

Banham Academy 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.

Banham Academy Ltd (Banham) is a private training provider, part of the Banham Group that specialises in the security and fire emergency sector. Banham gained a contract to provide apprenticeships and started training in September 2017. The company is based in Earlsfield and works with levy-paying employers nationally. Banham is also a subcontractor for training apprentices of other providers.

Currently, 28 apprentices are on apprenticeship programmes, all of whom follow the fire emergency and security standard at level 3. The majority of apprentices are over the age of 18 years.

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 share a vision and ambition to provide high-quality apprenticeships in the security industry. They successfully attract new and younger entrants to train for a career in the sector and several competitor firms choose to send their apprentices to train with Banham. Senior directors demonstrate a clear commitment to support and finance the apprenticeship programme and are restricting growth in order to prioritise quality.

The Banham apprenticeship programme is well structured and meets employers' needs very well. Off-the-job training meets the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. Apprentices attend a series of block-release training weeks that are more condensed in the early part of the course. This enables them to develop their skills and knowledge rapidly and, as a result, employers deploy them quickly to work independently, for example in carrying out service visits for residential clients. The operations director sits on the representative employer board responsible for developing the fire emergency and security standard and understands well the changing priorities of the industry. Banham has built a strong reputation and was a finalist in recent national security and training initiative awards.

Leaders and managers ensure that programmes fully meet the requirements set down by the funding body. All apprentices are appropriately employed with levy-paying employers. They take an additional technical qualification and achieve professional certification to work in the security sector.

Arrangements to monitor the quality of apprenticeship provision are effective. Managers regularly report progress to group directors and board members, which they use effectively to review and agree decisions and improvement actions. Managers involve external observers to assess accurately the quality of training sessions and set specific actions that develop tutors' professional practice. They use apprentices' feedback to review the quality of each training week and act on this to make practical improvements to the programme, for example in responding to requests to increase the amount of hands-on training.

Senior leaders recruit tutors and trainers who have an extensive range of specialist technical or educational experience. The senior tutor is a compliance inspector and national training lead in the industry and his wealth of knowledge is highly beneficial to apprentices.

Apprentices complete detailed skills and behaviour assessments, including of their skills in the use of English and mathematics, at the start of programmes. Tutors use this information to assess apprentices' starting points and place them in the right cohort. The vast majority of apprentices are new to the industry and are placed on the recommended three-year programme; however, the few apprentices that have relevant prior learning have their programme length adjusted to take this into account.

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

Banham apprentices enjoy their learning and are proud to work with their employers and learn at the provider. They show high regard for their tutors and the learning and support that they provide. The company sets high aspirations and promotes well the options available to apprentices when they complete their programme. Apprentices have competed successfully at a range of national skills competitions including World Skills, where heats are held at the centre, and the Engineers of Tomorrow competition.

Apprentices develop substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours and talk confidently about what they can do and how this is having an impact in their workplaces. For example, they learn how to read and decipher resistance readings and understand how circuits work and affect installations. At progress reviews, apprentices receive good feedback from their employers and the academy on how

well they are doing. Employers are sufficiently involved in discussions and planning what apprentices need to cover at work.

All apprentices develop very good mathematical skills, which they apply to planning and carrying out security equipment installations, for example by calculating the battery life required. Apprentices that require English and mathematics qualifications are working towards these and a few have already passed their exams.

Apprentices build a comprehensive portfolio of work that evidences their learning and development. Their extensive revision notes demonstrate they have a good understanding of electronic theory and principles underpinning practical tasks undertaken at work. Tutors give written feedback on portfolio content and correct spelling and grammar errors.

Tutors and trainers provide high-quality off-the-job training. They make theory sessions highly relevant to what apprentices do in the workplace. They ensure that employers are fully informed about what their apprentices are learning. Tutors assess the progress apprentices make both at the beginning and end of each block training week in order to identify any gaps in their learning. Apprentices undertake end-of-year mock tests that prepare them well for end-point assessments. Tutors encourage apprentices to aim for higher grades and many are ambitious to do well.

Apprentices benefit from additional study sessions and one-to-one support that tutors provide outside working hours. Managers closely monitor apprentices' personal and work circumstances to identify those at risk of falling behind and take prompt action where this is needed to keep them on track. The proportion of apprentices staying on course is extremely high.

Tutors and trainers carry out regular workplace assessments. However, they do not always make clear enough to apprentices beforehand what they will be assessing. Verbal feedback is not specific enough to tell them what they did well or how they need to improve.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding apprentices are effective. Managers are vigilant to record and maintain a log of potential safeguarding concerns for apprentices, for example by identifying patterns of irregular attendance. They share this information with employers and parents and carers to take effective intervention support. To date, no incidents have been reported.

All staff undergo statutory pre-employment checks. They complete appropriate training and keep a safeguarding awareness log that ensures that their knowledge is current. The designated safeguarding person has completed advanced safeguarding

qualifications and maintains links with relevant referral agencies, including the local 'Prevent' duty officer. Leaders and managers meet their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty.

Apprentices have a basic understanding of how to stay safe and protect themselves from radicalisation or extremism. They know to whom to report any concerns they may have, and these concerns are also discussed by tutors at learning reviews.

Tutors and trainers do not make apprentices sufficiently aware of the specific risks or precautions involved within the private security industry. Apprentices are not knowledgeable enough about what steps to take to protect themselves when working alone or about their vulnerability from having access to sensitive data.

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