

Mbkb Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Victor Reid, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

In March 2017, Mbkb Limited began the direct delivery of adult learning programmes and levy-funded apprenticeship courses. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 58 adults and 223 apprentices in learning. Adult learners attend short courses in child development and well-being, foundation learning, and preparation for work. Around two thirds of adult learners receive their training via a single subcontractor. Most apprentices are working towards standards-based apprenticeships in a range of vocational pathways, including payroll administration, lead adult care work and operations management at levels 3 and 5. A small minority of apprentices are enrolled on frameworks in child development, administration, and business management.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made good use of their experience working as a subcontractor to develop their internal capability to manage apprenticeship training programmes successfully. As a result, apprentices routinely benefit from high-quality training that extends their confidence and equips them with new knowledge, skills and behaviours to make assured progress in their learning.

Leaders and managers work closely with a range of partners, including trailblazers and employers, to ensure that the provision closely aligns to, and meets, regional and local skills priorities. Leaders and managers give high priority to the development of apprentices' confidence in English and mathematics. Trainers promote the importance of these skills effectively across the full range of learning programmes.

Leaders have developed a strongly shared culture of high expectations for the quality of the provision and the progress apprentices make. Leaders set appropriate targets for managers and staff to achieve and monitor their performance in improving the provision through frequent one-to-one meetings. Each member of staff understands their role in contributing to the success of the organisation. Trainers are suitably qualified and have substantial industry experience aligned to their individual roles

and responsibilities. Leaders have developed a carefully planned staff development programme to help them consolidate their skills and expertise in meeting the learning needs of apprentices.

Leaders and managers have established an effective culture of continual improvement. The self-assessment report is evaluative and identifies clearly how actions taken by leaders have improved the quality of the provision.

Managers' observations of teaching and learning help them to have an accurate understanding of the quality of learners' experiences. However, in a small minority of cases, the observation report places insufficient emphasis on judgements about the quality of learning over time.

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 benefit from good on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices enjoy their learning, appreciate the up-to-date training they receive and are keen to learn new skills and apply them in their workplace. Apprentices produce a good standard of work. The vast majority make at least the progress expected of them and are well prepared for their next steps in learning. The provision meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.

Trainers use initial assessment well to establish apprentices' vocational starting points and identify any support needs. Trainers use these results to inform both the selection of the most appropriate learning programme and the planning of challenging learning. Trainers provide good personal support for all apprentices throughout their programmes.

Trainers are highly motivated and develop positive relationships with apprentices and employers. They skilfully use their recent vocational experience to make the learning relevant to the apprentices' job roles. Trainers promote good professional standards and behaviours in the workplace, which help apprentices quickly become valuable members of their teams. For example, in local authority settings, apprentices studying at level 3 in payroll administration quickly become confident and skilled in accurately interpreting employment law relating to employee pay and conditions.

Apprentices working towards English, mathematics, and information, communication and technology functional skills programmes make steady progress in developing confidence in these skills. For example, one apprentice in a childcare setting holds lead responsibility for supporting children's reading.

Partnership working with employers is strong. Employers are involved effectively in planning training to support the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. For example, childcare apprentices studying at level 3 benefit from attendance at in-

house training in 'behaviour management' that enhances their confidence and effectiveness in the workplace.

In a very small number of instances, feedback provided to apprentices about their work is not sufficiently precise to help them understand what they need to do to improve and achieve high grades in end-point assessment.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals? Reasonable progress

Leaders' planning and management of the key requirements for adult learning programmes are good. They have established very productive working relationships with community-based organisations, local councils and Jobcentre Plus. Leaders and managers have ensured that programmes are personalised and appropriately structured to meet the needs of learners. Many learners have had little in the way of formal education and/or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Leaders' oversight of the management of the single subcontractor is effective. Managers regularly monitor the quality of this provision. The subcontracting arrangements provide adult learners with good access to local learning. Trainers ensure that learners enrol onto courses that match their goals and aspirations. Learners work well in groups and provide good support for each other. As a result, they develop good communication and team-working skills that help improve their confidence in their own abilities.

Trainers who deliver to adults have up-to-date vocational expertise and knowledge, which they apply well in taught sessions, and ensure that the learning is relevant. Trainers create a good rapport and organise interesting activities for learners, which maintains learners' motivation and enables them to develop their employability and interpersonal skills.

Assessment of learning is generally good. Trainers use an appropriate range of assessment methods to check understanding and to evaluate accurately learners' progress. Learners benefit from helpful verbal feedback and good individual support. As a result, learners increase their self-confidence and demonstrate mature attitudes to their studies. Current learners are making good progress, and most are on track to achieve their qualifications.

On the vocational childcare programmes, learners confidently apply their new knowledge and skills when on work placement in a variety of childcare settings. Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses confidently develop their written and spoken language skills, which help to prepare them well to make job applications and attend interviews with prospective employers. However,

too many learners on the subcontracted English and ESOL programmes leave their course early.

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

Leaders and managers have established a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff have benefited from suitable training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Suitably qualified staff systematically check the health and safety of workplaces and work placements used by apprentices and learners.

Managers maintain an accurate and up-to-date single central record of the checks made during the recruitment of new staff to ensure their suitability to work with young apprentices and vulnerable learners.

The designated safeguarding officer is suitably trained for the role and maintains a comprehensive record of all safeguarding and welfare concerns, and the actions taken to protect learners and apprentices. Where appropriate, onward referral to outside agencies is made swiftly.

Apprentices and learners receive useful safeguarding information during induction that develops their understanding of the risks of extremism and radicalisation. They know who to contact should they feel unsafe. Most learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the safe and appropriate use of the internet and social media. However, a few tutors on adult learning courses do not reinforce this information well enough.

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