

# Halifax Opportunities Trust

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

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Jonny Wright, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre Hanson Lane Halifax HX1 5PG

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Halifax Opportunities Trust was inspected in July 2021. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

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.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that 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.**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have reviewed and adapted the curriculum to ensure that apprentices develop their learning incrementally over time. Tutors plan the curriculum effectively so apprentices can gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours which are relevant to their job role. Apprentices carry out their roles with more confidence and a deeper understanding, and often take on extra responsibility.

Tutors have successfully tailored the curriculum for each apprentice, taking account of apprentices' prior knowledge and experience, their starting point in the academic year, and the settings at which apprentices are employed. Apprentices develop new knowledge and skills that are specific to their workplace. Those who work with children from areas of deprivation use their learning in childhood development to understand better the causes of a child's behaviour.

Leaders and managers have established consistent and well-planned assessment practices which enable apprentices to demonstrate their understanding and enable tutors to plan for future learning. Tutors successfully use a range of assessment methods to check apprentices' knowledge and ensure that apprentices are making appropriate progress. They track progress well, and they accurately identify apprentices who fall behind and support them to get back on track. Tutors prepare apprentices well for their end-point assessment (EPA), including carrying out practice professional discussions and providing helpful feedback.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices successfully develop their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers provide appropriate support for apprentices to help them develop their English and mathematics skills in preparation for taking examinations. Tutors provide effective support at monthly review meetings, and apprentices also benefit from additional individualised sessions from an external specialist tutor each week. Tutors use mock tests and other methods to assess when apprentices are ready to sit their examinations. Apprentices preparing for examinations in English and mathematics are making steady progress.

Leaders and managers have effectively revised and developed their English and mathematics provision for new apprentices. They have invested in an online learning platform to support apprentices in the development of their English and mathematics skills. Tutors provide English and mathematics support for apprentices early in their programmes, with the aim of apprentices successfully passing examinations within the first six months of their programme.

Tutors encourage most apprentices who already have English and mathematics qualifications to continue to develop their skills. This has been particularly successful in improving the quality of apprentices' written communication. However, tutors have not consistently prioritised the continuing development of English and mathematics for all apprentices.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices receive helpful careers information to use when they are considering their next steps?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have supported tutors to improve their knowledge and skills in providing careers guidance. Training has included webinars from the local training provider network, standardisation of practice and individual support from managers.

Leaders and managers have developed useful resources to support apprentices in choosing which apprenticeship to undertake and to inform them of the career routes that they can take. Information includes the requirements of the apprenticeship, the topics that apprentices will learn, how apprentices will be assessed, and the requirements for EPA. Careers information focuses on the jobs that apprentices can consider in the early years and primary school sectors and how apprentices can progress in their careers.

Apprentices benefit from helpful careers advice and guidance that prepare them well for their next steps. They explained how the guidance that they received helped

them in their successful transition from level 2 early years apprenticeship frameworks to level 3 early years educator standards-based apprenticeships. Apprentices have a good understanding of the level 3 apprenticeship, including the EPA requirements.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in providing training for tutors that is specific to tutors' individual needs and supports them to improve their subject expertise and their teaching skills?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate training that has helped tutors to improve their teaching and assessing skills. Training undertaken so far includes assessing apprentices effectively, meeting special educational needs and preparing apprentices for EPA. Further planned training includes how to support apprentices to improve their English and mathematics skills.

Leaders and managers have successfully engaged with an external quality assurance consultant to identify and address areas for improvement. Weaknesses identified included assessment practice and undertaking professional discussions with apprentices. Tutors have benefited from helpful training and sharing of best practice to address these weaknesses.

Tutors take part in useful professional development to enhance their subject knowledge. They take part in meetings and conferences to keep their industry knowledge up to date and to enhance their understanding of current trends and issues in the education sector. Tutors share this information with apprentices to improve their knowledge and enhance their experience on their programme.

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