

SYTG Ltd

Reinspection report

Unique reference number: 54504

Name of lead inspector: Ian McMillan HMI

Last day of inspection: 22 April 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. SYTG was formed in June 1990. It is located in premises near Sheffield city centre. SYTG has a contract with South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme. It also has a contract jointly funded by Sheffield local authority and local schools to provide a Vocational Support Programme (VSP) for learners aged 14 to 16 who are disengaged from school. The majority of SYTG's business is government-funded training.
2. At the previous inspection in December 2008, SYTG's overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, achievement and standards, quality of provision, leadership and management and employability training were all inadequate. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory.
3. The company's two managing directors have overall responsibility for all aspects of the company's performance. The company's programme manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the training programme. SYTG has three other members of staff; they also use occasional part-time tutors.
4. Like most E2E providers, SYTG works with learners who have failed or been excluded from other training programmes or compulsory education. SYTG has established itself as a specialist provider who supports the progression and development of learners with significant barriers to employability and complex support needs.
5. The unemployment rate for Sheffield is 4.2% compared with 3.4% for England as a whole. The proportion of young people achieving five or more GCSEs including English and maths at grade C or above in Sheffield was 49% in 2009 compared with the national average of 50%. In South Yorkshire the participation in learning at age 16 to 18 is generally below the national average.
6. SYTG provides training on behalf of the following providers:

- Sheffield local authority

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Provision for young learners: Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	36 learners
14 to 16 VSP programme	6 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	
Preparation for life and work	3

Overall effectiveness

7. The overall effectiveness of SYTG's provision is satisfactory. The two directors have provided sound leadership that has raised expectations for learners. SYTG has implemented a satisfactory range of improvements since the previous inspection. Learner progression rates are satisfactory and improving, and more learners are now progressing within agreed timescales. Learners develop appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy skills and gain nationally recognised qualifications. Teaching, learning and assessment practices are satisfactory. However, attendance and timekeeping at some sessions are poor. SYTG works very productively with employers to provide good work experience that meets the needs of learners and employers. Learners say that they feel safe and are well protected from abuse.
8. The majority of SYTG's learners have complex support needs and significant barriers to progression. There are good support arrangements in place, which are effective and valued by learners and employers. Equality and diversity are satisfactory and promoted well. SYTG is aware of the need to measure the achievement of all the different groups of learners more effectively. SYTG has improved many of the issues identified at the previous inspection. However, it has been slow to fully address some aspects of its quality improvement arrangements.

Main findings

- Learners, who regularly attend, develop good employability skills and improve their self-confidence. All learners undertake external qualifications including literacy and numeracy. Qualification success rates and progression rates into further education, training or employment are satisfactory and improving. However, more work needs to be done to improve progression rates and increase the proportion of learners who progress within agreed timescales.
- Since the previous inspection, SYTG has improved teaching, training and assessment to a satisfactory level. Better planned learning sessions and more interesting teaching methods have helped to make learning more effective and enjoyable. SYTG is aware that it needs to improve further the way it plans learning and develop more learning resources to support the needs of all learners.
- Learners benefit from very well planned and carefully chosen work placements. During work placements, learners receive good employer support to develop their employability skills and improve their economic and social well-being. Learners feel safe, and health and safety in the workplace is a high priority for staff and employers.
- Learning support, English language skills development, literacy, numeracy, and personal effectiveness are effective and have improved well since the previous inspection. SYTG quickly identifies learners' preferred learning styles and specialist support needs and uses this information well to inform the planning of individual learning and support.
- Tutors and assessors have appropriate vocational skills and expertise. Some have enhanced professional qualifications. However, too few members of staff hold professional competencies or specialist qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy.
- SYTG works particularly well with a range of partners. The good communication with organisations like Connexions, the Youth Offending Team, specialist support agencies and the Probation Service are effective in supporting the most vulnerable learners throughout the E2E programme. Employer partnership arrangements are excellent and help to inform the development of programmes and work-experience opportunities for learners.
- Advice and guidance are helpful in developing learners' sense of responsibility for their own future. Information and support for progression are available and are increasingly effective. Learners' progress reviews are regular and provide the clear messages and targets they need to progress and improve. Punctuality and attendance at learning sessions are improving, but still poor.
- Equality, diversity and arrangements to promote safeguarding are satisfactory. SYTG promotes equality and diversity well through reviews and the curriculum. SYTG attracts learners from across a wide range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic groups. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the performance of different learner groups.
- SYTG's programmes are generally well managed and senior staff provide adequate leadership and direction. However, quality improvement arrangements

are weak. This includes the arrangements to improve teaching and learning, the use of management information, self-assessment, action planning, and the use of learners' and employers' feedback.

