

Inspection of Sport Structures Education Community Interest Company

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Sport Structures Education Community Interest Group (Sport Structures) is an independent training provider based in Birmingham, West Midlands. At the time of the visit, there were 43 apprentices, of whom six were under the age of 19. All apprentices were on apprenticeship standards. There were 26 apprentices on the level 5 operations or departmental manager, eight on the level 3 business administrator, six on the level 3 team leader or supervisor, two on the level 3 equine groom and one on the level 3 senior equine groom apprenticeship.

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

Apprentices are ambitious about what they can achieve in their careers. They regularly discuss their future careers and aspirations with tutors and workplace mentors. They understand that the skills they are developing are transferrable to other sectors and that they can progress on to higher study, such as management qualifications. However, leaders do not systematically plan to ensure that all apprentices receive high-quality careers advice.

Apprentices develop professional behaviours at work. They build confidence, resilience and character. Apprentices learn about conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and communication. They apply their learning when managing difficult workplace situations, resulting in more positive relationships at work.

Attendance at lessons is high. On the rare occasion that apprentices cannot attend, tutors quickly reschedule lessons so that apprentices do not fall behind. However, leaders do not routinely monitor and track the attendance of apprentices to identify any patterns or concerns with non-attendance.

Tutors promote fundamental British values, safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty effectively. They provide apprentices with information on these topics at the start of their apprenticeship and revisit them in progress review meetings and workshops. However, most apprentices do not fully understand how the risks associated with radicalisation and extremist views are relevant in the areas where they live and work.

Apprentices feel safe. They report that the training centre is a safe environment to study, and tutors support diversity and safeguarding. Apprentices feel comfortable discussing with staff any concerns they may have.

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

Leaders work with employers, community and sector bodies to co-create the curriculums. For example, they work with Norwich City Community Sports Foundation to plan the level 5 operations or departmental manager curriculum. They work with experts from the foundation's senior leadership team to include more appropriate content that meets the employer's needs. As a result, the curriculum helps apprentices to develop an in-depth understanding of leadership in football and broader sports sectors.

Leaders have a skilled governing body. The governing body has an apprenticeship-specific sub-group that is significantly involved in the quality assurance of the apprenticeship provision and informs the governing body of the improvements that need to be made. Governors understand the strengths and areas for development at the provider and, as a result, can make an informed contribution to curriculum development discussions.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provider. They put in place strategies to bring about further improvements, such as in functional skills, where apprentices now benefit from improved teaching and support. However, in some cases, such as careers advice and guidance, it is too early in the implementation of these strategies to see the impact fully.

Leaders have in place strategies to identify and support the training needs of staff. They discuss training opportunities with staff during annual appraisals that are revisited quarterly and identify appropriate training. For example, management tutors are undertaking a level 5 management and leadership course to complement their industry experience. As a result, apprentices' learning reflects current theories and practice.

Leaders have sequenced their curriculums effectively. Level 5 operations or departmental manager apprentices develop an understanding of self-awareness and communication styles, which they subsequently apply when learning strategies for leading people. As a result, apprentices build their knowledge and skills over time.

Tutors explore with apprentices and their workplace mentors what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their apprenticeship and what they need to learn. They use this information to identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to develop. However, they do not always use this information to plan apprentices' learning. As a result, a few apprentices do not progress as quickly as they are able.

Tutors use a variety of effective teaching techniques to support apprentices. For example, tutors who teach the level 5 operations or departmental manager apprenticeship encourage apprentices to reflect on and discuss the management styles they use in the workplace and the impact it has on their teams. As a result, apprentices can apply the theory they are learning to their workplace practice.

Functional skills tutors use assessments completed at the start of the apprenticeship to plan to teach effectively. They work closely with apprentices to support them to improve in areas where they are less confident. As a result, apprentices become more confident in their abilities and are well prepared for their functional skills examinations. However, for apprentices who do not have to study functional skills, the development of English and mathematics is less well planned. For these apprentices, tutors do not use starting points to plan their English and mathematics development carefully to help prepare them for their next steps.

Employers are clear about their responsibilities to support apprentices. They ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training and create opportunities for them to experience different business departments to improve their skills. The majority of employers regularly attend apprentices' progress reviews. They find these useful, and the reviews help them support their apprentices to stay on track and create opportunities at work to practise the skills they have learned. However, progress reviews do not always involve the employer for the few equine groom apprentices. Discussions at these reviews are often linked to the completion

of tasks and do not always focus on apprentices developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, these apprentices make slower progress.

Most apprentices receive helpful feedback from their tutor that helps them to improve. For example, apprentices' feedback advises them to provide examples of transformational leadership and how they might apply it in their workplace rather than simply describing transformational leadership. As a result, the quality of the apprentices' work and contribution to their employers' businesses improves over time.

Most apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours during their apprenticeship. For example, level 3 business administrator apprentices learn about the social, economic and political influences on their business and how collaborating with external stakeholders can support them with these factors. As a result, apprentices can take on additional responsibilities in the workplace.

Equine apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Level 2 equine groom apprentices learn about horse management and bringing a young horse back to work after an injury. However, in a few circumstances, learning is heavily influenced by the employer and less so by classroom learning. This leads to apprentices not linking their classroom learning with activities they undertake in the workplace.

Most apprentices can quickly produce work to the required standard. The large majority of apprentices understand the requirements of end-point assessment and the standard needed to achieve high grades. Most apprentices who take their end-point assessment pass, and a high proportion attain their highest grades.

Leaders do not systematically capture apprentices' next steps, such as increased responsibility or promotion. While most apprentices who complete their apprenticeship remain employed, leaders do not have sufficiently detailed information to help them measure the impact of their curriculums.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have in place appropriately trained designated safeguarding leads (DSLs). They have appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that apprentices are appropriately protected. They work with external bodies, such as the Prevent coordinator and the police, when needed.

Tutors complete annual mandatory safeguarding training and receive regular updates and training as part of team meetings.

Leaders ensure that apprentices improve their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. However, the safeguarding training provided for the few

apprentices under 19 does not yet focus sufficiently on topics related to healthy relationships, such as consent and harmful sexual behaviours.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate recruitment checks. They maintain up-to-date and detailed records of all employees' training.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that progress reviews for apprentices on equine apprenticeships involve the apprentice, workplace mentor and tutor so that apprentices can link classroom learning to the skills they develop at work.
- Leaders should ensure that tutors use the starting points of apprentices when planning their learning so that all apprentices make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices have access to careers advice so that they are aware of the full range of opportunities available to them.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism in the areas in which they live and work, and that these are continually developed throughout their apprenticeship so that they can apply this knowledge to their daily lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2654178
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Contact number	0121 455 8270
Website	www.sportstructures.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Katherine Percival (Managing Director) Simon Kirkland (Executive Director)
Provider type	Independent Training Provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior apprenticeship manager, 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.

Inspection team

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Clark	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Bill	Ofsted Inspector

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