

SBC Training

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	54277
Name of lead inspector:	Robert Hamp HMI
Last day of inspection:	9 July 2010
Type of provider:	Independent Learning Provider
Address:	Suite 1 LMH Business Park Harlescott Lane Shrewsbury Shropshire SY1 3AG
Telephone number:	01743 454810

Information about the provider

1. SBC Training (SBC) is a private training provider constituted as a sole trader. It has offices and a training centre in Shrewsbury where it employs 26 staff and two associate staff. An operations manager is responsible for the quality of the provision supported by a director, quality improvement manager and business development manager. Twelve training staff are allocated to one of three sector managers and one trainer reports to the quality improvement manager.
2. SBC contracts directly with the Skills Funding Agency and provides apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in business administration and law, retail and commercial enterprises, health, public services and care throughout Shropshire, the Midlands and the North West. It is also a member of three consortia delivering Train to Gain and wider adult training funded by the European Social Fund. SBC's engineering and manufacturing technologies, preparation for life and work, and education and training programmes were not included in the inspection.
3. Thirty-four per cent of learners are male and 17% are from minority ethnic groups. Around, 20% of SBC's revenue comes from privately funded training.
4. The provider provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Mantra Learning
 - 3 Counties Train To Gain Consortia

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	749
Apprenticeships	169

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	Grade
Health & social care	2
Warehousing & distribution	2
Business administration	2

Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of SBC's provision is good. SBC has maintained the good grades awarded at the previous reinspection and improved its grade for equality and diversity from satisfactory to good. Senior managers have a clear learner focus and provide effective leadership to raise standards and set challenging targets. Management of training programmes is good. The quality of teaching, training and learning is good. Staff work well with employers to provide good training in the workplace that meets well the needs of learners and employers. Learners achieve qualifications well, and a significant number of learners are achieving within the agreed timescales. Arrangements to assess learners at work are highly effectively and partnership arrangements are outstanding. Learners say they feel safe and protected from abuse. SBC promotes equality and diversity effectively and managers regularly analyse and monitor the achievements of all the different groups of learners. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates for apprentices are high and have been in line or better than national averages for the past three years. Success rates for advanced apprentices increased markedly in 2008/09. They are now good. In 2008/09, success rates for learners completing within agreed timescales were high.
- Learners enjoy their training, develop good work-related skills and improve their self-confidence and motivation. The standard of learners' work is particularly good.
- Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and adopt safe working practices. Learners confirm they feel safe and are protected from harassment and bullying. The internal communication of risk assessments is not always effective.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Learners' progress reviews are thorough and effectively used to assess progress against agreed targets. Health and safety and equality and diversity are promoted well at reviews. However, in business administration programmes lengths and learner targets are not always sufficiently individualised.
- Training meets the needs and interest of learners well. SBC has an established programme of well-designed off-the-job learning modules across all provision. However, modules do not meet employers' individual needs sufficiently.
- SBC has outstanding long-term partnerships with employers and education establishments to meet the needs of learners. Feedback from employers is highly positive and supportive.
- Leadership and management of training programmes are good. Staff are knowledgeable, experienced and well qualified. Resources are good and managers and staff use data well at meetings to develop successful strategies to increase learners' success rates.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff and learners have a good appreciation of equality and diversity, which staff promote effectively during reviews through the use of good quality training resources. Equality and diversity data managers and staff use well to analyse the achievement of different groups and identify actions for the equity and diversity action plan.
- Arrangements for users to support and promote improvement are good. Managers gather feedback from learners systematically, which they use well to improve provision. Good use is made of feedback from employers through regular visits from the business development team and questionnaires.
- Quality arrangements are good. The standard of provision in subject areas is high. The use of data to improve provision is good. The self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment report was largely judgemental and accurate.
- SBC provides good value for money. Resources to support teaching training and assessment are good including arrangements for supporting professional

development. However, technology is not used consistently during assessment practice.

What does SBC Training need to do to improve further?

- Ensure learners' safety risk assessments are fully communicated and any action points from the assessments are followed through effectively.
- Further improve the quality of provision by continuing to implement good practices across all subject areas.
- Continue to improve learning programmes by ensuring they cover the specific needs of employers and learners.
- Support teaching, learning and assessment further by increasing the use of technology across all subject programme.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the help and support they receive to increase their confidence
- the help with knowledge of safeguarding
- very supportive and helpful staff
- the flexible programme that that meets personal commitments
- how courses help learners reflect and work as volunteers
- the positive attitude of assessors.

