

# Inspection of Halifax Opportunities Trust

Inspection dates:

30 June–2 July 2021

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Halifax Opportunities Trust is a registered charity and social enterprise that was founded in 2001. It operates 11 children's centres and provides training throughout Kirklees and Calderdale. In 2017, it started to provide apprenticeships for schools and children's centres.

At the time of the inspection, there were 26 apprentices enrolled on standards-based programmes, with 17 apprentices on level 3 supporting teaching and learning in schools, seven on level 3 early years educator, and two on level 3 business administration. There were 15 apprentices on framework programmes, with 10 on level 2 and level 3 supporting teaching and learning, and five on levels 2 and 3 early years practitioner and level 2 children and young people's workforce.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices benefit from working in a respectful and inclusive environment during training and in the workplace. They speak positively about the support that they receive from their tutors, employers and peers. Apprentices have enjoyed and valued the training they that they have received since new tutors were appointed in January 2021.

Apprentices benefit from attending useful workshops on working with young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), gaining knowledge that is additional to that covered through their qualification. They use what they have learned in their workplaces when working with children who require additional support.

Tutors and employers encourage apprentices to be punctual and attend regularly. As a result, apprentices are always on time to support the children with whom they work. They are enthusiastic in carrying out their work and demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning and their jobs.

Apprentices do not receive high-quality teaching to improve their mathematics and English skills. Tutors who no longer work for the organisation left the teaching of these subjects until near the end of the programme. As a result, too many apprentices were not able to complete their apprenticeship by the planned end date as they had not achieved their mathematics and English qualifications. New tutors have provided intensive support to apprentices, who are now making much-improved progress in acquiring the knowledge that they need.

Apprentices do not receive sufficiently useful careers information to support them in making decisions about their next steps. Leaders have recently produced information on career pathways and have begun to share this with apprentices, but it is too soon to see the impact.

Too many apprentices do not demonstrate a clear understanding of fundamental British values or how these values may impact on their own and other people's lives. Tutors do not routinely carry out discussions on these topics and, consequently, apprentices are unable to articulate their understanding of the importance of these values in their everyday lives.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the apprenticeship provision, which is to upskill people in the local community and respond to the increased demand for teaching assistants and early years educators.

Leaders and managers have begun to work closely with employers to develop a curriculum that meets employers' needs. They have recently included additional training on working with children with SEND at the request of the local authority and they have changed the order in which they teach topics on the

apprenticeship to meet the needs of schools. For example, they now teach nutrition earlier in the programme to prepare apprentices for the increased emphasis that some schools place on this topic in their own curriculum.

Leaders and managers have recently improved the initial advice and guidance given to new apprentices. They check that apprentices are in the right job role, and are enrolled on the right level of programme, and ensure that they are aware of the apprenticeship expectations. Most apprentices know about the grades they can achieve and what they need to do to achieve them.

The curriculum that apprentices follow is not planned well enough and does not enable apprentices to build on their existing knowledge. Consequently, too many apprentices have made slow progress in developing the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need at work and to complete their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers have recently implemented measures to improve the provision. They have appointed well-qualified new tutors who are now supporting apprentices well to make more rapid progress.

The new tutors have carefully thought about how to plan and teach the curriculum. They begin with safeguarding and health and safety, as apprentices cannot work with children in schools until they have a sound understanding of these topics. Tutors have also begun to tailor the curriculum to support apprentices in their individual job roles. For example, apprentices who have a sports event taking place in their schools have recently learned about risk assessments and their importance for these events.

Leaders and managers have recently improved governance arrangements. They now provide more useful information to the board of trustees so that trustees can provide effective scrutiny. However, in a few cases, the information is still not precise enough for trustees to hold leaders to account. To improve their oversight of the quality of education, leaders and managers have identified external partners to help them to identify more accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, it is too early to identify the impact of these changes.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that tutors benefit from training that is specific to their individual needs. While tutors have attended useful training about delivering apprenticeship standards, end-point assessment, safeguarding, and the 'Prevent' duty, they have not attended training to improve their subject expertise or their teaching skills.

Tutors provide apprentices with helpful coaching. They record the discussions that they have with apprentices when giving feedback on tasks. This enables apprentices to revisit the feedback and use it to improve their work. Tutors also help apprentices to complete reflective journals so that apprentices can further consider what they have learned and how they will use their new knowledge in the workplace. As a result,

apprentices are more confident in supporting teachers and young children in a school environment.

Following recent training, staff have begun to use initial and formative assessment well to measure apprentices' starting points and identify what apprentices know and can do when they begin their programmes. They complete observations of apprentices in the workplace and ask questions to check apprentices' understanding. They consider gaps in the knowledge of apprentices who have made slow progress and use this information to plan future sessions. Most apprentices are now aware of the progress that they are making.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads have extensive experience and receive appropriate training to be effective in their role.

Leaders have thorough safeguarding policies and procedures. They have suitable arrangements in place for apprentices to raise concerns.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to stay safe in the workplace and in wider society. They are aware of how to report any concerns that they have regarding keeping themselves and other people safe and they are confident that these concerns will be dealt with. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to keep safe the children with whom they work.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that tutors teach mathematics and English earlier in the programme to enable apprentices to develop successfully the knowledge and skills that they need.
- Ensure that tutors provide helpful careers information for apprentices to use when they are considering their next steps.
- Ensure that all tutors plan and teach the curriculum in a logical order, building on the knowledge and skills that apprentices develop, so that apprentices make good progress.
- Ensure that leaders and managers provide training for tutors that is specific to tutors' individual needs and supports them to improve their subject expertise and their teaching skills.
- Ensure that leaders and managers sustain the improvements that they have made to the quality of education that apprentices receive.

**Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58139
<b>Address</b>	Hanson Lane Halifax West Yorkshire HX1 5PG
<b>Contact number</b>	01422 399400
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.regen.org.uk">www.regen.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Alison Haskins
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent Learning Provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/a

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and system lead as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Jacque Brown, lead inspector  
Andrew Scanlan

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Ofsted Inspector

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