Inspection of Northern Regeneration CIC

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 November 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

Northern Regeneration CIC is an independent learning provider that operates from the Scarborough Construction Skills Village. It first received funding to deliver apprenticeships in April 2017 and provides specialist training in construction trades. There are currently 104 apprentices enrolled on construction apprenticeships. Around half are following either bricklaying or carpentry apprenticeships at level 2. The remaining apprentices are on electrical and plumbing apprenticeships at level 3 and construction plant operative, plastering, groundworker and property maintenance apprenticeships at level 2. Around half of the apprentices are aged 16 to 18. Northern Regeneration CIC recently began to deliver adult learning programmes but, at the time of this inspection, there were fewer than five learners who had only very recently been enrolled on construction plant operative and functional skills courses. Therefore, it was too close to the start of their learning to be able to determine judgements for adult learning provision.

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

Too many apprentices do not successfully complete their apprenticeship. They are unprepared for working as apprentices on lower wages than other, less qualified construction operatives. Other factors, including weaknesses in the quality of training that apprentices receive and the increased cost of living, have resulted in apprentices seeking better paid employment as unqualified construction workers. Leaders have recently improved the advice that they give to potential new apprentices so they are better prepared for the construction industry. Retention of apprentices is now improving, but it is too early to determine the full impact of leaders' actions.

Apprentices enjoy and engage positively in their learning. Tutors ensure that new apprentices who join the programme at different points in the year are integrated well into existing classes. Apprentices feel welcomed, and they value studying in a calm working environment. However, tutors in plumbing do not effectively tackle a few incidents of poor behaviour well enough.

Most apprentices attend off-the-job training sessions well and are punctual, both in learning and at work. Employers and tutors are quick to raise any concerns about apprentices' attendance. However, in a few instances, tutors do not reinforce the importance of attending lessons, which results in a few apprentices missing elements of their training.

Apprentices are highly motivated and develop valuable new knowledge and skills at work. They work independently and contribute to the output of work on building projects. For example, joinery apprentices work competently on tasks such as fitting floor joists, staircases and balustrading.

Apprentices feel safe at work and in their training sessions. They are well informed about keeping safe from construction-related safety risks. Apprentices are frequently reminded by their teachers about the importance of good professional conduct when at work.

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

Teachers in too many subjects do not plan learning well enough. In plumbing and electrical, teachers do not make the links between on- and off-the-job training clear enough for apprentices. Too many apprentices attend training that merely repeats what they have already learned on site, such as installing fall pipes and guttering, and are not taught trade essentials such as measuring accurately and brazing different types of metals.

Leaders have not done enough to ensure that apprentices benefit from a well-planned personal development curriculum. They have been too slow to implement training in topics about sexual health and what constitutes healthy relationships and

do not provide apprentices with impartial careers advice and guidance about their future career options. Leaders have recognised that the personal development curriculum is not good enough and have planned a series of topics to address this shortfall. However, it is too early to determine the impact of these actions.

On most apprenticeships, including bricklaying, carpentry and groundworks, teachers instruct apprentices well and help them to develop good practical skills over time. Apprentices on these programmes learn highly valued employability skills. For example, groundworker apprentices learn how to use digger and dumper trucks when excavating drainage channels and backfilling repaired roadways. However, in plumbing and electrical, too many apprentices are not taught early enough in their programme the skills that they need for their job roles. Multiple staffing changes have compounded the poor quality of education that apprentices on these programmes receive, which has resulted in too many apprentices making slow progress. Leaders have recently recruited new staff in these subjects in order to tackle the weaknesses.

Most teachers conduct frequent reviews of apprentices' progress in close partnership with employers to check how well apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need. Employers have a good understanding of their apprentices' progress. For example, in joinery, employers report that apprentices can work independently, fitting door frames, hanging doors and installing internal fire strips. However, in too many instances, such as in plumbing, employers attribute most of apprentices' new skills to what they learn at work rather than the training that they receive from the provider.

Teachers assess most apprentices' practical work accurately. They check that apprentices' work is at the industry standard and offer helpful suggestions for improvement. For example, teachers in groundworker check apprentices' completed paving projects to make sure that there are no protruding ledges that a customer could trip over. Where there are potential areas for improvement, such as the spacing of gaps between paving, these are highlighted to the apprentice. However, apprentices in electrical do not have their written work marked accurately or swiftly enough. This delays their learning of specific technical knowledge related to their industry.

Leaders have developed apprenticeship provision that meets local and regional skills shortage priorities. There is a high demand for skilled construction workers in the area, with several new-build housing schemes located close by. Leaders have responded to the demand for a skilled workforce by providing apprenticeship opportunities for local people in the main construction disciplines of bricklaying, carpentry, plastering, electrical and plumbing. They have also recently started to provide adult learning programmes to meet sector needs, such as construction plant operative training.

Leaders have provided apprentices with a realistic site environment. Apprentices benefit from studying practical activities in conditions that replicate a live building site. Bricklayers and groundworkers practise their skills outside in all weather

conditions, while plasterers work in unheated workshops that closely match the conditions in a new-build home that has yet to have the central heating system installed. These conditions prepare apprentices well for the reality of working on construction sites.

Leaders provide new and existing staff with additional training to improve their teaching practice. New staff have completed initial teacher training programmes, providing them with the basic skills required to plan and teach training sessions. Other staff are supported to improve their teaching skills further by enrolling on a level 5 apprenticeship in teaching and learning.

Non-executive directors (NEDs) hold leaders to account well for the quality and oversight of the provision. The managing director provides NEDs with useful quarterly performance reports that are carefully scrutinised. NEDs understand that key staff within the organisation have previously not been effective in their role and have made recommendations to leaders about the improvement actions that they need to take.

Teachers provide those apprentices identified as needing additional learning support with effective arrangements to enable them to access the curriculum. Staff provide extra time to complete work for apprentices with visual impairment and dyslexia, as well as learning materials and overlays, so that these apprentices are able to learn more effectively.

Teachers provide good-quality English and mathematics training for apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications. Almost all apprentices pass, and most are successful at their first attempt. Teachers develop apprentices' construction terminology well but, in too many instances, do not correct poor spelling and grammar in apprentices' written work and annotated sketches, which slows the development of apprentices' writing skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead and two deputies attend useful regional training events, which enhance their awareness of risks to apprentices. Leaders recently attended a safeguarding event about lone, self-initiated extremist activities in the north of England.

Staff appropriately escalate any concerns about apprentices' safety to those responsible for safeguarding. This includes concerns relating to homelessness and drug abuse. Leaders act swiftly to ensure that apprentices receive the support that they need.

Leaders ensure that safe recruitment checks take place for new staff. Where leaders have concerns about staff suitability, they undertake additional, thorough risk assessments to ensure that staff are safe to work with apprentices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all apprentices receive a good quality of education, particularly on plumbing and electrical apprenticeships.
- Improve the quality of the personal development curriculum so that all apprentices receive appropriate careers advice and guidance as well as training on what might constitute an unhealthy personal relationship.
- Ensure that a higher proportion of apprentices stay on programme and successfully complete their apprenticeship.
- Ensure that attendance and behaviour is consistently high across all apprenticeship programmes.
- Ensure that teachers provide good support to help apprentices to improve their writing skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2626884
Address	Scarborough Construction Skills Village Musham Bank Road Eastfield Scarborough YO11 3XU
Contact number	01723 585009
Website	https://skills-village.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Graham Ratcliffe
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations 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 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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