

CSR Scientific Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1276261

Name of lead inspector: Victor Reid HMI

Inspection date(s): 28-29 November 2018

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 1b Mitre Court
38 Lichfield Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B74 2LZ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

CSR Scientific Training Limited is a private limited company established in 2007, and was formerly known as Crime Scene Resources Limited. The company provides apprenticeships in health and science-related technical areas, including healthcare science, forensic science, metrology and laboratory sciences. In March 2017, the company was successful in joining the register of apprenticeship training providers. At the time of the monitoring visit, the company had 152 levy-funded apprentices in learning spread across England. Of these, 130 were on recently introduced standards-based apprenticeships in health, science, engineering and manufacturing, ranging from foundation level through to higher apprenticeships. The remaining 22 apprentices are working towards advanced-level framework qualifications in science.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Company directors have established a clear vision for the company in seeking to meet the workforce development needs of employers and apprentices within the health and scientific-related vocational sectors. Leaders' business and strategic planning is thorough and fully supports the company's day-to-day operations. Key leadership and managerial responsibilities are clearly defined on meeting all the requirements for an apprenticeship. Managers and trainers work effectively as a team and have a clear understanding of their respective roles in ensuring that apprentices enjoy their learning and are supported well in acquiring new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders and managers meet frequently and use a broad range of pertinent information to monitor closely and evaluate routinely operational performance against a range of key indicators. However, too few of these indicators relate to the in-year evaluation of the quality and standards of apprenticeships. In addition, targets for improvement in the quality improvement plan are not detailed enough for managers to be clear about what actions they should take to achieve the desired outcomes or to be able to evaluate the impact of actions taken. For example, leaders

have not set any targets to extend routinely the English and mathematical skills of the more able apprentices who join the course with high-grade GCSEs in these key subjects.

Leaders demonstrate a concise and well-considered strategic vision for the development of the apprenticeship curriculum in meeting regional and national skills priorities. A beneficial range of effective partnerships, established over time, enables leaders to gather useful market intelligence, which informs the planning of the provision. Directors make skilful use of their close involvement with a range of key industry stakeholders, such as professional institutes and 'trailblazer' organisations, to ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum is both reflective of and well aligned to meeting employers' specific workforce needs. For example, leaders have successfully mapped a standards-based apprenticeship in applied science to support staff involved in undertaking criminal detection and investigation work for a regional police force.

Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good. The recently revised observation system is well planned. Observers identify accurately the key features of learning sessions and reviews. Trainers receive detailed and informative feedback following observation with a sharp focus on the impact of planned learning activities on apprentices and the progress that they make. However, observers do not routinely comment on or evaluate the extent to which apprentices are consistently developing their independent learning skills. Enhanced developmental observations for newly appointed trainers are particularly effective in ensuring that they benefit from close monitoring, regular feedback and targeted support. Appropriate links between the outcomes of observations and staff development reviews result in useful actions to improve trainers' performance.

A strong culture of continual professional development exists throughout the organisation. Managers provide staff with good vocational professional development and coaching support to enhance their performance. Trainers, all of whom are highly experienced and well qualified in subjects such as health, biology, biomedical science and immunology, benefit from well-planned and targeted professional development. This helps extend and further develop their skills and expertise for the benefit of apprentices. For example, the minority of trainers who do not possess a teaching qualification are being supported to hone and extend their facilitation and demonstration techniques when presenting to apprentices through the skills they gain by attending a teacher training course.

Leaders have ensured that effective systems are in place to review the quality and performance of the sole subcontractor. Detailed subcontracting agreements set out leaders' high expectations for their apprentices and demonstrate a strong commitment to enabling them to achieve. Very regular monitoring and support for the subcontractor ensure close and detailed oversight; as a result, most apprentices who receive training through the external partner make secure progress in their learning.

Governance arrangements are not yet fully established. Currently, the two founding directors have oversight of the provision and provide appropriate support and challenge to managers. Directors have made reasonable progress in reconstituting

the operational oversight of the board and have very recently appointed a governor to provide impartial scrutiny and challenge at directors' meetings. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these newly developed arrangements.

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

Initial advice and guidance are comprehensive. Leaders and managers ensure that prospective apprentices benefit from clear careers information and advice about the demands and expectations of working in a range of biotechnology, forensic and science-related industries. As a result, learners make an informed choice about the most appropriate apprenticeship to meet their needs and learn about the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to demonstrate to complete the course.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and benefit from highly qualified and well-experienced trainers. Trainers use their extensive expertise about their subjects very effectively to provide well-planned learning activities which motivate and extend apprentices' interest. As a result, apprentices quickly put theory into practice. They confidently develop their knowledge and acquire a good range of scientific and laboratory skills.

