

LRTT 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 themes set out below.

LRTT Limited was originally formed in 2003 in South Wales as part of a joint venture under a different name. It moved to its current location near Cirencester in 2010 and was renamed LRTT Limited (LRTT) in 2012 when its parent company, Resource Group, acquired sole ownership. LRTT specialises in aircraft engineering training for apprentices employed in the aviation industry, in addition to commercial courses for this sector. In September 2017, LRTT recruited its first apprentices under levy-funding arrangements and currently works with 10 employers. Prior to 2017, LRTT acted as a subcontractor for other apprenticeship providers.

At the time of the monitoring visit, 137 apprentices were studying level 3 aircraft engineering technician standard apprenticeships. Around half of these apprentices were in the second year of a two-year apprenticeship, and just over half of apprentices were under the age of 19. Apprentices come from all over the United Kingdom and most work for large multinational and well-known aviation companies. Apprentices undertake their off-the-job training in one of two training centres, one in Kemble and the other in Humberside. Apprentices who do not live close to these centres are accommodated nearby during their training.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Directors have a very clear and long-term strategy to provide high-quality engineering apprenticeships to the aviation sector. They work very closely with a small number of blue-chip aviation companies to provide skilled and knowledgeable engineering apprentices which employers value very highly, even at an early stage in their apprenticeships.

Directors and the senior management team have ensured that the requirements of both the apprenticeship standard and those of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are

met and often exceeded. For example, the achievement of apprentices in module examinations is frequently much higher than the required level. Apprentices are also provided with valuable additional training – such as first aid at work – and opportunities to improve their confidence to meet the demands of their end-point assessment, such as regular presentations and professional discussions.

Senior managers have a deep understanding of the requirements of effective apprenticeship delivery through close involvement in the development of the apprenticeship standard. They are currently supporting the production of standards at higher levels.

Directors have ensured that resources are in place – including staff – to support the growth in apprenticeship numbers. These have doubled over two years and an additional intake is planned in March 2019. Managers began using a second centre in Humberside in September 2018 to train the increased numbers of apprentices. New assessors were recently recruited and an apprenticeship centre manager put in place last year, with further management posts created to monitor and improve compliance and quality. Managers are currently recruiting for a new post of student liaison officer to further enhance the experience of apprentices while they are away from home. A large number of specialist mathematics teachers and well-qualified technical instructors with considerable industry expertise teach apprentices at both centres.

Staff work very effectively with employers to provide a well-planned training programme for each apprentice. This requires apprentices to complete a comprehensive induction to apprenticeships – including safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty – eight months off-the-job foundation training at one of the centres in year one and development training – mostly in the workplace – in year two. The plans include time for apprentices to complete any remedial work if required and to prepare them thoroughly for the two gateway assessments they need to pass before they take their end-point assessment.

Employers are very well informed by the provider's staff – thanks to excellent and regular communication – on the progress of their apprentices, welfare concerns or changes to the programme. The expertise of LRTT's staff greatly enhances apprentices' experiences and skills and, consequently, benefits employers considerably. Directors, managers and staff respond swiftly to address any concerns or make changes to meet the employers' needs better. The commitment of the senior management team to their apprentices was evident in the very quick way they worked to resolve a potential safeguarding concern that occurred during the visit.

Staff ensure that apprentices and employers have a very thorough understanding of the demands of the apprenticeship standards and CAA requirements. Highly collaborative work with employers ensures that new and existing apprentices know what career paths are available to them. Staff meet with newly recruited apprentices – and often their parents and carers – before apprentices start training at the centres so that apprentices know what to expect when they arrive.

Managers have implemented effective and useful procedures to monitor and improve the quality of training. They regularly seek the views of apprentices and employers – including at employers’ senior management level – and take actions to address any concerns or suggestions for improvement. Managers regularly observe instructors teaching and record actions to help instructors improve. Staff benefit significantly from a range of continuous professional training – including mandatory aviation sector training – as well as internal meetings and conferences which keep them very well informed. Directors know the strengths and weaknesses of their provision very well and make rapid, appropriate decisions on any areas for improvement.

