

Calex UK Ltd

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 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.

Calex UK Ltd runs a range of apprenticeships for those in the automotive trade. They work closely with Volvo, the PSA group and London Electric Vehicle Company. Around 370 apprentices study on seven apprenticeship programmes at levels 2 and 3, with the large majority following the level 3 motor vehicle service and maintenance technician standard. Just under half of Calex UK's apprentices are aged between 16 and 18. Most apprentices follow standards-based apprenticeships, with around 60 apprentices on frameworks.

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 developed a sensible and effective range of apprenticeships that meet the needs of employers well. Staff in the automotive industry benefit from the skills that apprentices develop. Leaders, managers and staff have very high expectations for their apprentices. They consistently challenge apprentices to produce high-quality practical work. As a result, apprentices develop their skills quickly and work in workshops with minimal supervision.

Leaders plan and design their apprenticeships effectively. They make sure that all learners satisfy the requirements of an apprenticeship. They recruit apprentices carefully and assess their starting points well. Retention of current apprentices is high. Leaders work closely with employers and manufacturers to identify what apprentices need to learn. They structure and sequence courses very carefully to make sure that apprentices build, develop and improve their knowledge throughout their apprenticeship.

The managing director provides effective governance and sets challenging targets for staff. Senior leaders meet frequently with employers and manufacturers to check the quality and effectiveness of their apprenticeship programmes. Although leaders and managers plan training for apprentices carefully, they do not record the off-the-job

learning that apprentices carry out in enough detail to give them a clear overview of how and when this is carried out.

Leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of their provision well. They act quickly to rectify most weaknesses. They carry out highly detailed observations of trainers and set clear targets for them to improve their teaching. They use staff appraisals to set challenging targets. However, they do not incorporate targets from lesson observations into appraisals or check frequently enough the progress that trainers make with meeting their teaching targets.

Senior leaders have invested heavily to develop useful and interesting teaching materials to help apprentices to understand the topics that they cover. They make sure that apprentices benefit from additional courses to improve their knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices take level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications to develop their knowledge of working with electricity and electric vehicles. Those studying vehicle maintenance learn how to set up vehicles' chassis for four-wheel alignment. Although leaders and managers have developed a range of materials to extend apprentices' learning, they do not challenge apprentices well enough to inspire them to try to achieve higher grades in their final assessments.

Leaders and managers plan well to make sure that all apprentices develop their English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT) skills during their apprenticeships. Those who start their apprenticeship having already achieved a high GCSE grade continue and extend their learning. Leaders make sure that those without the necessary GCSE grades achieve their functional skills qualifications quickly. First-time pass rates for functional skills examinations are very high.

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 very high-quality training sessions. Those working in the Volvo training development centre receive particularly effective training. Apprentices quickly develop the skills that enable them to become expert and valued employees. Trainers use the excellent facilities and resources in the training and development centres to help apprentices to develop high levels of technical and practical proficiency. Trainers plan teaching sessions very carefully and use their skills to interest and enthuse apprentices.

Apprentices benefit from detailed, well-structured and interesting virtual learning sessions that enable them to understand fully the theoretical aspects of their programmes and apply their knowledge to their practical work. For example, apprentices learning about gear ratios start by examining the operation of simple gear systems in bicycles. Trainers use this as a stepping stone to developing

apprentices' knowledge of larger gear systems until they are confident about how to apply their skills to vehicles.

Apprentices make very good progress with their apprenticeship and their development of knowledge, skills and behaviours. They apply the skills they develop very effectively in their workplaces. For example, apprentices following commercial programmes develop financial management skills in monitoring stock levels and cost values within tight budgets. Those following vehicle maintenance apprenticeships calculate the levels of distortion on vehicle brake discs in line with manufacturers' limits to very small tolerances.

Trainers and assessors prepare those on standards apprenticeships well for their final assessments. Staff assess apprentices' starting points effectively. Trainers use this information to plan detailed and challenging extension work for apprentices. Apprentices take pride in their work and are keen to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. They develop and improve their confidence. They understand how to behave in the workplace and learn how their behaviour will impact on business relationships with customers.

Trainers, assessors and employers check apprentices' progress frequently and in detail. They plan carefully with apprentices to make sure that they understand the skills that they need to develop during their next training blocks. Apprentices know what they need to do to improve. Assessors and employers make sure that the few apprentices who fall behind receive swift and effective support to enable them to catch up quickly. For example, staff at Calnex UK identified that a few customer service practitioner apprentices had gaps in their training plans. They acted quickly to rectify this and to minimise further delays in apprentices' skills development and the subsequent completion of their apprenticeships.

Staff and employers support apprentices very effectively. They recognise and celebrate apprentices' achievements through award evenings and visits to manufacturers' factories. They make sure that apprentices work closely with highly skilled mentors to help them develop their technical skills. For example, mentors help vehicle maintenance apprentices quickly gain the qualification they need to correctly re-gas vehicle air conditioning units to industry standards. Apprentices develop new skills rapidly because of the support they receive from their mentors, assessors and trainers.

Apprentices develop their English, mathematics and ICT skills well during their programmes. They benefit from enthusiastically taught, well-planned and effective lessons. Apprentices appreciate the way that staff link these topics to their workplace learning. For example, they develop their mathematics skills by learning how to determine the voltage drop on vehicles' electrical systems to identify the cause of faults.

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

Apprentices are safe in their workplaces and training centres. They know who to contact if they have concerns. Apprentices benefit from a carefully planned and structured programme that improves their knowledge of a wide variety of topics to keep them safe and healthy. Assessors check carefully apprentices' knowledge of these topics during reviews.

Apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and know how to stay safe when online. Employers rigidly enforce health and safety guidelines and apprentices understand the importance of following these rules. Although apprentices have access to useful and informative online learning packages to enable them to learn more about keeping themselves safe and healthy, leaders and managers do not currently know how well learners access these resources.

The designated safeguarding leads have had appropriate training to ensure that they are effective in their roles. They record safeguarding concerns in detail and take appropriate actions. They involve external organisations when required. They have developed effective links with the local 'Prevent' duty coordinators that help them understand the local threats for their apprentices around the country. Although leaders have created a useful 'Prevent' duty action plan, they do not review their progress on actions frequently enough to be sure that they are achieving all the targets that they have set. All staff who work with apprentices have undergone safeguarding training but leaders do not make sure that they update this training frequently enough. Leaders and managers recruit staff safely and confirm that all have undergone the correct safety checks before starting employment.

Leaders and managers make sure that parents and carers know how to keep their children safe as they start their apprenticeships. They inform parents in detail about topics such as safe internet use, mental health and alcohol and substance misuse, and make sure that they have contact details for safeguarding staff. Managers give employers useful information about safeguarding procedures but do not check in enough detail that employers have read and understood this information.

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