

Inspection of Hays Travel Limited

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Hays Travel Limited is an independent travel agent with 420 branches and around 3,000 staff members. The head office is in Sunderland. The provider currently has 215 apprentices, 37 of whom are on the level 2 customer service practitioner standard and 178 on the level 3 travel consultant standard. The majority of apprentices are below the age of 19.

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

Apprentices benefit from an extremely friendly and welcoming environment in both online and classroom provision. They are encouraged to epitomise Hays Travel's 'smile' values, which are to be supportive, motivational, innovative and loyal, and to provide excellence. As a result, apprentices become more committed to their learning.

Staff have very high expectations of apprentices' behaviour and conduct. At the start of virtual sessions, staff promote remote learning protocols and, as a result, apprentices concentrate well on learning tasks. Apprentice absences are managed effectively, including any well-being issues that prevent attendance. Apprentices attend well across programmes, both on and off the job. Staff monitor attendance well and automatic emails are used to alert branch managers of any non-attendance.

Leaders and managers promote a very supportive and highly inclusive culture across all apprenticeship programmes. Apprentices support each other and grow in confidence due to their improved knowledge and customer service skills. They are highly motivated and supported well by their line managers. Learning and development coaches know their apprentices well, and they use this knowledge to build extremely positive, respectful and nurturing relationships.

Learning development coaches ensure that apprentices perform beyond their job roles and make active contributions to the wider community. Apprentices take part in life skills sessions, such as social awareness training, diversity in society, budgeting and understanding sustainability. Apprentices contribute to society by engaging in charity work, which includes sponsored walks and bicycle rides.

The standard of work produced by apprentices is very high and exceeds the expectations of the apprenticeship programme. For example, apprentices improve the depth and quality of their discussions, their use of travel terminology, their language and vocabulary, their confidence and their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. The development of their skills, knowledge and behaviours prepares them well for their employment following their apprenticeship programme.

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

Leaders provide a curriculum that meets the needs of their business. Hays Travel Limited recruits apprentices annually at all their branches. The apprenticeship standards offered are key to the roles of travel consultants and customer service practitioners working in the organisation. Apprentices have many opportunities to progress their careers in the company. Many of the organisation's team leaders and managers began their careers as apprentices.

Staff plan and sequence the curriculum well. The training begins with the 'Hays Experience', which covers the company culture, safeguarding and customer service.

Apprentices then experience the working environment in branches or the head office. As a result, apprentices build up knowledge over time and cumulatively develop the skills required for future learning and their employment.

Staff have expert knowledge in the courses that they teach. Learning and development coaches and functional skills coaches are highly skilled in their specialisms. They are also skilled in the craft of teaching and are either qualified or working towards teaching qualifications. Learning and development coaches work in the travel industry for two days each year to ensure that their knowledge remains current.

Learning and development coaches contextualise key concepts and present information well using examples and experiences which are familiar to the apprentices. In teaching sessions focused on customer service, staff ensure, through using a range of teaching methods, that apprentices can explain what excellent customer service means in various contexts. Apprentices respond to this well and, as a result, can identify good and poor customer service in their work and personal lives.

Learning and development coaches use a wide range of effective assessment methods with apprentices to meet apprentices' individual needs, the needs of the business and the standards of the apprenticeships. They use professional discussion, questioning, written reports, and individual and group presentations. Functional skills coaches use online resources effectively to support apprentices to learn. For example, staff use visualisers so the apprentice can view staff solving mathematical questions and participate in finding a solution.

Apprentices successfully develop their skills and knowledge from their starting points. This includes their use of travel terminology, language and vocabulary, confidence and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. The development of their skills, knowledge and behaviours prepares apprentices well for employment following their apprenticeships. All apprentices are offered employment with Hays Travel Limited at the end of the apprenticeship programme.

Leaders consider the workload and well-being of their staff very well. Staff have a manageable caseload of apprentices, allowing them to spend significant time with their apprentices to develop their skills and knowledge. There is a strong emphasis on the professional development of staff, which includes external training and experiencing different working environments through, for example, visits to cruise ships.

Leaders and managers have recognised that too many apprentices leave the programme early. They have analysed the reasons for this carefully and implemented sensible plans to ensure that more apprentices remain on their programmes. For example, the recruitment process has been improved to ensure that apprentices understand the role better. The initial training now includes weekly work experience and resilience training. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these initiatives.

Staff use highly effective techniques to develop apprentices' broader character and confidence. In functional skills lessons, apprentices are encouraged to 'write a letter to mathematics', which serves as a non-confrontational tool for functional skills coaches to capture apprentices' fears concerning mathematics. Apprentices benefit from adjustments and personalised support to help them overcome their fears, develop resilience and grow in confidence.

Leaders and managers support apprentices to become ambitious in their pursuit for future careers. Apprentices prepare individual development plans capturing their individual career aspirations. They are supported to prepare CVs and learn how to answer interview questions effectively. Apprentices take part in a 'next steps' lesson to help identify their transferrable skills, to understand where their skills can take them and to consider possible career paths both internally and externally. Apprentices understand the skills, knowledge and behaviours that they have acquired and the job roles that they could carry out with their transferrable skills. As a result, they are prepared well for the next steps in their careers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong safeguarding culture and implement effective safeguarding arrangements which are consistent with the policies and procedures in place. There is an at-risk register which records safeguarding concerns and actions to support apprentices, including, where relevant, referrals to social services.

Leaders and managers have in place qualified and experienced designated safeguarding leads. Those with safeguarding responsibilities are trained to level 3 and receive frequent refresher training.

Leaders and managers recruit staff who are safe to work with apprentices. They ensure that staff have the right to work in the United Kingdom and carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Apprentices feel safe. They know who to contact in an emergency or if they feel unsafe. Apprentices know the signs to look out for in fellow apprentices who might be unsafe or at risk, and feel confident in the provider's safeguarding processes.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that staff make potential recruits fully aware of the expectations of the programme before commencement of the apprenticeship.
- Ensure that newly introduced procedures for onboarding support apprentices for success early in their apprenticeship and ensure that they remain on programme.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59066
Address	Gilbridge House High Street West Sunderland SR1 3HA
Contact number	0191 8148060
Website	www.haystravel.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Dame Irene Hays
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship, quality and standards manager, 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

Glenise Burrell, lead inspector

Vikki Edmondson

Aimey Adamson

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023