

# Piper Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1280358

**Name of lead inspector:** Andy Fitt, HMI

**Inspection date(s):** 14 to 15 March 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 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.

Piper Training Limited (Piper Training) was formed in January 2018 as the training arm of the building engineering services association (BESA), with the aim of offering apprenticeships in areas relevant to heating and ventilation. Working with staff in BESA, leaders at Piper Training are developing apprenticeship standards in all areas of heating and ventilation. There are currently 123 apprentices studying with Piper Training based throughout England. Almost all apprentices study at levels 2 and 3, with a very small number studying project management apprenticeships at level 4. Most apprentices access their off-the-job training through subcontracted colleges. Just under half of all apprentices are following standards-based apprenticeships.

### Themes

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

#### **Insufficient progress**

Leaders have not put in place effective actions to check and improve the quality of their provision. They do not plan carefully enough to make sure that the quality of the training their apprentices receive is at least good. They have not observed any teaching in the subcontracted colleges where most apprentices learn. Consequently, leaders are unclear about the effectiveness of off-the-job training for most of their apprentices. They rely too heavily on feedback from apprentices to judge the success of teaching and learning.

Leaders and managers do not assess the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship provision in enough detail. They do not know about the quality of subcontracted provision. Although all apprentices receive off-the-job training and most have sufficient and frequent training, leaders and managers do not track and record this precisely to be clear that they are satisfying the requirements of an apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers have been slow to make sure that they plan their apprenticeships coherently. They rely too heavily on subcontracted colleges to

structure off-the-job learning. They do not check subcontractors' plans for learning carefully in order to ensure that they are clear and logical. Although leaders are developing sensible and coherent ideas to structure learning for those following standards-based apprenticeships, these plans are not yet available for college staff or apprentices.

Leaders, and those in the role of governance who oversee the apprenticeship programme, concentrate too much on contractual compliance and financial and business developments. They set too few targets for staff to make sure that apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. They do not focus closely enough on the progress that apprentices make or the quality of their learning.

Leaders and managers do not communicate effectively enough with employers to make sure that they understand the requirements of apprenticeships. Too many employers are unclear about how to support their apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. Although apprentices develop useful skills which enable them to become more productive employees, employers do not know enough about the progress that their apprentices are making. As a result, they are not able to identify and help those who fall behind improve quickly enough.

Leaders understand in detail the needs of the heating and ventilation labour market. They work closely with employers to develop and write standards-based apprenticeships that are specific to the needs of the profession. Leaders work with those who have completed their apprenticeships to identify and develop additional courses to improve apprentices' knowledge and skills. Most employers benefit from the practical skills that apprentices gain during their apprenticeships that help them to be more effective in the workplace.

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

Although apprentices develop useful skills that help them in their day-to-day work, too many make slow progress with their apprenticeship. Apprentices do not receive enough feedback from assessors about the skills they are developing. Assessors do not set clear targets on reviews to help apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly. They do not help apprentices to evaluate in enough detail what they have learned and how to develop further their skills. Training coordinators and employers are unclear about arrangements for end-point assessments for standards-based apprentices.

Leaders and managers have developed effective application and enrolment processes for apprentices that ensure that they are suitable for their apprenticeships. Although most apprentices already have appropriate GCSE English and mathematics

qualifications before they start at Piper Training, leaders and managers do not plan to improve further apprentices' skills in these areas. Assessors question apprentices about how they use their English and mathematics skills at work but do not help them to improve their knowledge of these topics. Managers support those who need to gain English and mathematics functional skills qualifications by arranging intensive teaching, but too many apprentices are unaware of when they will receive this teaching or when they will take their qualifications.

Managers record the progress that apprentices make in achieving the units of their qualifications. However, they do not track and record how well apprentices with subcontractors develop their knowledge and skills. Managers do not assess in enough detail the knowledge and skills that apprentices already have when they start their programmes. Consequently, college staff and training coordinators struggle to plan learning that is sufficiently challenging for apprentices. Leaders and managers have not developed ways to enable them to identify quickly apprentices making fast progress and those who need extra help. As a result, they have an overly positive view of the progress of apprentices.

Leaders have started to train staff to teach apprentices at the small number of employers who provide their own off-the-job training. However, managers do not observe these staff frequently enough to make sure that their teaching is effective. Apprentices at these employers struggle to make the distinction between their on- and off-the-job training and make slow progress.

Staff identify apprentices who need additional support during enrolment and make sure that subcontractors understand these apprentices' needs. Training coordinators and teachers in subcontracted provision support these apprentices effectively. Most apprentices enjoy their learning. They work closely with their employers to develop new skills and knowledge that enable them to become more effective employees. This improves their confidence and their independent working skills. Those on frameworks make good progress towards completing their qualifications.

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

Leaders have not made sure that they have effective policies and procedures in place to protect apprentices. They have not reviewed their safeguarding arrangements carefully to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Leaders, staff and apprentices are not clear who the designated safeguarding lead for Piper Training is. Staff, employers and apprentices do not understand that this role is their main point of contact in case of safeguarding concerns.

Leaders do not make sure that they adhere to the actions that they have set in their safeguarding documentation. Although their handbooks indicate a requirement for annual safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty training, not all staff have completed this.

Leaders have not checked safeguarding arrangements in subcontractors or made sure that staff and employers are aware of how and when to report safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding lead has only received very basic training for the role and there is insufficient cover for the role during holiday periods. Leaders understand the implications of this lack of training and have acted quickly to make sure that all training staff working with apprentices will receive high-level safeguarding training quickly. All staff at Piper Training who work with apprentices have undergone the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Leaders have been slow to assess the possible dangers to apprentices around radicalisation and extremism. Although the safeguarding lead has received appropriate training on the 'Prevent' duty, leaders were unable to show that all staff had received recent training on keeping safe from radicalisation and extremism. Leaders have written an action plan to assess the dangers to apprentices, but this is not yet in place. Most apprentices understand the implications of the 'Prevent' duty and know how to protect themselves from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. However, leaders rely too heavily on colleges to whom they subcontract training to inform and develop apprentices' knowledge of safeguarding. As a result, those who attend colleges away from where they live and work are not aware of local threats to their wellbeing.

Apprentices receive detailed information during their induction about how to keep themselves safe. They feel safe at work and when attending their off-the-job training. Apprentices understand health and safety requirements of their jobs very thoroughly. Staff at Piper Training and employers make sure that apprentices understand the importance of adhering to health and safety procedures while at work. Staff and employers work closely with apprentices to improve their knowledge of health and safety outside of the remit of their qualifications. This helps them work safely and prepares them effectively for employment.

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