What learners would like to see improved:

- make the recording of information simpler for people working full time.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- how training has improved housekeeping
- the good relationship with all SBC staff
- SBC staff always listen to our needs
- excellent communications
- very professional team
- all assessors are very supportive.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the same support on apprenticeships as we receive on Train to Gain provision.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. SBC has maintained and built on the significant improvements identified at the previous reinspection. Recent restructuring of the business has been effective in improving communications and providing a clear focus on raising standards and learners' progress. Staff and learners have a good appreciation of targets and what they need to do to succeed. The links between business planning, the self-assessment report and development planning are well defined and effective. The stakeholder involvement strategy is well established and effective. Managers have recently revised the user stakeholder strategy to introduce learner quality champions and the use of technology to further improve feedback arrangements.
7. The quality of teaching, training and assessment remains good and takes place effectively in a wide variety of settings local to learners. Managers monitor the quality of training and assessment very effectively. Assessment of learners at all stages of their programme is good. Overall achievement of apprenticeships has improved substantially and is now good. Learners' achievement of their qualifications within the agreed timescales has shown recent improvement and is now good. The quality of off-the-job training materials is particularly good although these are not always customised to meet individual employer and learner's needs. Target setting is effective. However, in business administration it is not sufficiently personalised.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Outcomes for learners are good. In 2008/09 the overall success rate for advanced apprentices increased to nearly nine percentage points above the national average. The success rate for apprentices completing in their planned timescale has shown a marked increase in 2008/09 and it was nearly 10 percentage points above the national average. The success rate for Train to Gain learners completing in their planned timescale for 2008/09 was 11 percentage points above the national average. Overall success rates for apprentices have been better than national averages for the past three years and are three percentage points above average for 2008/09 and at a satisfactory level. The success rate for advanced apprentices completing in their planned timescales increased to three percentage points above the national average in 2008/09 and was at a satisfactory level.
9. Learners enjoy their training, develop good work skills and improve their self-confidence and motivation. The standard of learners' work is particularly good. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and adopt safe working practices. Learners confirm that they feel safe and protected from harassment and bullying.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

10. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Assessment of learners at all stages of the programme is good. Initial assessment of learners is thorough and explores their existing knowledge and skills well to develop an individualised learning plan. Staff use screening and initial assessment tools effectively to identify additional support. A dedicated qualified specialist provides effective additional support. Learners benefit from thorough assessment visits every three weeks in the workplace. Learners use feedback on their performance, knowledge and evidence constructively. Visits are particularly well planned, with clear short term targeting outlining the work learners need to complete. However, targets and the length of programme for business administration learners does not take account of their prior knowledge and experience.
11. SBC has an established programme of good quality off-the-job learning modules across all programmes. The range, content and duration of training meets the needs and interest of learners very well. For example, in response to employers' feedback, SBC provides some off-job training over three full days instead of full or half days. The training and attendance at these sessions is good and takes place in a wide variety of locations. SBC place a high priority on finding suitable accommodation that meets well the needs of learners with mobility difficulties. However, programmes are not always customised to meet individual employers' needs.
12. SBC has outstanding long-term partnerships with employers and local education establishments to meet the needs of learners. For example, members of the senior management have a particularly effective role in developing partnerships with the local life long learning network on an Aim Higher project to provide a single progression route from vocational learning into higher education. Feedback from employers is highly positive. An Ofsted survey, prior to the inspection, received positive feedback from 43 employers showing 100% confidence in the work provided by SBC.
13. Care, guidance and support for learners to achieve their learning goals is good. Learners receive comprehensive and well presented information at induction on all aspects of their programme. Initial screening effectively identifies learners with additional learning support needs. A specialist provides one-to-one coaching in the workplace for those with additional learning needs. SBC staff are appropriately qualified to provide information and advice and guidance to learners.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

14. Leadership and management are good. Managers have taken effective action to improve timely achievement. SBC has a well informed senior management team and a business plan that has a clear focus on learners. The links between business planning, the self-assessment report and the development plan are

effective. Staff speak positively about recent restructuring of the provision of training and how it has improved communications and helped to raise standards. Data are used well in meetings to monitor and improve performance and to plan and manage programmes. Operational management is good. Continuous professional development and staff training is effective in providing learners with good quality provision. Staff have clear targets for learners' progress and achievement, which they monitor well. However, in business administration the planning of learning does not take sufficient account of individual learning needs.

15. Arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are clear and appropriate and embedded well within the organisation. All staff have satisfactory criminal record bureau checks which are maintained on a single record. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Managers deal with and record incidents promptly and take appropriate action to resolve them. The quality improvement manager ensures that effective policies and procedures are in place and learners, employers and staff have a good awareness of their content. Links with relevant external agencies and other training organisations are effective. Learners have a good appreciation of the procedures for reporting any safeguarding issues. SBC has worked hard to create a safe environment for learners and staff, including a robust system of risk assessments. However, risk assessments in business administration are not always communicated effectively.
16. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Discussion of equality and diversity takes place regularly at team meetings and all staff receive well designed in-house equality and diversity training. Staff introduce equality and diversity well during learners' induction. Learners speak positively about a culture of mutual respect and support and how this helps to enhance their learning. For example, a significant number of learners are volunteers for whom SBC has developed flexible training models to meet the needs of learners during evenings and at weekends. Staff and learners have a good appreciation of equality and diversity which staff promote effectively during reviews through the use of good quality training resources. The equality group identify and gather systematically equality and diversity data. The group is effective in identifying under representation and achievement gaps and developing effective actions to be included in the equality and diversity action plan. For example, it has not identified any differences in the performance of different groups but has been particularly successful in attracting learners from minority ethnic groups across the majority of its apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes.
17. SBC has an effective and well-established system for collecting stakeholder views to improve the provision. Managers gain information systematically from learners and employers' questionnaires, which they analyse effectively to identify and implement improvements. Business development officers undertake effective programme reviews with employers and provide training managers with useful feedback about the quality of their programmes. SBC works effectively with other training providers to improve the learner's experience and

has recently piloted learner quality champions who assist in obtaining learners' views on all aspects of the learner journey. This recent initiative is part of a revised and improved stakeholder involvement strategy that is also piloting the use of user group technology.

18. Quality arrangements are good. The quality of provision in programme areas is good and the management of programmes is also good. Managers use data effectively to improve provision. Relationships with local employers and industry are strong. Partnership working is effective at sharing good practice and providing valuable feedback to improve the provision. The self-assessment process is well established and effective. The self-assessment report was clear, judgemental, accurate and inspectors agreed with all grades except safeguarding.
19. Value for money is good. The management of resources is effective. Learners have access to good resources. Learning resources are particularly good. Resources at employer venues are good. All training and assessment staff have relevant experience and are suitably qualified. Alternative arrangements for learners with mobility problems are satisfactory.

Subject areas

Health & social care

Grade 2

Context

20. Currently 114 learners are working towards qualifications at intermediate and advanced levels in health & social care. Of these 82 are on Train to Gain programmes, 17 are apprentices and 15 are advanced apprentices. Learners work in community care, independent living care, hospices, nursing and residential homes in Shropshire and the West Midlands. Fourteen per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and 19% are males.

Key findings

- Success rates are high. The overall success rate for apprentices in 2008/09 was seven percentage points above the national average and is good. The success rate for Train to Gain learners completing in agreed timescales was five percentage points above the national average. Apprentices completing within agreed timescales have improved to the national average from a low base and are now satisfactory. Current learners make satisfactory progress.
- Learners develop good professional and team working skills. They acquire theoretical knowledge well and are able to apply theory to practical situations effectively. Learners develop confidence and skills to tackle difficult aspects of their work to the benefit of service users and colleagues.
- Learners feel safe at work. Staff promote safe working practices effectively during teaching, assessment and at reviews. Learners have a good understanding of adult protection, security and health and safety in the care industry.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Particularly good teaching resources support learning. Learners' attainment and knowledge of their job at each stage of their training is good. Assessment is well planned and reliable. Learners complete high standard portfolios through well-supported independent learning and research. Key skills provision makes effective use of care settings. However, the use of technology to support learning and assessment is not consistent.
- SBC meets the needs of users well. Learners choose from a good range of optional units that reflect their job role. Employers value the development of good work skills and learners report that they are able to take on greater responsibility, such as team leading, and to seek promotion opportunities. Progression to higher education in 2008/09 was good.
- Relationships with employers are particularly effective. Learners benefit from useful and well-established working partnerships with major providers in the public and private health care sectors. Communications with employers is systematic and effective. Managers, assessors and learners are involved well in progress reviews. Business development officers provide a strong additional link between employers and SBC staff.

- Support for learners is good. Initial assessment identifies well learners' additional literacy and numeracy support needs. Detailed job analysis ensures learners are working towards the appropriate level of qualification for their job. Programme reviews are thorough and staff use them effectively to set challenging targets.
- Leadership and management are good. Subject and standardisation meetings identify well methods to meet the needs of learners and staff are aware of current assessment practice. Monitoring of learners' progress and achievements is good. Internal verification is satisfactory. Staff development is good as is the promotion of equality and diversity during reviews. Observations of teaching and learning are thorough and effective but do not include all trainers.

What does SBC Training need to do to improve further?

- Improve observation of teaching and learning by ensuring it covers all teachers.
- Maintain and further develop good working relationships with employers to provide learners with good quality training opportunities.

