

South West Association of Training Providers Limited

Not-for-profit organisation

Inspection dates

10–13 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- The vast majority of learners and apprentices, including those on functional skills in English and mathematics courses, complete their learning programme and gain their qualifications within the time planned.
- The vast majority of apprentices and trainees progress into employment in roles that match their aspirations. Learners enjoy their learning, rapidly improve their confidence and make very good progress.
- Subcontractors benefit from working closely with managers at the South West Association of Training Providers (SWATPro) and share good practice that improves learners' achievements.
- Assessors and trainers have high expectations of their learners.
- Managers have extensive links with employers and stakeholders in the South West and ensure that their needs, learners' needs and those of local communities are matched well to the courses available.
- Trainers develop learners' English and mathematics skills very well in lessons.
- Trainers develop learners' understanding of diversity well so that they respect each other's views.
- Trainers give learners good information, advice and guidance throughout their programmes, ensuring that they receive training that matches their abilities and aspirations
- Trainers plan lessons well and create effective links between on- and off-the-job training, which help learners make valuable contributions in their workplaces.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Managers do not have sufficient information about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to develop clear action plans for staff development and further improvement of teaching and learning.
- Trainers' and assessors' written assessments are insufficiently detailed and the targets they set do not focus enough on how learners can improve their work.

Full report

Information about the provider

- SWATPro was formed in 2011 as a partnership of employers and training providers in the south west of England. The partnership is managed by a board chaired by SWATPro's chief executive officer. The board includes managers from SWATPro's 15 partners, 10 of which are subcontractors, along with SWATPro's quality and compliance managers. Three of the subcontractors are employers, the remainder are training providers. A non-executive director offers the board advice and direction about possible future developments in training.
- The largest programmes offered by the partnership are in health, health and social care, early years and play work. Smaller subject areas include accountancy, business administration, business management, ICT, hospitality, leisure and employability programmes. The vast majority of learners are apprentices aged over 18 and around half are on advanced or higher level apprenticeships. In addition, SWATPro offers employability training and a small number of traineeships through subcontractors.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve managers' focus on teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus on what learners learn and the progress they make
 - making observation records from all subcontractors readily available to SWATPro's managers so that they can check the quality of these and monitor the impact of improvements
 - analysing centrally the strengths and weaknesses identified in observations so that staff development is focused on identified needs
 - evaluating the quality and impact of tutors', trainers' and assessors' assessment of their learners' work.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices understand clearly how they can improve their skills as learners and increase the rate of progress of which they are capable, by:
 - giving clear and detailed written feedback on learners' and apprentices' written work so that they understand precisely how to improve further their practical work, mathematics and English and their learning skills
 - setting clear, realistically time-bound targets that are focused on the skills that learners and apprentices need to develop and on the completion of their qualifications
 - ensuring that staff and managers use these targets to monitor the rate of progress that learners make.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Managers of SWATPro and their partner subcontractors work very effectively together and create a positive, collaborative working relationship that focuses closely on the needs of learners and employers. The partners share good practice and resources freely with one another, which contribute to most learners succeeding in their studies and achieving their qualification irrespective of the subcontractor with whom they are placed.
- Managers use their excellent links with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), employers and other stakeholders to gain a thorough understanding of local and regional employment needs. They work well with subcontractors to develop learning programmes that meet these needs. For example, SWATPro has been instrumental in ensuring that health, and health and social care have become priorities for one of the LEPs in the area.
- Managers have created a broad range of programmes from entry level employability programmes to higher level apprenticeships in health, health and social care, early years and play work, accountancy and management. They have selected new subcontractors carefully to complement and develop further the range of programmes. As a result, learners benefit from an increasing range of provision, for example in the leisure sector, a sector in high demand in the region.
- Managers communicate their vision, high expectations and culture well to all staff and stakeholders, who support their aims. Board meetings focus closely on improving learners' achievement and progression into jobs, for which they have plentiful accurate data. However, they do not pay enough attention to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Subcontractor managers attend board meetings frequently and they are fully involved in decision making.
- Managers plan the self-assessment process well as part of an annual quality improvement cycle in which all subcontractors participate fully. Subcontractors evaluate each other's self-assessment reports as part of an effective system for sharing good practice. Managers consider the views of learners, employers and other stakeholders carefully to improve provision. Directors and managers know the provision well and evaluate most of its strengths and weaknesses very effectively. They use self-assessment well to drive improvements in outcomes and the management of subcontractors, and to identify new areas of provision.
- The quality improvement plans arising from self-assessment do not have enough emphasis on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. SWATPro managers monitor outcomes of lesson observations following regular quality improvement visits to subcontractors but the records of these observations are not focused sufficiently on what learners learn, how well they are challenged or the rate of progress they make. As a result, managers do not have sufficient information to plan staff development to improve further learners' experience.
- Managers use information and data well to monitor learners' achievements and identify areas for improvement. For example, managers quickly identified the reasons behind a dip in apprentices' achievement rates in 2013/14 and took swift and effective action to reverse the trend. Learners' achievements improved in 2014/15, and continue to rise in the current year.
- The governance of the provider
 - The governing board is made up of managers from each subcontractor led by the chief executive officer of SWATPro and this ensures that the needs and interests of all learners are represented.
 - The board agrees all policies, quality improvement activity and the monitoring of the provision and this ensures that all subcontractors take responsibility for acting on the decisions they jointly make.
 - Members of the board pool their excellent understanding of regional priorities and have strong links to many agencies across the region. They align their offer to meet these needs and provide training in vocational areas in which learners can find employment.
 - Directors and managers of subcontractors scrutinise each other's data, challenge each other to improve and support each other very well to improve further learners' experiences and outcomes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective
 - Learners are safe in the training centres and their workplaces. Learners and staff know how to report concerns.
 - SWATPro and its subcontractors meet statutory requirements and each subcontractor has a designated safeguarding officer. Managers take appropriate action to safeguard learners and identify learners at risk. Subcontractors conduct disclosure and barring checks on staff who may be in contact with vulnerable learners.

