

# Veolia Environmental Development Centre

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

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**Unique reference number:** 58179

**Name of lead inspector:** Ian Higgins, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Employer

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Veolia Environment Development Centre was inspected in December 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

At the time of the visit, 168 apprentices were on programme. Exactly 50 apprentices were enrolled on the level 3 team leader standard. A further 47 apprentices were enrolled on the level 2 waste resource operative standard. There were a further 41 apprentices enrolled on the level 5 departmental manager standard, with 17 on the level 3 business administrator standard. The remaining 13 apprentices were on the level 2 long goods vehicle standard.

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 impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

### Themes

**To what extent have senior leaders and specialists revisited the planning and the order in which they deliver learning for the standard that they offer, so that they support apprentices better in developing substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection senior leaders and specialists have revisited the content they teach, when they teach it, and how they teach it, so that apprentices build on what they know to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Specialists on the level 5 departmental manager standard introduce project work much earlier on in apprentices' programmes. As a result, apprentices get to apply their new learning more quickly. Apprentices are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours more swiftly as a result.

Specialists on the level 2 waste resource operative standard have revisited the content they teach. Apprentices develop significant new knowledge about all sectors within the waste management industry. Plans are in place for apprentices to complete site visits to support this learning. However, the impact of this change is not yet clear. The pandemic has prevented apprentices from being able to undertake

such visits. Current apprentices spend almost all of their time in the setting they are most familiar with. In some cases, apprentices have been in this setting for a significant period and already know this area of waste management very well.

Senior leaders and specialists have introduced a new skills scan. This is completed before each taught session to find out what apprentices already know. Specialists then use this information well to make sure they focus their teaching on what apprentices need to know most urgently. Following each teaching session, apprentices revisit the skills scan to reflect on any new learning. Where apprentices still have gaps in their knowledge, specialists offer more frequent one-to-one support sessions to apprentices to help them. Many apprentices benefit from this additional support.

Specialists teach more frequent but shorter sessions to apprentices. Apprentices assert how this approach is more flexible to fit around their job commitments. However, in a few cases, apprentices do not routinely get sufficient time away from their day-to-day job to focus on their learning. Where this is the case, apprentices do not develop new knowledge, skills, and behaviours as quickly as they could.

**What steps have leaders and managers taken to improve the planning and teaching of English and mathematics to support apprentices better in developing these skills? Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders have increased the focus and expectations for apprentices in developing their English and mathematics skills. In the vast majority of cases, specialists make sure that apprentices start to develop their English and mathematics skills from the beginning of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices complete assessments to find out what they can do, and what they need to know, in relation to their English and mathematics. Specialists use this information to plan and prioritise what apprentices need to learn first. As a result, apprentices start to address the gaps in their knowledge more swiftly.

Senior leaders provide training for specialists, so they are able to teach English and mathematics better. For example, specialists complete training on how best to use the online learning system for functional skills.

Specialists place a greater emphasis on the development of English and mathematics in their teaching sessions. For example, apprentices on the level 2 long goods vehicle standard have English and mathematics problems posed to them through an 'avatar figure'. As a result, apprentices have more regular opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills.

Specialists provide more frequent one-to-one support sessions for apprentices. For example, apprentices receive extra teaching in using fractions, decimals and percentages. Apprentices rightly share how useful they find these sessions. As a

result, apprentices develop new knowledge and skills. However, apprentices on the level 2 waste resource operative standard are not clear how they can access additional support.

Specialists review more frequently the progress which apprentices are making with their functional skills. Senior leaders have introduced a new, more frequent review process. The majority of specialists set clear targets during these review sessions for what apprentices need to learn. However, in a few cases the targets set are not precise and clear enough. Where this is the case, apprentices go too long in between learning sessions and do not develop new knowledge and skills as quickly as their peers.

**What actions have senior leaders taken to revise and improve the arrangements for governance, so that they can hold senior leaders to account better through improved rigour and challenge?**

**Significant progress**

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have taken significant steps to improve and strengthen governance.

Senior leaders have recruited a number of additional external board members. The new board members have a wide range of skills, experience, and expertise – including experience of apprenticeship delivery, teaching, and the use of management information systems. The addition of such board members adds to the additional expertise Veolia already have on their board in relation to safeguarding and health and safety practices.

The new board have set out a clear set of terms of reference. They have a clear aim and ambition to challenge senior leaders to improve the quality of apprenticeships that they offer.

Senior leaders and the newly formed board have started to meet on a formal basis. The board have access to a wider range of information, including the plan that is in place for how the quality of apprenticeships will be improved. Senior leaders have clear plans for how they intend to hold senior leaders to account, including through speaking directly to apprentices and looking at their work to find out what apprentices know and can now do.

The newly recruited board members are clear on the actions that senior leaders need to take to improve the quality of apprenticeships. For example, the board are well aware that the support that apprentices receive to improve their English and mathematics skills needs to improve further.

Senior leaders and the board have a clear meeting schedule. This includes formal quarterly meetings. From the first meeting that has taken place, there is a set of well-defined actions and timescales for when these actions will be completed.

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