

# Academy for Project Management Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1278653

**Name of lead inspector:** Judy Lye-Forster Her Majesty's Inspector

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**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 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 three themes set out below.

Established in 2013, the Academy for Project Management Ltd (Academy4PM), based in Bristol, is a specialist project management organisation focusing on project, programme and portfolio management. It specialises in the development and delivery of project, programme and portfolio management learning and development for organisations and individuals. It started delivery against the apprenticeship standards in 2017, when it became a directly funded provider. It is also an end-point assessment organisation.

At the time of the monitoring visit, Academy4PM had 28 levy-funded apprentices on the level 4 standards-based apprenticeship, Associate Project Manager. Nineteen of these had been on programme for seven months, while the other nine had been on programme for one month. In 2018, 19 apprentices completed all the requirements of the standard and the end-point assessment.

### 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 focus on establishing an effective and high-quality programme in their specialist field. They have a clearly articulated vision and rationale for the apprenticeship. Leaders, managers and tutors have suitable qualifications and experience. They have extensive expertise in their field, which they successfully use to develop and support apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Senior leaders are highly responsive to the needs of their employers. They ensure that the apprenticeship programme meets the needs of employers and apprentices. Leaders and managers are evaluative in their review of their provision. They identify appropriate areas for development. They are self-reflective and have a culture of improvement.

Leaders and managers, in consultation with each employer, plan and manage an individualised programme that meets the requirements of that employer. This

ensures that apprentices complete the programme with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to carry out the specific roles within their organisation.

Leaders and managers ensure that employers and apprentices have a comprehensive understanding of the apprenticeship, including the off-the-job training requirements. As a result, the vast majority understand the commitment and expectations of the apprenticeship programme. Leaders and managers have well-established and highly effective relationships with employers. They consult them to ensure that the on- and off-the-job training, including the apprentices' continuing development of their English, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, meets the requirements and standards for their roles and builds on their prior attainment.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices have the appropriate potential to meet the demands of the programme. Recruitment is rigorous. Apprentices undertake a thorough induction, which includes an assessment of their prior skills, knowledge and understanding.

Leaders and managers record, track and monitor the off-the-job training effectively. They recognise that the process for doing this has not been as effective and accurate as it should have been. As a result, they introduced a revised and more effective process for the new cohort of apprentices. All employers, apprentices and tutors can accurately track apprentices' progress towards fulfilling their off-the-job training requirements.

Leaders and managers undertake effective quality assurance of training, which enables development of the programme. They use the feedback they receive from employers and apprentices to make improvements.

The provision meets the apprenticeship requirements and appropriately prepares candidates for their end-point assessment. All apprentices in the previous cohort successfully completed their apprenticeship and subsequently gained promotion into sustained permanent employment. A few achieved distinctions.

**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 benefit from training that managers organise well and that is of high quality. Apprentices attend a formal training day every month and then have the autonomy to decide on the most appropriate way to undertake the rest of their off-the-job training. This is individualised, based on the needs and preferences of each apprentice. During the formal training, apprentices benefit from a range of teaching and learning strategies to support their engagement and their development. They do this within a collaborative and cooperative learning environment. Tutors have high expectations of their apprentices. They use their expert knowledge and skills to

motivate apprentices to work beyond the requirements of the standard. Apprentices enjoy their learning and identify clearly the progress they are making and the wider skills they are developing. They now have a deeper understanding of the practical application of their technical knowledge and describe how they use this successfully in their role.

Apprentices benefit from effective peer support, which has a very positive impact on their development. Although apprentices work all over the country, they share their individual experiences and support each other through the effective use of technology. This broadens their learning experience. Apprentices demonstrate a clear understanding of peer working. They receive a good preparation to work in the culturally diverse environment of modern Britain.

Apprentices benefit from constructive feedback, which enables them to recognise their strengths and how to improve. For example, feedback enables apprentices to be aware of the level of detail needed within a response to an examination question. They know when elements of the content they added were superfluous to requirements.

Almost all apprentices make good or better progress from their starting point. They demonstrate and explain the impact that their training is having on their skills development and on their work roles. Managers and tutors carefully track and monitor the progress that apprentices make from their starting points. They assess their starting points effectively, the outcome of which informs each individual apprentice's learning plan. Apprentices, through their regular reviews, track their own progress. Because of their effective monitoring of apprentices' progress, managers and tutors are aware of any apprentice who is at risk of falling behind. They and the employer intervene swiftly and put appropriate interventions in place.

Apprentices develop effective wider skills. They develop their English, mathematical and ICT skills, and make good use of these in all forms of communication. For example, they make oral and written presentations, complete estimations, costings and financial planning, and write evaluatively in their reflective journals.

Apprentices benefit from a highly detailed and comprehensive candidate guide. As a result, they are well informed about the whole programme. They know what to expect of the technical certificate examination and the end-point assessment. They are aware of what their options are on successful completion of the programme.

Apprentices develop highly appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours which they competently demonstrate within their everyday roles. Employers recognise the development of these skills, and how apprentices apply them, as they become more confident and competent in their roles and make a valuable contribution to their business.

The vast majority of apprentices receive good support throughout their programme from their tutor, their placement coordinator and their employer. However, a small

minority of apprentices feel less well supported in their placements because their placement line managers are not always fully aware of what the apprentices should do or of the apprenticeship requirements.

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

Effective arrangements are in place to keep apprentices safe. Apprentices feel safe in the workplace and when they attend off-the-job training. Security and health and safety are a high priority for employers, for Academy4PM and for apprentices. Apprentices recognise their own professional responsibility to ensure that they adhere to all guidance and respond to, and report, any concerns. They have a good understanding of the importance of confidentiality within their professional roles.

Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. Managers and tutors identify clear lines of responsibility and referral routes, which staff and apprentices understand. Senior staff respond appropriately to reports and referrals and follow them up accordingly. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty training, in line with their level of responsibility. The designated safeguarding lead has suitable experience and qualifications.

Leaders maintain safeguarding records. However, because the organisation is so small, they do not have a central recording mechanism to draw together all the information relating to referrals. As a result, leaders cannot identify trends and patterns over time. Leaders and managers undertake appropriate pre-employment checks for all staff and maintain accurate and up-to-date records.

Leaders and managers have put in place effective 'Prevent' duty training for staff and apprentices. Apprentices understand potential threats and know how to keep themselves and each other safe. However, leaders and managers have not yet completed a formal 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan.

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