

Dunbia

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Employer

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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.

Dunbia was formed in 1976 and merged with Dawn Meats (UK) in 2017. The company became a levy-funded employer provider in May 2017. Dunbia is a large employer supplying red meat products to retailers across the United Kingdom and Ireland. The apprenticeship programme is delivered at their plant in Sawley, Lancashire. At the time of the monitoring visit, eight apprentices were enrolled on standards-based programmes at level 2 in butchery. Functional skills training for apprentices is delivered by a subcontractor.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have set a clear strategy and use their expertise well to provide apprenticeships in butchery. They use the apprenticeship levy funding to train their own staff. Apprentices are new to working in a meat processing and butchery environment. Managers have started with a small number of apprentices to ensure that they get the provision right, before expanding. The apprenticeship courses fully meet the requirements of apprenticeship programmes. Apprentices receive a high standard of practical training from which they gain substantial new skills. This training prepares them well for work as commercial butchers. For example, apprentices prepare meat for the wholesale market and carry out skills, such as boning meat joints, to industry standards.

Leaders and managers carefully monitor the progress of all apprentices regularly. They accurately identify apprentices who make slow progress. Leaders and managers take appropriate action to help apprentices to catch up quickly.

Managers ensure that suitably qualified and experienced staff are in place to deliver all aspects of the apprenticeship. They use their extensive experience to train apprentices to the required industry standards on the production floor.

The executive board holds leaders and managers to account effectively for the progress of apprentices. Challenging targets for the apprenticeship programme are set and progress against these targets are monitored by members of the executive board. However, these targets are not specific enough to inform the quality improvement strategy. Managers have not yet implemented sufficiently rigorous quality monitoring processes. Consequently, managers do not routinely check that apprentices receive a high standard of training in theory lessons, including for the subcontractor.

The proportion of apprentices who remain on their course is too low. The self-assessment report is insufficiently rigorous; it did not identify the low retention rates. However, managers did recognise rightly that although apprentices were making good progress, too many left their programmes early. They have now introduced a probationary period to ensure that apprentices fully understand the commitment needed on the apprenticeship programme. The apprentices recruited more recently remain on their course and make good progress.

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

Apprentices have little or no prior skills of butchery when they start their apprenticeships. They gain a wide range of new practical skills and understanding through the apprenticeship. They develop an extensive range of meat preparation skills. This prepares apprentices well for future employment. For example, apprentices are able to trim and prepare the more expensive cuts of meat, such as beef fillet, with the minimum of waste. Apprentices use the skills and knowledge they gain at work well, which means that they produce work of a high standard. When on the production floor, they meet industry and supermarkets' individual requirements. For example, apprentices are able to trim off the Jacob's ladder and fat on the inside of the brisket.

Trainers and supervisors closely monitor apprentices' compliance with the specific health and safety requirements when they work in the different sections on the production line or in training areas. Apprentices understand the steps they need to take to avoid the risk of cross-contamination when moving between the meat processing and staff changing areas. For example, apprentices know how to wash their hands thoroughly to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

Apprentices receive frequent verbal feedback from their trainer and co-workers on the production floor. As a result, they know what they need to do to improve their practical skills. For example, apprentices carry out the correct procedure to clean out the vein that sits below the brisket ear. Trainers have a range of up-to-date skills, knowledge and experience of working in the meat production industry. As a result, apprentices develop a wide range of skills and knowledge that they successfully

apply in their good working practices. Apprentices are well behaved, polite and communicate well with their peers.

Trainers plan sufficient and effective off-the-job training so that it meets the needs of individual apprentices. Consequently, apprentices develop a wide range of substantial new skills. Trainers identify accurately any extra training needs required by apprentices. Trainers make sure that apprentices are well prepared to complete their assessments.

The arrangements for functional skills meet the apprenticeship programme requirements. The majority of apprentices have achieved functional skills qualifications at level 1 in English and mathematics. However, managers have not ensured that functional skills lessons start early enough in the programme to enable apprentice to swiftly develop their English and mathematics skills. Trainers do not correct apprentices' written English when they mark work. Consequently, apprentices continue to make the same spelling errors and do not know how to improve their work.

Apprentices do not receive sufficient and helpful feedback to help them improve their work. As a result, apprentices do not improve their writing skills quickly enough. For example, they cannot spell some of the key technical language they need, such as the correct spelling of cattle breeds.

Apprentices apply the mathematical skills they learn in the classroom when cutting and trimming meat. For example, apprentices understand the implications of waste when they prepare initial cuts of meat from the carcass.

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

Leaders and managers make safeguarding a priority for apprentices. Managers have implemented useful safeguarding policies and procedures; these include the 'Prevent' duty. Staff understand how to apply these policies.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of apprentices are effective. The senior designated safeguarding officer (DSO) is a member of the senior leadership team. She has completed training at level 3 which prepares her well for the role. She is also supported by a new deputy DSO for whom training is planned. Managers have not yet had to investigate any safeguarding incidents. Therefore, safeguarding arrangements are not yet tested. All trainers have regular training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Apprentices complete a thorough induction programme. They have a good understanding about safeguarding and know to who they can report any concerns. Apprentices feel safe and are safe. Apprentices have a good understanding of

radicalisation and extremism and how it applies to them in the meat industry. They know how to work safely when working online. Apprentices benefit from extensive support from the human resource team. Staff support apprentices who are at risk of becoming homeless or who have personal or health concerns. Staff and apprentices have access to a confidential telephone helpline and occupational health services, for example medical and counselling support. However, human resource managers do not always record concerns raised. Managers cannot therefore follow up concerns if they escalate.

Leaders and managers ensure that effective and stringent health and safety policies are in place. These policies meet the exacting standards of the meat production industry. Trainers and line leaders supervise apprentices at all times to ensure that they work safely. For example, apprentices use the correct manual handling procedures when dealing with large animal carcasses. In addition, apprentices can explain articulately how to protect themselves when working with sharp knives and hooks for hanging and boning animal carcasses.

Apprentices wear appropriate personal protective equipment when working with knives. For example, they wear chain mail aprons and gloves when working in this high-risk environment.

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