Warehousing & distribution

Grade 2

Context

21. Thirty-seven learners are on apprenticeship programmes, and one on Train to Gain. All apprentices are working on the level 2, National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), driving goods vehicles. Provision of training and assessment of the programme is in the workplace by the employer. SBC undertake internal verification, quality assurance and reviews. Most learners have previously undertaken an advanced apprenticeship. One learner is female with no minority ethnic participation.

Key findings

- Success rates for Train to Gain learners completing within their planned timescales are outstanding at 97%. Current learners on the adult apprenticeship programme are making very good progress on their NVQ but have not started on some components of their learning programme.
- Development of learners' driving skills is good. Driver training has improved driving techniques and skills. For example, learners and the employer speak positively about the benefits from the effective coaching they have received especially in relation to driving with heavy loads and driving in wet conditions.
- Learners feel safe, and the development of their driving skills has improved their safety. Accident rates within the company have reduced from 12% to 8% and are continuing to show a downward trend. Learners are highly motivated to achieve this qualification to obtain more job security.
- Training and coaching is very good with a clear emphasis on practical driving sessions. Resources for training are good. However, the introduction of new materials for the programme is slow and some new key skills resources are not available.
- Assessment and assessment planning is good. Assessors use a good range of assessment methods. They provide very good feedback to learners following an assessment. Initial assessment and advice and guidance are satisfactory.
- Partnership arrangements with the employer are excellent and have developed over many years. Joint programme development between the employer and SBC has been highly effective and mutually beneficial. For example, a director of the company is an associate assessor with SBC and is involved effectively in all aspects of the programme.
- Leadership and management of the provision are good. Staff are set challenging performance targets which managers review annually. Quality assurance is robust and effective. Self-assessment is good and judgments are clear and accurate. Internal verification is thorough. However, the promotion of equality and diversity within progress reviews is inconsistent. Reviews do not always reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace.

What does SBC Training need to do to improve further?

- Complete the development and implementation of the new key skills and technical certificate resources, with consideration to the new qualifications due in 2010.
- Reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace by effective promotion during progress reviews.

Business administration

Grade 2

Context

22. SBC provides apprenticeships and NVOs in business administration. Fifty-eight learners are on programmes, eight of which are on Train to Gain, 40 are apprentices and 10 are advanced apprentices. Some 78% per cent of employers are in the care and public health sectors. Around 25% of learners are male and 12% are from minority ethnic groups.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The success rate for Train to Gain learners completing in the agreed timescale in 2008/09 was outstanding at 100%. The success rate for advanced apprentices in 2008/09 increased to 19 points above the national average and was very good. Success rates for apprentices have been roughly in line with national averages for the last three years and are satisfactory.
- Learners develop good occupational skills and demonstrate high levels of confidence in the workplace. They apply new skills well. Learners' work is of a high standard and progress is satisfactory. Progression to higher-level qualifications within SBC and into higher education is good.
- Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices. However, the communication of risk assessments is not always effective. Managers recognise this issue and they have taken effective action to resolve the problem.
- Assessment planning is good. Learners are able to understand their current knowledge and practice well. Learners are confident in identifying evidence they can put forward for assessment. Assessment is frequent and regular and provides motivation and support to learners. Use of technology to support learning and assessment is not consistent.
- Staff plan theory sessions effectively to provide a variety of learning methods to suit learners. Learners take useful optional NVO units that suit their job role and their training needs. SBC is very responsive to employer requirements to set up complex programmes very quickly. However, the content is not tailored to their needs and is not explained sufficiently. The planning of training does not challenge learners sufficiently or provide support for those with specialist needs.
- Target setting does not always stretch learners. Staff give insufficient attention to previous experience and skills when establishing the length of programme. Too little attention is given to achievement of targets when planning learning with the employer.
- Partnerships with employers are highly effective and well-established. Employers and their staff are involved well in learners' training, play an important role in progress reviews and participate well in action planning.
- Support for learners is good. Initial advice and guidance and induction are of a high standard. Learners receive good advice and guidance on completion of their programmes.

- Leadership and management are good. Success rates are high. Effective use of resources supports learning. Staff development is good. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report mostly accurate. At meetings, learners' performance against targets has insufficient emphasis. The internal verification of on-the-job training is insufficiently robust. Feedback to trainers does not give appropriate guidance on how to improve.

What does SBC Training need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that learning programmes and target setting take account of where learners start their training and the type of workplace they are employed at.
- Introduce more detailed information about learners, activities and learning methods into training sessions to enable learners to achieve their learning outcomes.
- Continue to improve the internal quality systems and ensure that internal verification in the workplace is robust.

Information about the inspection

23. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality improvement manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous reinspection.
24. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

SBC Training

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners	387	387
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	n/a	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

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

© Crown copyright 2010