

Siemens PLC

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58736

Name of lead inspector: Tim Hanson HMI

Last day of inspection: 11 December 2009

Type of provider: Employer

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Information about the provider

1. Siemens PLC (Siemens) was established in the United Kingdom (UK) 165 years ago. The company employs 18,402 people in the UK, including about 6,000 in the manufacturing sector. Siemens has offices and factories throughout the UK, with its headquarters in Frimley, Surrey. The company's global headquarters is in Munich, Germany. Siemens provides government funded apprentice training and Train to Gain across three UK sites; Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Ltd Lincoln, Siemens Mobility Rolling Stock, Northampton and Siemens Power Generation and Transmission and Distribution, Newcastle.
2. Funded by the National Employer Service (NES), Siemens currently has 123 apprentices on a national contract following programmes in the engineering and manufacturing technologies subject area. Most apprentices are in Lincoln. Apprentices are normally employed on a three or four year apprentice contract which is transferred, subject to business requirements and achievement of the advanced apprenticeship framework, to qualified employed status. A small Train to Gain provision is currently provided for eight learners. This is Siemens' first inspection.
3. Siemens work with four colleges of further education and one private training provider nationally to deliver off-the-job training for apprentices. The apprentice training programme is managed nationally by the initial training manager based in Lincoln. A team of full-and part-time trainers and assessors including a rolling stock training manager support the training programme nationally.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
 - Lincoln College
 - Tyne Metropolitan College
 - Highbury College
 - Milton Keynes College
 - Southampton Engineering Training Association

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	8 learners
Apprenticeships	123 apprentices

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	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	Grade
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	2

Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of Siemens' provision is good. The company has a good capacity to improve and provides high quality training with good outcomes for learners. A high number of learners achieve their qualifications. They complete well within their planned time. Learners gain particularly high levels of skills. Good mentoring is provided. Both learners and the company benefit from the training taking place in a technologically challenging workplace. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the provision of training in the engineering subject area is good. Learners complete their qualifications well within their planned time. Learners feel particularly safe. Excellent levels of attention are paid to health and safety in the workplace and the arrangements for the safeguarding of learners are good. Learners enjoy and value their training. Support for learners is good with any issues that arise being dealt with rapidly. Leadership and management are good with highly effective strategies in place to ensure the apprenticeship programme is an integral part of the company's business development plans. The promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory with particular success in recruiting females into engineering. However equality and diversity is not fully re-enforced at learner reviews.

Main findings

- Success rates are high. The success rate in 2008/09 was 84% and in the previous two years this averaged 94%. Timely completion rates are also high. The timely completion rate in 2008/09 was 79% and in the previous two years this averaged 77%. Both overall and timely success rates are considerably above the national average. Train to Gain is a new initiative with current learners making good progress.
- Learners develop their skills well. Theoretical and practical training is interspersed with work experience in the different departments of the company. This enables learners to gain a greater understanding and to make an informed choice of their future specialisation.
- Health and safety standards are very high. These are thoroughly established during the company induction, and further reinforced at the subcontractors. In the workplace, the standards are rigorously implemented, and there is a very strong ethos of safe working.
- Learners participate in a wide range of relevant additional training and qualifications. All learners undertake additional National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units at level 3. Learners are given additional formal training in health and safety and related issues. Most learners are enrolled on or have completed a higher level course such as a higher national certificate or foundation degree.
- Planning of on-and off-the-job training and assessment is good. Each learner has a detailed agreed training plan for each of the working areas they are placed in. Supervisors are flexible in organising relevant work for learners to acquire the necessary skills. Assessment of the learners' skills is regular and thorough. The assessment review process records detailed targets for progress.
- Senior managers have a well developed strategy to ensure the apprentice programme is sustained and grows nationally over the next four years. Business requirements have been analysed across the different sector areas and financial commitment given to ensure the apprentice programme is a foundation for future business growth.
- Excellent partnership working with providers of education at all levels has raised young people's awareness of opportunities in the engineering sector. Both financial and human resources have been provided to schools, colleges and universities to aid and encourage joint working on capital and learner projects. Initiatives to encourage females into engineering have been very successful.
- A high level of safeguarding awareness across all levels of staff at the various sites ensures the health, safety and well-being of the learners is secure. Very comprehensive systems and procedures are in place which are maintained and monitored by a designated training team member. An innovative training initiative to raise work place awareness has been introduced.