What does SYTG need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve learners' progression into education, training and employment by, for example, improving poor attendance rates and through a stronger focus on learning and progression throughout the programme.
- Improve staff professional competencies and qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy.
- Develop teaching and learning resources and strategies to improve personalised learning and improve attendance and punctuality at learning sessions.
- Ensure that performance monitoring of different learner groups takes place more systematically to, for example, identify and reduce variations in performance.
- Develop more effective ways of using learner and employer feedback to inform and promote improvements.
- Continue to improve quality improvement by, for example, introducing more focused actions to improve teaching and learning, through more evaluation and use of information and data to inform action planning and more self-critical and detailed self-assessment.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly learning centre and good learning environment
- being treated like adults
- being able to work at your own pace
- feeling safe with no bullying
- each day is different with a mixture of activities
- the very good support from helpful tutors
- help with reading and maths and a chance to gain qualifications
- having regular progress reviews.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more varied learning opportunities
- more easy to use and understand learning resources in personal and social development sessions
- more space in the learning centre
- better social facilities for break times.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good working relationships that are strongly promoted by SYTG
- the support and training provided by SYTG
- how SYTG responds so quickly to meet our needs
- how SYTG takes care to place learners appropriately
- the very good trainees with good employability skills.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. SYTG has a satisfactory capacity to make and sustain improvements. Managers have a clear strategic direction, very good understanding of national and local priorities and have been successful in developing a positive and supportive environment for learners and staff. SYTG maintains satisfactory value for money through its business planning and operational management arrangements. SYTG has responded well to the workforce reforms and staff have obtained, or are working towards, qualified teacher status. Resources are sufficient but need further development to provide more teaching and learning resources to better support all learners.
10. Arrangements to promote equality, diversity and safeguarding are satisfactory, and widening of participation is good. SYTG has made a number of effective improvements since the last inspection including the removal of inadequate teaching, better progress reviews, and more effective promotion of equality and diversity. However, quality improvement and self-assessment arrangements remain weak. SYTG recognises that the development of these aspects of the organisation are a key priority and a critical factor in securing further improvements.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Learners' progression rates and attainment of personal learning objectives are satisfactory and compare well to national progression rates. Most progression is onto further education courses or directly into employment. Particularly well organised work experience adds significant value to learners' skill and personal development. There is no noticeable variation in the achievement of personal objectives or progression rates between different groups of learners.
12. Since the previous inspection SYTG has introduced a richer and more interesting blend of vocational learning options and qualifications and learners benefit from good participation and satisfactory success in these areas. Learners on the VSP programme integrate back into mainstream schooling well or progress onto other support initiatives.
13. Learners' development of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. Learners with English as their second language quickly gain good levels of self-confidence and receive good support to develop citizenship knowledge and understanding. The good behaviour and a positive attitude for learning and personal development by learners are strongly supported and promoted by all SYTG tutors and support staff. Many learners show significant improvement in their self-confidence during their work-experience sessions and their contributions are highly valued by employers.
14. All learners have a good understanding of safe working practices and adopt them in learning and at work. They feel safe and have a sound understanding

of their rights and responsibilities at work. Learners are well motivated, generally enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Attendance and punctuality is poor. SYTG is working hard to provide the necessary development and support for this issue and there are early signs of improvement.

