

# Inspection of Springboard

Inspection dates:

5 to 8 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## **Information about this provider**

Springboard is a registered charity and independent learning provider based in Sunderland. It works across the north east of England, delivering education programmes for young people and apprenticeships through its own delivery centres and through subcontractors. At the time of the inspection, there were 119 learners on education programmes for young people, of whom 57 were on programmes delivered by subcontractors. There were 61 apprentices on a range of programmes, with over a half studying business administration and customer service. The remaining apprentices were on programmes at either level 2 or 3 in hairdressing, beauty therapy, warehousing and logistics, health and social care, childcare, teaching assistants and property maintenance. There were 29 learners for whom the provider was in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Leaders and managers have created a culture of care and respect. Staff set high expectations and promote these through positive reinforcement when dealing with issues, such as poor attendance and behaviour. Learners and apprentices have positive attitudes to learning. They demonstrate a high level of respect for staff, work collaboratively with their peers, and listen and respond appropriately during discussions. Learners and apprentices, many of whom face a range of significant challenges, including mental health concerns, benefit from effective support from their tutors and a well-being and safeguarding coordinator.

In the specialist provision for learners with high needs, relationships between staff and learners are very positive. Support staff manage behaviour and conduct well through the use of supportive interventions and management strategies. As a result, learners with complex needs engage fully in their learning, overcome a range of barriers and achieve their goals. However, too many learners with high needs, who are enrolled on vocational courses, do not benefit from sufficiently effective support and, therefore, do not make the progress that they could. Too few learners with high needs progress on to other education programmes, employment or traineeships.

Most learners and apprentices take pride in their work, which improves over time. Learners and apprentices develop their technical language and become fluent in using technical terms correctly and in the right context. For example, on level 2 hairdressing programmes, both learners and apprentices understand the meanings of and can hold discussions about terms, such as effleurage and petrissage.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in learning. Tutors are vigilant in spotting signs of concern and make themselves readily available to discuss any issues which may be barriers to learning. Learners and apprentices understand well the precautions to take to stay safe online, including when using social media. For example, they can explain the potential consequences of disclosing personal information online, including providing bank details, and have a secure understanding of the negative impact of cyber-bullying on individuals.

Too many learners do not make the progress of which they are capable and do not achieve their qualifications, including in English and mathematics. Apprentices are not prepared well enough for their end-point assessment and too many do not know what they need to do to achieve a high grade.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders and trustees have recruited a new management team and implemented a range of information systems to monitor the quality of teaching and assessment. However, these improvements have been too slow, and managers do not use the information generated well enough to enable them to improve weaker aspects of the provision. When actions for improvement are

identified, they are not taken quickly or rigorously enough. Staff do not have a good enough understanding of how to use the information generated to improve the support that they give to learners.

Leaders and managers provide education and training opportunities for young people who find it difficult to engage in learning and for whom alternative provision is not easily accessible. The curriculum is designed to enable learners and apprentices to progress to further education, apprenticeships and into secure job roles once they have completed their programmes. However, a few learners are enrolled onto programmes that do not fulfil their career aspirations, including those who either already hold higher-level qualifications or for whom the provider does not offer a programme that meets their interests.

Leaders and managers do not do enough to assure themselves of the quality of the teaching or the progress that learners make at the subcontractors with whom they work. They have developed a range of quality processes to monitor the subcontractors' work, but do not make sufficient use of the information that they collect to ensure that learners at subcontractors experience high-quality education and make good progress.

Too many tutors do not make good enough use of the information collected about learners and apprentices at the beginning of their programmes. As a result, they often do not plan and sequence the curriculum effectively to enable individual learners and apprentices to build their knowledge and skills well enough over time. This means that, too often, learners and apprentices do not have a sufficient grasp of the basic knowledge and skills that they need before moving on to more complex topics.

