

FLM Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

FLM Training Limited (FLM) was established in January 2013. The company has operated as a subcontractor since May 2013. The final few apprentices on subcontracted provision are completing their programmes. FLM received its own contract for delivering apprenticeships in May 2017. FLM offers apprenticeships, mainly for leisure trusts and councils, across the North West of England.

Of the 89 apprentices, 61 are completing apprenticeship frameworks and 28 are on standards-based apprenticeships. FLM offers apprenticeships in business administration at levels 2, 3 and 5 and sports and recreation at levels 2 and 3. Forty-seven apprentices study at level 2, 29 at level 3 and 13 at level 5.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a strong vision and clear aspirations for FLM to become a preferred apprenticeship provider for the leisure industry. A detailed strategic plan and business plan define clearly the strategy for a conservative growth in apprenticeships over a three-year period. Managers plan apprenticeships carefully and, as standards-based apprenticeships for the leisure industry become available, leaders and managers plan effectively for their implementation. Staff benefit from a wide range of staff development activities to improve their teaching practice. They also gain new knowledge and skills relating to standards-based apprenticeships. Consequently, FLM meets the requirements of apprenticeship programmes.

Managers monitor the progress of apprentices carefully. Effective monthly performance management meetings with assessors ensure that managers measure apprentices' progress accurately. Managers also check whether assessors meet their targets. Decisive leadership actions in addressing staff underperformance have resulted in a few staff leaving the organisation.

Managers collect and analyse a range of data that informs them, for example, of the achievement rates of different groups of apprentices. However, managers do not develop or implement action plans to address the improvements identified.

Clear and effective communication with apprentices and their employers ensures that managers place apprentices on the correct programmes to meet apprentices' and employers' needs. Employers engage fully in apprentices' programmes. For example, they attend apprentices' review sessions, so that they know what apprentices have learned and what they need to do to improve their skills.

Leaders and managers correctly identify that self-assessment processes lack precision. The resulting self-assessment report is repetitive and too long. The report is descriptive and does not focus well enough on the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The quality improvement plan relates to the self-assessment report, but is also too long, with too many actions. As a result, managers do not address improvements in priority order.

A clear and detailed observation of teaching, learning and assessment policy covers all aspects of apprenticeships. These include progress reviews, English and mathematics development, one-to-one teaching, classroom-based teaching and assessment. However, observers focus too much on what the assessor does and not on the effect teaching and training have on apprentices' learning and skills development. Managers are right to recognise this and they are planning training for observers on how to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Leaders correctly identified that they needed an advisory and challenge board to support leaders while providing challenge and holding leaders to account. The board came into existence very recently and so it is too soon to measure its impact or effectiveness.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Reasonable progress

Managers' thorough planning of programmes ensures that apprentices make at least the progress expected of them. Apprentices articulate well the benefits of their apprenticeship programme and how it helps them to progress to higher levels of study or gain promotion. For example, apprentices have progressed from leisure centre assistants to leisure centre duty managers.

Rigorous initial and diagnostic assessments enable managers and assessors to identify apprentices' starting points. Although managers and assessors analyse the results of assessments, they do not use them well enough to set personalised targets for apprentices. These include their development needs, such as in English and mathematics or the improvement of specific skills.

Apprentices develop good independent research and study skills that support them effectively when completing assessments and tasks related to their job roles. For example, apprentices on level 5 operations/departmental manager programmes develop good project management skills when they create programmes for weight loss in males. Apprentices on level 3 fitness instructor programmes use their knowledge of anatomy and physiology effectively when devising individual fitness training programmes for clients. Consequently, apprentices produce work of a high standard as they work on live project briefs that benefit their employers.

Employers and apprentices rightly value the support and training provided by FLM. Apprentices gain new skills and become more effective in their job roles. Employers actively participate in reviews of apprentices' progress. This enables them to support apprentices to complete specific tasks and activities relating to their programme. Although assessors have recently undertaken training to give better feedback to apprentices to help them improve their work, this has yet to have any significant impact.

Apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training undertaken in work time. FLM works skilfully with employers to ensure that it personalises the off-the-job training for apprentices, and makes it related to their job roles. As a result, apprentices deepen their knowledge, develop new skills and demonstrate effectively the behaviours expected in the workplace.

Managers arranged additional training for assessors following a recent review of targets set for, and with, apprentices. The resulting report identified accurately that the quality of target-setting varied significantly between assessors, programmes and levels. A minority of assessors have improved the individual and specific targets that they agree with apprentices to develop apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. However, not all assessors have yet developed their skills sufficiently. As a result, most assessors continue to set targets that focus on the completion of units, rather than on the development of apprentices' skills and behaviours.

Apprentices benefit from a range of additional training and qualifications. These support them effectively in their job roles and help them gain additional responsibility and promotion. For example, apprentices on fitness instructor programmes undertake kettle bell training to help them devise personal training sessions for clients.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Managers make regular and rigorous reviews and updates of safeguarding policies, processes and procedures to ensure that apprentices and staff are safe. Apprentices have a good understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. They know to whom they should report any concerns or queries. Apprentices have a good awareness of

the threats of radicalisation and extremism. They are conscientious in the workplace, for example when assessing the risks of terrorist threats in public venues such as leisure centres and gyms.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy safeguarding lead (DDSL) are suitably qualified to perform their duties. The DSL and DDSL benefit from regular update training from Wigan Safeguarding Children Board. Leaders routinely cascade safeguarding updates to staff during monthly team meetings or more often if necessary. All staff have qualifications in safeguarding to at least level 2.

All staff have undertaken online and face-to-face training for the 'Prevent' duty. The development and implementation, by leaders, of an appropriate risk assessment mitigates effectively the risks associated with radicalisation, extremism and terrorist acts.

Leaders and managers adopt safe recruitment practices when recruiting and employing staff. They check on eligibility for roles, identity and right to work in the UK routinely and take up references to ensure suitability for employment. They carry out annual updates of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all staff to ensure their suitability for working with apprentices.

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