

Inspection of Secom Plc

Inspection dates:

12 to 14 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Secom Plc is an employer-provider of apprenticeships. The company is based in Kenley, Croydon and has a specialised training centre in Birmingham, West Midlands. It began training apprentices on a direct contract in May 2017 and offers a standards-based apprenticeship in fire, emergency and security systems at level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were 13 adult apprentices. Apprentices work throughout England, and all attend off-the-job, block-release training remotely. The provider does not subcontract any of its provision.

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

Apprentices value and benefit from the training they receive from trainers, who are suitably experienced. Trainers have high expectations of their apprentices and use their industry knowledge and experience to develop apprentices' vocational understanding and awareness of the sector demands.

Nearly all apprentices develop skills quickly. They gain confidence in working towards high industrial standards; they use sophisticated tools and equipment safely. Apprentices benefit from effective support from trainers that extends their skills and confidence in both English and mathematics.

Most apprentices receive good support from field-based service engineers, who act as their mentors within the workplace.

Apprentices do not always receive sufficiently synchronised on- and off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices are not always able to practise or consolidate their vocational skills frequently enough.

Too few apprentices have a precise enough understanding of their progress from their identified starting points.

Not all apprentices understand the different career opportunities available to them outside their current employer.

Too many apprentices do not achieve their apprenticeships, and the proportion who achieve a high grade in their end-point assessment (EPA) is low.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for the apprenticeship they offer. The curriculum is well aligned to the needs of the business and workforce requirements of the security industry. Leaders have invested in suitable facilities and technical resources to support the apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Leaders and managers have not put into place effective self-assessment processes. Leaders do not identify well enough the areas of development within the provider and are not critical enough of their own performance.

Leaders and managers have developed a coherent structure for the governing board. The governing board contains experienced sector experts who appropriately monitor the provider's performance. Governors allow leaders the autonomy to make key and critical decisions. However, the governors' understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the provider do not align with those of the

management. Leaders do not ensure that the information governors receive fully details apprentices' progress from their identified starting points.

Trainers ensure that apprentices benefit from frequently scheduled training that is structured in a logical sequence. This allows them to gain new knowledge, insight and skills related to the installation and service of a wide range of security-related products. For example, apprentices learn about the operating principles of electro-magnetism and how this can be utilised to lock and unlock electronically controlled doors remotely.

Trainers use their technical expertise well to provide apprentices with relevant learning that ensures that they develop good technical knowledge and industry insight. For example, apprentices quickly learn how to read correctly installation and technical wiring diagrams related to security systems; as a result, they can confidently install, maintain or service them. In addition, trainers skilfully give apprentices clear and constructive feedback, which helps them to improve the quality and technical content of their work.

Trainers support apprentices to consolidate and improve their confidence in English and mathematics. Trainers accurately identify apprentices' literacy and numeracy skills at the start of the programme. Apprentices develop these skills well over time. For example, apprentices confidently use technical language when communicating with customers and other field-based service engineers.

Trainers and workplace mentors support apprentices to develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Apprentices take pride in their new-found abilities.

Leaders and trainers do not sufficiently synchronise the coordination of on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices are not always able to practise and consolidate their vocational skills frequently enough in the workplace. For example, a significant minority of apprentices have limited opportunity to practise their on-the-job skills in the installation and servicing of control-access security systems, which is a core occupational requirement.

Trainer and workplace mentors do not always ensure that workplace reviews are effective. While progress reviews for apprentices are frequent, employer and trainer reviews take place separately. As a result, the records and actions are not always fully reflective of individual apprentices' circumstances or their progress. For example, too many apprentices are not aware of their EPA target grade.

Trainers do not track or monitor apprentices' progress consistently well. Trainers do not make effective use of identified starting points to plan their learning with sufficient thought. Trainers do not routinely revisit or evaluate apprentices' progress from starting points or over time. For example, targets set for apprentices focus too narrowly on units or tasks to complete, not on the further development of the identified skills needed.

Trainers do not always plan or teach learning activities well. Trainers do not always appropriately assess whether apprentices have developed mastery or fully understood the topics being taught. Consequently, apprentices cannot recall their prior learning with confidence or fluency.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices routinely receive unbiased careers advice to enable them to make informed decisions about their next steps. Managers and trainers do provide guidance about progression for apprentices. However, it is too narrowly focused on immediate opportunities within the provider and not the wider careers opportunities the apprenticeship affords them.

Trainers do not ensure that apprentices have a secure understanding of the principles that underlie British values. While these values are covered at the outset of the apprenticeship, they are not reinforced well enough. Subsequently, too few apprentices can describe how these values are relevant to them personally or how they affect their professional lives.

Leaders, managers and trainers have not taken effective steps to ensure apprentices remain on their programme. Too many apprentices do not successfully achieve their apprenticeships. The proportion of apprentices who achieve the grade they are capable of in their EPA is too low.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safety of their apprentices. They ensure that staff and apprentices have a clear and appropriate understanding of policies and safeguarding procedures. Apprentices know how to implement them and, as a result, they feel safe.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputies are suitably qualified and trained. They ensure that they are kept well-informed of the latest safeguarding information from local agencies, and this is successfully shared with the apprentices. Consequently, apprentices have a sound understanding of risks associated with their locality.

Leaders have in place a strict safer recruitment policy. Leaders ensure that appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken, including mandatory identity and police checks. Leaders ensure that all staff undertake training in safeguarding, including training on extremism, online safety and counteracting terrorism. This training is frequently refreshed.

Leaders and trainers ensure that apprentices are safe within the workplace. Apprentices can contextualise 'safety' to their chosen field well. They undertake frequent training in health and safety, including training on working at heights, the dangers of asbestos, and stress management. As a result, apprentices adopt safer working practices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should put into place clear strategies to ensure apprentices complete their programme and achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers should implement more effective self-assessment processes which correctly identify key areas of development for the organisation.
- Leaders must ensure that governors receive sufficiently helpful information about apprentices' progress so that they are able to hold leaders fully to account. They should use this information to identify accurately where provision needs to improve and put measurable actions in place to help guide improvement.
- Leaders and trainers need to synchronise the coordination of on- and off-the-job training so that all apprentices are able to practise and consolidate their vocational skills in the workplace.
- Leaders must ensure that trainers consider apprentices' starting points when planning learning to ensure they can consolidate prior understanding and apply their learning fluently.
- Trainers must further develop their teaching approaches to ensure apprentices know and remember more because of the training they receive.
- Trainers must ensure that all apprentices receive unbiased careers advice and guidance so that they are fully informed about their next steps.

Provider details

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CEO	Minoru Takezawa
Provider type	Employer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of compliance and training, 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.

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