

NCAL Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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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.

NCAL Ltd received a direct contract for apprenticeship training in April 2017. It delivers apprenticeships for levy-paying employers. NCAL Ltd specialises in hospitality and catering qualifications at levels 2, 4, and 5. All apprentices are on standards-based qualifications. NCAL Ltd does not subcontract provision. At the time of the monitoring visit, NCAL Ltd had 39 apprentices, 18 studying at level 2 and 21 studying at levels 4 and 5.

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 effective strategy for their apprenticeship programmes. They make sure that their apprenticeships meet the needs of employers in the hospitality and catering industry well. Managers work closely with employers to identify the most useful content and delivery models for their apprentices. This ensures that the apprenticeships are highly relevant to their employees' needs. Apprentices learn new skills and knowledge. They apply these well to their own work settings. For example, apprentices become more effective managers by understanding in greater detail how to manage the time of their staff.

Senior leaders monitor effectively the quality of training and the progress that apprentices make. They use a range of information to identify concerns quickly. Trainers keep detailed logs of the progress that apprentices make. As a result, apprentices develop their vocational skills quickly.

Apprentices understand what they need to do to pass their apprenticeships. Managers are very knowledgeable about the requirements of the final tests. They undertake assessments for other apprenticeship organisations and use this information to help apprentices prepare well. It is too early to judge the impact of this work, since apprentices have not taken their final tests.

Apprentices are making insufficiently rapid progress with their English and mathematics learning. Managers are taking appropriate action to improve apprentices' attendance at English and mathematics workshops. English and mathematics tutors are working very closely with apprentices who are at risk of not passing these qualifications. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this support on apprentices' achievement.

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**

Apprentices develop appropriate new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours. They value these new skills, which make them more effective in their workplaces. Employers often reward apprentices' efforts by promoting them. Apprentices use their new skills to improve working practices in their own restaurants.

Trainers provide good-quality on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices frequently attend specialist workshops and training sessions. As a result, they learn a wide range of advanced culinary skills and develop more effective management strategies. Apprentices receive effective online support to develop their vocational knowledge. They also benefit from masterclasses delivered by well-known industry experts.

Managers and trainers have developed very positive working partnerships with employers. Employers appreciate the input they have to the apprenticeship programme. They value the high-quality training their employees receive.

Managers and trainers work closely with employers to identify apprentices' starting points accurately. Staff evaluate apprentices' skills and knowledge through a range of subject-specialist skills assessments. Managers and trainers use this information well to enrol apprentices on the correct level of programme. In addition, employers identify a mentor for each apprentice. As a result, apprentices improve their confidence and knowledge of the catering industry.

Trainers provide apprentices with good vocational support. Apprentices speak highly of the good-quality training and support they receive from their trainers. Consequently, most apprentices make good progress.

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

Senior leaders safeguard and protect their apprentices well. They recruit staff safely. Staff and apprentices adhere to safe working practices. All staff have Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

A well-trained designated safeguarding officer deals with safeguarding concerns effectively. All staff receive training to ensure their knowledge is current. However,

senior leaders do not keep an up-to-date register of staff training. Therefore, they cannot quickly identify when staff require update training.

Senior leaders ensure that staff, apprentices and employers understand whom to contact should a concern arise. Managers resolve safeguarding concerns appropriately and quickly. However, because leaders do not record safeguarding incidents in sufficient detail, they cannot analyse how effective their actions have been.

Apprentices have a good working knowledge of British values. They can relate these well to their personal and working lives. They respect each other's views and opinions. Apprentices fully understand how the rule of law applies to their working and social lives.

Apprentices are safe in their workplaces and in their off-the-job training. They understand the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation, and how these may affect them in their daily lives.

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