Apprentices have access to a good range of industry-standard resources to aid their learning and skills acquisition. Learning resources and equipment at the company's training centre in Birmingham meet apprentices' needs closely. Most apprentices skilfully use the plentiful online resources – including the online learning forum and videos of laboratory and scientific procedures – to extend their learning. For example, they extend their understanding of the importance of adhering to the correct testing procedure when evaluating a patient's tissue or fluid samples.

Strong links with employers ensure that apprentices receive very good support for their learning. Trainers and employers have appropriately high expectations of apprentices. On the few occasions where apprentices fall behind target, tutors respond quickly with support, enabling them to get back rapidly on track with their learning.

Training is well planned and coordinated through clear communication between trainers and workplace mentors. Apprentices benefit from frequent visits to the workplace from trainers, who skilfully use questioning and other forms of assessment to check what apprentices have learned. Apprentices quickly develop a secure understanding of the relevance of theory to practical settings; they often make thorough notes that they use well to consolidate and recap their learning. Feedback provided by trainers is very detailed and constructive, helping apprentices to develop a clear understanding of what they have done well and how they need to improve their future work.

Workplace mentors provide excellent coaching and support that enable apprentices to develop good levels of practical skills. Apprentices take pride in their learning and

work. For example, apprentices who work as laboratory technicians undertake a variety of complex testing procedures under the watchful eye of more experienced colleagues. These ensure that apprentices follow strict analytical testing protocols and accurately record their findings. The standard of apprentices' work is high and employers value them highly.

Apprentices quickly develop the behaviours that employers value as a result of the comprehensive feedback given to them by their trainers and workplace supervisors. The large majority of apprentices make secure progress compared to their starting points and are encouraged to achieve high grades in assessed examinations.

Apprentices benefit from a broad range of initial and diagnostic assessment activities. Trainers use these effectively to determine accurately apprentices' individual, vocational starting points, and suitability to cope with the demands of an apprenticeship. Trainers precisely identify apprentices' skills in English and mathematics and plan further learning for the small minority who join the course without suitable qualifications in these essential skills. However, trainers do not routinely set challenging targets for the large majority of the most able apprentices, to enable them to develop and extend their skills in literacy or numeracy beyond the minimum level required for their apprenticeship.

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

Safeguarding arrangements for apprentices are effective. Safeguarding assumes a high priority in leaders' thinking and is a standing agenda item on all senior leadership and board meetings. Staff adhere to and follow company safeguarding policies diligently. Two designated and suitably trained safeguarding officers maintain an appropriate level of vigilance over the health, safety and welfare of apprentices. In the very few instances where safeguarding disclosures have been made, designated officers have managed these sensitively and swiftly. They maintain detailed and concise confidential records setting out the actions taken to keep apprentices safe.

Leaders ensure that good attention is paid to the safe recruitment of staff. Managers maintain an accurate and up-to-date single central record of disclosure clearances undertaken. All staff have recently completed training in both safeguarding and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Trainers are alert and vigilant to any changes in apprentices' behaviours which may indicate that they are at heightened risk or in need of support. Apprentices feel confident that any concerns that they may have would be dealt with quickly by staff.

Leaders ensure that apprentices benefit from an informative and well-planned induction that focuses on inclusive attitudes and behaviours. This induction incorporates a strong emphasis on British values, personal safety – including when online – and awareness of the threats posed by those promoting extremist views.

Trainers ensure that apprentices have a secure understanding of the dangers of internet grooming, bullying and abuse. Staff place a high priority on protecting learners from these hazards. Trainers regularly reinforce at planned reviews apprentices' awareness of how to keep safe online.

Health and safety in the workplace are monitored and managed well. Staff undertake detailed and informative workplace risk assessments before apprentices start their training. Trainers ensure that health and safety are a high priority in their thinking by skilful use of their detailed working knowledge of scientific and laboratory procedures. This ensures that apprentices follow closely approved method statements when working with hazardous chemicals and substances. Apprentices benefit from the early prioritisation and delivery of health and safety units such as the safe handling of bio-hazardous materials. As a result, they develop a secure understanding how to keep themselves and others safe.

Very recently developed policies related to 'Prevent', e-safety and acceptable use of information technology set out leaders' determination to protect apprentices from the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation while online and using social media. However, the board has not yet formally approved these policies. In addition, leaders have not yet developed a 'Prevent' action plan setting out how they will exercise due regard to promoting and further developing apprentices' and staff's understanding of the principles related to the 'Prevent' duty.

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 looked after children, 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