

Summerhouse Equestrian and Training Centre LLP

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

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Name of lead inspector: Helen Flint, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Address: Bath Road
Hardwicke
Gloucester
GL2 2RG



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Summerhouse Equestrian and Training Centre LLP (SETC) was inspected in September 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.

SETC are based in Gloucestershire. They provide apprenticeships and adult learning, mostly via subcontractors based in London, the north-west and the north-east. At the time of the visit, there were 172 apprentices and just over 200 adults on courses. Most current apprentices are on equine or digital and information technology apprenticeships. Most adults are studying beauty therapy, nail technology, or healthcare. SETC also provide a small number of traineeships via a subcontract, although there were no trainees on courses at the time of the visit.

Themes

What progress has been made in ensuring that managers are challenged to improve their performance through greater scrutiny and suitable governance?

Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved governance arrangements and performance monitoring processes significantly. They scrutinise available information closely and regularly at senior management level. Consequently, leaders have a greater understanding of the performance of learners, managers and subcontractors. They use this knowledge to hold managers, staff and subcontractors to account well and to make appropriate strategic management decisions about the whole provision. For example, they have reduced the number of apprenticeship subjects they offer. This is to ensure a greater focus on sectors where they and their selected subcontractors have most expertise, or where there is local, regional or national need, such as for digital technology.

A newly appointed governance team includes experienced professionals in business and education. Their support and expertise enable them to challenge SETC leaders appropriately to make the necessary improvements, and the benefits are already visible. For example, SETC managers have improved their due diligence process for new subcontractors and their scrutiny of action plans to make improvements more swiftly. Due to governors' support, SETC accessed useful training for managers and staff who observe teaching, learning and assessment.

SETC managers have improved their communication with subcontractors considerably since the previous inspection. There is more frequent sharing of useful information, good practice and improved networking across all subcontractors. This has helped SETC develop mutual respect and trust with the subcontractors with whom they continue to work. Managers from the subcontracted provision report higher levels of support and effective challenge from SETC managers, which they find helpful to improve their own provision.

What progress have leaders and managers made in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the whole provision and developing actions plans to address the areas of improvement? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers now use their improved monitoring of performance effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses. They know most of the areas they need to improve and what measures are required. They have a sound self-assessment process which reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the whole provision effectively, including subcontractors.

Managers' action plans are comprehensive and detailed. These plans are monitored regularly at senior and governor level to ensure that actions are appropriate, and progress is being made in a timely manner. Most of the areas identified at the previous inspection as needing improvement are captured in managers' action plans and show clear progress. A few actions lack the impact required or are not yet complete.

Managers have yet to evaluate some areas of improvement to determine what actions are required. For example, they know the achievement of younger equine apprentices is lower than those who are older but not why. As a result, they have not been able to implement appropriate actions to address this.

What progress has been made in analysing data to identify learners or groups of learners who are performing less well and implementing actions to help them improve? **Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders have improved their analysis of the progress and achievement of learners and apprentices, including those with subcontractors. They know which learners are making the progress expected on their main courses, who is falling behind and who is at risk of not completing. As a result, they support staff and subcontractors to put interventions in place quickly to help these learners catch up or overcome any barriers to learning they may have.

Most assessors provide useful support and activities to enable apprentices to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. Assessors ensure that employers are kept informed about their apprentices' progress and work with them to provide the most appropriate off-the-job training and support. For example, level

3 digital marketing apprentices with Vista learn specific programming languages, which they use in their workplace to develop websites.

Managers now identify groups of learners or apprentices, such as by subject, gender or age, who are performing less well than others. They do not yet use their analysis well enough to determine what specific actions to take where they have concerns.

Managers do not monitor apprentices' achievement of English and mathematics functional skills qualifications closely enough. Consequently, managers do not know what improvements are needed to improve apprentices' achievement, or what interventions have worked well.

Managers now capture the progression and destinations of learners and apprentices effectively. They are using this to identify which courses have the most impact on learners' careers and now make better informed management decisions about future provision. For example, they plan to increase health-related courses for adult learners as these enhance career opportunities for those learners.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that tutors and assessors continually improve their teaching and assessment? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers work closely with governors to provide staff with a wider range of useful continuous professional development. This includes improving tutors' knowledge of new functional skills qualifications, awareness of autism, and staying current with advances in adult healthcare. Managers invited subcontractors to a recent training event on teaching, learning and assessment, which was very positively received. As a result, SETC and their subcontractors redesigned the processes they use to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to focus more effectively on the impact of learning.

Managers support staff well to achieve higher level teaching qualifications and assessor qualifications. Teaching staff have access to a range of useful teaching resources, including online resources, which learners use effectively. For example, tutors help adult learners on nail technology courses to explore different nail designs on social media platforms.

Most subcontractors use their quality improvement processes, including observations of teaching, learning and assessment, to identify themes as a basis for staff development. SETC managers are beginning to identify similar themes, such as improving the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in vocational lessons. However, they do not routinely use these to develop a strategic staff development plan for the whole provision. Leaders and governors have recognised this as an area for improvement.

What progress has been made to rapidly improve **Reasonable progress**

the progress and achievement of learners with subcontractors, including English, mathematics and digital skills?

Senior leaders now use a range of appropriate measures to determine whether subcontractors' learners and apprentices are making progress and achieving their qualifications. They reduced the number of their subcontractors since the previous inspection. This was partly because their improved performance management helped them identify more quickly those subcontractors not performing at the level required.

Tutors and assessors record and monitor learners' and apprentices' progress through their qualifications effectively. Most apprentices are on target to complete their courses on time. SETC managers' analysis identifies a small increase in the proportion of apprentices who have achieved their apprenticeships so far this year compared to previous years. The development of learners' skills and knowledge is less well recorded, and what learners need to do to improve these is not always clear.

Subcontractors demonstrate more clearly to SETC managers that their apprentices are making appropriate progress, including in English, mathematics and digital skills. Level 3 childcare apprentices with Winnovation receive good support to pass functional skills qualifications and learn how to manage children's challenging behaviour. Level 4 networking and level 3 digital marketing apprentices with Vista develop new skills and knowledge, for example in coding and using analytics, which they relate to their workplace well. Employers and their apprentices understand the requirements of apprenticeships and those on standards-based apprenticeships have a good understanding of their end-point assessments.

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