- SWATPro's chief executive has trained all staff and subcontractors about 'Prevent' duty guidelines. However, staff have not yet made all learners fully aware of how to identify potential radicalisation or extremism or ensured they understand fundamental British values.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Assessors and trainers have high expectations of their learners and provide good individual coaching and support to help them make good progress. They use probing questions in reviews and use sessions well to check learners' understanding and help them to explore ideas more deeply. Trainers and learners use online resources well, including to support learning outside the classroom.
- Learners enjoy their learning and make good progress in developing their vocational skills. Early years and play work apprentices are particularly enthusiastic and confident in their work and they manage children in their settings well. Apprentices on supervisory courses make a significant contribution to the running of their nurseries. One apprentice has helped redesign the outdoor area to make more efficient use of the space available.
- Trainers and assessors plan learning well and make effective links between the workplace and the classroom. Experienced tutors use their professional knowledge very well to enliven their teaching and make it relevant to their learners' jobs or career aspirations. For example, apprentices on management courses are taught management theory using examples that closely reflect their job roles.
- SWATPro's managers and their subcontractors meet employers' needs well and this is supported well by the good relationship that employers have with assessors. Employers play a key role in choosing the optional units that learners take within their qualifications so that they meet each employer's business needs. For example, the training for activity leadership apprentices is planned well to coincide with their employers' main outdoor activity season. Assessors keep employers well-informed about learners' progress and, as a result, employers ensure that workplace activities support their learners' needs.
- SWATPro directors provide subcontractors with good resources to help them assess and identify learners' starting points. Subcontractors use the outcomes of these assessments to put learners onto courses that are well-matched to their individual needs. Assessors are skilled at helping learners make efficient use of the evidence available to meet the demands of their qualifications. Assessors provide clear and detailed oral feedback that indicates how learners can meet the qualification standards.
- Assessors and trainers do not provide enough written developmental feedback or written targets that are precise enough to ensure that learners remember what they need to do in order to improve their skills. Consequently, learners do not always get sufficient challenge or guidance on how to achieve their full potential. Too often, trainers' and assessors' feedback on learners' work is only a description of the evidence assessed and a simple confirmation that it meets minimum standards, rather than giving learners specific advice to help them learn how to improve and excel. Assessors and vocational trainers do not correct learners' written English sufficiently so that they understand that accuracy is important in any work-related communication.
- By contrast, in functional skills and GCSE lessons trainers develop learners' English and mathematics skills well. This leads to high pass rates in functional skills tests and good outcomes in GCSE mathematics and English. Excellent mathematics teaching provides significant challenge and helps learners to develop good skills in, for example, algebraic manipulation. Learners grow in confidence and keep trying until they succeed in topics such as rearranging equations and working with fractions. They benefit from solving problems in small groups. Trainers provide good support to learners for whom English is not their first language.
- Trainers and assessors give learners accurate and helpful information and guidance on their choice of course. Learners receive a thorough induction from which they gain a clear understanding of the requirements of the qualification. Apprentices, along with their employers, are closely involved in the choice of optional units of their qualification to support their career aspirations and their employers' needs and they have a good understanding of the progression opportunities open to them.
Assessors and trainers help learners to appreciate the needs of people from diverse backgrounds well. Learners, including those from different cultural backgrounds, work very well together and are respectful of each other's views.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are outstanding

