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Mr Andrew Ayres  
Director  
Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy Limited  
Belgrave House  
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Crawley  
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Dear Mr Ayres

### **Short inspection of Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy Limited**

Following the short inspection on 5 and 6 December 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 August 2014.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Since the previous inspection, you have recruited two new directors who specialise in adult learning and apprenticeships. This strengthens the board's expertise and ability to challenge progress and decisions. A team of three sector managers appointed over the past two years has increased your management capacity to respond to, and increase, the pace of improvement. Through their close monitoring of learners' progress, managers dealt with the 2015/16 decrease in learners' achievement rates and these are now high for adult learners and the majority of apprentices. Your data shows significantly improved achievement for apprentices so far this year.

Partnerships continue to be strong. You have grown the provision since the previous inspection and increased the number of apprentices. Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy Limited (Rewards Training) offers a broader range of courses and levels, particularly on preparation for work and health and social care programmes. You work with fewer, but different, subcontractors on the apprenticeship programme. You now recruit apprentices from a wider geographical area and in new subjects, such as digital media.

Managers know what needs to improve and carry out incisive self-assessment. They have maintained strengths from the previous inspection through setting, and meeting, challenging targets. Managers monitor subcontractors' training, assessment and outcomes very carefully and tackle underperformance where appropriate. For example, when a subcontractor's apprentices made slow progress,

and this was not improving, you ended the contract and allocated a Rewards Training assessor to help learners complete their training programme.

Managers have tackled the majority of areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. They observe tutors' and assessors' training and assessment carefully and use their findings to prioritise staff training. This has helped maintain good-quality training and assessment. Although assessors set suitable targets to ensure that apprentices make good progress, few learners have sufficiently aspirational targets to help them reach their potential.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and you take effective action to safeguard all learners. Staff are well trained and use their expertise to raise learners' and employers' awareness, challenging employers to strengthen their systems where appropriate. Where incidents have occurred, managers take appropriate action, including referring learners to external specialist organisations. They maintain comprehensive records of actions taken, and leaders scrutinise these to inform future improvements. This has helped you make changes to the apprentices' recruitment process so that assessors identify vulnerable learners earlier. Staff create a nurturing and caring learning environment. Learners feel, and are, safe.

Managers have made good progress in implementing the 'Prevent' duty action plan. The majority of staff have had recent update training. Tutors display visually attractive posters in the training centre about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. This has helped adult learners understand how these apply to them, including when using the internet. Managers recently introduced 'topics of the month' for apprentices in subjects such as cyber bullying, but not all apprentices have sufficient awareness of how to stay safe online. Too few apprentices appreciate how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism are relevant to them at work or in their personal lives.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and managers use data well to identify trends in achievement rates and to focus improvement action. Because of this, they took very effective action that increased achievement rates in most subject areas in 2016/17 and narrowed gaps in achievement by different groups, such as male and female apprentices.
- Managers monitor the quality of training and assessment well. They know where good practice exists and what needs to improve. Managers prioritise staff training and individual tutor and assessor support well to deal with identified weaknesses, for example, in training tutors and assessors so they could teach English and mathematics confidently.
- Leaders and managers have good partnerships through a wide range of network groups. They maintain good contacts with local stakeholders. They listen and act upon partners' feedback to make sure Rewards Training offers courses that meet local priorities. For example, in response to requests from local employers, the

borough council and careers staff, managers introduced a course to develop unemployed adult learners' skills for the construction industry. This very successful course has outstanding achievement rates and a high proportion of adult learners now work on building projects or sites.

- Managers and assessors forge productive links with a wide range of employers and subcontractors. This has helped Rewards Training to offer apprentices a broad choice of subjects. Managers and assessors support employers well by helping them recruit apprentices and providing frequent reports about their progress.
- Apprentices develop good vocational skills that they use well at work. For example, health and social care apprentices relate anatomy theory and the procedures for 'consent' more effectively to their service users. Many apprentices take on additional responsibility at work, helping them progress towards their career goals.
- Tutors and assessors give adult learners and apprentices good individual mathematics coaching which helps them develop valuable skills. Adult learners and apprentices apply mathematical theory well by completing good-quality practical activities. As a result, many feel better prepared and more confident to sit external tests.
- Adult learners and apprentices develop good English skills. They benefit from a wide range of workbooks, individual coaching sessions and online learning materials that help them learn independently between lessons and assessor visits. Tutors and assessors give detailed feedback to adult learners and apprentices about what they need to do to improve. This helps adult learners make fewer mistakes in their written work and summarise text more accurately, while apprentices write more professional business emails.
- Tutors and assessors set clear targets to help adult learners and apprentices gain units of their qualifications. The vast majority make good or better progress. Where adult learners find tasks difficult, their tutors break targets down into more achievable actions. This helps learners gain confidence and competence in activities, for example devising presentations and using spreadsheet formulas.
- Assessors rarely focus on the learning or the skills apprentices need to develop when they set targets. As a result, apprentices are often unclear about what they have learned or how they can transfer their skills to different work situations. The most able apprentices are not given difficult enough learning activities to help them achieve their full potential or achieve more rapidly.
- Adult learners, the vast majority of whom are unemployed, benefit from useful careers and job-search advice and guidance. An external careers specialist provides weekly on-site coaching. This has helped many adult learners improve their CVs and interview skills and has improved their job prospects.
- Apprentices' achievement rates improved in 2016/17 and are now high on child development and well-being, direct learning support, accounting, administration, management and customer service courses. Health and social care and hospitality and catering apprentices' achievement rates require improvement.

Managers have taken successful action that has so far resulted in high achievement rates in these two subjects this year.

- Adult learners' achievements are good overall and, in vocational subjects, outstanding. Almost all learners that managers were able to contact after they finished their course gained a job or started further education or training courses. However, managers have not been able to gather enough data about the majority of adult learners' next steps, so they cannot fully evaluate the impact of provision.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- directors and managers take action to maintain high achievement rates in all subject areas
- managers review current arrangements for gathering data on adult learners' next steps and work with partners to increase the proportion of learners whose destinations are known, so they can fully evaluate the impact of adult learning programmes
- assessors set better aspirational and developmental targets that enable apprentices to reach their full potential
- assessors raise apprentices' awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism by making induction, progress review questions and monthly topics more relevant and meaningful.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors assisted by a director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors met with directors, managers, tutors, assessors, employers, partners, adult learners and apprentices. They observed lessons and progress reviews. Inspectors reviewed key documents, including those relating to self-assessment, quality improvement plans, and learners' achievements and safeguarding.