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8 November 2017

Mr Don Brearly
Chief Executive
West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd
Office 26, Bradford Chamber Business Park
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Dear Mr Brearly

Short inspection of West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd

Following the short inspection on 11 and 12 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in May 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your staff have taken successful action to address most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Your managers have worked indefatigably to promote high standards and to support quality improvement throughout the consortium. Your team have created robust quality assurance and improvement processes and the high proportion of apprentices achieving their qualifications has been maintained.

At the time of this inspection, a consortium of delivery partners comprising 11 subcontractors provides all of the education and training for West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd (WYLP). CMS Vocational Training and Learning Innovations Training Team Ltd are the largest, offering apprenticeships in a range of vocational areas, including accounting, business administration, customer service, management and retail. Aire Vocational Training, Forward Steps Training and Halifax Opportunities Trust specialise in apprenticeships in the childcare sector. Mark Betts, The Link Academy and Taylors Training specialise in hairdressing and barbering. Dutton Fisher is one of the newest members of the consortium, offering the new standards apprenticeships in housing. Aspire 2 B is the smallest subcontractor, offering only traineeships. Since the previous inspection, managers have worked particularly closely with Roche Training Solutions, which specialises in health and social care apprenticeships, to improve the quality of education and training for apprentices.

Since the previous inspection, you and your management team have made some difficult strategic decisions about the education and training that you offer. As a result of changes to apprenticeship funding arrangements, you have decided to terminate the WYLP contract with the funding agency, and to support the members of the consortium to join the register of approved training providers to secure contracts in their own right. Your company will cease to recruit new apprentices to your contract from November 2017 but will continue to recruit trainees, who will have to complete their course by July 2018.

Together with your team, you recognise the importance of developing trainers' practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the consortium, and this is an important aspect of the quality improvement strategy. Your team has a range of effective mechanisms to share good practice across the consortium, including regular meetings, written briefings and support groups such as EMBED. The EMBED group supports trainers to share good practice in the teaching of English and mathematics and in developing apprentices' and trainees' understanding of life in modern Britain. This group has overseen the production of an innovative resource for trainers containing very helpful ideas to use in their teaching. The members of the consortium value highly the support that they receive from you and your team.

The company has introduced traineeships recently within the consortium. At the time of the inspection, a small number of trainees are enrolled on to these courses, but you intend to continue to enrol trainees in this contract year. The programmes are well planned and prepare trainees for apprenticeships very effectively. You and your team have also introduced new standards apprenticeships, and employers, particularly in housing, value the emphasis that these apprenticeships place on developing appropriate behaviours within the workplace.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers have robust arrangements for safeguarding throughout the consortium. Managers make the expectations of each subcontractor clear in the safeguarding policy. Designated safeguarding leads have received appropriate training. Clearly defined responsibilities and good communication between WYLP staff and subcontractor staff ensures that apprentices are safe. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that safeguarding incidents are recorded efficiently and that appropriate interventions are made, including referral to external agencies. Directors have good oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Apprentices and trainees feel safe and know to whom they should report any concerns.

Managers place a high priority on fulfilling their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. A detailed risk assessment and action plan is in place for WYLP, and for each of the subcontractors. The risk assessments are appropriately contextualised to the risks within the West Yorkshire area, and managers conduct regular checks of progress towards implementing the plan. Safeguarding, the dangers of extremism, and how to recognise the signs of radicalism are covered by trainers during induction and in their regular meetings with individual apprentices. As a result, most apprentices demonstrate a sound understanding of the dangers of extremist views.

Apprentices at Roche Training Solutions and Mark Betts demonstrate a good understanding. However, trainers at CMS Vocational Training are not developing apprentices' understanding fully.

Inspection findings

- Managers have a very effective strategic focus on providing support to develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills across the consortium. As a result of this strategy, a high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics. Managers provide good support to improve the quality of teaching of English and mathematics in subcontractors where achievements are too low. The proportion of apprentices achieving qualifications in English and mathematics is now good across all subcontractors in the consortium. WYLP managers support staff from each subcontractor to take level 3 qualifications in English and mathematics, which has improved the confidence of staff in helping apprentices to develop these skills. Trainers plan effective opportunities to develop apprentices' mathematics and English skills. However, too few trainers within the consortium extend apprentices' skills in English and mathematics beyond the minimum level required for their qualification.
- Managers plan traineeships well, with the duration of the traineeship determined by the skills of the individual trainee. All trainees benefit from appropriate work experience and most trainees progress onto an apprenticeship. Current trainees with the Link Academy develop skills to prepare them for employment within the hair industry; they improve their confidence and ability to deal effectively with customers. Trainees complete work to a high standard and are very proud of the work that they produce.
- The quality assurance processes that managers use are rigorous. Managers have a good oversight of the performance of each provider within the consortium. WYLP managers monitor the progress of apprentices with each subcontractor regularly. They have precise and useful management information to identify the subcontractors where apprentices are making slower progress, and the board of directors receive a summary of progress at each meeting. All subcontractors have regular performance reviews. Any subcontractor at risk of not meeting their targets receives extra intervention such as more-frequent reviews of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and closer scrutiny of the progress of individual apprentices.
- Managers ensure that the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned timescale remains high, and in every current subcontractor the proportion is above that found in similar providers. The proportion of apprentices who achieved within the planned timescale with Learning Innovations Training Team Ltd, although still high, declined significantly in 2016/17. The vast majority of current apprentices across the consortium make at least the expected progress.
- Apprentices' starting points are identified accurately, and this information is used well by trainers to identify apprentices who would benefit from additional support. Trainers provide effective support to apprentices. The way that this support benefits apprentices and contributes to their progress is monitored well through regular individual progress reviews. For a minority of the most able

apprentices, trainers do not use information about starting points to plan learning that provides sufficient challenge to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Arrangements for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Managers at WYLP have trained all observers to focus precisely on learning and the development of apprentices' skills. They use employer feedback well to contribute to an accurate evaluation of the quality of training that apprentices receive. Feedback to trainers clearly identifies how they need to improve their practice, and managers build this information into the quality monitoring and improvement plan for each subcontractor.
- Trainers provide effective individual coaching of apprentices, which clearly links qualification requirements to apprentices' job roles. Trainers provide good feedback to apprentices in the workplace, and this ensures that the vast majority of apprentices understand the progress that they are making, and how to develop their vocational skills further. Most apprentices gain in confidence as a result of their training and make a valuable contribution to the workplace. In a small minority of cases, trainers do not plan well and waste too much time in one-to-one sessions and, as a result, the progress of a few apprentices in these sessions is slow.
- Managers have planned the introduction of new standards apprenticeships carefully, and they work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices are receiving appropriate off-the-job training. Employers support the new apprenticeships and recruit apprentices carefully. Managers are developing assessment well to ensure that the progress of apprentices is carefully tracked in hairdressing, where apprentices have no mandatory qualifications to complete.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- trainers across all subcontractors develop fully apprentices' understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism
- trainers across the provision use information about apprentices' starting points to challenge the most able apprentices to make the progress of which they are capable, in both their vocational qualifications and the development of their mathematics and English skills
- managers continue to monitor the progress of apprentices rigorously/closely and ensure that staff in all subcontractors support the minority of apprentices who make slower progress.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Angus
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team comprised one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors, and were assisted by you in the role of nominee. We met with you and members of your team. We observed teaching and learning sessions at employer premises and visited subcontractors. We spoke to learners, apprentices and employers. We scrutinised key documents, including those related to safeguarding, self-assessment and quality assurance. We analysed achievement data.