- Good target setting and monitoring for training staff are in place. Targets are very specific and focused on ensuring learners achieve in their planned time. Staff have a high level of awareness of what is expected in terms of their own performance and are very focused on supporting and guiding learners through their programme.
- The review process is satisfactory. The review of NVQ assessment evidence is good with clear targets set for progress. Reviews to monitor overall progress do not include precise information on progress on all aspects of the programme and does not set clear targets. Equality and diversity is not regularly re-enforced as part of the learner review process.
- All learners take an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy and an aptitude test. The recording and dissemination of results is insufficient. The results are not recorded on the individual learning plan. Staff responsible for training and assessing learners are not made aware of the outcome of initial assessment and are not able to plan individual targeted support.
- Internal verification is satisfactory. Sampling plans ensure that all learners and assessors' work is sampled. Portfolios are checked regularly and feedback is given to assessors. Standardisation is satisfactory. However, the internal verification of workplace assessments is not planned. Checks that sufficient workplace assessment observations are carried out are unclear.
- Although subcontracting arrangements are well documented and monitored not all service level agreements are yet in place for this year. Health and safety visits and teaching observations take place and are well recorded, however systems are not in place to ensure initial paperwork is completed in a timely manner.

What does Siemens need to do to improve further?

- Introduce a better system for monitoring, analysing and reporting learner progress on all aspects of their programme during their reviews. Include more precise information on progress for all elements of the programme
- Record the results of initial assessment and other testing, including any specific learning needs that should be dealt with, in the individual learning plan. Provide this information to all staff who are involved with the training and assessment of learners enabling them to plan to meet individual needs.
- Implement a plan to internally verify workplace assessments. Improve the rigour of internal verification to ensure that all assessment issues are identified and action taken to address these. Plan sufficient observation of workplace assessments by internal verifiers.
- Improve the reinforcement and understanding of equality and diversity for learners by ensuring that questions are posed as part of the formal review process.

- Improve the recording of subcontractor arrangements to ensure all paperwork is completed in a timely manner and is easily accessible for monitoring purposes.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the college courses and tutors
- the well structured programme
- the good resources which are easily available
- the good range of qualifications at the end of the programme
- learning on the job
- the excellent training
- all of the staff are very helpful
- the way the company deals with a personal issues very professionally.

What learners would like to see improved:

- a better initial briefing on the requirements of the NVQ.

Summary of the views of supervisors as confirmed by inspectors

What supervisors like:

- the well structured programme
- the flexibility to ensure that the learner receive the best programme
- the support from the training department
- the chance to see all the apprentices during training
- the good system of log books and NVQ portfolios.

What supervisors would like to see improved:

- nothing reported.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. Siemens demonstrates a good capacity to improve. It has maintained high success rates, which are well above the national averages, and high standards of training. Targets are used well to maintain the high success rates. Staff are given high but achievable targets to work towards, and the outcomes of these are used as part of annual staff appraisal. All staff continually look for improvement and share identified improvements and good practice at regular team meetings. Assessor surveys and feedback from learners have both resulted in positive changes to the provision. At regular reviews with subcontractors, issues raised are used as part of the quality improvement process. Good quality subcontractor and workplace resources are updated regularly to reflect current industry standards.
7. The self-assessment process is mainly inclusive, and is influenced by views gained from a range of internal and external partners. The quality improvement plan is detailed and accurate. The self-assessment report was mainly accurate in the grades proposed and the improvements needed.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Outcomes for learners are good. Siemens achieves very good overall success rates on its advanced apprenticeships. Rates are high and in 2008/09, 85% of the apprentices achieved all their qualifications. In the previous three years the average success rate was 94%, which is well above the national average for engineering. Timely success rates are also good. In the period 2008/09 they were 79%, and the average over the previous three years was 77%, again well above the national average. There are no differences in the performance of different groups.
9. Learners develop very good engineering skills and work with a wide range of sophisticated materials and machines. Learners readily take responsibility for their own learning programmes and for their progress on the level 3 NVQ. Learners feel safe and have very high health and safety standards. Learners obtain suitable employment with Siemens at the end of their training. Some achieve promotion and many senior staff within the company are previous apprentices.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

10. The quality of provision is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The planning of on and off the job training and assessment is comprehensive and effective. Supervisors are flexible in organising relevant work for learners to

acquire the necessary skills and to provide regular assessment opportunities. Assessment of learner's skills is regular and thorough.

