

# Inspection of Springboard

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 September 2024

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

## Information about this provider

Springboard is a registered charity and independent learning provider based in Sunderland. It provides education programmes for young people, apprenticeships and adult learning programmes from entry level to level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were 77 young learners on a range of courses in health and social care, children's and young people's settings, and hairdressing and beauty. There were 16 apprentices studying on four programmes and 19 learners with high needs. At the subcontracted provision, there were 14 learners studying on a level 1 construction skills programme. At the time of the inspection, there were no adult learners enrolled.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from calm and welcoming environments. Staff set clear expectations early in the programme for attendance and behaviour, to which most learners and apprentices adhere. Learners and apprentices demonstrate respectful attitudes towards staff and each other. They take their learning seriously and comply with safe working practices.

Learners and apprentices follow programmes that meet their specific needs. Leaders and managers gather information about learners' and apprentices' starting points from stakeholders such as local authorities and schools and use the information well to select the correct level of course. Teachers plan personal targets and provide individual support based on learners' and apprentices' starting points. This helps learners and apprentices, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress towards their goals.

Most learners on education programmes for young people participate in useful work experience and, as a result, develop skills that prepare them well for future employment. Learners complete a helpful reflective journal to identify what they have learned. Those with high needs carry out useful placements in a foodbank, a charity shop and a care home. However, too many learners on construction courses do not participate in work experience.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and know who they should report any concerns to. They develop a good understanding of potential risks through a range of activities, including guest speaker visits, drop-in sessions and workshops. For example, local organisations provide helpful information on alcohol and drug misuse, drink spiking and the impact of knife crimes. As a result, learners and apprentices develop resilience and confidence to make informed choices about their interactions with people in the communities in which they live.

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

Leaders have a clear intent to deliver learning programmes for the most disadvantaged and disengaged young people and adults in the local community. Many learners have had a poor previous experience of education and have not developed the routine of attending learning settings for a significant length of time. Leaders and managers provide an opportunity to participate in learning for those learners that have been unable to engage in education in other settings. A high proportion of learners who remain on their courses achieve their qualifications and have the opportunity to access further study, work or an apprenticeship and improve their life chances.

Leaders and managers rightly recognise that too many learners and apprentices leave their programme early. Many of those who leave early do so as a consequence of complex personal, family and life circumstances. Leaders work with many agencies to support learners and apprentices to stay in education and now provide

taster sessions to match learners to courses more effectively. The measures that leaders have taken are starting to have a positive impact on retention.

Leaders recruit staff who are suitably qualified in the specialisms that they teach. In response to an identified need, they have recently recruited more learning support assistants and teachers of mathematics. Leaders and managers provide good support for staff who are new to education to develop the skills that they need to carry out their roles. They provide peer support and mentoring and encourage sharing of resources and good practice. Staff without teaching qualifications are supported to gain these to improve their practice.

Most teachers use learning activities that help learners to develop their subject-specific knowledge and skills. Tutors on the level 1 animal care course use a range of activities to develop learners' understanding of key theory and practical elements of the course, including health and safety, risk assessments, cleanliness, feeding and health checks. Teachers use effective questioning that encourages learners and apprentices to break down concepts. For example, teachers question learners on the level 2 diploma in beauty therapy about product choice, how to use different products and the key ingredients and the benefits of using the product. However, in a few cases tutors do not ensure that learners have gained essential elements of knowledge sufficiently well before moving on.

Teachers effectively monitor learners' and apprentices' progress and identify appropriate actions to support learners and apprentices to achieve their learning aims. Team leaders have useful meetings with managers that result in identifying interventions, such as providing additional learning support assistants in sessions where individual learners need extra help. However, leaders and managers do not make effective enough use of the management information available to them to oversee the provision, in particular the progress that learners are making.

Teachers use assessment well in lessons to check and confirm learners' and apprentices' understanding. They use quizzes, worksheets, presentations and practical observations to identify gaps in learning. Teachers clarify misconceptions and revisit learning when needed. They provide useful feedback on work that helps learners and apprentices make improvements. Apprentices who complete their programmes are successful at end-point assessment, although only a few achieve high grades.

Leaders and managers ensure that teachers plan functional skills courses effectively. Learners and apprentices are grouped based on their current level and ability in English and mathematics to ensure that they receive specific teaching and support at the correct level to address gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Most vocational teachers develop learners' English and mathematics skills throughout their programmes. Learners develop professional technical language well. On the level 2 beauty therapy course, learners understand terms such as 'superficial cleanse', 'environmental factors' and 'effleurage' and are able to discuss these concepts with confidence. On animal care courses, learners use terminology

such as 'cross-contamination' and successfully develop their writing skills. Apprentices become more effective in their job roles as they improve their formal writing skills. Learners with high needs, when on work experience, use ratios to add supplements to residents' food in a care home. Those on placement at an ambulance station check serial numbers on resuscitation machines and match vehicle registration numbers with call signs.

Leaders support their staff well, providing frequent and relevant professional development opportunities. Staff working with learners with high needs have received training in autism, medical administration and mental health awareness. Staff record useful reflections and effectively identify how they can use the training in their practice. For example, staff identified that providing resources prior to lessons was helpful for learners with dyslexia.

Staff provide most learners and apprentices with useful careers information, advice and guidance. Learners have access to a careers officer to discuss options and potential progression routes. In employability lessons, learners with high needs research different job roles and learn about skills that are important to securing and maintaining employment. Apprentices receive advice and guidance from a broad range of sources, including their employer and a local university. On the level 1 construction skills programme, learners understand how the programme can help them to progress to work in the construction industry. However, they cannot recall advice about specific careers and potential pathways to support their future career progression.

Leaders have carefully selected a subcontractor that has recognised expertise in delivering construction training and can provide a potential progression route to apprenticeships for learners. Leaders monitor the provision through frequent meetings and quality assurance activities such as lesson visits. A high proportion of learners on the subcontracted level 1 construction skills course progress to apprenticeships in construction trades.

Trustees have relevant experience to enable them to carry out their roles. They have served as board members for many years and have a good knowledge of the provider. They use their understanding of the challenges of working with young learners and apprentices in the area well to hold leaders to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Identify and implement actions to increase further the proportion of learners who complete their programme successfully.
- Increase the proportion of apprentices who complete their programmes and the proportion that achieve high grades.

- Improve the analysis of management information and use this analysis to identify improvement actions.
- Ensure that young learners benefit from purposeful work experience across all programmes.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50199
<b>Address</b>	Unit 1–2 East Way Rivergreen Industrial Estate Sunderland SR4 6AD
<b>Contact number</b>	0191 5155300
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://springboard-ne.org.uk">https://springboard-ne.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Steve Reay
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 to 8 July 2022
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Optimum Skills

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive, 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

Joanne Stork, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Seaman	His Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Fraser	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Wiley	Ofsted Inspector
Marina Gaze	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Clark	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024