

# Inspection of Sutton and District Training Limited

Inspection dates:

17 to 20 October 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Sutton and District Training Limited (SDTL) is an independent training provider with sites in Sutton, Morden and Brighton. It trains young people aged 16 to 24 who have a diverse range of needs.

At the time of the inspection, there were 74 learners on level 2 and level 3 creative media courses, 68 learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), 35 on employability skills, 30 on level 1 and level 2 plumbing, 27 on level 1 and level 2 multiskills, 15 on level 2 hairdressing, 12 on level 2 customer service and five learners on level 2 and level 3 performance skills courses. There were 117 learners with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

There were just under 50 apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships in early years, business, teaching assistant and mentoring at levels 2, 3 and 4.

SDTL works with one subcontractor, Enemy of Boredom Academy (EoB). Approximately 35 learners were enrolled on creative media courses at EoB's training centre in Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

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

Learners and apprentices, many of whom have been out of education for some years, enjoy their time at SDTL. Across all sites, as well as online, learners are treated fairly by kind staff, who create a nurturing setting. Learners, including those with high needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), appreciate the support they receive from their tutors and learning support assistants. They feel safe and well cared for.

Learners and apprentices develop their interpersonal skills and behaviour rapidly. Staff have created a well-defined code of conduct and use this as guidance for learners to coach them towards positive behaviour in class. Learners and apprentices behave well in lessons and around the different sites. They concentrate on their studies in a calm and purposeful environment.

Learners benefit from the close relationship that staff have with community groups and outside agencies. For example, staff arrange visits and relevant work experience for learners at local non-profit cafés and community projects. As a result, learners develop their competence in communicating with customers.

Learners develop their interests beyond their academic or vocational courses. Staff plan into the curriculum good opportunities for learners to engage in a wide range of activities. For example, at the Carshalton site, learners play basketball and cricket in the neighbouring park. Others enjoy learning how to ride a bicycle for the first time. As a result, learners develop new skills, make new friends and become more confident.

Due to inconsistencies in the experience and expertise of teachers, a minority of learners have a learning experience that is too variable. For example, staffing disruption has negatively affected the quality of teaching in a minority of creative media and multiskills courses. Not all tutors in these subjects have suitable subject knowledge and teaching expertise.

Too many apprentices do not complete their training. Apprentices who stay on their programmes enjoy developing new knowledge and skills that they can subsequently use at work. For example, early years practitioner apprentices learn about planning and preparing healthy meals for children. Employers then give apprentices opportunities to discuss dietary needs and allergies with the children's parents. Apprentices welcome the greater responsibility they have at work.

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

Leaders and managers have designed a curriculum that suitably meets local employment priorities. For example, leaders offer customer service courses in Brighton and creative media courses in London. Learners and apprentices gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will help them go on to their chosen next steps.

Managers and tutors have sequenced the curriculum logically in the majority of subjects so that learners and apprentices learn essential knowledge and skills before carrying out more challenging work. For instance, learners in plumbing learn how to convert measurements from centimetres to inches before they take on pipe-cutting practical work. This ensures that learners have the mathematical skills they need to measure and cut pipes accurately. However, in other subjects, such as multiskills, managers and tutors have not given sufficient consideration to how they plan the curriculum.

Tutors do not assess learners' prior knowledge and skills consistently well. In a minority of subjects, managers and tutors do not assess what learners already know and can do thoroughly enough. Tutors do not adjust what they teach in relation to learners' prior knowledge. They teach topics that some learners are already familiar with, and learners subsequently become bored and stop paying attention. Conversely, on other occasions, they introduce activities for which learners do not have the necessary foundation knowledge. For example, in ESOL, teachers set students listening tasks using videos that contain vocabulary they have not yet taught to students. This slows down the progress learners make. However, in other areas, tutors have good knowledge of the abilities of learners. For example, in the employability programme in Brighton, tutors assess learners' prior knowledge thoroughly and successfully adapt the content they teach to meet their needs. In these cases, tutors help learners to make substantial progress.

Too many learners and apprentices do not pass important English and mathematics qualifications. Leaders have recently taken suitable steps to improve the quality of teaching and assessment for those learners and apprentices who require English and/or mathematics qualifications. However, pass rates remain too low, which limits learners' and apprentices' choices about their next steps in education or employment. On vocational courses, tutors make sure that learners and apprentices are able to apply relevant mathematics and English skills. For example, early years practitioner tutors assess apprentices' use of technical language in their written work, which they return promptly for correction where needed.

In the majority of cases, staff monitor the progress that learners and apprentices make effectively. For example, creative media tutors, learners and parents meet every half term to review progress and set purposeful targets. As a result, most learners and apprentices know where they are in their courses and what they need to do to make progress. However, tutors do not provide learners with high needs and SEND with enough support to work towards achieving the outcomes of their EHC plans. Tutors do not break down EHC plan outcomes into achievable subject-related steps that tutors and learners can work towards together. This means that managers and tutors are unclear about how much progress learners with high needs and SEND make.

Leaders and managers did not have suitable recruitment and initial assessment processes in place when they began to offer apprenticeships. Managers recruited apprentices who did not have the right job roles or prior knowledge needed to be able to study the early years practitioner programme. Consequently, over half of the

apprentices in the first cohort withdrew from their programmes before completion. Leaders and managers have taken suitable steps to improve the retention of apprentices. For example, staff begin teaching English and mathematics earlier in the apprenticeship so that apprentices can achieve the qualifications that they need to complete their apprenticeships. Managers now support apprentices effectively to stay on their programmes.

Apprentices who remain on their programmes develop their confidence well. For example, assessors and staff provide opportunities for early years practitioner apprentices to shadow experienced colleagues and undertake supervised interactions with parents. Employers say that apprentices in all subjects become valued members of the workforce as a result of improvements in their confidence, resilience and well-being.

Tutors include relevant careers and employability training in the curriculum. Sector specialists and key support workers arrange for learners and apprentices to receive suitable careers advice and guidance. For example, learners on employability courses have visits from the Metropolitan Police and healthcare professionals to discuss job opportunities in their sectors. As a result, learners and apprentices, including those with SEND, can explain their intended destinations, what is available to them and what they need to do to secure those destinations. The majority of learners who complete their courses go on to educational and local employment destinations that meet their interests and aspirations.

Governors, who are well informed about the quality of the provision, provide effective challenge to leaders to improve aspects of the quality of the provision. For example, leaders have strengthened arrangements for how they assess the quality of teaching and learning following input from the board. However, governors do not have a good enough understanding of weaknesses in other areas, such as the quality of education for learners with high needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Make sure that tutors complete professional development that helps them to improve their teaching practice so that learners, including those with SEND, experience high-quality teaching.
- Identify learners' prior knowledge, skills and experience accurately at the start of their courses. Tutors should use this information to adjust their planning and teaching to make certain that learners know and remember more of what they are taught.
- Improve the quality of English and mathematics teaching so that learners and apprentices achieve the qualifications they need to complete their programmes or enter into their next steps in education or employment.

- Make sure that staff develop clear targets for learners with high needs who have EHC plans, ensuring that tutors can plan effectively for learners to achieve their EHC plan outcomes.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	54698
<b>Address</b>	Lawn View Grove Park Carshalton High Street Carshalton SM5 3BB
<b>Contact number</b>	020 8687 5225
<b>Website</b>	suttondistrict.co.uk
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Julie Ingleton
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 24 February 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Enemy of Boredom Academy

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the centre 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

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