

British Printing Industries Federation Ltd

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number: 50857

Name of lead inspector: Victor Reid HMI

Inspection date(s): 20 November 2018

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Head office address
Unit 2, Villiers Court
Meriden Business Park
Copse Drive
Coventry
CV5 9RN

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The British Printing Industries Federation Ltd (BPIF) was inspected in March 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The themes for this monitoring visit were selected from the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.

The BPIF is a non-profit organisation which provides business support and training to the UK print industry. It provides apprenticeship training to both member and non-member companies within the industry. The main administrative headquarters for the BPIF are based in Coventry. The BPIF has two further offices in Brighouse and London. It has 11 training coordinators covering the three regions. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 372 apprentices in learning, of which 229 were working towards a wide range of printing and business-related qualifications at level 2 and level 3. A further 73 apprentices are working towards newly introduced standards-based apprenticeships in management at level 3 and 4.

Themes

What progress are board members making in holding leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that apprentices routinely receive a consistently high-quality education and training experience?

Reasonable progress

Following the previous inspection in March 2018, BPIF board members recognised that the rate of improvement in apprenticeship success rates had been too slow. The chief executive officer and the BPIF board responded swiftly to the inspection recommendation and established a new training advisory board in May 2018 to strengthen governance and operational oversight of apprenticeship training. The apprenticeship training board now routinely reports into the main BPIF board.

Newly appointed governors on the training advisory board have a broad and suitable range of business and financial skills; they have specific expertise in further education, including apprenticeships, to support senior leaders effectively. Their knowledge, skills and industry networks enable them to take an active role with a focus on quality improvement.

The advisory board meets every six weeks and has set a clear agenda focusing on the routine monitoring and continuous improvement of all aspects of apprenticeship provision against a range of strategic and quality priorities. Scrutiny of board minutes

indicates that governors work in an open and transparent way with the senior team; they question leaders' actions in raising standards and expectations in a constructive but challenging way.

Governors have wasted little time in making their impact felt across the organisation; this includes the recent appointment of a new managing director for apprenticeships. Governors have also recognised a need to strengthen the quality of data reporting across the organisation and have approved the appointment of a new head of apprenticeship data. The newly revised structure ensures clear allocation of management roles and responsibilities.

Governors have also undertaken a detailed review. They have overseen the approval of key internal policies and procedures, with a strong focus on apprentices and the quality of their experiences. For example, key strategies have been approved relating to careers-related information, advice and guidance; a revised English and mathematics strategy; and the approval of a new quality assurance and observation process. In addition, the advisory board also commissioned an independent external review to aid their insight into the standard and consistency of training that apprentices receive.

As a result of recent actions and initiatives, governors now have a more informed level of understanding as to the key challenges and actions needed to raise the quality of apprenticeship training. For example, the advisory board has given unwavering commitment to support training managers and coordinators responsible for apprenticeship training to improve and extend their skills and expertise. This has led to a well-considered programme of personalised coaching and professional development support for training staff to improve their teaching and assessment practices. This includes enhancing their skills in delivering English and mathematics support to apprentices. However, while the large majority of training staff have detailed and informative personal development plans, this is not the case for a small minority of staff.

Governors on the advisory board have recently approved the implementation of a new quality and performance management framework due for implementation as from January 2019. The framework sets out clear and more thorough arrangements that challenge staff to improve outcomes and the quality of experience for apprentices. The framework sets out clear expectations of intent, including communicating BPIF values, strategic direction and their high expectations of staff at all levels, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness in driving improvement.

At the board's request, leaders have recently amended the quality improvement plan, as too many of the actions focused on process and developing strategies to support improvement. While the newly approved quality plan is more concise and informative, the absence of any quantifiable impact measures continues to hinder its effectiveness. For example, no target has been set for leaders' expectations on the proportion of teaching and learning that they expect to be of a good or better standard as a result of their investment in staff training and support.

How successful are strategies that leaders and managers have put in place to ensure that apprentices are recruited on to suitable programmes, make good progress and achieve in line with their potential?

Reasonable progress

Following inspection, leaders adopted a more rigorous and challenging approach to the delivery of apprenticeship training and were successful in securing a modest improvement in apprenticeship performance in 2017/18. Similarly, a greater proportion of apprentices completed their courses in the planned time. Outcomes for apprentices have now improved, but too many apprentices do not achieve in the allocated time, and their performance continues to remain too low.

Leaders' analysis of apprenticeship performance by a range of protected characteristics indicates that the level of achievement they have secured varies considerably across the provision. The performance gap between younger and older apprentices continues to remain too wide.