Tutors are well qualified in their subject areas in which they teach. They have appropriate industry experience and use their knowledge and skills to inform the content of the curriculum. Most tutors hold relevant teaching qualifications and a few tutors have studied for advanced teaching and assessing qualifications. However, staff are not supported well enough to refresh their current understanding of teaching practices. Consequently, they do not use teaching and learning strategies well enough to ensure that learners and apprentices understand, consolidate and firmly acquire substantial new knowledge and skills.

Too often, tutors do not provide learners and apprentices with useful information on how to improve their work. Feedback on marked work is too often superficial and does not explain to learners and apprentices what the accurate features of their work are or what they need to do to improve their work. When errors are made, learners and apprentices do not rectify their mistakes. This impacts negatively on their progress and their potential to achieve higher grades.

Tutors have high aspirations for their learners and apprentices to overcome any personal challenges and to achieve on their programmes. Learners and apprentices are expected to attend and to work hard to improve their life and career opportunities. However, attendance is too low on a few education programmes for

young people.

Tutors and assessors support the development of learners' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills well. As a result, most learners and apprentices use English and mathematics effectively in their job roles. For example, property management apprentices can work out fee percentages and floorplans to scale and write formal letters to customers. However, not enough learners achieve their English and mathematics qualifications at the first attempt.

Most learners on education programmes for young people benefit from support from their tutors to prepare them for their next steps, including progression to higher levels of study, apprenticeships and employment. However, learners and apprentices do not benefit from structured careers guidance to provide them with a thorough understanding of the full range of career opportunities available.

The training that apprentices receive is not consistently effective in preparing them well for their end-point assessment. Too often, individual training sessions lack sufficient focus on enabling apprentices to reflect on their learning and identify what they need to do next.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all employers clearly understand their responsibilities in relation to the apprenticeship agreement, including ensuring that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training. Too many employers are not involved in the review process and, consequently, do not understand the progress that their apprentices are making or how to support apprentices to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours required at work.

Tutors enable learners and apprentices to gain additional qualifications that help them to develop and increase their understanding and skills. For example, on the level 3 childcare apprenticeship, apprentices gain additional qualifications in autism spectrum disorder awareness, first aid and Makaton.

Most learners on education programmes for young people benefit from well-planned work experience. Learners develop key employability skills and knowledge on their placements, which help to prepare them for future employment and to gain insights into the world of work. In hairdressing, more than half of learners have been offered job opportunities as a result of their work experience. However, a few learners studying with subcontractors do not benefit from work experience.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have in place appropriate policies and procedures that they use to keep learners and apprentices safe. They review their processes frequently and use information from external sources to update the documents. For example, they make good use of information provided by the local 'Prevent' coordinator.

Leaders, managers and staff follow appropriate safeguarding procedures closely to ensure that safeguarding concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Where additional support is required, staff make referrals promptly and follow up with learners to ensure they are safe.

Managers ensure that safeguarding systems are used well to identify poor attendance, and that tutors follow up attendance concerns. This means that managers and tutors ensure that learners and apprentices are not at risk when unplanned absences occur.

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and trustees intensify the speed at which they improve the weaker aspects of the provision.
- Ensure that the information collected about learners' and apprentices' starting points is used effectively to plan and provide teaching that enables learners and apprentices to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure that tutors are provided with the support and guidance that they need to improve their teaching practice and the quality of the feedback that they give to learners and apprentices.
- Improve the quality of apprenticeship training, so that apprentices are better prepared for their end-point assessment.
- Ensure that all employers are fully committed to supporting their apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful.
- Provide effective tuition and support to enable a higher proportion of learners and apprentices to achieve their functional skills qualifications at the first attempt.
- Ensure that all learners with high needs on vocational programmes receive the support they need to prepare them for their next steps, so that a much higher proportion progress successfully.
- Provide learners and apprentices with helpful careers advice and guidance.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50199
<b>Address</b>	Unit 1-2 East Way Rivergreen Industrial Estate Sunderland SR4 6AD
<b>Contact number</b>	0191 515 5300
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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Steve Reay
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–8 March 2019
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Foundation of Light Sporting Chances North East CIC Sunderland Training and Education Farm Limited Oxclose and District Young People Project Limited Boldon School

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

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