

Kids Allowed Limited

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 themes set out below.

Kids Allowed Limited (KAL) received a direct contract to provide apprenticeships in January 2017 and started training apprentices using levy funding in September 2017. KAL currently provides training for 47 apprentices, all of whom study on frameworks. Fifteen apprentices follow the level 2 framework in childcare and young person's workforce and 32 follow the level 3 framework in early years educator. KAL only offers apprenticeships to its own employees who work in one of its eight dedicated nurseries throughout Manchester and Cheshire. Apprenticeships take place through direct delivery by trainer/assessors in the Knutsford academy/nursery and by assessment in the workplace throughout the eight centres. KAL subcontracts the delivery of functional skills to Total People.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have an ambitious and sensible strategy to provide high-quality levy-funded apprentices at levels 2 and 3 in childcare. Leaders and managers ensure that staff have extensive specialist expertise and knowledge in childcare. They provide a high-quality training centre and training resources at their Knutsford academy to train apprentices to work across their eight childcare centres. Tutors develop good learning resources to help apprentices gain the skills and knowledge they require to succeed in the workplace, and to satisfy the requirements of apprenticeships.

All apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and understanding throughout their apprenticeships. The academy manager and the tutors have established highly effective links with each of the centre managers to ensure that apprentices receive good support in their workplaces. They ensure that potential apprentices and centre managers understand the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. All apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. They attend fortnightly taught sessions at the academy to develop their skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. Apprentices have time in their workplaces each fortnight to

support their skills development and the completion of their apprenticeships. Apprentices log their off-the-job activity, which assessors monitor monthly.

Recruitment of apprentices is rigorous. Leaders and managers have established very good links with schools near each of their centres. Centre managers work closely with schools and attend careers fairs and open days. They offer work experience placements to schoolchildren in years eight to eleven to ensure that they develop a good understanding of careers in childcare.

The academy manager carries out observations of teaching and learning sessions. Tutors also carry out observations of each other's sessions. Feedback following peer observations focus too much on teaching. It is often too positive and does not lead to clear actions to improve. Observations carried out by the academy manager are more evaluative. They identify strengths and areas for improvement in the practice observed. No one monitors the impact of actions to measure improvement. Observations focus solely on teaching and learning sessions. The quality assurance of other aspects of the apprenticeship programme, for example learners' recruitment and learners' progress reviews, is not in place.

Too many learners on level 2 programmes leave their programmes early without achieving. Of the 23 apprentices who started in 2017, eleven left early without achieving. Of the 24 apprentices who started in 2018, seven have left the programme without achieving. Managers are right to recognise that they need to do more to ensure that prospective apprentices understand the requirements of the programme and the demands of working in childcare before starting their studies. Managers have taken steps to strengthen the provision of advice and guidance prior to enrolment, particularly in working more closely with schools, but it is too early to judge the impact. Managers do not analyse thoroughly the destinations of apprentices who leave the programme early.

Governance is strong. Board members have a range of skills, including finance, compliance and education and training that complements the provision well. Governors provide high levels of challenge and hold leaders and managers to account. For example, board members challenged leaders about the low retention of apprentices on level 2 programmes. As a result, leaders comprehensively reviewed the level 2 apprenticeship and, with the support of the board, improved the arrangements for initial advice and guidance. They are evaluating new ways of planning the programme to improve the proportion of apprentices on level 2 programmes who stay on programme and complete their apprenticeship.

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

Planning of the apprenticeship curriculum is effective. Childcare managers understand the programme well and receive encouragement to suggest changes to the curriculum. Leaders and managers recognise that the apprenticeship programme allows staff to become qualified and learn the 'Kids Allowed' way. All apprentices

recognise and clearly articulate the new skills that they have developed and how these improve their performance in their workplaces. For example, a level 2 apprentice explained how she gained confidence in talking to parents. A level 3 apprentice explained how her understanding of how to observe and track children's progress has improved significantly.

Tutors plan teaching sessions well to ensure all apprentices remain fully engaged. As a result, all apprentices are involved in the session, they are enthusiastic and they are ready to learn. Tutors use group work and questioning skilfully to extend and test apprentices' knowledge. They relate learning appropriately to the workplace to consolidate learning. The innovative teaching strategies enthuse learners to apply their learning to practice. Nursery staff and apprentices respect their tutors who pass on their knowledge to apprentices well.

Centre managers ensure that apprentices receive good support in the workplace. All apprentices have mentors to help them develop their skills at work. Apprentices have frequent visits from their assessors and gain good, impartial guidance on future careers. For example, one apprentice had help to investigate whether to complete her qualification at KAL, or to attend a local college. Academy managers and centre managers communicate well to ensure that apprentices have support throughout the programme. Centre managers have frequent meetings with apprentices to aid them during their time at the nursery.

Apprentices' understanding of British values, the 'Prevent' duty and safeguarding is very good. Apprentices relate this understanding to their workplace practice. For example, they demonstrate democracy in the 'Woddlers', where the children choose which book to read. In pre-school, the children all have their own pegs and choose how to greet their peers.

Managers are right to recognise that the electronic portfolio system does not record apprentices' progress accurately, and so they use frequent meetings with assessors to discuss apprentices' progress. The electronic portfolio system indicates that a quarter of apprentices make slow progress, whereas only four apprentices are falling behind. In each case, managers have agreed intervention plans with assessors to help learners catch up. However, in two cases, although the apprentices initially showed progress, they are now falling behind again.

Apprentices are proud of their work. They produce work at the required level. At level 3, tutors enable apprentices to develop the skills to correct their spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately. At level 2, tutors' feedback is mostly supportive, but does not always give apprentices enough guidance on how to improve. As a result, apprentices continue to make mistakes in their written work and do not develop their English skills to a high enough standard. Managers are implementing a literacy and numeracy strategy to rectify this concern.

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

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and apprentices at KAL. Leaders and managers ensure that staff, apprentices and children feel safe and that they keep them safe. They also ensure that they follow safe recruitment procedures rigorously. All staff and apprentices who work for KAL have appropriate disclosure and barring service checks. Designated safeguarding leads (DSL) and deputy DSLs are appropriately qualified and benefit from frequent update training.

Apprentices receive in-depth safeguarding training at the start of, and throughout, their training. Consequently, they are very alert to issues such as female genital mutilation and exploitation, in relation to children and also their peers. Apprentices have a detailed understanding of how to report issues, should they have any concerns about safeguarding. The process for reporting safeguarding concerns is highly visible across all eight nurseries and the training academy.

Leaders and managers investigate safeguarding concerns thoroughly and, when appropriate, refer them to external agencies. Leaders and managers ensure that they store records of safeguarding incidents securely, and that they are available only to named DSLs and deputy DSLs.

Support for apprentices' and staff's mental health and well-being is exceptional. Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of the pressures of working in childcare. As a result, they provide highly effective support for apprentices and staff. For example, staff and apprentices access counselling, health care and a wide range of additional support, such as financial help, whenever needed.

Apprentices have a highly developed understanding of the threats of radicalisation and extremism and how these might affect their peers and the children in their care. Apprentices have a detailed understanding of British values and apply these skilfully and highly effectively to their childcare practice. Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity within their workplaces and the wider community. One male learner was confident and happy to challenge prejudice. One level 2 apprentice worked on an activity with young children. This involved cutting pictures of faces into four and assembling the quarters as composite pictures. This prompted a discussion with children about how they are all different and how to value diversity.

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