

Inspection of Reach4Skills Training Ltd

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Reach4Skills Training Ltd began to offer apprenticeships in 2016 as a subcontractor. Since 2018, it has had a direct contract and ceased its work as a subcontractor for apprenticeships. At the time of the monitoring visit in 2019, there were three apprentices. There are now 129 apprentices, of whom 47 are aged 16 to 18.

Almost all apprentices are studying on early years specialist apprenticeships, with 17 on the level 2 early years practitioner, 78 studying level 3 early years educator and 9 studying level 5 early years manager apprenticeships. Eight apprentices are studying level 3 business administrator and there are a few studying a range of other apprenticeships, including level 3 and level 4 specialist programmes in procurement and supply. Eighty-four apprentices study functional skills mathematics and 58 apprentices study functional skills English as part of their apprenticeship.

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

Apprentices are motivated to succeed. They enjoy their studies and are keen to do well. Apprentices become proficient in their roles quickly, and they develop the knowledge and skills to become skilled practitioners. For example, early years apprentices apply their learning on child development milestones confidently and accurately when they discuss a child's learning with their parents.

Apprentices benefit from the close working between their tutors and their line managers so they can learn new skills to meet the needs of different groups of children. For example, tutors and line managers arranged for early years apprentices to learn Makaton to support deaf children and others to learn strategies to improve language development of toddlers through singing and use of puppets.

Apprentices learn about the expected professional behaviours in their workplace and demonstrate these from early on in their programme. For example, business administrator apprentices learn about professional standards in their workplaces, including how to communicate to a range of external stakeholders. This helps them become more confident and able to participate in more business-related activities, for example sales events.

Apprentices feel safe. They are confident that their tutors or their employers would act on any concerns they raised.

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

Leaders and managers have developed a range of early years specialist apprenticeships to meet the needs of the early years sector. They work closely with employers and relevant sector bodies to ensure that the qualifications, courses and training they offer meet local needs and professional requirements. More recently, they have broadened their apprenticeship offer in response to regional skills gaps and employer demand. For example, they now offer procurement and supply apprenticeships to meet regional demand.

Tutors are very passionate about their roles. They are well qualified and have significant vocational experience in their specialisms. For example, early years tutors have substantial sector experience, including managing nurseries and childcare settings. Apprentices benefit from this. They rapidly learn valuable knowledge and skills that help them to thrive in their workplaces. For example, they learn how to work with children and their families from different religious and cultural backgrounds so that they can meet the children's needs, including their dietary requirements.

Tutors know their apprentices well. They work closely with employers so that they know what each apprentice needs to learn next or where they need further support. They plan bespoke sessions which build on the individual apprentice's learning to date. This helps them to acquire new knowledge during their off-the-job training

that they can use in their roles. For example, business administrator apprentices learn about the importance of data protection and relevant legislation before they have access to clients' data in their workplace.

Tutors are skilful in explaining new knowledge to their apprentices. They encourage apprentices to apply their learning to their workplace and this helps apprentices secure new knowledge. For example, apprentices deepen their knowledge about language acquisition through using scenarios based on different-aged children. However, a few tutors do not check apprentices' learning thoroughly enough or they do not encourage deeper understanding. For example, an over-reliance on simple questioning limits apprentices from exploring the topic in sufficient detail.

Tutors monitor their apprentices' progress carefully. They use a range of methods to ensure that apprentices know what they are doing well and what they could improve. For example, level 3 early years apprentices benefit from helpful feedback so that they know the importance of using different child development theorists in a longitudinal study. However, tutors do not challenge level 2 apprentices to produce work that is of a high enough standard to equip them fully with the knowledge and skills they will need for success at the next level.

Tutors annotate apprentices' written work to show where there are spelling, punctuation or grammar errors. However, they do not provide sufficient guidance on what the specific errors are or how to improve these essential skills. For example, business administrator apprentices need to be accurate in their written communication with internal and external stakeholders.

Apprentices studying functional skills English and/or mathematics benefit from helpful sessions as well as plentiful resources for them to access online. A newly appointed specialist tutor works with apprentices on a one-to-one basis to help them with specific problem areas. For example, apprentices benefit from sessions where they work through topics of personal challenge, such as geometry, with helpful advice on how to break down the problem into its component parts.

Apprentices with additional learning needs, including those with education, health and care plans, benefit from prompt and appropriate support. For example, apprentices with dyslexia or dyscalculia have the support they need to complete their work successfully.

Leaders and managers have implemented comprehensive processes to monitor the quality of their provision. They review relevant data carefully, observe tutors and monitor their work frequently. Although their overall judgements are broadly accurate, too often there is a slowness to follow up on their identified actions, which limits the pace of improvements. For example, tutors value the very helpful feedback following visits to their sessions but support for improvement is not always provided in a timely way. This means that tutors cannot act on the recommended actions as soon as they would like to.

Leaders and managers have identified the importance of a governance function to challenge and support them in their roles. Although they have started the process of finding suitable governors, they have not yet recruited any to the post. They recognise this is a priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have implemented relevant policies, including one for safer recruitment. All staff complete appropriate safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two deputies benefit from enhanced training so they can advise all staff on their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff confidently refer any apprentices they have concerns about to the DSL. The DSLs and wider staff team provide effective support.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that apprentices have a good understanding of local risks in their own areas. Although tutors produce a range of 'hot topic' information, too many apprentices do not recall this learning.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should provide more timely support for tutors so that they can continue to improve their teaching skills.
- Leaders and managers should equip tutors with the skills to provide more specific guidance so that apprentices can improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors provide more challenging learning activities so that level 2 apprentices can develop the knowledge and skills they need for success on higher-level programmes.
- Leaders and managers should review how tutors support apprentices to develop a good understanding of risks in their local areas.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that their plans to develop an appropriate governance arrangement are implemented promptly so that they can benefit from sufficient support and challenge for their actions.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2510875
Address	Gatcombe House Copnor Road Portsmouth Hants PO3 5EJ
Contact number	0845 519 4480
Website	www.reach4skills.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Charlotte White
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, 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.

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