11. The review process is satisfactory. The review of NVQ assessment evidence is good with clear targets set for progress. Reviews to monitor overall progress do not include precise information on the learner's progress on all aspects of the programme and clear targets are not set. There is no overarching system for monitoring and measuring progress on all aspects of the programme. All learners take an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy and an aptitude test. The recording and dissemination of these is insufficient.
12. Internal verification is satisfactory. Sampling plans ensure that all learners and assessors' work is sampled. Portfolios are checked regularly and feedback is given to assessors. However, the internal verification of workplace assessments is not planned. Internal verification does not always identify the required improvements to assessment practice.
13. Provision for meeting the needs of learners is good. Both on-and off-the-job training programmes are flexibly planned to meet Siemens' business needs and the learner's career preferences. Provision provides clear career progression routes. Supervisors are highly involved in planning and delivering training which meets the skills needs of their area.
14. All learners have good access to and participate in a wide range of relevant additional training and qualifications. They take additional NVQ units at level 3 and receive additional formal training in health and safety, abrasive wheels and lift-truck operation . Of the 16 learners who completed in 2008/09, 12 are enrolled on or have completed a higher national certificate or foundation degree.
15. Excellent partnerships are in place with local education providers' which give learners the opportunity to integrate with school pupils both in the workplace and in the schools. Learners assist schools with science and technology projects for GCSE and work with younger school pupils to raise awareness of engineering through school visits and by encouraging pupils to attend the workplace for appreciation visits which learners host.
16. Advice, guidance and support are good. The recruitment process is thorough and applicants are provided with good information on all aspects of the programme. Good support is provided at all stages of the programme. Mentors are appointed to provide good support in the workplace and learners value this highly. Siemens make good adaptations for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

17. Leadership and management are good. Well planned strategies ensure the apprentice programme is used in forward projections to ensure future business needs are met. Part of Siemens strategy is to improve the business through apprentice training. Resources are well managed and reviewed regularly. Demanding performance targets are set annually for training staff which are closely monitored and particularly focused on learner achievement. Good levels of communication and good practice sharing through regular team meetings provide the drive for improvement and consistency in programme achievement.
18. Excellent partnerships are in place with a range of educational institutions. The company provide good support for local education initiatives. Ranging from degree level at universities to primary level at schools Siemens' has a range of initiatives to ensure opportunities are available for learners. Work experience for school pupils are provided across all the company's departments and industrial placements are provided for school teachers. The company is working with a local university to develop and part finance an engineering facility and has supported schools financially and with educational resources. Partnerships are in place with a range of standards setting bodies across the various Siemens engineering disciplines and the company has been active in revising and piloting industry standards.
19. Safeguarding arrangements within Siemens are good. As part of the Siemens national safeguarding strategy a comprehensive young workers policy has been introduced. The project is overseen by a member of staff who is qualified to level 2 safeguarding. Very informative staff awareness sessions have taken place for assessors and shop floor awareness talks for all staff have been introduced. Safeguarding risk assessments have taken place to reflect all the key areas of the company and managers have received guidance to support the young workers policy. The company acts an umbrella body for the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) and all relevant staff are CRB checked. A central register is held and staff undergo a three year re-approval check. As part of its community partnership initiative, the company CRB check any of its partner volunteer organisations for no cost. Preparations for the introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority Vetting and Barring scheme 2010 are underway with staff training and operational procedures being produced.
20. Management of health and safety is very good. A comprehensive range of systems and procedures including two learner inductions ensure the safety of learners and school visitors. Health and safety are an integral component of the young workers policy and specifically aimed to promote a consistent approach to learner health and safety across all Siemens sites. Managers give regular shop floor health and safety talks. Information technology use is electronically monitored and a comprehensive policy regarding the use of computers is in place.

21. Equality and diversity within Siemens are satisfactory. Learners receive a thorough induction and throughout their training the strong culture of equality and diversity within the company is inherent in all their activities. All staff have a good awareness of equality and diversity. Staff at all levels are either formally trained in equality and diversity or have received shop floor awareness raising talks. Policies are in place for the key aspects of equality and diversity including bullying and harassment. One potential bullying incident had been quickly dealt with and comprehensively recorded. Good use is made of data to monitor recruitment statistics and to measure the performance of different groups. A women into engineering initiative has been particularly successful and the company has more than twice the national average of female learners on its engineering programmes. However minority ethnic representation is low and no initiatives are currently in place to improve this. Opportunities are missed at the regular learner reviews to reinforce equality and diversity.
22. Subcontracting arrangements with the five subcontractors are comprehensive. Service level agreements are in place and are particularly detailed. Targets are agreed and closely monitored by training staff through regular contract review visits. Observations of subcontractor training take place and programmes are reviewed regularly. Safeguarding and equality and diversity are an integral part of all subcontracting arrangements and are regularly reviewed. However some inconsistencies in the completion of subcontractor documentation had not been identified by training staff.
23. Siemens' self assessment process is well established and fully inclusive. Good use of a range of data analysis informs the company's drive to maintain and improve performance and forms the basis for improvement planning. Quality improvement planning is well monitored and regularly updated through national training team meetings.

Information about the inspection

24. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's initial training manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plan, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and data on learners and their achievement.
25. 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 assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from the subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Siemens PLC

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	131	131
Part-time learners	0	0
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?	1	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	1	
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?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
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

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