

SPS Training Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. 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 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

SPS Training Solutions Limited (SPS) gained a contract to deliver adult education programmes in November 2017. It is based in Stevenage and has four training centres in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties. In addition, it provides training in several community venues. SPS provides training predominantly for learners to develop skills needed to gain employment. Learners study courses in functional skills, English and mathematics, information and communications technology (ICT) and employability skills, and vocationally specific courses. At the time of inspection, SPS had 90 learners on programmes. SPS does not use subcontractors.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a very good focus on providing courses to help learners gain the skills and qualifications they need to find employment. Leaders use their prior experience as a subcontractor effectively to provide good-quality training. As a result, achievement rates are high.

Leaders plan a very effective curriculum. They ensure that their provision is flexible to meet the varying needs of their learners and the regions in which they work. Leaders have ensured that they provide training in a range of appropriate locations.

Leaders work successfully with partners and potential employers to ensure that courses provide learners with the skills they need to compete effectively for jobs. For example, in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus staff, leaders provide courses to help learners gain the skills required by a major food retailer to meet their recruitment demands. As a result, the proportion of learners who go into employment after their courses is high.

Managers collect and analyse data about learners' destinations to ensure that their provision is effective. Leaders use a destination data collection service to ensure that

they check learners' destinations not only immediately after their course, but also over time. As a result, leaders have a very good knowledge of learners' destinations and use this to improve further their planning of future courses.

Leaders' arrangements for quality assurance are effective. Staff collect evidence for self-assessment from a range of sources, including achievement data, attendance and punctuality data, and feedback from learners and partners. As a result, leaders know accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.

Leaders and managers collect and analyse data about learners' progress during their courses. They analyse achievement data closely to identify groups of learners who underachieve. As a result, few differences exist in the achievement of learners.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders used their experience efficiently to provide good resources for teaching. Tutors provide effective individual coaching, which helps learners to overcome their anxiety about education and make good progress in their learning. As a result, learners develop skills for employment and gain qualifications that enable them to compete successfully in the job market.

Learners make good progress towards developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Tutors closely monitor this progress and help learners overcome any barriers to remaining in learning that they may have.

Tutors provide good feedback to learners about the standard of their work and what they need to do to improve. Tutors work with learners to help them to apply the principles and theory of what they have learned to practical learning activities. Tutors provide effective initial course information, advice and guidance. As a result, learners are on the correct courses to meet their skills and development needs.

Tutors and centre staff develop good relationships with learners and provide them with highly effective personal and emotional support. This enables learners to overcome their personal barriers to learning. As a result, they are well motivated, confident and optimistic about their career aspirations.

In too many cases, managers do not ensure that learners on employability skills and vocational programmes receive an effective assessment of their initial starting points in English and mathematics. For example, learners on ICT courses are not assessed for their English skills. As a result, learners do not always develop and improve their literacy skills.

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

Leaders have ensured that SPS meets its responsibilities to safeguard learners. They have established effective safe recruitment practices. Managers ensure that the designated safeguarding lead and staff are suitably trained. As a result, all staff know how to recognise and report safeguarding issues effectively.

Tutors provide effective training for learners. As a result, learners have a clear recall and understanding of safeguarding topics and the potential risks arising from radicalisation and extremism. Learners are safe and feel safe.

Staff keep detailed records about safeguarding issues, which they deal with swiftly and effectively. They monitor learners during their programmes to identify any safeguarding issues that may occur, particularly in terms of the potential vulnerability of individual learners.

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