employers safeguard apprentices. This includes a strong focus on health and safety.

A well-qualified and experienced manager carries out appropriate checks of new employers to ensure that they give a high priority to health and safety throughout their workplaces. Training officers ensure that apprentices have a good knowledge of health and safety and how to apply this in the workplace. They achieve this through high-quality worksheets and a good focus on developing health and safety awareness and understanding, using real workplace examples, during progress reviews.

Apprentices feel safe at work and at college and know to whom they should report any concerns. All staff who work directly with apprentices receive the required employment checks and undertake training to take the appropriate action when any safeguarding concerns arise.

Training officers ensure that apprentices have at least a basic awareness of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They achieve this through a briefing during induction and through using worksheets. Training officers do not help apprentices develop and broaden their awareness and understanding of radicalisation and extremism well enough during progress reviews.

Managers assess risks that apprentices may face from those who might try to radicalise them and plan effectively to mitigate those risks. These plans meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty but do not focus sufficiently on the dangers apprentices might face in the different areas where they live and work.

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/government/organisations/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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018