15. SYTG has a satisfactory range of initiatives to support learner awareness of health and well-being issues including lessons to support healthy eating. Learners' contribution to the community is good. Learners participate in fundraising activities, charitable events and community gardening projects.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

16. Teaching, training and assessment are satisfactory. SYTG has been successful in improving aspects of teaching, training and assessment since the last inspection. For example, tutors use more varied and interesting teaching and assessment methods to better engage and challenge learners. SYTG is aware that more work is still needed to develop resources that better support individual learner needs.
17. SYTG has very effective working partnerships with employers. SYTG's E2E programme, external qualification options and the good work-experience arrangements are planned well to meet learner and employer needs. Learners benefit from the wide range of employers who support the E2E programme and provide good vocational work experience. SYTG has expanded and built on this strength since the previous inspection. SYTG sensitively matches learners to the most appropriate employer and employers value the work that learners undertake during work-experience sessions. Learners are prepared well to help them benefit from a good learning experience while at work.
18. Support for learners is good. SYTG has improved all aspects of its support arrangements since the previous inspection. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory and quickly identify individual needs. SYTG works well with learners who have been rejected by similar providers in Sheffield and provides support in a caring and respectful manner. To ensure adequate specialist support is available SYTG has developed links with a broad range of external specialist providers and agencies. It provides effective support for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners from a range of countries and cultures and support for the development of literacy and numeracy for all learners is well developed and effective. SYTG is aware that it needs to ensure more of its own staff develop specialist qualifications in areas such as ESOL and literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are satisfactory. SYTG's managers are extremely well informed about national and local priorities and have a clear strategic direction. The organisation's strong commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable young learners is commendable. There is a positive and supportive culture within the company that is particularly helpful to learners, many of

whom have multiple barriers to learning and employment. SYTG has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to guide its operation although there is insufficient monitoring of their impact. Managers and tutors have successfully obtained, or are working towards, qualified teacher status and all are members of the Institute for Learning.

20. SYTG's annual business plan for 2009/10 closely matches the company's mission statement and identifies relevant objectives to develop the provision. Regular staff meetings take place through which actions needed to resolve identified issues are agreed, implemented and reviewed. Staff performance review arrangements are satisfactory but staff appraisal reports lack detailed evaluations. Assessment practices and internal verification arrangements are satisfactory.
21. SYTG has improved progression rates since the last inspection but recognises that there is still much more work to do in this area; for example, improving learner attendance rates at training sessions. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced but require more support in improving their professional competence in areas like literacy, language and numeracy.
22. Equality, diversity and safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory overall. SYTG has established itself as a provider who is highly effective at supporting the most vulnerable learners who often have significant and complex support and developmental needs. It provides this support with great skill and a strong sense of respect for the individual. Staff are particularly well informed about learners' difficulties, disabilities and learning needs and they respond well to meet their welfare requirements. Good partnership arrangements are in place with a range of external organisations that provide specialist support to learners when required. Through the recruitment procedures, SYTG widens participation very well and makes a very positive contribution to social inclusion and racial integration in the area. SYTG's 14 to 16 vocational support programme helps disengaged young people return to learning.
23. SYTG takes considerable care when placing learners with employers to ensure they are safe and satisfactorily protected from harassment, bullying, discrimination and unfair treatment. Appropriate health and safety procedures for risk assessing the learning centre and work placements are in place and effective. All the necessary safeguarding checks have taken place and they meet current government requirements. The promotion and prioritisation of safeguarding and equality and diversity have improved since the previous inspection, in particular during learning sessions and reviews. However, SYTG needs to do more systematic performance monitoring of different learner groups and, where needed, establish action plans to reduce any variations in performance.
24. Quality improvement arrangements remain poor. SYTG has made good progress in some areas since the last inspection; for example, improving the management of learning programmes, eradicating much inadequate teaching and increasing the range of external qualifications available to learners.

Nevertheless, key aspects of quality improvement remain weak. For example, SYTG does not fully scrutinise all the information and data it collects to inform its action and improvement plans, current arrangements to observe teaching and learning do not lead to focused actions for improvement and SYTG's self-assessment report lacks detail and misses the opportunity to use all the data and information available to support its judgements more systematically.

25. Overall, the provision provides satisfactory value for money. While most learners have significant barriers to learning and employment, many make satisfactory progress and develop the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their learning objectives. Resources are appropriate and well managed to meet the needs of learners. SYTG gives satisfactory importance to use resources in a sustainable way.

Information about the inspection

26. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's programme manager, as nominee, carried out the reinspection. 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), 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 inspection.
27. 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 and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from both programmes SYTG offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

SYTG Ltd

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	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	36	0	36
Part-time learners	6	6	0
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3		
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?	3		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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