

Inspection of Solveway Limited

Inspection dates: 27 to 30 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Solveway Limited is an apprenticeship provider based in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. It has 71 apprentices studying digital and accountancy standards-based qualifications. Approximately two thirds of all apprentices are studying accountancy at levels 2, 3 or 4.

At the time of the inspection, Solveway Limited had apprentices studying the level 2 accounts or finance assistant programme. Most apprentices are studying the level 3 qualification for business administrator, assistant accountant, infrastructure technician and information communications technician. At level 4, apprentices are studying professional accounting or taxation technician, software developer and network engineer. One apprentice has special educational needs. Solveway Limited has no subcontractors.

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

Apprentices take pride in their learning and achievements. They value the new skills and knowledge they are developing, which aligns closely with their work responsibilities. Digital apprentices in the hospitality sector develop technical skills which they use to develop functions that provide customers with access to bespoke menus.

Apprentices are motivated to learn and achieve their qualifications. They have high aspirations to succeed in their careers. Assistant accountants have long-term goals to achieve chartered accountancy qualifications. Apprentices develop professional behaviours and confidence at work. They make valuable contributions to their employer's business.

Apprentices feel well supported, listened to and valued by staff, as individuals and as professionals. They benefit from frequent contact with work coaches who set short-term targets and manageable goals. As a result, apprentices have a much lower level of anxiety and they work independently.

Apprentices enjoy their learning. They have shown resilience and commitment to their apprenticeship programme during the pandemic. They continue to attend well, at work and for their training. They settle into their job roles quickly and are swift to learn how to prioritise work and meet deadlines efficiently.

Apprentices feel safe and they feel comfortable to report any concerns they may have about their safety and well-being. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know who to contact if they have any concerns.

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

Leaders have a clear intent to provide training for the digital industries and accountancy sectors. They have developed good working relationships with their employers. Most employers are supportive of their apprentices' development.

Since the previous monitoring visit, leaders have successfully consulted employers when reviewing and planning a more flexible curriculum. They have introduced sector-specific external qualifications in response to employers' requests. These qualifications prepare apprentices effectively for achievement of their final assessments. Leaders make good use of employers' suitability surveys to ensure that apprentices' learning is matched appropriately to their job roles. Consequently, apprentices can fully apply their learning in the workplace. They are developing the skills and knowledge that employers need and value.

Leaders recruited work coaches with the vocational and academic qualifications, and experience, to be able to review and train apprentices effectively. Work coaches make valuable links between apprentices' learning and their job role. They make learning more meaningful and, as a result, apprentices understand key concepts. Work coaches liaise effectively with the technical tutors who are responsible for the curriculum teaching. They work together effectively to identify and action any gaps or misunderstandings in the apprentices' learning. Work coaches break down tasks into short-term goals to help apprentices to manage their workload effectively. As a result, most apprentices make good progress and pass their final assessment.

Staff use frequent assessments to check apprentices' understanding effectively. They check what apprentices can recall at the start of each lesson. They use mock exams to check learning, identify any gaps in learning and signpost apprentices to additional training resources. As a result, apprentices know the progress they are making, and they are well prepared for their final assessments.

Too few accountancy apprentices receive developmental feedback to help them to improve the quality of their work. The feedback they receive is often confirmatory. Tutors do not help apprentices to learn from their English errors and improve the quality of their work. As a result, too few accountancy apprentices produce written work that meets expectations. However, digital apprentices receive effective feedback and challenge from coaches to improve vocational content and English skills.

Apprentices quickly develop the professional standards and behaviours expected of them. For example, they develop teamwork, communication, time management and prioritisation skills. They quickly become trusted members of the team. They speak confidently with clients and colleagues because of their increased subject knowledge and skills. They attribute this to their apprenticeship training and to the experience they gain in the workplace. They understand professional ethics, such as client confidentiality. They know to report any concerns they may have when working with colleagues and clients, such as fraudulent activity and money laundering.

Managers provide new apprenticeship applicants with valuable careers education and guidance to support their job search. They help apprentices to improve the quality of their curriculum vitae. They hold mock interviews and provide feedback to develop their interview skills, communication and presentation skills. As a result, apprentices are well matched to their job roles. Increasingly, more of them now stay on their programme and achieve their qualifications.

Too few apprentices receive the impartial careers guidance they need to help them to pursue their long-term, aspirational career goals. For example, accountancy apprentices aspire to work with retail sports companies or complete tax returns for sports athletes. Others want to gain their accountancy professional qualifications and work in the civil service, but they do not know how they will make this progress in their careers. Apprentices do have a good understanding of next steps at the end of their apprenticeship. They are aware of career opportunities in the sector they are working in.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They have developed highly effective quality monitoring processes. They act swiftly to improve areas of underperformance. They monitor apprentices' progress on a weekly basis and agree interventions. Managers listen to and act on feedback from apprentices and employers to ensure customer satisfaction. They use data and lesson observation findings usefully to set clear expectations and developmental targets for staff. They hold frequent team meetings to provide training for staff and share best practice to support further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are managed and well resourced. They have ensured that apprentices have multiple opportunities for reporting concerns.

Apprentices have a good understanding of health and safety and how this is relevant in their workplaces. They can deal effectively with any issues at work, such as how to dispose of old technology, and they understand the associated regulations.

Most apprentices understand the potential risks linked to their job role, such as money laundering. Digital apprentices understand how social media is used to develop a group mentality and to what extent social media could or should be regulated. However, apprentices have little awareness of local risks and how these apply to them personally.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to ensure that staff improve the quality and timeliness of feedback for apprentices on accounting apprenticeships.
- Leaders need to ensure that apprentices receive impartial careers guidance throughout their training, so that they understand how to achieve their career aspirations.
- Leaders need to ensure that apprentices understand the local safeguarding risks and how these apply to them personally.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278582
Address	Barnwell School Barnwell Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 9SW
Contact number	01438 340121
Website	https://solveway.co.uk/contact/
Principal/CEO	Keith Swain
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations and quality director, 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.

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