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

Apprentices arrive at employers’ workshops with considerable new knowledge and skills because of the high-quality training LRTT provide. Apprentices make very good progress in all aspects of their apprenticeship. They develop a good range of hand skills, can work accurately to within industry-standard tolerances and rapidly improve their understanding and use of relevant technical vocabulary. Apprentices gain useful and appropriate behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. They know what is expected of them. For example, they work safely as part of an engineering team in an aircraft hangar and check the hangar thoroughly to ensure that there is no foreign object debris which could affect aircraft.

The year one foundation training develops apprentices’ skills well – for example in fabrication and repair – in well-equipped hangar workshops at the centres, as well as the workplace. They develop important underpinning engineering knowledge, such as the function and installation of hydraulic systems, English and mathematics skills and required behaviours for the aviation sector. Managers provide all apprentices with an electronic tablet to record notes and improve their digital skills. Staff set apprentices essays on the importance of physics and mathematics in engineering to develop their general written skills, as well as developing their technical report writing skills. Apprentices also maintain a reflective journal that is marked by staff. Apprentices give regular presentations to each other and their instructors to improve their communication skills and confidence.

Instructors use their industry expertise and knowledge very well to share real situations so that apprentices remember important information. For example, to illustrate health and safety in the workshop, instructors discussed resulting injuries caused if engineers trap wedding rings in machinery and how to avoid these dangers. Instructors use apprentices’ workplace experiences creatively to enrich discussions and share ways to solve engineering problems, such as air frame installations. Instructors use high-quality resources to help apprentices learn, including a range of detailed online resources which apprentices use in their own time.

Apprentices arrive at lessons keen and ready to learn. Most apprentices can answer instructors' questions correctly because they have understood the topics well and spent time reviewing the previous day's topics, often with their peers in study groups in the evening. Instructors check apprentices' learning frequently and effectively. As a result, almost all apprentices are making at least the progress expected of them and many exceed this. LRTT staff give apprentices excellent support to develop life skills – such as budgeting and living and working with others – as well as the technical skills they gain.

During year two, apprentices are mostly based in their workplaces. They are visited frequently by their assessors, who provide detailed and useful guidance and review their progress. Apprentices regularly complete online training and assessment which are marked promptly by assessors, with useful feedback. Apprentices complete a logbook during their second year, which they submit to the CAA to obtain their relevant licences to operate legally. This forms part of their apprenticeship portfolio. Assessors' reviews of apprentices on their e-portfolios thoroughly cover a range of subjects, such as keeping safe online, personal development and new skills which have been mastered. Apprentices are supported well by their employers to further develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours, both on and off the job. For example, apprentices move between different engineering teams in their workplace to gain valuable experiences of different roles, and many travel overseas to maintain aircraft.

Managers have a very good knowledge of the progress that apprentices in each cohort are making due to the effective monitoring systems they have implemented. Staff are aware of apprentices who may need additional help to understand topics better or pass module examinations, and they work well with employers to ensure that apprentices receive whatever they need to be successful. As a result, a very high proportion of apprentices have remained on their apprenticeship, and all of those who have reached their first gateway assessment have passed.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Managers have developed a range of policies and procedures which cover arrangements such as keeping apprentices safe online, management of complaints and health and safety incidents, safer recruiting of new staff and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff, apprentices and employers all know how to report concerns and who they should contact. There is appropriate supervision of apprentices who are under 18, both in the centres and in their accommodation.

Directors and managers ensure that all relevant checks are completed on new staff. Managers provide safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty training to new staff and apprentices during induction and reinforce this continuously. Staff complete training

regularly and the designated safeguarding officer is appropriately trained, with a refresher planned imminently.

Managers maintain an appropriate record of safeguarding incidents and report these to senior managers effectively. They have established relationships with external agencies in the Gloucester area to support any apprentices who may be at risk but have yet to extend this to other regions. Senior managers have developed a basic 'Prevent' duty action plan but this does not consider specific risks to apprentices based on the locations in which they work or the nature of the aviation industry. Most apprentices have a good awareness of safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Most also understand fundamental British values. These topics are reinforced by staff in lessons and in reviews.

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