

Tempdent Dental Agency Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 54778

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Inspection dates: 7–8 February 2019

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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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 (ESFA) 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.

Tempdent has provided training since 1999. Between 2000 and 2011 it held a contract to provide publicly funded apprenticeships in dental nursing. At Tempdent's most recent inspection, in 2010, it was judged to be good. When funding arrangements changed in 2011, Tempdent joined North London Garages to form the Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Limited and continued to provide publicly funded apprenticeships as part of this consortium. The consortium was judged to be good at its inspections in 2013 and 2018. Tempdent was awarded direct contracts for levy-funded apprenticeships from May 2017 and ESFA non-levy funded apprenticeships from January 2018. Tempdent continues to provide apprenticeships as part of its consortium arrangements. At the time of this inspection, Tempdent had 601 apprentices on programmes funded by its direct contracts. Of these, 375 are funded by the apprenticeship levy. All are doing standards-based apprenticeships at level 3 in dental nursing.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have a well-established programme of learning that makes excellent use of technology to enable a large number of apprentices with little or no prior knowledge to train in dental nursing. Tutors are skilled in using a blend of webinars, classroom sessions, and high-quality online resources to develop apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Assessors support this learning very effectively with frequent telephone and face-to-face reviews with apprentices. As a result, apprentices become much more confident about putting patients at their ease before dental treatment. They are adept at preparing and stocking the dental surgery and supporting the dentists who are treating patients.

Leaders and managers make very effective use of their links with employers to enable apprentices to enter a career in dental nursing. Tempdent staff have high expectations of the employers they work with and the contribution that employers must make to nurses' development. They monitor this contribution carefully to ensure that apprentices make good progress in their studies. Tutors and assessors record apprentices' attendance at training sessions and their time spent in off-the-job training well. Managers take prompt action if employers fail to provide suitable training and employment in their surgeries. They move apprentices to more appropriate employers if necessary.

Managers carry out careful checks to ensure that candidates are suitable for the apprenticeship. Tutors and assessors prepare candidates well by giving them extensive and thorough pre-apprenticeship training. This ensures that candidates understand the demands of the apprenticeship, what will be expected of them as dental nurses and how to present themselves at interview. Assessors prepare apprentices well for their end-point assessments and explain their options for further education and employment. All the apprentices nearing completion have obtained on-going employment as dental nurses.

Tempdent's tutors and assessors are well qualified in dental nursing and in teaching or assessment. They make good use of their knowledge and experience to provide very effective training, support and guidance for apprentices. Managers ensure that assessors have manageable caseloads so that assessors can give apprentices the support they need in their training.

Managers and assessors monitor apprentices' progress particularly closely. They make effective use of online records that give clear information on apprentices and their progress. If apprentices miss work, or are at risk of falling behind, assessors intervene swiftly and sensitively to keep them on track. They provide guidance on additional learning when necessary, or pastoral support if apprentices have health or personal problems, such as dealing with bereavement. This type of monitoring and support enables apprentices to make good progress or to catch up and work towards successful completion of their awards.

The majority of apprentices have a qualification in English and mathematics at level 2 when they join the programme. Managers have suitable arrangements for developing apprentices' English and mathematics skills, if they do not yet have these qualifications. They assess apprentices effectively and provide additional webinars and individual support to help apprentices improve. Although apprentices make progress with their English and mathematics skills, the proportion that pass English or mathematics examinations at the first attempt is low. Managers have identified this in their self-assessment and have appointed a specialist tutor to help apprentices make faster progress in English and mathematics.

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

Leaders and managers plan the training programme for apprentices very carefully. They structure apprentices' training logically, so that apprentices quickly develop the knowledge and skills they need to contribute effectively in their dental practices. Similarly, tutors ensure that apprentices have a sound grasp of theory, such as dental anatomy, before they learn how to take notes in clinical assessments. Apprentices make good use of online resources, including recordings of webinars, to catch up with missed sessions, or when revising for examinations.

Assessors make skilful use of telephone conference calls to guide apprentices' learning and review their progress. Apprentices' employers make a valuable contribution to these reviews. As a result, employers and assessors know how best to assist apprentices in their learning and help them to succeed in their qualifications. Apprentices describe a wide range of ways in which lead nurses, practice managers and dentists help them gain a thorough understanding of their roles and introduce them to new areas of work such as orthodontics.

Following assessments, assessors give apprentices detailed feedback, so that they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. They follow up this feedback with telephone calls to check that apprentices understand and can act on the feedback. Managers moderate and verify assessment decisions carefully. Apprentices are clear about the progress they are making.

Tutors explain concepts and techniques very clearly during lessons and webinars. Apprentices learn, for example, about the signs, symptoms and action to take in a medical emergency, or the risks of contamination and of how to maintain a sterile work environment. In lessons, tutors have high expectations of apprentices and the standard of their work. Tutors emphasise underlying principles in biology to explain, for example, the causes of plaque. They ensure that apprentices spell and use technical terms correctly.

During lessons, webinars and reviews, tutors make very effective use of questions to assess apprentices' knowledge and understanding. They use probing questions well to explore this knowledge and develop it. As a result, apprentices broaden their understanding and learn to think for themselves. For example, they raise ethical considerations of consent during discussions on the barriers patients face when receiving dental treatment.

Apprentices' understanding of health and safety in the workplace is detailed and thorough. They know how equality of opportunity applies in their work. They explain, for example, that patients, no matter what their circumstances, should have equal access to dental services.

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

Managers have well-established safer recruitment procedures. They carry out a range of appropriate checks and keep records of these. Two members of staff, one of whom is the designated safeguarding officer (DSO), is trained to lead safeguarding arrangements and to lead in the 'Prevent' duty arrangements. The DSO has clear oversight of these aspects of Tempdent's work and of the welfare of apprentices. Managers train tutors and assessors in safeguarding and update this training annually.

Tutors cover safeguarding, the dangers of terrorism and radicalisation and British values during apprentices' induction. They follow up these topics in webinars and at progress reviews. The dental nursing apprenticeship includes the safeguarding of patients as part of the course. Tutors are effective in developing this aspect of apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Apprentices describe the health and safety features of their work, and how they keep patients safe. They recognise, for example, how dental examinations may reveal neglect. However, assessors do not do enough to develop apprentices' understanding of how a minority of the safeguarding concepts they apply to patients might also apply to themselves. Managers correctly identify the need to do further work on promoting this understanding in their self-assessment.

Managers have particularly effective arrangements for following up safeguarding and welfare concerns. Tutors and assessors provide suitable pastoral support to help apprentices with personal problems. Managers monitor tutors and assessors closely to ensure that they follow up concerns and refer apprentices to external agencies if necessary. The DSO keeps careful records of the actions assessors take to support apprentices who have, for example, anxiety or depression. Apprentices are justifiably confident that managers at Tempdent will take effective action if apprentices encounter difficulties or need support.

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