- Learners and apprentices are rightly very proud of the high standard of their work. They can identify and clearly articulate the skills they have learned. They gain confidence rapidly and they enjoy learning. Apprentices become proficient in the skills that their employers and clients require and add significant value to the businesses in which they work. For example, apprentices in health, and health and social care play vital roles in nursing for mental health-related issues. Trainees in the health service progress well on to further training with many entering advanced level programmes straight from their traineeships.
- Trainers and assessors provide learners with very helpful and thorough information, advice and guidance that builds well on learners' previous experience and aspirations. They provide impartial and well-informed careers guidance that encourages learners to have high expectations for their next steps. This helps them to develop ambitious and realistic plans for the future. In one instance, an early years apprentice benefited from detailed guidance about how she could prepare for a university degree by completing an advanced apprenticeship as an alternative to GCE A levels. This route matched her needs and her abilities well. Similarly, staff supported a manager in a child care centre very well to review her skills in managing teams and career options. The manager chose an advanced apprenticeship in leadership and management that fitted her work and home life commitments very well.
- Learners develop very good skills to help them gain promotion and take on challenging new roles that enhance their employment and promotion prospects. One advanced apprentice used questionnaires that identified how people like to work with others to allocate staff more effectively to individual children with special educational needs in their workplaces. Catering apprentices understand the importance of hygiene particularly well, and are diligent about achieving high standards of cleanliness. Particularly effective provision for learners for whom English is not their first language ensures that they are very well supported to take a full role in the community and the workplace.
- Learners feel, and are kept, safe because managers ensure that health and safety procedures are applied rigorously. Managers foster a culture with high expectations of respect between learners and between staff and learners. Respect for each other's views is central to managers' philosophy, and exemplified well by the open and transparent communication of the board. Managers work together well to create helpful resources which promote fundamental British values. The material is readily available to all subcontractors online and learners, including those from differing cultures, value each other's views, are tolerant of each other and behave well.
- Adult learners increase their motivation to look for work and develop their potential to gain employment by, for example, developing their skills in communication, information and communications technology, team building and team work. Learners who are on a foundation level employability programme in a coastal area with high unemployment rates enjoy learning, attend regularly and make good progress from their starting points. They improve significantly the skills they need to search for work.
- Attendance is high across all provision because employers, trainers and assessors ensure that learners receive relevant and enjoyable training, and are supported and challenged to achieve their potential.

Outcomes for learners

are outstanding

- The vast majority of learners and apprentices, across all levels, age ranges and subcontractors and in almost all subject areas, complete their learning programme and gain their qualifications within the time planned. Adults and advanced apprentices in health, health and social care, early years and play work, accountancy and management gain their qualifications at a rate much higher than that achieved nationally. A very high proportion of apprentices aged 16 to 18 also gain their qualifications at a rate higher than is being achieved nationally in early years and play work, accountancy and management.
- Learners and apprentices are very successful in achieving their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications. In 2014/15 almost all learners who took functional skills English examinations, and over two thirds of those who took mathematics, were successful at the first attempt. In the current year, managers at SWATPro have encouraged trainers to further challenge and improve the performance of intermediate apprentices, and as a result most are studying functional skills at a level above the minimum needed for their framework.

- Apprentices on early years and play work programmes make very good progress in GCSE English and mathematics. Of the 24 apprentices who took these subjects in 2014/15, more than half gained a C grade, and the large majority improved the grades they had on entry, in several cases by two grades or more.
- While the number of trainees is small, a very high proportion of them make good progress to employment or further education. Of the 15 who have finished this year, 12 have gone into further training and employment in their chosen occupation in health services. Those still on the programme are making good progress.
- Apprentices' achievement rates were high in 2014/15 although they had dipped in 2013/14 from a very high level the previous year. Following improvement actions by managers, the achievement rate of apprentices in the current year is not only already higher than it was in 2014/15 but is also well above national rates.
- Learners and apprentices make very good progress compared with their starting points. For example, two learners on a traineeship have progressed directly into apprenticeships in nursing and the large majority of apprentices gain promotion or increased responsibility.
- Managers identified a few small gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners and have taken effective action to close the gaps. There are very few differences in learners' achievements between the different subcontractors. In 2014/15, the achievements of learners in hospitality and a small number of administration apprentices were too low. Managers identified why this was happening, took appropriate action and this year these learners and apprentices are making very good progress.
- Adults gain their information and communications technology qualifications to support their future employability at the same rate as others nationally.
- The large majority of learners on employability programmes pass their qualifications and remain on the programme until the end. Even so, although they gain good skills that prepare them for work and, importantly, they enjoy learning, only around a quarter gain sustainable employment following the end of the programme.

Provider details

Type of provider	Not-for-profit organisation
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,220
Principal/CEO	Mr R Davis
Website address	www.swatpro.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	13	0	7	0	0	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	77	331	37	295	1	56		
	16-19		19+		Total			
	5		2					
	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<div><div></div>Academy for Training and Development</div> <div><div></div>North Bristol NHS Trust</div> <div><div></div>Quest Vocational Training</div> <div><div></div>Paignton Sec</div> <div><div></div>Wessex Training and Assessment</div> <div><div></div>White Horse Training</div> <div><div></div>Puffins Ltd</div> <div><div></div>1610</div> <div><div></div>Channel Training</div> <div><div></div>Hudson Training</div>							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

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Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Flint	Ofsted Inspector
Laurie Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Hill	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the chief executive officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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