The very few female apprentices achieve well, and their performance has rapidly improved over time. In contrast, outcomes for the very large majority of male apprentices continue to remain low. Achievement for the very few apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities is high compared to that of their peers.

The achievement of apprentices also varies significantly across vocational areas. For example, the proportion of apprentices following programmes in print manufacturing technologies and who are successful in their studies is much higher than for apprentices studying administration, customer service and management.

In relation to the promotion and further development of apprentices' skills in English and mathematics, the large majority of apprentices pass their functional skills qualifications in mathematics at the first attempt. However, apprentices' outcomes in functional skills in English are lower in comparison. Leaders have recently established the capacity to secure improvement in the English provision. This includes a mandatory staff training programme designed to ensure that all trainers and assessors are competent in promoting the value of these essential skills, but it is too early to judge the impact of this.

Analysis of internal tracking and performance data indicates that an increasing proportion of current apprentices who are planned to leave in 2018/19 are now making good and more assured progress in their training activities compared with their starting points.

Most apprentices develop good, relevant skills that enhance their prospects for employment and contribute effectively to business performance; as a result they are highly valued by employers. Almost all apprentices who complete their apprenticeship gain permanent employment or take on additional responsibilities in their workplace, while a few secure early promotion.

Leaders have now strengthened the advice that prospective apprentices receive on entry to the course. All training coordinators have achieved a level 2 advice and guidance qualification to extend staff skills and confidence in providing careers-related information to newly recruited apprentices. In addition, the BPIF website has been refreshed to provide more detailed information regarding career pathways within the printing industry.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices routinely benefit from challenging learning that deepens and consolidates their knowledge and skills and that they receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made reasonable progress in ensuring that apprentices routinely benefit from learning activities which challenge them to extend their knowledge and skills. Training coordinators routinely provide high-quality individual support for apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers require in the workplace. They use well their extensive industry experience to deepen apprentices' subject knowledge. This is particularly strong in printing disciplines and in the newly introduced level 5 management apprenticeship.

Training coordinators plan assessment well and are thorough in their assessment decisions. Apprentices respond well by producing a good range of high-quality evidence for their portfolios. Trainers review apprentices' progress regularly, plan assessments carefully and provide effective feedback which helps apprentices to improve.

As a result of recent professional development support, an increasing proportion of trainers are extending their confidence in setting targets with apprentices that challenge them to work hard, extend their learning and make good progress. Trainers provide effective support to improve the progress of apprentices who are falling behind.

Training coordinators work well with employers to ensure that there is effective coordination between the individual targets for improvement that they set for apprentices and the opportunities to develop and reinforce these skills in the workplace. In most cases, leaders and managers work well with employers to integrate their company management-training schemes into the apprenticeship programme. Employers are positive about the new vocational skills, knowledge and behaviours that their employees develop during the apprenticeship, such as correctly setting up printing equipment, team-working and problem-solving.

Training staff make effective use of the results from the assessment of their starting points to support apprentices to develop their confidence in English and mathematics and to deepen their understanding of how these essential skills relate to the workplace. For example, they support apprentices to develop skills in correctly estimating printing lead times when using offset lithography printing technology,

compared to digital or flexography methods. However, trainers do not provide ongoing support for most-able apprentices who have already achieved their GCSEs to develop their skills in both English and mathematics.

On the recently introduced, standards-based apprenticeships in management, most apprentices have a good understanding of the skills, knowledge and behaviour that they have developed and of the areas where they need to improve their personal and vocational skills. They confidently use their new learning to solve problems in the workplace through real projects. However, most apprentices on standards-based awards do not yet possess a precise understanding of what they must do to achieve the highest grades. In addition, a few apprentices do not have a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the links between the formal management qualification they are working towards and the in-house training provided by their employers to support their apprenticeship.

On framework-based apprenticeships, trainers and apprentices focus too much on the completion of units at the expense of a more holistic understanding of the job role and the skills and behaviours that they need to improve. Too many apprentices rely on the trainers to manage their learning, summarise their progress and identify targets for improvement. As a result, a significant minority of apprentices working towards framework qualifications do not have a secure understanding of, and are not able to confidently articulate, what activities they need to accomplish to accelerate their individual performance. In contrast, the very small majority of standards-based apprentices who use e-portfolios have a clearer record of their overall progress and a better awareness of the gaps in their evidence. They make good use of technology to support assessments, upload evidence and have it assessed between training seminars.

While leaders and managers have developed the facility to offer impartial careers information and guidance, not all apprentices are aware of this, and many still use the human resources department of their employer as the key source of advice on what to do on completion of their apprenticeship.

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