

Inspection of Skills for Security Limited

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Skills for Security is an independent learning provider based in Warrington with training centres in Watford, Glasgow, Birmingham and Oxford. At the time of the inspection, there were 450 learners, of which 408 were apprentices and 42 were on traineeships. Of the 408 apprentices, 396 were on the level 3 fire, emergency, and security systems technician, five on the level 3 security first line manager, four on the level 3 team leader or supervisor, two were on the level 2 customer service practitioner, and one was on the level 3 business administrator apprenticeship.

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

Trainees and apprentices enjoy their learning. Tutors create a respectful culture where apprentices are invited to contribute to discussions and share their experiences of their own workplace settings.

Most apprentices have a positive attitude to their learning. They are motivated to learn and engage with peers in group discussions and practical activities effectively. Apprentices' attendance at taught sessions is high.

Tutors of traineeships do not enforce leaders' high expectations of behaviours in the classroom or challenge trainees well enough. Attendance is too low, punctuality is poor, and trainees do not always dress in accordance with their classroom agreement. As a result, too many trainees do not develop work-ready behaviours during their traineeship.

Employers speak highly of the training their apprentices receive and the regular communication they have with the provider on the progress their apprentices make. They contribute actively to apprentices' reviews and talk positively about the contribution that apprentices make in the workplace.

Apprentices and trainees feel safe. They know how to report any issues and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. However, in a few instances, apprentices are not fully aware of the risks of working and studying online.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for apprentices. They have developed close relationships with employers and industry partners and use these effectively to develop a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the sector. They focus the large majority of their training on the level 3 fire, emergency, and security systems technician apprenticeship in response to a nationally identified need for skilled workers in the installation and maintenance of these systems.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have expanded the providers' reach across a network of regionally based training centres. These centres provide apprentices and trainees with access to more conveniently located specialist training facilities across England. Working with employer partners, leaders have equipped the training centres with high-quality facilities that enable apprentices to practise and hone their skills using industry-standard equipment.

Skills coaches and tutors are suitably qualified and experienced, and a high proportion hold recognised teaching qualifications. Leaders provide staff with access to a range of continuing professional development activities. As a result, apprentices and trainees benefit from current industry and vocational insight in their learning.

Leaders and tutors have developed a curriculum for apprentices that is well ordered and has been carefully planned to ensure that they are supported to systematically develop knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. For example, in year one the curriculum focuses on safe electrical isolation, health and safety procedures, and legislative compliance, before progressing in year two to more complex tasks, such as information and communication technologies (ICT) based installation techniques. However, the curriculum that trainees follow is not as well planned, and in a few cases the curriculum is not ambitious enough for all trainees, to prepare them for future employment.

Tutors support apprentices to develop knowledge and skills that are significantly beyond the apprenticeship standard they follow. For example, they have included the installation and testing of double-door contacts in response to a recognised need for this skill when working in commercial premises. As a result, apprentices' knowledge of advanced topics and skills is well developed, allowing them to make a significant impact in the workplace.

In a few cases tutors do not always consider the starting points of apprentices or trainees well enough when planning their learning. For example, a small number of apprentices with prior electrical installation qualifications or experience follow the same curriculum as those new to the industry. Consequently, these apprentices repeat learning that they do not need, and, as a result, do not make rapid progress in the development of new skills.

Tutors ensure that all apprentices, particularly those who require English or mathematics functional skills qualifications as part of their apprenticeship, receive specialist teaching and support in these areas alongside their main programme. As a result, the large majority of these apprentices show significant improvement in their work. However, tutors do not routinely develop the English and mathematics skills of trainees who do not study functional skills. Consequently, these trainees do not improve their skills further.

Trainees do not always benefit from sufficiently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment to help them develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Teaching sessions are often heavily reliant on workbooks and task sheets, and assessment is not well planned to enable trainees to demonstrate to tutors what they know and can do. As a result, tutors are unable to plan learning to ensure trainees can achieve their best.

Apprenticeship tutors present information clearly and promote discussion. For example, in the health and safety unit apprentices are taught the principles of risk assessment and subsequently complete a risk assessment, discussing their findings with their peers. Apprentices develop detailed knowledge of the concepts they are taught and understand well how to apply these in the workplace.

Tutors do not always ensure that the feedback on written work of apprentices is sufficiently developmental to help them to improve their work. In too many cases, feedback does not highlight areas where they could further deepen their knowledge.

However, the feedback that apprentices receive on their practical work is much more focused on the improvements they need to make. Consequently, apprentices' practical skills are developed to a high standard and show improvement throughout their learning.

Leaders and managers do not always track effectively the progress that apprentices are making. In too many cases the progress of apprentices is measured by attendance at sessions and does not measure the development of new knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, leaders and tutors cannot act with confidence to intervene when apprentices are not making the expected progress. Leaders have recognised this and have already started to implement a plan to improve this; however, as these changes are new, the impact cannot yet be seen.

Staff promote equality of opportunity so that all apprentices and trainees recognise difference positively. For example, they challenge gender stereotypes and celebrate the contribution female colleagues make to the sector. Leaders also take the opportunity to celebrate the success of female apprentices on specific days, such as International Women's Day.

A small but significant number of apprentices participate in skills competitions, including World Skills, which tutors use to motivate apprentices and support them to develop their confidence. As a result, apprentices demonstrate these skills effectively, both in the workplace and in regional and national competitions.

Since the last inspection, leaders have placed significant emphasis on improving apprentices' preparation for their end-point assessment (EPA), to increase the number of apprentices who pass at the first attempt. They have done this through the earlier introduction of preparation for EPA in the curriculum and the addition of mock assessments throughout the final stages of the apprenticeship. As a result, the number of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship and pass their EPA at the first attempt has improved.

An increasing proportion of apprentices and trainees achieve well. Some apprentices take on additional responsibilities, such as managing teams or projects as a result of their learning, and a few achieve promotions, either during or after they complete their apprenticeship. The large majority of trainees move to positive destinations, such as further learning, employment or an apprenticeship.

Staff provide apprentices and trainees with impartial careers advice, enabling them to make considered decisions on their next steps. For example, apprentices and trainees talk well about the different career routes available to them within the security sector upon completion of their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers have ensured that appropriate policies and procedures are in place and that staff, apprentices and trainees know how to use them. The designated safeguarding officer is appropriately trained, and members of the safeguarding team deal with referrals promptly. Where necessary, they work closely with external agencies to ensure that apprentices and trainees receive the support they need.

Leaders have established effective systems to ensure that staff are suitably recruited and appropriately checked so that they do not present a risk to apprentices or trainees.

Health and safety procedures for work placements and training centres are effective, and appropriate risk assessments are in place for all settings where apprentices and trainees work.

Leaders have ensured that apprentices and trainees receive useful information on life in modern Britain and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, tutors have not reinforced this learning; consequently, some apprentices and trainees cannot articulate how this information affects their life or work.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that the starting points of all apprentices and trainees are taken into account when planning their learning, to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders should ensure that the feedback that all apprentices and trainees receive is sufficiently developmental, giving them the opportunity to improve the standard of their work.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum all trainees follow is sufficiently focused on the development of work-ready skills and that teaching is relevant to the sector of their chosen traineeship programme.
- Leaders should ensure that the teaching all trainees receive helps them to develop work-ready and vocationally relevant skills throughout their programme.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50192
Address	The Outset Senkey Street Warrington WA1 1NN
Contact number	01905 744000
Website	www.skills4security.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	David Scott
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	26 to 29 January 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Director of Education, 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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