

SE Trains Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	135414
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

SE Trains Limited (SE Trains) is based at London Bridge with training centres in Tonbridge, Ashford and Orpington. It has been offering apprenticeships since January 2022. Prior to this, it operated as London and South Eastern Railways. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 108 apprentices on the level 2 passenger transport operative standard and 190 apprentices on the level 3 train driver standard. All apprentices were aged over 19 years old.

SE Trains works with one subcontractor, Learnmore, to teach functional skills English, mathematics and information communication technology (ICT).

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have implemented a curriculum that is aligned closely to the business needs of the train and transport industry. They understand employer requirements well and have developed the curriculum so that apprentices gain skills, knowledge and behaviours tailored closely to their job role. For example, leaders changed apprentices' training to better respond to fires onboard trains, following an actual incident. Consequently, apprentices quickly become valued members of their teams.

Leaders ensure that courses meet the requirements of apprenticeships successfully. Apprentices benefit from sufficient, high quality on- and off-the-job training. Learning coaches talk to apprentices about what they are doing well and what they need to do to further develop their skills and knowledge. However, too often managers do not join these review meetings and hence are not able to fully support apprentices, which slows their progress.

Leaders ensure that there are sufficient appropriate resources to support apprentices' learning well. Trainers and learning coaches are experts in their field who maintain their knowledge and skills well. For example, trainers return to their original job role for at least three hours each month. Apprentices benefit from high-

quality physical resources, such as train simulators at the training centres. As a result, apprentices quickly acquire current industry working practices.

Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and take swift action to address identified issues. For example, they rightly identified that too few apprentices were passing functional skills ICT and worked with the subcontractor to address this successfully. Consequently, the proportion of apprentices passing this qualification has increased significantly.

Leaders manage the subcontractor effectively. They visit learning sessions and provide helpful feedback that improves the standard of teaching. They share relevant information with subcontractor leaders at frequent review meetings during which they identify and resolve issues promptly.

Executive board members receive regular updates on the performance of the apprenticeship provision and use this to support and hold leaders to account effectively. For example, board members use key performance indicators, across a range of sensible areas of activity, to monitor the performance of the apprenticeship provision and inform their discussion with leaders well.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Staff check thoroughly what apprentices already know and can do prior to starting their apprenticeship. They use this information to ensure that apprentices are learning at the correct level and acquiring substantial new skills and knowledge.

Trainers provide well-structured teaching sessions that build on what apprentices have previously learned. They plan the order of on- and off-the-job training carefully to ensure that apprentices put into practice the knowledge they learn. For example, train driver apprentices learn the sequencing of signals and then apply this when driving a train under instruction. Consequently, apprentices quickly consolidate theoretical learning into their working practices.

Staff check apprentices' understanding carefully. Where gaps in apprentices' knowledge are identified, staff take action that address them effectively. Learning coaches check apprentices' knowledge and understanding diligently. However, too often the feedback that they provide is insufficient for apprentices to know how to improve their future work.

Staff track apprentices' progress carefully and set targets that ensure most make the progress expected. Where apprentices fall behind, staff take effective action that ensures they catch-up quickly. As a result, most apprentices make good progress in their learning. However, a small minority of apprentices, whose learning was

disrupted by changes to SE Trains ownership structure and the pandemic, are making slow progress.

Staff support learners to develop their use of English, mathematics and ICT very effectively. Trainers embed these subjects into vocational training activities skilfully. For example, train driver apprentices use their mathematical skills to calculate stopping distances. As a result, most apprentices develop these skills quickly, apply them to their roles well and pass their qualifications.

Staff support apprentices to prepare for their final assessments effectively. They use a variety of activities that help apprentices remember key information. As a result, most apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeship and achieve well.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders prioritise the safety and well-being of apprentices highly. Trainers teach apprentices how to keep themselves and others safe while at work effectively. Consequently, apprentices develop a deep-rooted understanding of health and safety in the highly regulated railway industry.

Staff teach apprentices about a wide range of safeguarding topics related to their job roles very effectively. Apprentices have a good understanding of topics such as county lines, radicalisation and extremism and how to identify potentially vulnerable passengers. As a result, apprentices are confident in what action to take if they encounter a safeguarding issue at work.

Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, including the designated safeguarding officers. Trainers and learning coaches know apprentices well and escalate concerns where they arise promptly. Safeguarding staff then take suitable steps to promote apprentices' well-being.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are conducted on staff before they work with apprentices.

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