

# Inspection of Involve Selection Limited

Inspection dates:

9 to 12 April 2024

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

**Information about this provider**

Involve Selection Limited (known as Vocate Training) is an independent learning provider based in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex. It has been training apprentices since 2019. Vocate Training specialises in digital, recruitment and sales apprenticeships. It works mostly with employers across Sussex and the wider south coast region.

At the time of the inspection, there were 57 apprentices on apprenticeship standards at level 2 and level 3. Almost half were aged 16 to 18 years old. Sixteen apprentices were on level 3 information communications technician (ICT), 12 were on level 3 digital marketer and 12 were on level 3 business administrator apprenticeships. There were also small groups taking apprenticeships in sales, recruitment and multi-channel marketing. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices are positive and exceptionally well motivated by the training they receive at Vocate. They enjoy their training and are very keen to learn. They attend sessions promptly and demonstrate excellent commitment to their studies. Apprentices value the expertise of their trainers and skills coaches, who inspire them to achieve. Most apprentices stay on programme and complete their apprenticeship. Many achieve high grades.

Apprentices learn new knowledge and skills swiftly, which they apply confidently in the workplace. For example, digital marketer apprentices use their new skills to produce effective marketing strategies. ICT apprentices competently dismantle computer networks and dispose of hardware securely. As a result, apprentices quickly make a positive contribution to their businesses.

Apprentices rapidly develop the confidence they need to flourish in progressively more challenging situations. For example, apprentices move from making cold-calls to closing deals. ICT apprentices move from providing helpdesk support to completing complex computer builds. Many apprentices show high levels of commitment beyond the basic expectations of their workplace. They quickly become resilient problem-solvers, keen to take on new tasks and ensure high levels of customer satisfaction.

Apprentices understand the career opportunities their apprenticeship will provide because staff provide clear guidance about the options available. Almost all apprentices continue working in related job roles when they finish. Most stay with the same employer. A very small number progress to higher levels of education and training, such as degree-level apprenticeships in accountancy.

Apprentices feel safe. They know how to report concerns in the workplace or at their training provider. Staff produce helpful newsletters that make sure apprentices know about risks in the local area, such as the dangers associated with county lines and cuckooing. Apprentices confidently discuss topics such as online safety and sexual harassment with their skills coaches. As a result, apprentices know how to recognise these risks and the appropriate actions to take if they have worries or concerns.

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

Leaders have focused carefully and effectively on improving the quality of education since the previous inspection. They now work very closely with employers to ensure apprentices are better supported in the workplace. They monitor progress robustly so that apprentices at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and supported. As a result, most apprentices who enrol now stay on their course. Only a few apprentices are now past their planned end date and almost all are making expected progress.

Leaders have a clear rationale for their apprenticeship offer, which meets the needs of local, digital sector employers well. Leaders and managers engage well with local

and regional stakeholder groups to understand skills gaps and local needs. They adapt their apprenticeship offer appropriately to ensure it remains current and relevant. For example, they have recently introduced the level 3 multi-channel marketer standard, recognising the changing needs of employers.

Leaders and managers have constructed their curriculum carefully so apprentices build their knowledge and skills based on what they know and can do. For example, business administrator apprentices learn about their organisation and its aims before learning about legislation and policies. Consequently, apprentices understand how laws such as those relating to data protection influence local policies, such as how data is processed and stored in the workplace.

Trainers use effective teaching strategies, such as scaffolding and quizzes, which help apprentices recall their learning over time. They use their extensive industry and sector experience very well to inform their teaching. For example, sales and recruitment trainers teach about the move towards ethical practices and away from a target-driven culture. ICT trainers stress the importance of empathy and good communication skills when running helpdesks. They provide apprentices with helpful prompt sheets to practise these skills in the safe space of the online classroom. As a result, apprentices benefit from teaching that is relevant and reflects current industry practice.

Staff support apprentices well, including those with additional learning needs, to help them to achieve. Staff work closely with employers to coordinate on- and off-the-job training, so learning can be quickly embedded. Employers value the new mentor handbooks, which make sure they understand the requirements and expectations of the apprenticeship. As a result, they feel well informed and provide effective workplace support to their apprentices at each stage of their studies.

Apprentices benefit from well-focused feedback from trainers through helpful recorded voice notes, which identify their strengths and what they need to do to improve. As a result, most apprentices produce work of a high standard. Business administrator apprentices create professional emails and presentations. Marketing apprentices produce engaging social media content. However, apprentices rarely identify research sources or reference quotes that they use in written assignments and journals. This is not picked up and commented on by trainers. Consequently, the very small number of apprentices who are looking to move on to higher levels of study are not developing the academic writing skills they will need to prepare them effectively.

Coaches use progress review meetings skilfully to discuss topics such as well-being and the rule of law. As a result, apprentices know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. They understand the importance of equality, diversity and personal liberties in the workplace. They respect the views of others that are different from their own in class discussions and team meetings. This ensures apprentices are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Apprentices benefit from a growing library of suitable resources to support their personal development. They use these to learn about drug awareness, preparing to move from school to the workplace and keeping safe from extremism and radicalisation. However, leaders do not use their assessments of apprentices' starting points to formalise or shape this curriculum to make sure it focuses on areas that are important for apprentices based on their current situations. As a result, a small number of apprentices do not feel challenged by this part of their course or see the relevance of it to their lives and local contexts.

Leaders have appointed governors who bring a rich mix of skill sets and experiences. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provider appropriately. They provide effective challenge that leads to positive improvements. For example, governors questioned staff about their ability to support neurodiverse apprentices. As a result, leaders provided staff development to ensure trainers now feel confident to support all apprentices effectively, which they do.

Leaders have worked diligently to ensure that apprentices who enrol, achieve their apprenticeship. In most cases, this work has been successful. However, leaders rightly recognise they have more work to do on improving outcomes on the level 3 digital marketer standard, where too many leave before completing their apprenticeship.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- The provider should improve the development of study skills and appropriate academic writing to support the aspirations of those apprentices looking to progress to higher education.
- The provider should make sure apprentices benefit from a personal development curriculum that helps them to understand topics that they can apply to their own lives and local contexts.
- The provider should continue to make sure that more apprentices on the level 3 digital marketer standard stay on their apprenticeship.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Ashley Goldman
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	25 to 27 May 2022
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## 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.

## Inspection team

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