

Goodman Masson 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.

Goodman Masson Limited specialises in the provision of recruits to fill vacancies in finance and technology in other businesses. In May 2017, it gained a contract to provide levy-funded, standards-based apprenticeships in recruitment research at level 2, and recruitment consultant and team leading, both at level 3. Since then, it has recruited 33 apprentices. At the time of the inspection, 23 apprentices were on programme. Of these apprentices, three were in recruitment consultancy, six in team leading and 14 in recruitment research.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have a clear intent and commitment to the apprenticeship programme, but have paid insufficient attention to ensuring that it meets the requirements of their apprenticeships. They have overlooked the need for apprentices to complete externally awarded qualifications as part of their apprenticeships. Although six apprentices have completed the training programme, managers have not yet made arrangements for providing end-point assessments for these apprentices.

Of the 33 apprentices who have started, 10 have left the programme without completing. Most of these apprentices left early because they quickly learned that they did not want to work in a high-pressure sales environment.

Internal recruitment consultants carry out a range of suitable activities to recruit apprentices who have little experience of working in the recruitment sector.

Learning and development consultants have devised a programme that prepares apprentices effectively for their recruitment jobs at Goodman Masson, but they do not adequately ensure that all of those recruited know they are on an apprenticeship. They provide an intensive induction course, followed by carefully

planned training and coaching that increase in complexity and challenge for apprentices. Learning and development consultants and internal recruitment staff are knowledgeable about the recruitment industry and the company for which they work.

Managers monitor apprentices' progress carefully to ensure they develop the skills needed for their jobs at Goodman Masson, but they do not link these adequately to the apprenticeship requirements. The targets they set for apprentices become increasingly demanding as apprentices develop and hone their skills. If apprentices are at risk of falling behind, managers and learning and development consultants provide beneficial coaching to help them achieve their targets.

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

Managers and learning and development consultants have not adapted their training programmes to ensure that apprentices can meet all the requirements of the apprenticeship standard and the external qualifications required by the apprenticeship. They do not prepare apprentices for the required technical awards. Managers and learning and development consultants do not make apprentices aware of the end-point assessment, of grading criteria or of the opportunity to gain high grades in their apprenticeships.

Managers do not make sufficient use of their assessments of apprentices at recruitment to prepare individual learning plans for them. They set a fixed 12-month requirement for apprentices' programmes, and do not take sufficient account of the needs of those who may require longer to complete. Learning and development consultants do not give apprentices enough opportunity to develop their independent study skills or to work at their own pace.

All the apprentices on programme at the time of the inspection already have English and mathematics qualifications at level 2. However, managers do not have a strategy for providing functional skills for apprentices who do not have these qualifications or are unable to provide evidence of their level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics.

Learning and development consultants develop apprentices' recruitment and management skills effectively. Apprentices learn how to evaluate their own performance at Goodman Masson and quickly develop the knowledge and skills they need for their jobs. For example, apprentices learn to follow up leads and job opportunities for candidates and to increase the number of placements they make. Apprentices improve their verbal communication skills so that they can deal with a range of different clients.

Managers and learning and development consultants carry out frequent reviews of apprentices, giving them detailed information on what has gone well and the improvements they need to make. They provide effective coaching sessions to tackle areas of weakness and clear development plans for improvement. However, these plans focus narrowly on apprentices' performance at work rather than the wider learning that they need for their apprenticeships.

Managers develop apprentices' use of English and mathematics at work. For example, apprentices become better at writing persuasive emails for negotiation purposes, and at analysing financial data and trends in recruitment.

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

Leaders and managers pay particularly careful attention to apprentices' well-being. They recognise that working in a high-pressure sales environment can be stressful and they monitor this closely during frequent pastoral reviews with apprentices. They provide a range of useful support mechanisms for apprentices, including mentors, an employee assistance line, rewards and benefits schemes and a breakout room where staff can let off steam after dealing with challenging activities at work. Staff have had suitable safeguarding training.

Apprentices spend much of their time dealing with individual and company data. Managers take the risks associated with this data handling seriously and provide training and refresher courses to keep apprentices up to date and help minimise risks to individual apprentices and the company.

Apprentices have a suitable understanding of safeguarding, the dangers of radicalisation and terrorism, and British values, but they learned most of this at school or college. Managers have not yet taken action to reinforce this understanding or develop it to meet the scope of the company's safeguarding policy. Managers correctly identify this as an area for development in their improvement plan.

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